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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Iran Update, November 1, 2023

Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kathryn Tyson, Annika Ganzeveld, Peter Mills, Amin Soltani, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments and in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

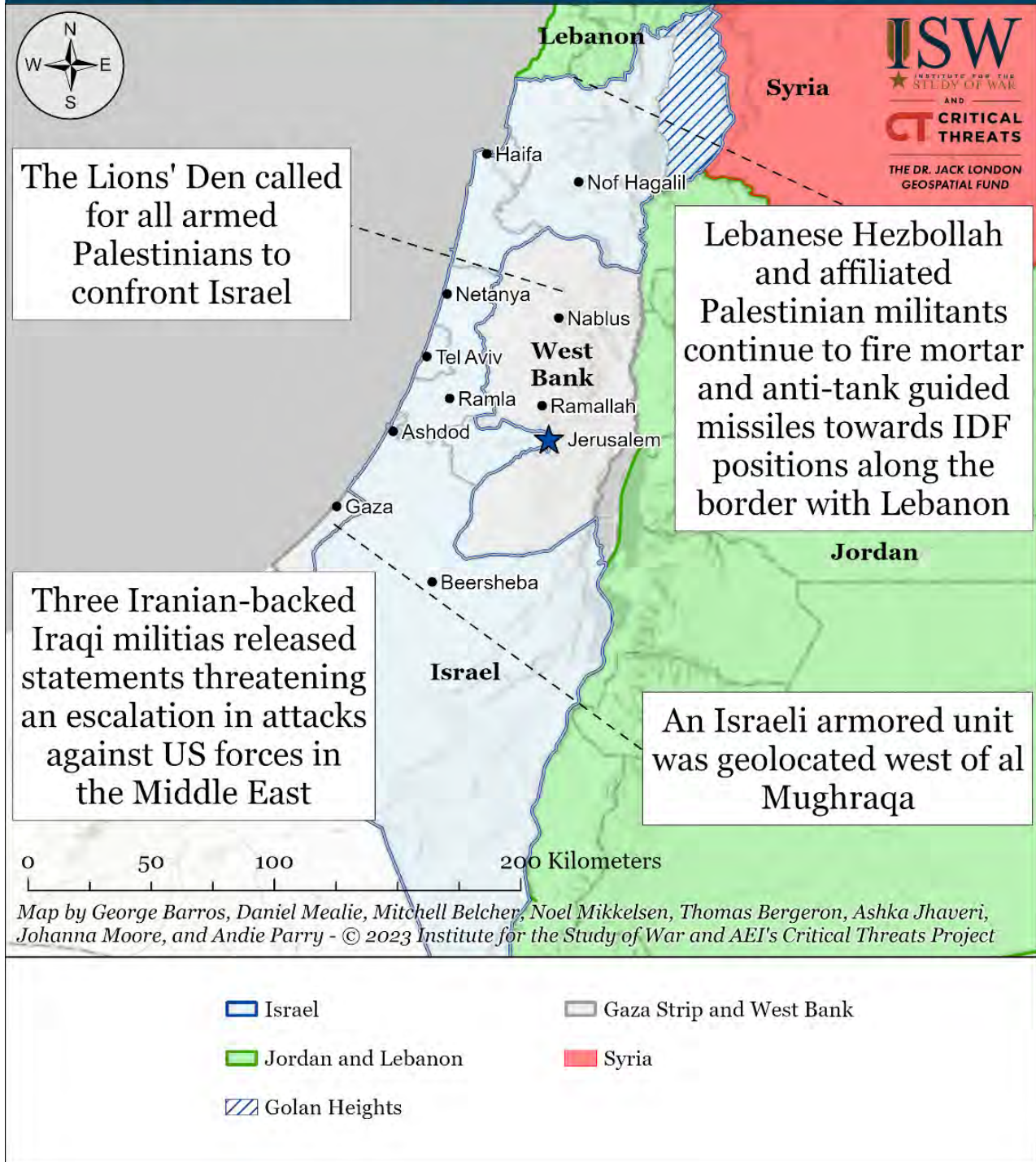
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Lebanese Hezbollah-affiliated al Mayadeen reported that an Israeli armored unit advanced from the northwestern Gaza Strip south along the coast.
2. Axis of Resistance and Palestinian media reported that the al Qassem Brigades clashed with an IDF unit in Beit Hanoun.
3. Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israel at their usual rate. Multiple Palestinian militias appeared to conduct joint indirect fire attacks on locations in Israel, which would suggest greater coordination between these groups.
4. Anti-Israel militancy and protest activity in the West Bank returned to regular levels after surging on October 31. The Lions' Den released a statement calling for further anti-Israel militancy in the West Bank.
5. Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah, conducted six attacks into Israel as part of an ongoing attack campaign targeting IDF radar and sensor sites and military targets.
6. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for a one-way drone attack targeting US forces in Syria.
7. Iran and LH are continuing to promote the expectation in the information space that LH will announce some kind of escalation against Israel on November 3.
8. Iranian-backed Iraqi militias are signaling that they may escalate against US forces in Iraq and Syria, as LH similarly messages against Israel.
9. The Houthi movement may have conducted an attack targeting southern Israel, which would mark the fourth attempted Houthi attack on Israel since the war began.
10. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian met Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Affairs Minister Hakan Fidan in Ankara.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 1, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

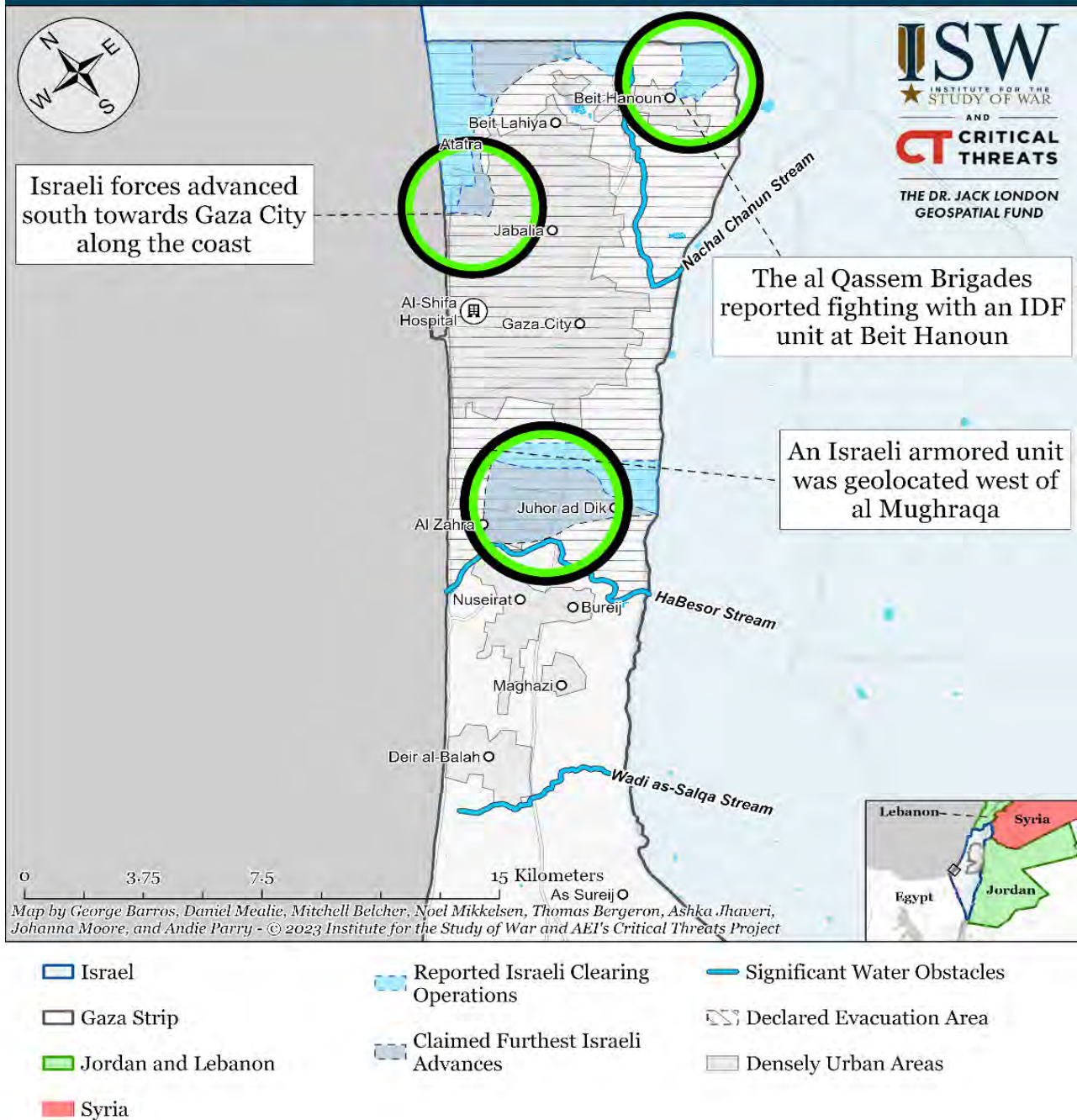
- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH)-affiliated al Mayadeen reported that an Israeli armored unit advanced from the northwestern Gaza Strip south along the coast to Salah Khalaf Street and later attempted to move east, inland, to al Nasr Street and al Toum Street.[1] The commander of the IDF 162nd Division stated that Israeli forces had reached “the gates of Gaza City,” possibly corroborating this reporting.[2]

Axis of Resistance and Palestinian media reported that the al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—clashed with an IDF unit in Beit Hanoun on November 1. The al Qassem Brigades claimed that its militants destroyed at least four Israeli Merkava tanks with Yasin-105 anti-tank weapons.[3] The al Qassem Brigades also claimed to have bombed a gathering of IDF soldiers near Beit Hanoun using a quadcopter drone.[4] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed that its fighters fought an IDF unit in Karamah, southwest Beit Lahia.

The al Qassem Brigades claimed that its militants engaged Israeli forces attempting to enter the Zaytoun neighborhood west of Gaza City. The al Quds Brigades militants reportedly fired Yasin-105 anti-tank weapons and conducted a mortar attack on advancing Israeli forces.[5] Palestinian media reported that militants were successful in destroying an Israeli armored personnel carrier during the fighting.[6] The al Quds Brigades claimed that its forces supported the fighting at Zaytoun and caused an unspecified number of Israeli casualties.[7]

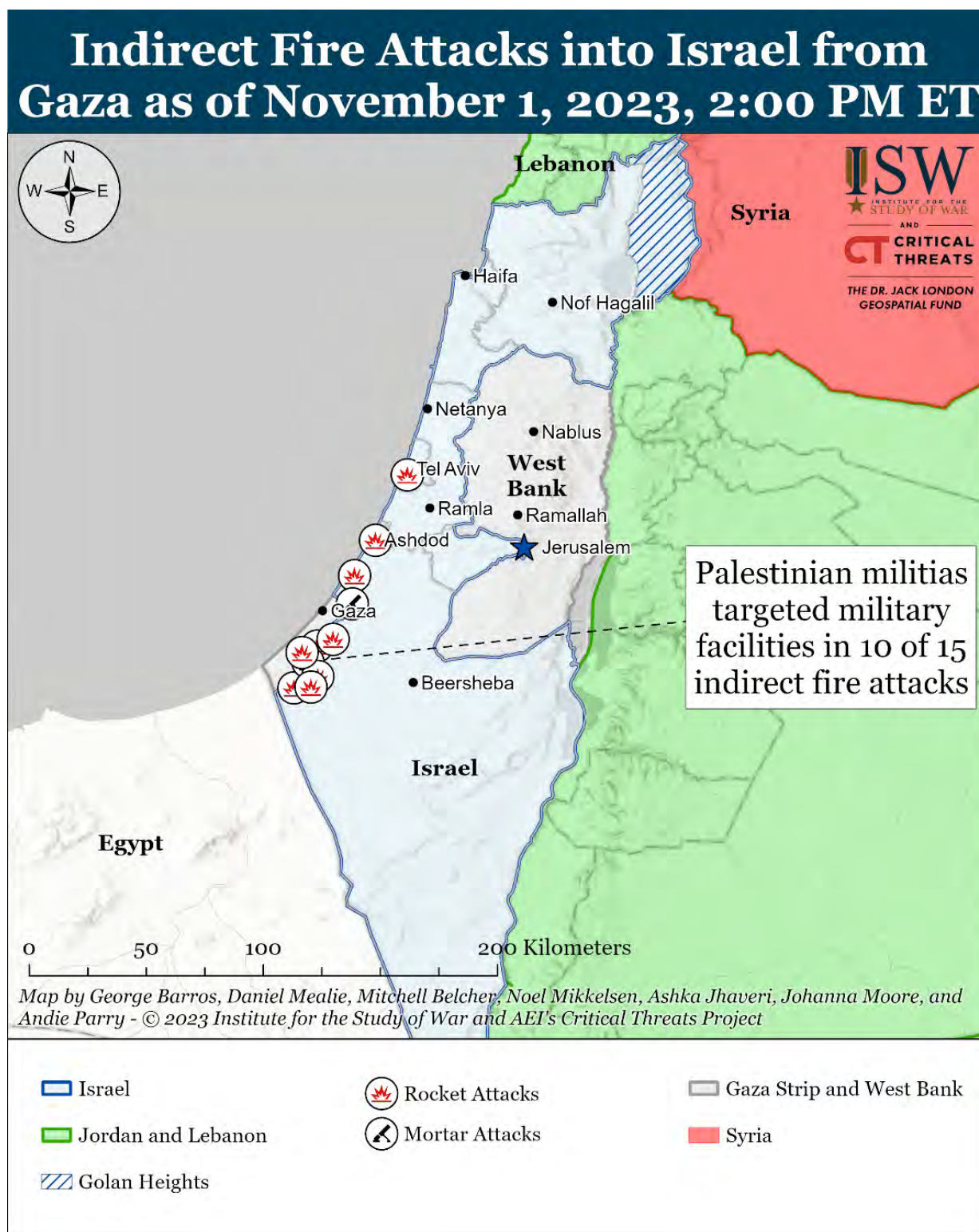
Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 1, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



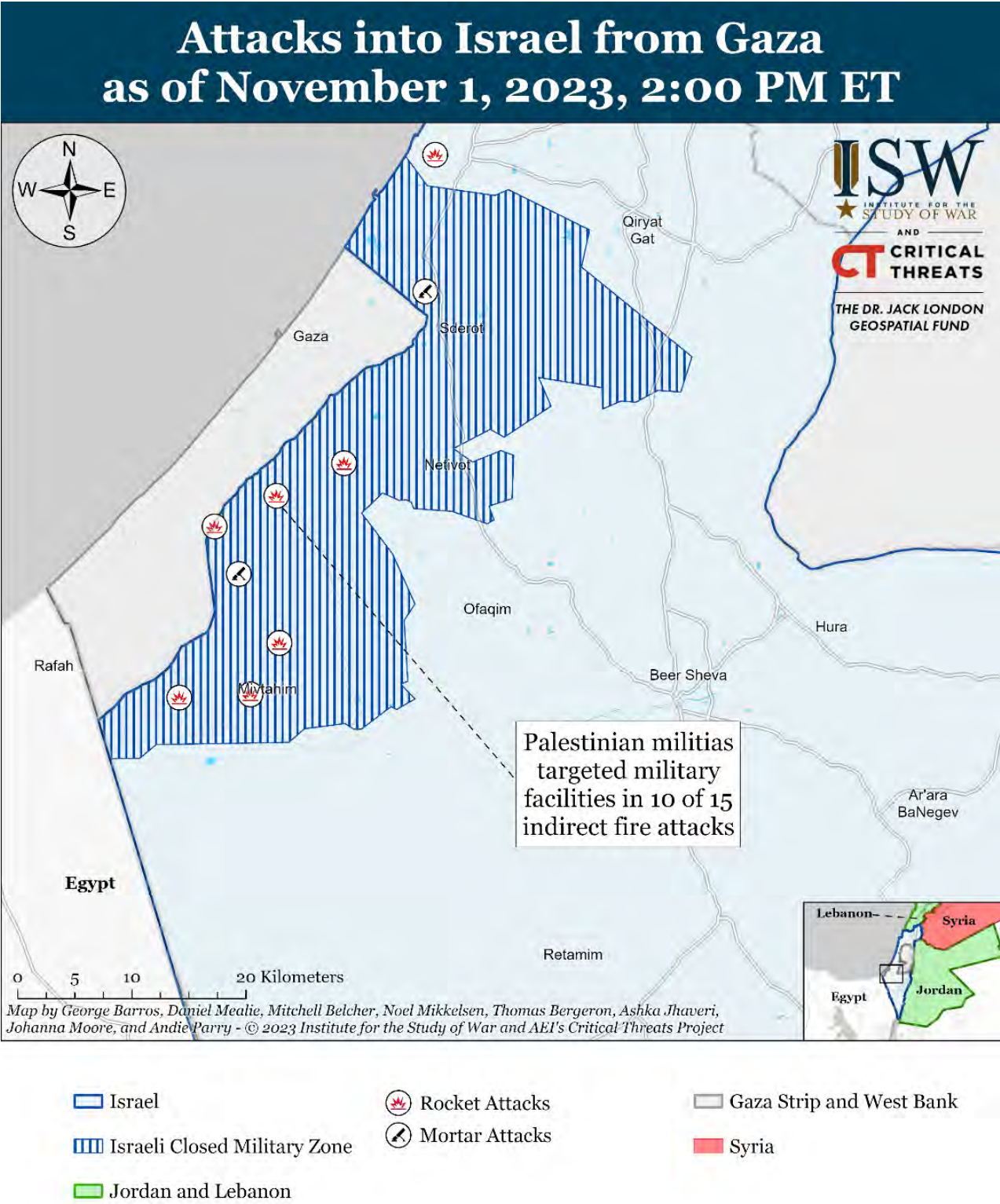
Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israel at their usual rate on November 1. The al Qassem Brigades claimed responsibility for eight indirect fire attacks.[8] The al Quds Brigades claimed responsibility for another three indirect fire attacks.[9] The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades—the militant wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—claimed to launch mortars into southern

Israel.[10] Palestinian media reported that the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades—the self-claimed militant wing of Fatah— conducted three rocket attacks.[11]

Multiple Palestinian militias appeared to conduct joint indirect fire attacks on locations in Israel, which would suggest greater coordination between these groups. The al Qassem Brigades and Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades independently claimed mortar and rocket attacks on Nirim, southern Israel, at the same time.[12] The al Quds Brigades and al Qassem Brigades jointly claimed mortar attacks on the Erez crossing into the Gaza Strip.[13]



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.



West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

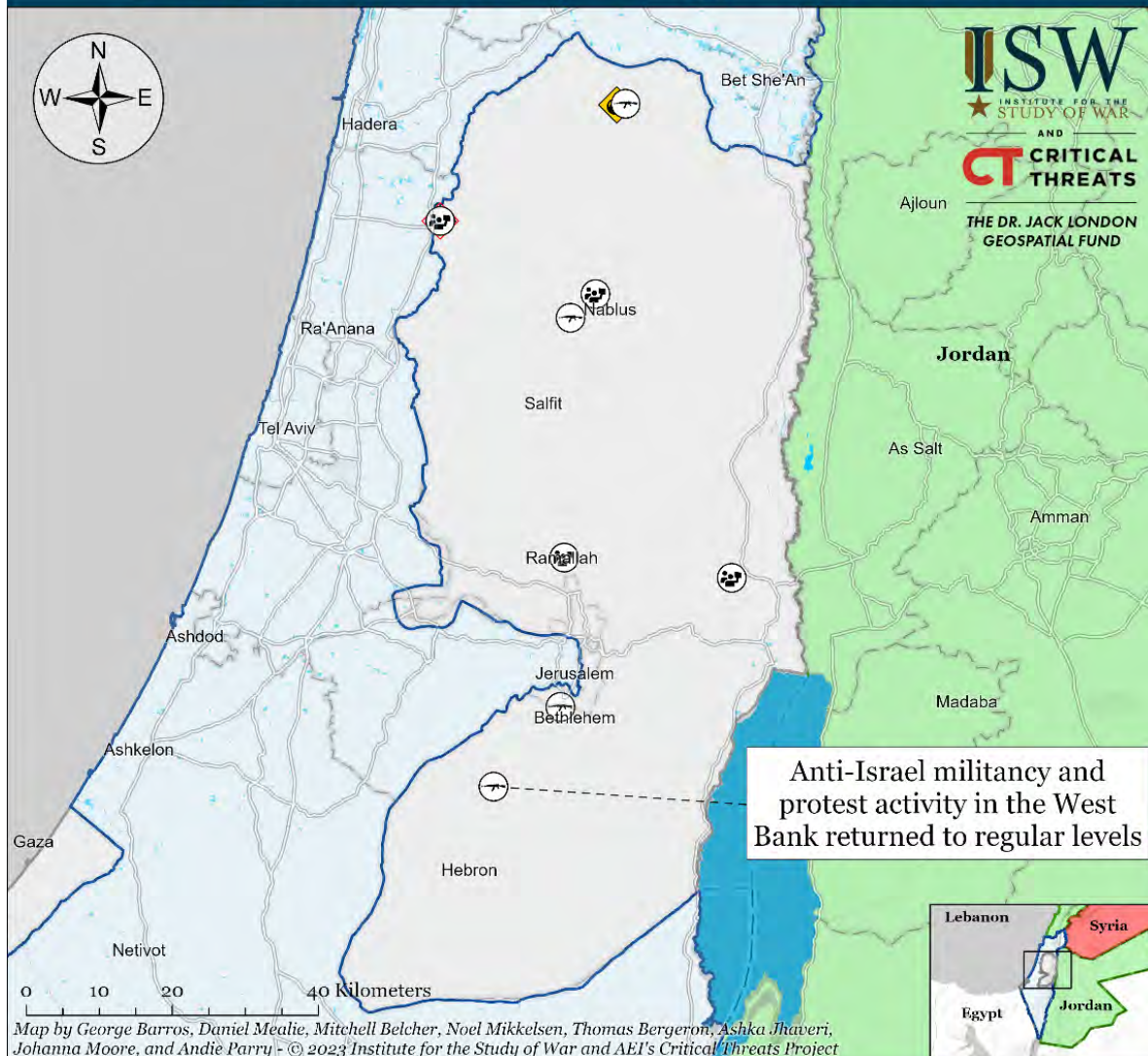
- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Anti-Israel militancy and protest activity in the West Bank returned to regular levels on November 1, after surging the day prior. CTP-ISW recorded five small arms clashes between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces, and two instances of Palestinian militants conducting IED attacks in the West Bank.^[14] Israeli forces also uncovered buried IEDs in the Jenin refugee camp.^[15] CTP-ISW recorded five demonstrations in support of the Gaza Strip.^[16] Demonstrators in Nablus and Ramallah flew Hamas flags.^[17]

The Lions' Den—a West Bank-based Palestinian militia—released a statement on October 31 calling for further anti-Israel militancy in the West Bank.^[18] The group reiterated its calls for mobilization and attacks against Israeli targets. The group also suggested that Israel could face a multi-front escalation on November 3, likely in reference to Hassan Nasrallah's planned speech that day.^[19] CTP-ISW previously noted that Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah are creating the expectation in the information environment that Nasrallah will announce some kind of escalation on November 3, which could include Hezbollah increasing its rate of attacks or using more advanced military systems against Israel.^[20] The Lions' Den has indicated growing alignment with Hamas in recent days, as CTP-ISW previously reported, even though the group has historically claimed that it is not affiliated with any specific Palestinian faction.^[21]

Israeli forces arrested Fatah Secretary General in Jenin Ata Abu Ramila in an overnight raid on November 1.^[22] Ramila is one of the few high-level Fatah officials whom Israeli forces have arrested since October 7.^[23] The IDF accused Ramila of inciting, promoting, and financing terrorism in Jenin, which is a hotspot for Palestinian militant activity in the West Bank.^[24] Ata Abu Ramila previously called for all Palestinian militias to unite and fight together against Israel in January 2023.^[25] Israel continued raids throughout the West Bank, arresting 46 people affiliated with Hamas and other West Bank militias on November 1.^[26] Israeli forces have arrested 1,830 people in the West Bank since October 7, according to Palestinian Authority media *Wafa*.^[27] CTP-ISW cannot verify the accuracy of this report.

Clashes in the West Bank as of November 1, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Israel | Clash (Small Arms Combat) | Gaza Strip and West Bank |
| Jordan and Lebanon | Demonstration | Syria |
| | IED Detonated | |
| | IED Planted | |

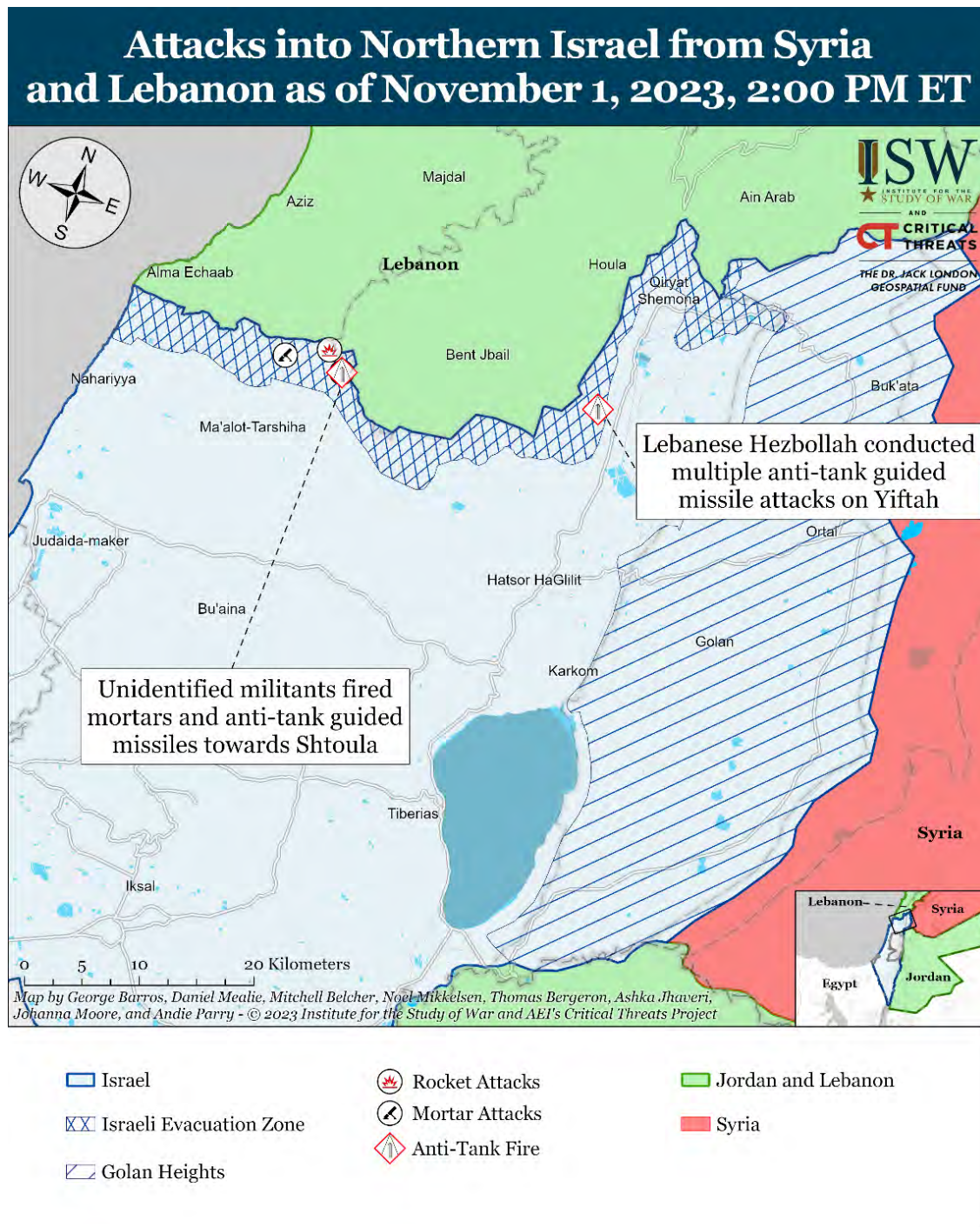
This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed militants, including LH, conducted six attacks into Israel on November 1 as part of an ongoing attack campaign targeting IDF radar and sensor sites and military targets. LH claimed four indirect fire and anti-tank missile attacks on IDF positions in northern Israel.[28] Unknown militants conducted two indirect fire and anti-tank missile attacks into northern Israel as well.[29] The IDF continues to conduct airstrikes and artillery strikes on Iranian-backed militants, who are attempting to launch indirect fire from southern Lebanon into northern Israel.[30]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for a one-way drone attack targeting US forces in Syria on November 1. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed it fired two drones targeting US forces at the al Tanf Garrison in southeastern Syria and achieved “direct hits.”^[31] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has attacked al Tanf Garrison four times since October 18. The group has conducted 27 total attacks on US forces in the Middle East since October 18.

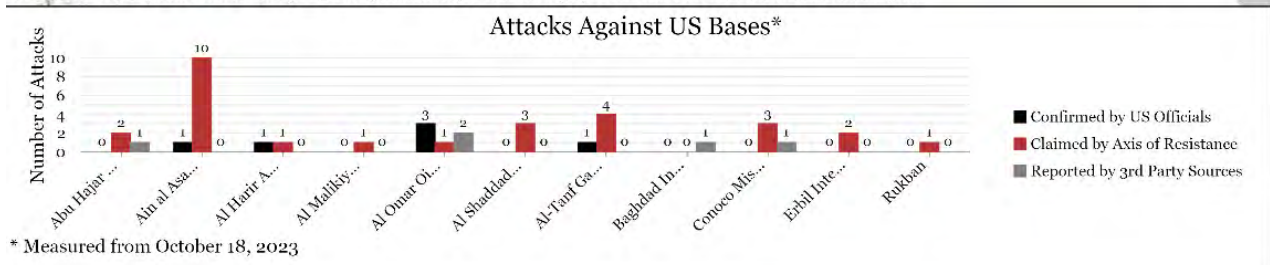
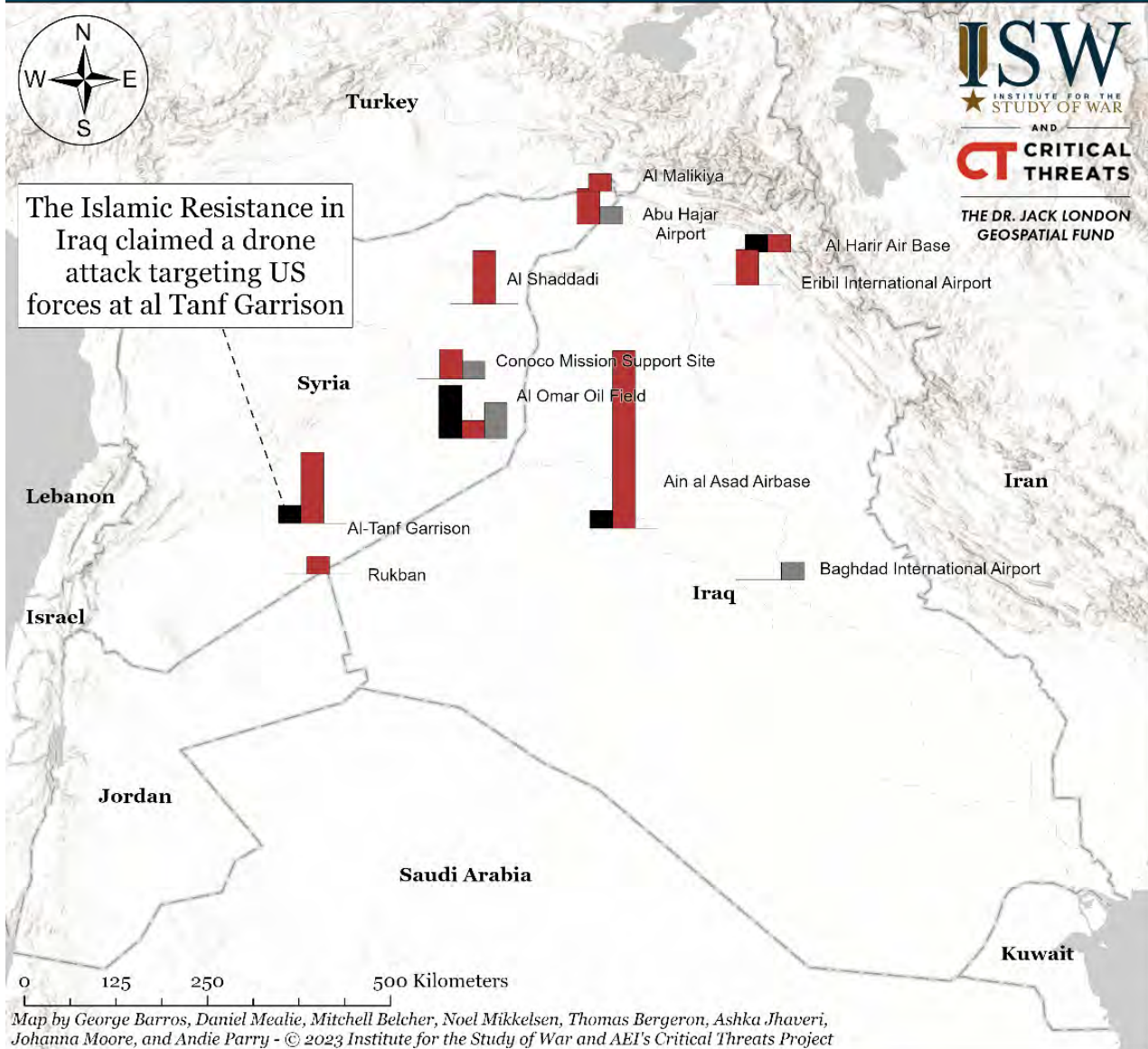
Iran and LH are continuing to promote the expectation in the information space that LH will announce some kind of escalation against Israel on November 3. CTP-ISW previously reported that LH has released two dramatic videos in recent days ahead of LH Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah’s planned speech on November 3, creating the expectation of a significant announcement on the Israel-Hamas war.^[32] This speech is significant in that it will be Nasrallah’s first public statement on the war. Iranian state media has further amplified the news of the upcoming speech and the dramatic videos, describing them as a “sign of future events.”^[33]

- Supreme Leader International Affairs Adviser Ali Akbar Velayati held a phone call with LH Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem on October 31 for further political coordination.^[34] Velayati praised Nasrallah’s leadership and wished him success in his fight against Israel, according to Iranian state media.
- Unidentified LH members published an open letter on November 1, expressing solidarity with Palestinian militants fighting Israel in the Gaza Strip.^[35]

Iranian-backed Iraqi militias are signaling that they may escalate against US forces in Iraq and Syria, as LH similarly messages against Israel. Three Iranian-backed Iraqi militias released statements on November 1 to escalate their attacks on US military positions. The leader of Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba said that the Islamic resistance is liberating Iraq militarily and that “what is coming is greater.”^[36] Ashab al Kahf responded to Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba, quoting the statement and saying that Ashab al Kahf will strike American bases “until our land is liberated.”^[37] Saraya Awlia al Dam similarly said that it is ready to fight against the “aggression in Iraq and in other arenas.”^[38] All three groups have attacked the US forces in Iraq previously.^[39] The groups are affiliated with Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Asaib Ahl al Haq, which is a member of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq.^[40]

The Houthi movement may have conducted an attack targeting southern Israel overnight on October 31, which would mark the fourth attempted Houthi attack on Israel since the war began. The IDF said that it intercepted an “aerial attack” over the Red Sea but that there was no threat to civilians and the attack did not enter Israeli territory.^[41] Local journalists and social media accounts reported that the attack was intercepted near Eilat in southern Israel.^[42] A Houthi Shura Council member posted “Eilat” in Arabic and Hebrew on X (Twitter) shortly before the IDF confirmed an attack.^[43] The attack came after the Houthis launched drones, ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles targeting Israel earlier on October 31 and threatened more attacks.^[44]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 1, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian met Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Affairs Minister Hakan Fidan in Ankara on November 1.[45] Abdollahian praised Erdogan's "strong and accurate positions" on the Israel-Hamas war and announced that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will soon travel to Turkey. Erdogan has expressed strong support for Hamas in recent days, describing the Palestinian militia as a "liberation group" on October 25 and organizing a pro-Palestine rally in

Istanbul on October 28.[46] Abdollahian's visit to Turkey is likely part of Iran's ongoing effort to unite Muslim countries against Israel. Iran has historically—and especially since the start of the war on October 7—sought to rally Muslim countries against Israel and frame itself as a champion of the Palestinian cause, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[47] Abdollahian has traveled to Turkey four times since August 2021 and last traveled to Turkey in March 2023 to evaluate the impacts and damage of the February 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake.[48]

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei discussed the Israel-Hamas war with a group of students on November 1, marking the fifth time he has publicly discussed the war since October 7.[49] Khamenei called on Muslim countries to impose an oil and food embargo on Israel, echoing previous calls from other Iranian officials, such as Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, to impose such an embargo.[50] Khamenei also warned Muslim countries that Israel may threaten them in the future if they do not help Hamas defeat Israel. Khamenei repeated previous Iranian claims that Israel does not care about Israeli hostages in the Gaza Strip and that the United States is directing Israel's war against Hamas.[51] CTP-ISW previously assessed that Hamas and its allies are preparing the information environment to blame Israel for the possible deaths of hostages in the Gaza Strip, especially if Hamas begins killing those hostages.[52]

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- [1] <https://www.almayadeen dot net/news/politics/%D9%85%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B5-%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A9--%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86--%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%86--%D8%AA%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%89-%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88>
- [2] <https://twitter.com/BarakRavid/status/1719732686447648915?s=20>
- [3] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/165> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/182>
- [4] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/154>
- [5] <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1719723280267894915>
- [6] <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1719682410147717618>
- [7] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16551>
- [8] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/152> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/156> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/163> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/164> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/176> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/178> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/180>
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- [11] <https://t.me/QudsN/322059>
- [12] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/164> ; <https://t.me/kataebabuali/10458>
- [13] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38002 ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/178>
- [14] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1719611873937473704> ; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5819> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/321990> ; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1719651959727161481> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/322086> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/322092>
- [15] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1719611873937473704>
- [16] <https://t.me/almanarnews/134162> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/322009> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/322148> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/322163> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/322164>
- [17] <https://t.me/QudsN/322148> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/322009>
- [18] <https://t.me/areennabluss/290>
- [19] <https://t.me/almanarnews/133800>
- [20] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-october-31-2023>
- [21] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-october-26-2023> ; <https://t.me/areennabluss/288>
- [22] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1719611867373445231>

[23] <https://www.wafa dot ps/Pages/Details/81480>
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[29] <https://t.me/QudsN/322053> ; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1719708842307502266>
[30] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1719728169693905029>
[31] <https://t.me/elamharbi/58>
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[33] <https://www.farsnews dot ir/media/14020808000280> ; <https://defapress dot ir/fa/news/626699>
[34] <https://www.farsnews dot ir/en/news/14020810000370> ; <https://www.irna dot ir/news/85276922>
[35] https://twitter.com/amalsaad_lb/status/1719756221001953724 ; <https://t.me/maymun5/56988>
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[41] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1719489325073584293>
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[52] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-24-2023>

IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 2, 2023

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Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Kathryn Tyson, Johanna Moore, Amin Soltani, Christina Harward, and Nicholas Carl

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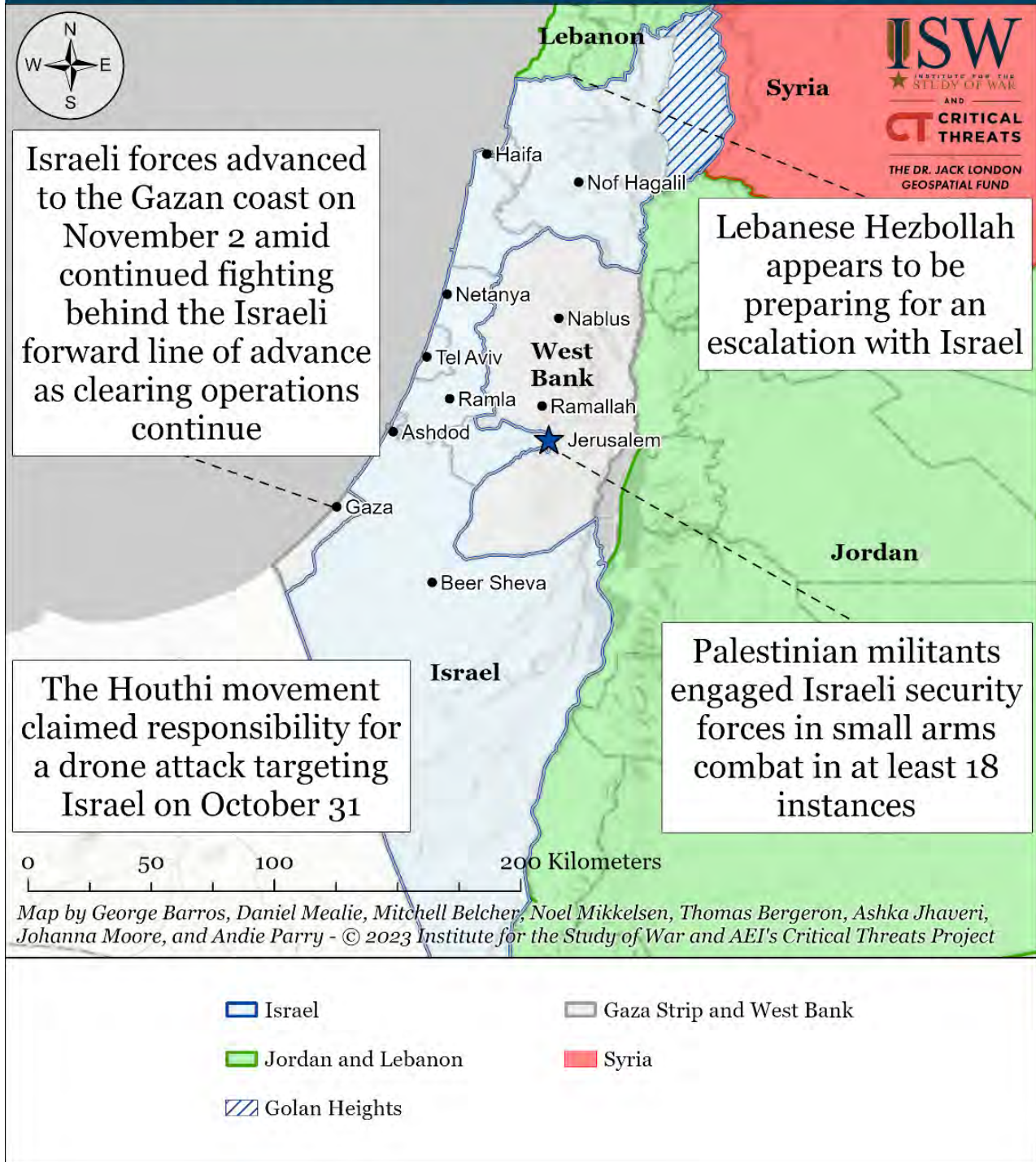
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Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli forces advanced to the coast in the central Gaza Strip on November 2 as clearing operations continued. Fighting continued behind the Israeli forward line of advance in the central Gaza Strip, however.
2. Palestinian militants targeted IDF ground forces with small arms, improvised explosive devices, and anti-tank fire along the northwestern Gazan coast north of al Shati camp.
3. Iranian and Axis of Resistance sources reported that Israeli forces continued their advance into Beit Hanoun.
4. Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory adjacent to the southern Gaza Strip, possibly due to Israeli operations near Gaza City constraining the groups' ability to launch rockets into Israeli towns adjacent to Gaza City.
5. CTP-ISW recorded 18 separate clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants in the West Bank.
6. Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah, conducted 28 attacks into northern Israel, which is the largest offensive on this front since the Israel-Hamas War began.
7. Lebanese Hezbollah appears to be preparing for an escalation with Israel ahead of Hassan Nasrallah's planned speech on November 3.
8. The Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces said that the PMF is in a "state of emergency" during a meeting with other PMF leaders in Baghdad, indicating preparations for an escalation with the United States.
9. The Houthi movement claimed responsibility for a drone attack targeting Israel on October 31, marking the fourth attempted Houthi attack on Israel since the war began.
10. Iranian Supreme National Security Council Secretary Rear Admiral Ali Akbar Ahmadian met with Russian President Vladimir Putin's Special Representative for Syrian Affairs Alexander Lavrentiev in Tehran.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 2, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

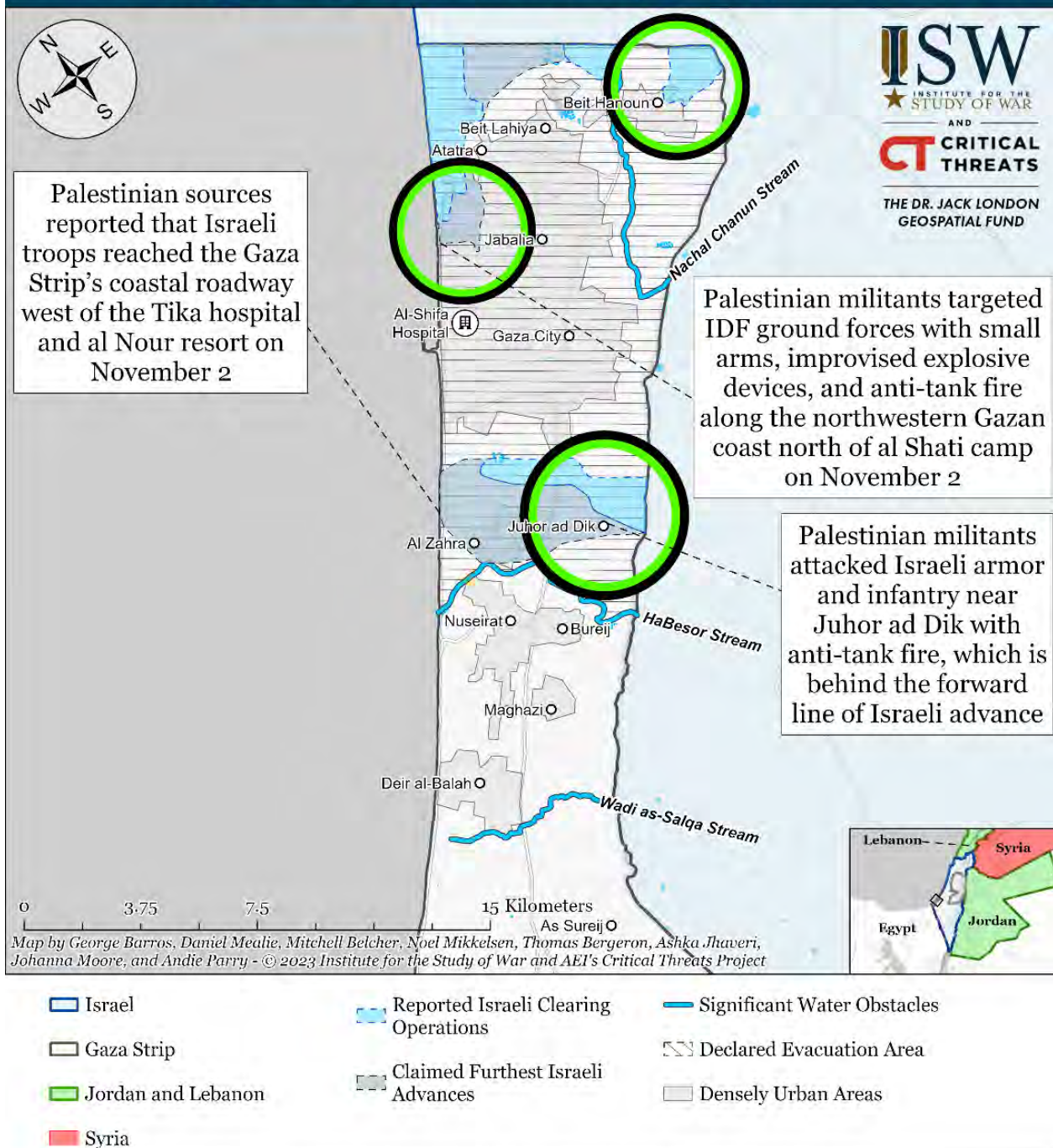
Israeli forces advanced to the coast in the central Gaza Strip on November 2 as clearing operations continued. Palestinian sources reported that Israeli troops reached the Gaza Strip's coastal roadway west of the Tika hospital and al Nour resort on November 2.[1]

Fighting continued behind the Israeli forward line of advance in the central Gaza Strip, however. Palestinian militants attacked Israeli armor and infantry near Juhor ad Dik with anti-tank fire.[2] The attack is consistent with the fact that the IDF is undertaking a clearing operation, which US military doctrine defines as an operation that "requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area." [3] Clearing operations frequently take weeks and sometimes months to complete.[4] Enemy counterattacks will often persist throughout a clearing operation until the clearing force has successfully eliminated organized resistance in its sector.[5] Attacks may still occur infrequently even after the end of a clearing operation due to the re-infiltration of enemy forces. The tactical task "clear" differs from "control" in that control requires a force to "maintain physical influence over a specified area to prevent its use by an enemy or to create conditions necessary for successful friendly operations." [6] Clearing operations precede a force gaining control over an area.

Palestinian militants targeted IDF ground forces with small arms, improvised explosive devices (IED), and anti-tank fire along the northwestern Gazan coast north of al Shati camp on November 2. The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—claimed that it fired an anti-tank rocket at an IDF vehicle near the Khalidi mosque amid an IDF advance down the coastal road.[7] Palestinian militants also ambushed IDF forces in two separate engagements east of the coastal road.[8]

Iranian and Axis of Resistance sources reported that Israeli forces continued their advance into Beit Hanoun.[9] CTP cannot corroborate this reporting. Lebanese Hezbollah (LH)-affiliated outlet al Mayadeen claimed that the IDF is advancing from the east and south as part of an effort to encircle Beit Hanoun.[10]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 2, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

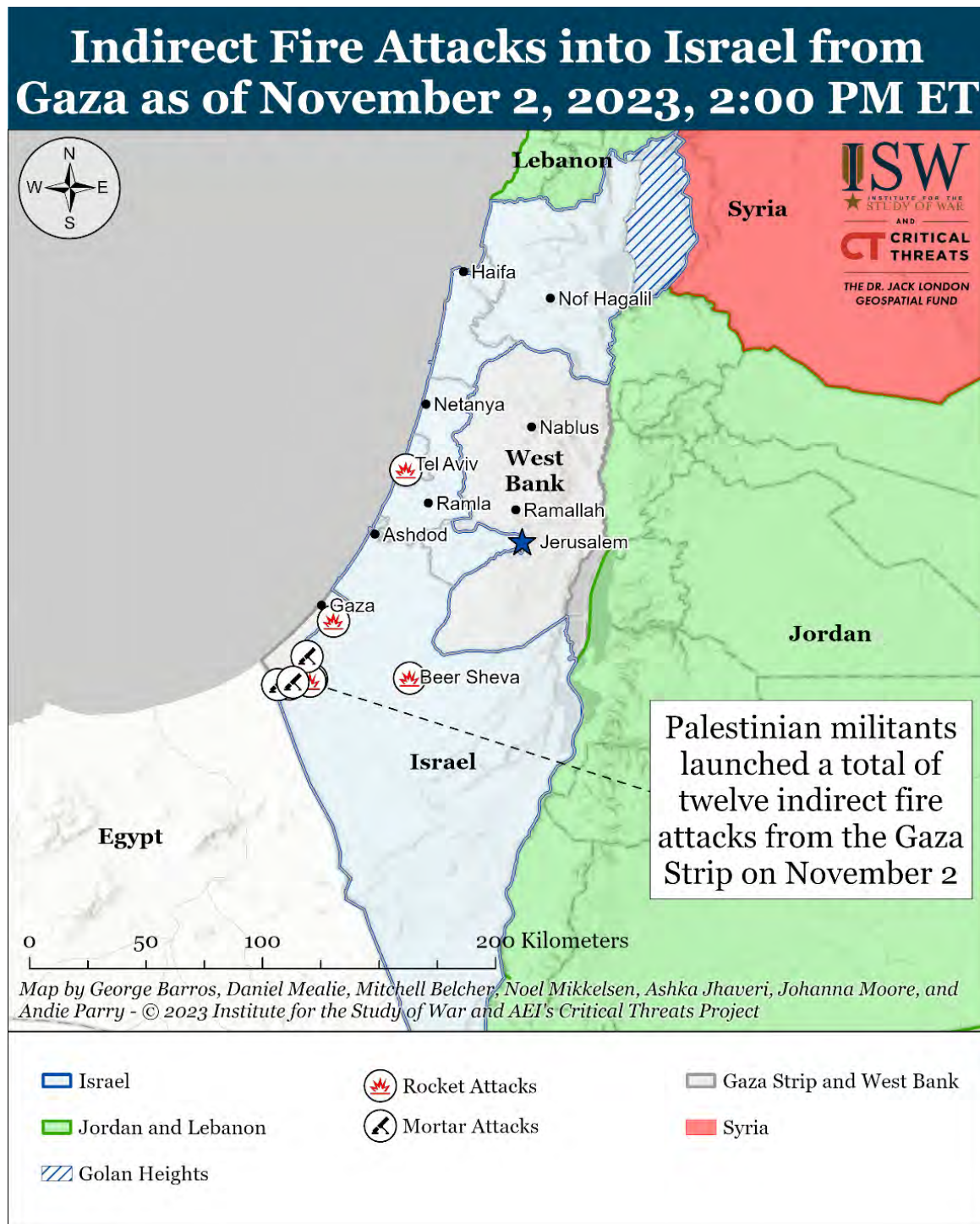


*CTP-ISW does not assess that areas coded as 'reported Israeli clearing operations' to be fully controlled by Israeli forces

Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory adjacent to the southern Gaza Strip, possibly due to Israeli operations near Gaza City constraining the groups' ability to launch rockets into Israeli towns adjacent to Gaza City. Palestinian militants launched a total of twelve indirect fire attacks from the Gaza Strip on November 2. These attacks focused on towns adjacent to the southern Gaza Strip, with the exception of two attacks targeting Tel Aviv and Beersheba.^[11] Israeli operations are making it more difficult for Hamas and its allies to fire rockets and mortars into areas adjacent

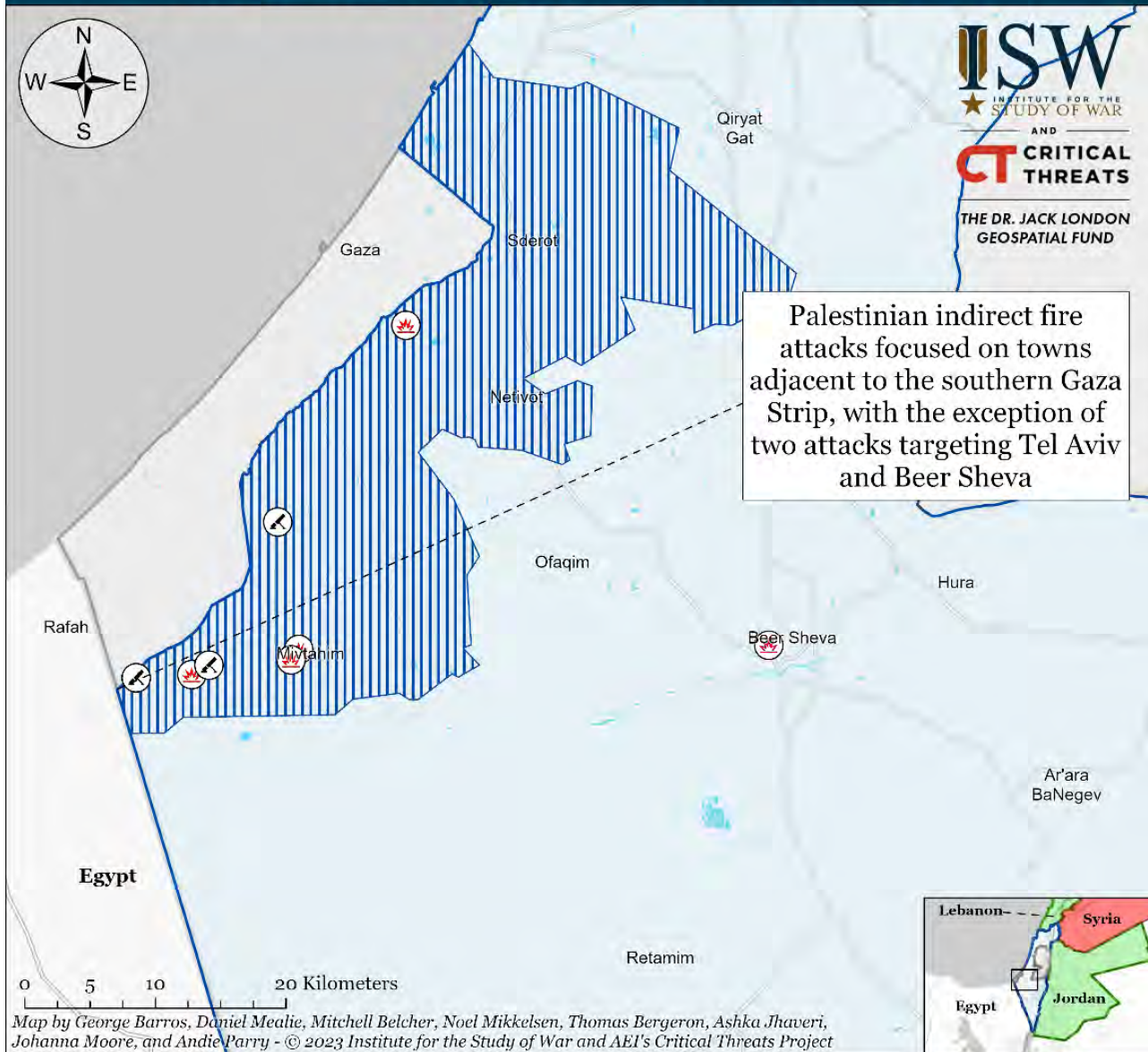
to the northern Gaza Strip as Palestinian militants are forced to fight IDF units. Palestinian militias retain the ability to launch rockets from the southern Gaza Strip into northern Israel by using longer-range rockets, such as the R160.[12]

Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israel at a slightly decreased rate on November 2. The al Qassem Brigades claimed responsibility for four indirect fire attacks.[13] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed responsibility for another five indirect fire attacks.[14] The National Resistance Brigades—the militant wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)—claimed three indirect fire attacks into southern Israel.[15]



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 2, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



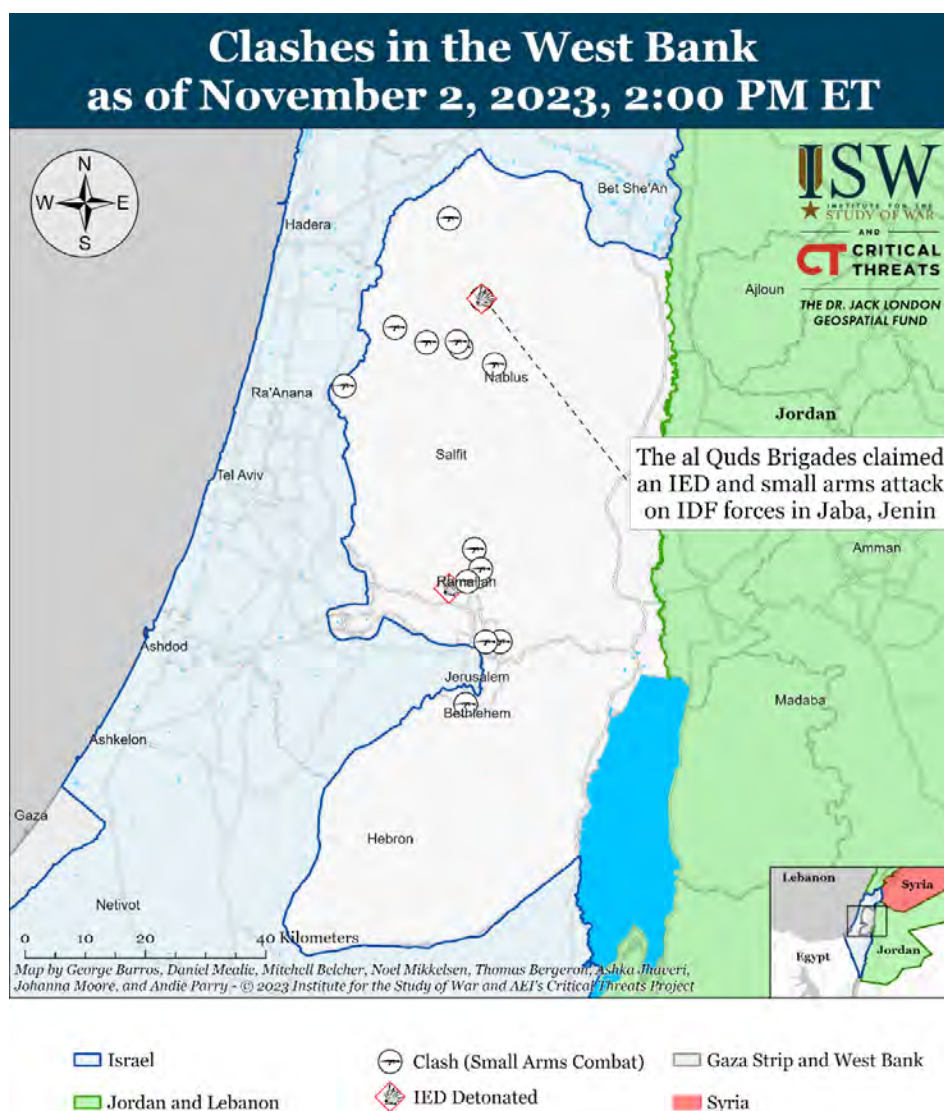
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|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Israel | Rocket Attacks | Gaza Strip and West Bank |
| Israeli Closed Military Zone | Mortar Attacks | Syria |
| Jordan and Lebanon | | |

Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
- CTP-ISW recorded 18 separate clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants in the West Bank on November 2.** The al Quds Brigades' Jaba Battalion claimed an IED and small arms attack on IDF forces in Jaba the evening of November 1.[16] Palestinian Authority-controlled Wafa News reported that the Jaba Battalion engaged the IDF at the entrance to the town.[17] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claimed a separate attack on Israeli forces at the Jalazone refugee camp, north of Ramallah.[18] Axis of Resistance-affiliated media circulated a statement from the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades warning that Palestinian militants will attack if Israeli forces try to enter the town. The IDF reported that Palestinian militants threw explosives at Israeli forces conducting arrests and weapons seizures in Bitunya.[19] Axis of Resistance and Palestinian media reported 14 additional instances of fighting taking place between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces in central and northern West Bank.[20] The Lion's Den—a West Bank-based Palestinian militia—released a statement on October 26 calling on West Bank residents to take up arms and “strike [everywhere] there is an [Israeli] soldier or settler.”[21] CTP-ISW previously recorded a comparable number of attacks on Israeli forces in the West Bank on October 28, after Israel began its clearing operations in the Gaza Strip.[22]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed militants, including LH, conducted 28 attacks into northern Israel on November 2, which is the largest offensive on this front since the Israel-Hamas War began. LH fired one-way attack drones for the first time at the IDF Zebdin barracks in the contested Shebaa Farms area. LH has primarily relied on anti-tank squads to attack IDF positions up until this point.^[23] LH claimed to simultaneously attack 19 IDF positions along the Lebanon-Israel border.^[24] This uptick in attacks precedes LH Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah's planned speech on November 3, during which he may announce further escalation against Israel. LH declared on October 8 that it is not a neutral party in the conflict but has nevertheless sustained daily attacks into northern Israel since the war began.^[25]

LH conducted attacks on IDF positions that are consistent with their ongoing attack campaign targeting IDF radar and sensor sites and military targets. LH attacked communication and surveillance equipment at the al Abbad site on November 2, which created conditions for successive operations against the IDF in northern Israel by targeting critical Israeli signals facilities and communications infrastructure.^[26] LH also fired a surface-to-air missile at an Israeli drone, which is a capability that LH has employed since October 28.^[27] The al Qassem Brigades claimed to have fired 12 rockets from southern Lebanon toward Kiriyaat Shimona on November 2.^[28] LH almost certainly permits such attacks from southern Lebanon given the extent to which LH controls the area and coordinates with the other Iranian-backed groups operating there. CTP-ISW recorded five unclaimed attacks from southern Lebanon, including a rocket attack on Safed.^[29]

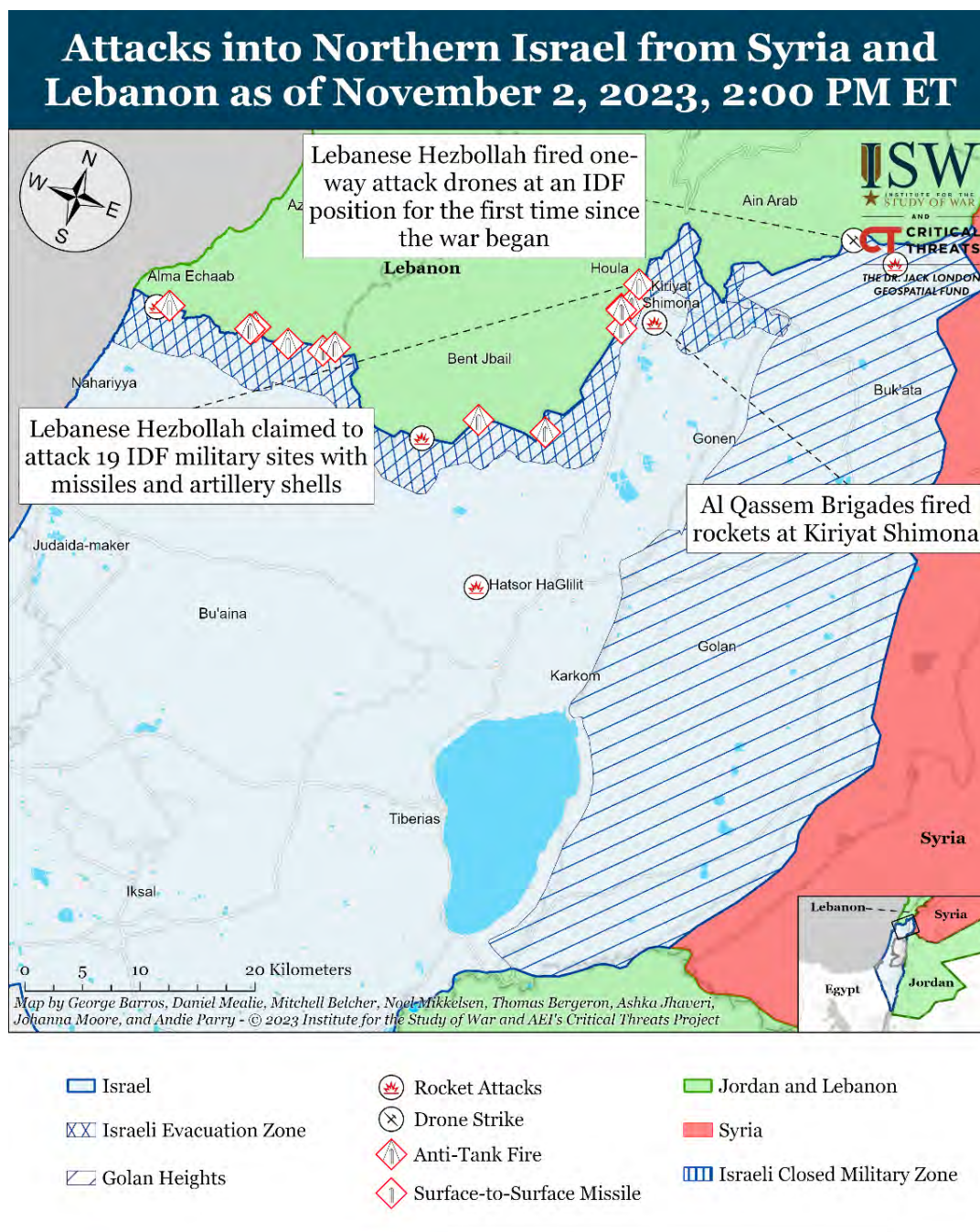
LH appears to be preparing for an escalation with Israel ahead of Nasrallah's planned speech. Iran and LH have been creating the expectation in the information environment that Nasrallah will announce some kind of escalation, which could include Hezbollah increasing its rate of attacks or using more advanced military systems against Israel. LH previously warned that it would get involved in the war if Israel conducts ground operations into the Gaza Strip.^[30]

- Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force Commander Esmail Ghaani traveled to Beirut on November 1 to coordinate the next stage of the Israel-Hamas War with LH.^[31] Ghaani also traveled to Beirut on October 20 to coordinate with LH and Palestinian militia leaders in a joint operation center there.^[32] Ghaani previously visited Syria to direct Iranian-affiliated militias to prepare to open a second front against Israel on October 15.^[33]
- Palestinian militias messaged their support for and anticipation of LH's involvement in the war. Unspecified Hamas sources informed the London-based al Quds al Arabi outlet that Hamas expects Nasrallah to announce LH's participation in the war.^[34] The sources said Hamas also wants LH to allow Palestinian groups within Lebanon to fight Israel, as LH controls the border. Hamas has previously messaged that LH is working at all military and political levels in the war.^[35] The al Quds Brigades separately released a statement on November 2 praising LH's combat abilities.^[36]
- US officials told the *Wall Street Journal* that US intelligence indicates that the Russian Wagner private military company plans to give LH Russian Pantsir-S1 air defense missile systems.^[37] Russia and Iran have increased their military-technical ties over the past year. Iran has provided Russia with Shahed-136/131 drones and domestic Shahed production capabilities, and Russia reportedly provided Iran with advanced surveillance software and cyber weapons and promised Iran Su-35 aircraft.^[38]

LH has been amassing forces on the borders with Israel in Lebanon and Syria since the Israel-Hamas war began. CTP-ISW has monitored LH redistribute its forces across the Levant for the possibility that the war in Israel will expand into a regional conflict fought on multiple fronts. LH and the IRGC Quds Force have attempted to build up their force presence in Syria and Lebanon to this end. LH immediately transferred special forces and medical teams to the borders with Israel. Hundreds of LH militants in the Radwan Unit, which is a special unit focused on infiltrating Israeli territory, mobilized and arrived in Syria on October 8 to spread out along the border with Israel.^[39] LH deployed forces from eastern Syria to southwestern Syria and Lebanon several times in the past few weeks.^[40] Ghaani previously warned Syrian President Bashar al Assad during a visit on October 15 that Iran intends to use Syria as a second front if the Israel-Hamas war

expands geographically.[41]

IDF spokesperson for Arab Media Avichay Adraee said on November 2 that the Iranian-backed, Syria-based Imam al Hussein Brigade arrived in Lebanon in recent weeks to assist LH in fighting Israel.[42] The militia has already engaged with the IDF in recent weeks along the Lebanese border.[43] The militia has been preparing and gathering capabilities to threaten US forces in Syria and Israel, according to a document obtained by *Newsweek* about the Imam Hossein Division in July 2023.[44] Former IRGC Quds Force Major General Qassem Soleimani founded the militia in 2016, and it now represents an Iranian-led, multi-national combat force comprised of thousands of fighters from around the Middle East.[45] Iran uses cargo planes landing in Syria to arm the militia, according to *Newsweek*. [46] Iran has already attempted to facilitate arms to forces in Lebanon and Syria, which Israel interdicted and indicated that the airstrikes are meant to prevent Iran from delivering weapons and equipment to LH and other Iranian-backed militias.[47]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

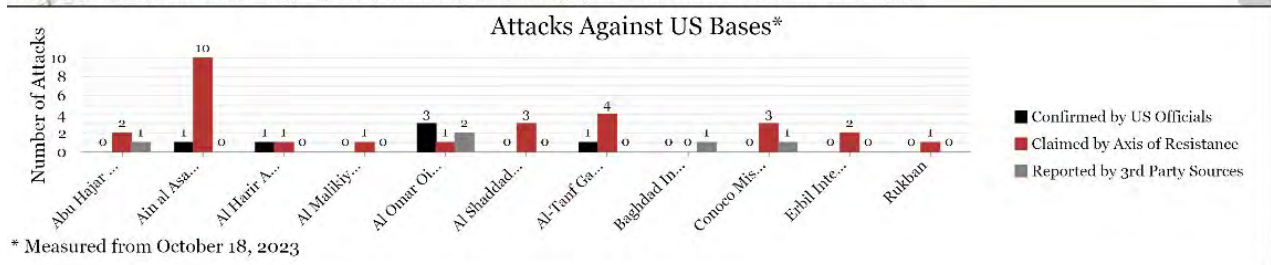
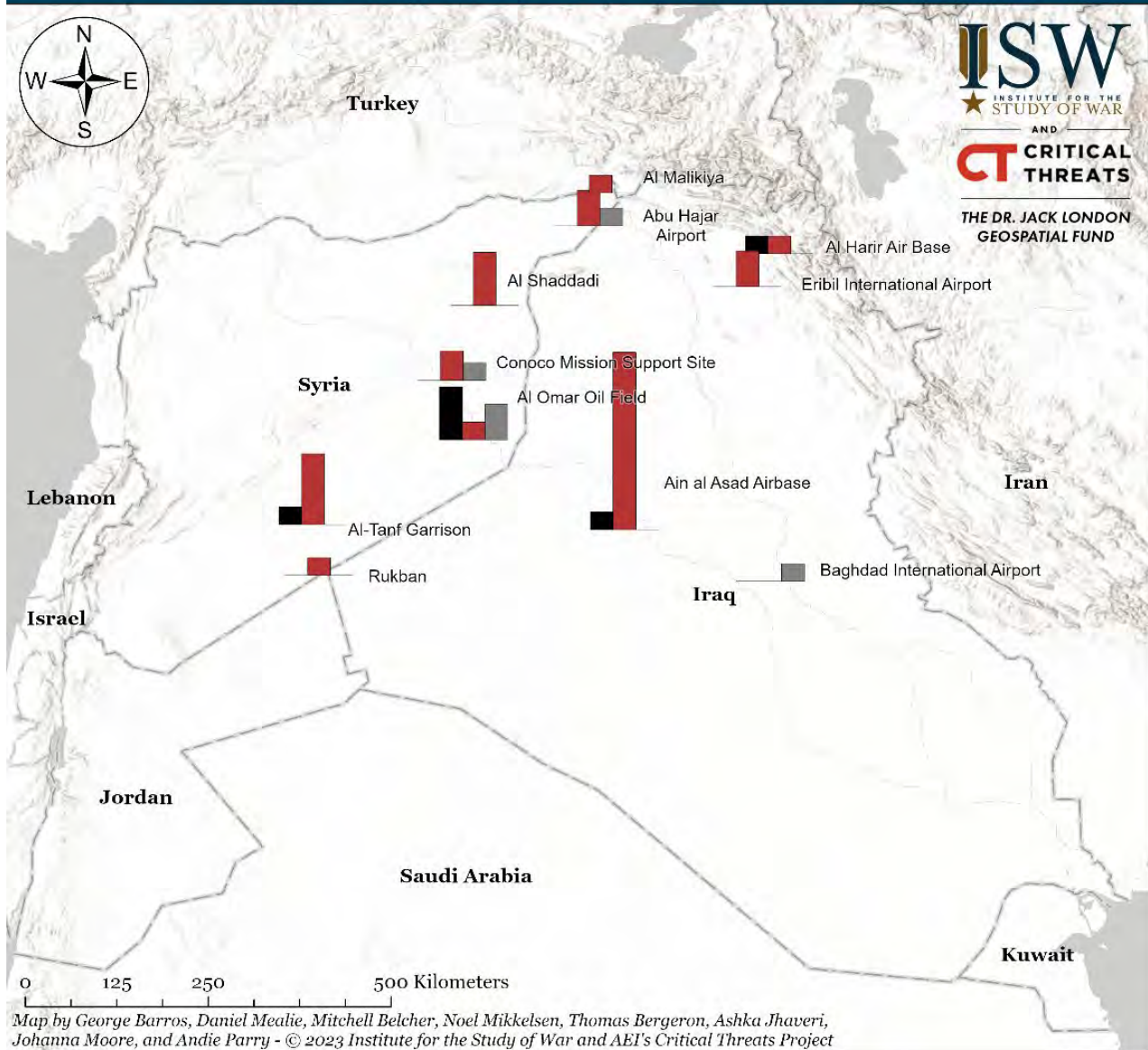
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) said that the PMF is in a “state of emergency” during a meeting with other PMF leaders in Baghdad on November 2, indicating preparations for an escalation with the United States. PMF Chief of Staff Abdulazi al Mohammadawi said that the current conditions in the region “warn of war” and PMF forces must be on alert to defend Iraqi sovereignty.^[48] Mohammadawi (also known as Abu Fadak) served as the secretary general of Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah and maintains strong ties to the group.^[49] KH has repeatedly threatened to conduct attacks on US military positions in recent weeks and is part of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which is a loose coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias and the group that has claimed most of the recent drone and rocket attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria.^[50]

The Houthi movement claimed responsibility for a drone attack targeting Israel on October 31, marking the fourth attempted Houthi attack on Israel since the war began. The Houthis said that it launched a “large batch of drones,” which it claimed hit Israeli territory.^[51] The IDF said that it intercepted an “aerial attack” over the Red Sea on October 31 but that there was no threat to civilians and the attack did not enter Israeli territory.^[52] A Houthi spokesperson separately criticized Saudi Arabia on November 2 for intercepting Houthi attacks targeting Israel and cooperating with the United States.^[53] Saudi Arabia and the US Navy intercepted Houthi cruise missiles headed toward Israel on October 19.^[54]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 2, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Iranian Supreme National Security Council Secretary Rear Admiral Ali Akbar Ahmadian met with Russian President Vladimir Putin's Special Representative for Syrian Affairs Alexander Lavrentiev in Tehran on November 1.[55] The two officials discussed the Israel-Hamas war, joint political and security cooperation, and cooperation in Syria. Lavrentiev also delivered a message from Putin to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

An Iranian media delegation traveled to Lebanon to meet with Palestinian militia commanders on November 2, likely in part to coordinate Axis of Resistance messaging and information operations.[56] Unspecified Iranian media officials met with the representatives from various Palestinian militias fighting Israel, including Hamas and PIJ. *Nour News Agency*—an outlet tied to Iran's Supreme National Security Council—reported on the delegation and emphasized that both Iranian and Palestinian officials agreed that “today's war is a war of narratives” and that the “responsibility of journalists. . . is to be in the field of the narratives war and present the voice and image of the oppressed Palestinian people to the world.”

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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 3, 2023

Iran Update, November 3, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Andie Parry, Brian Carter, Annika Ganzeveld, Kathryn Tyson, Sydney White, Riley Bailey and Frederick W. Kagan

Contributor: James Cary

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments and in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

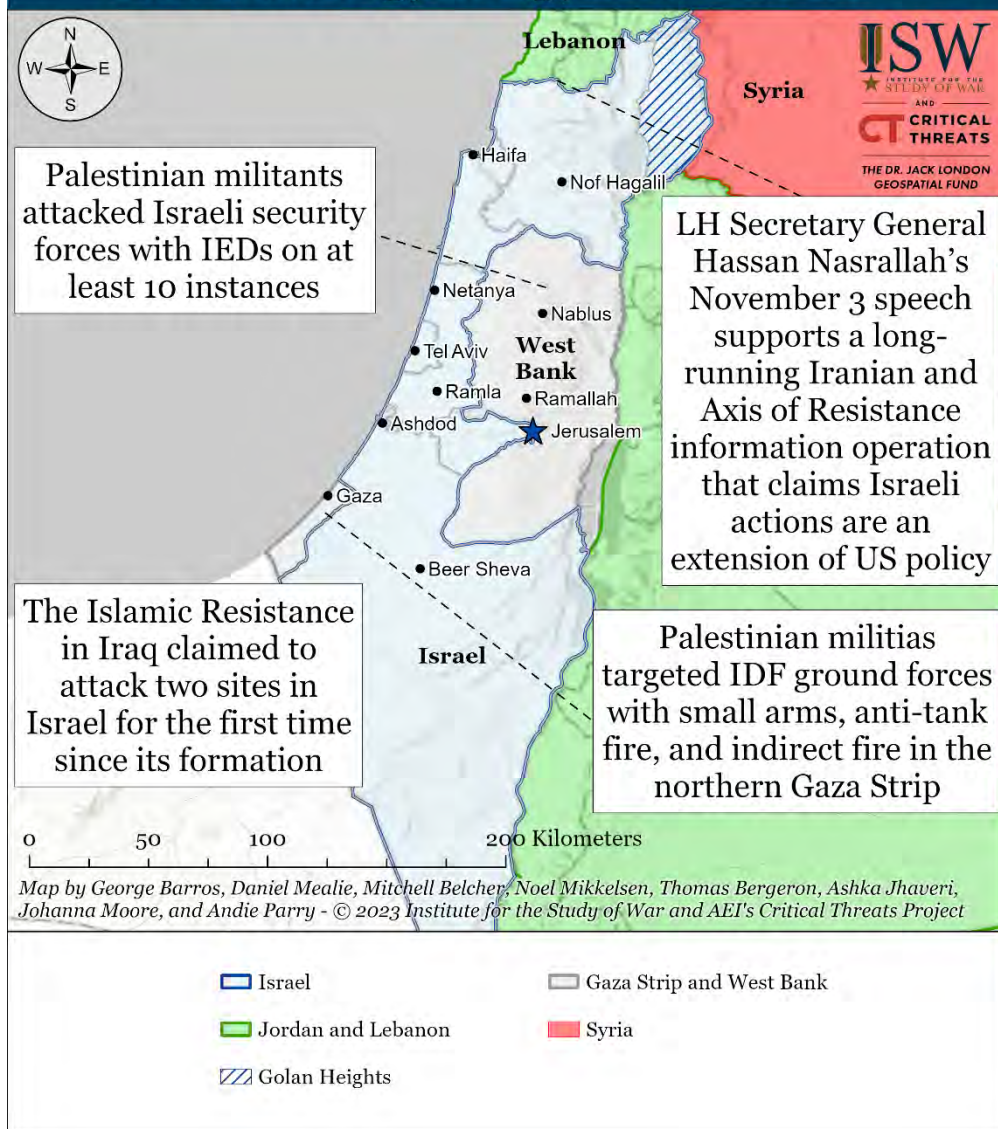
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. **Palestinian militias targeted IDF ground forces with small arms, anti-tank fire, and indirect fire in the northern Gaza Strip.**
2. **Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory, primarily in Southern Israel.**
3. **Palestinian militants engaged Israeli forces in small arms and IED attacks in the Jenin refugee camp overnight on November 2-3 amid Israeli arrest raids.**
4. **Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Axis of Resistance militias conducted three attacks from southern Lebanon into Israel on November 3, including one attack using a one-way attack drone.**
5. **LH Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah's November 3 speech supports a long-running Iranian and Axis of Resistance information operation that claims Israeli actions are an extension of US policy.**
6. **The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed two attacks inside Israel on October 3, the group's first time attacking outside Iraq and Syria. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq also claimed responsibility for a one-way drone attack targeting US forces in Iraq on November 3.**
7. **Wagner elements in Syria will reportedly transfer Russian Pantsir-S1 air defense systems that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has agreed to provide to Iranian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah.**
8. **Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian is continuing to coordinate politically with senior Hamas leadership.**

Israel-Hamas War as of November 3, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

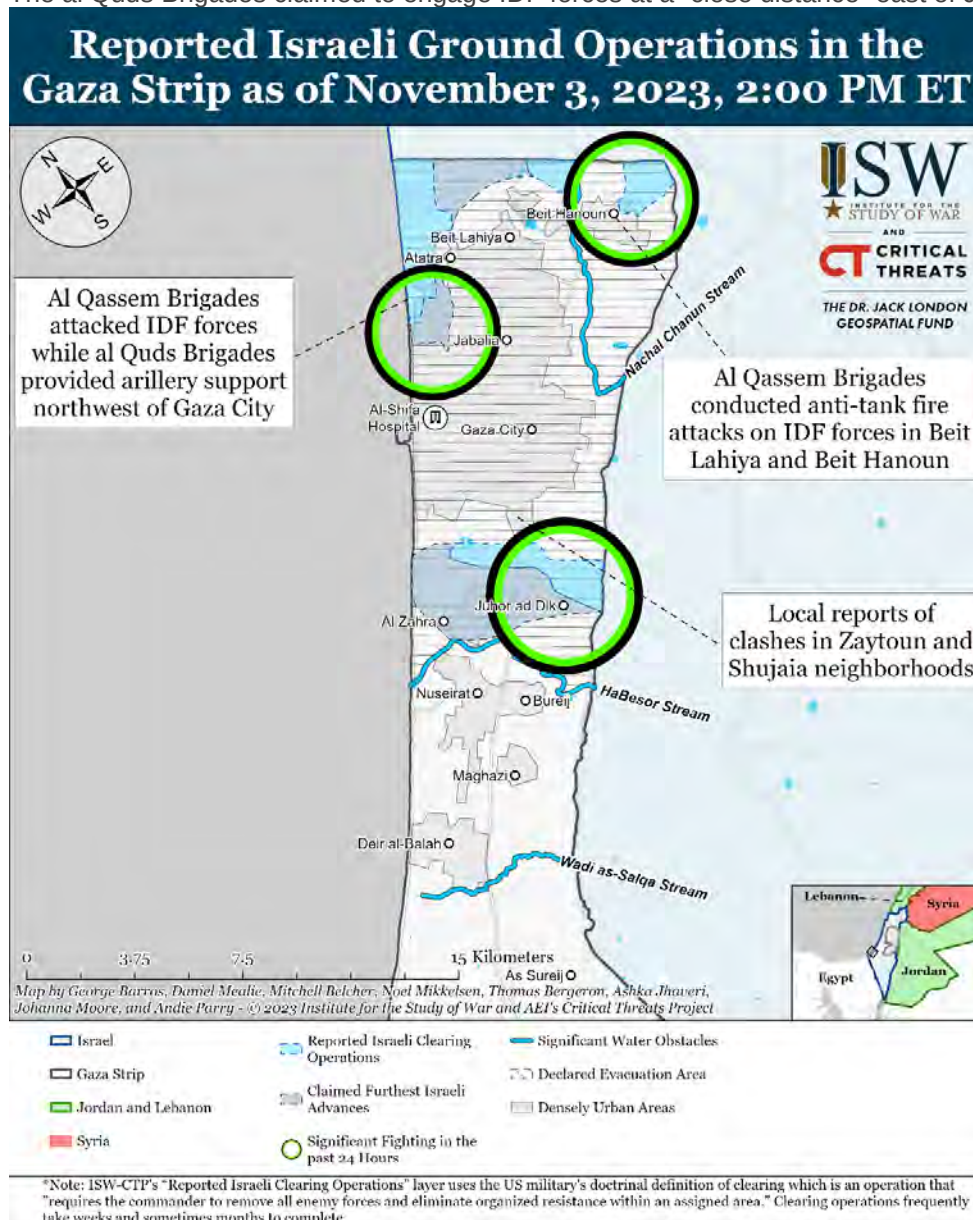
Israeli Clearing Operations

Palestinian militias targeted IDF ground forces with small arms, anti-tank fire, and indirect fire in the northern Gaza Strip. IDF spokesperson Daniel Hagari said that the IDF is encircling Gaza City from the air land, and sea.[1] Fighting continued behind the Israeli forward line of advance in the central Gaza Strip, however. The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—claimed responsibility for attacking IDF forces in the northwest, northeast, and south of Gaza City.[2] The al Qassem Brigades used anti-tank munitions and their intricate network of tunnels underneath the Gaza Strip to ambush IDF forces.[3] They also used rockets and mortars to attack IDF vehicles and infantry near the Erez military checkpoint on the northern border.[4] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed to fire artillery at advancing IDF vehicles along the coast.[5] The al Quds Brigades military spokesmen said his

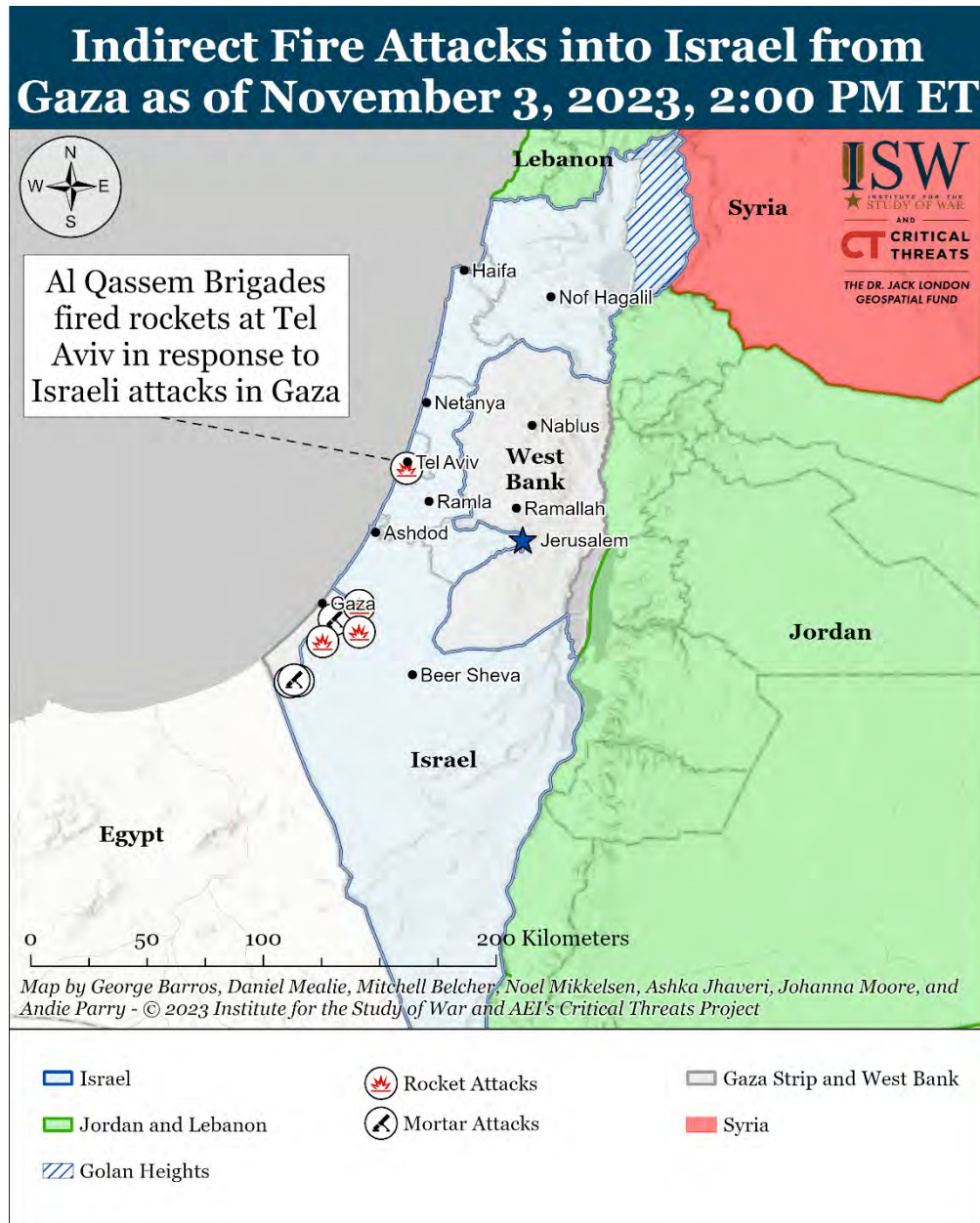
fighters fired anti-tank munitions at Israeli vehicles and thwarted a maritime landing attempt west of Gaza City.[6] A Palestinian journalist reported clashes in the Zaytoun and Shujaia neighborhoods southeast of Gaza City on November 3.[7] Palestinian militias have attacked IDF forces and vehicles in Zaytoun neighborhood since October 30 as the IDF attempts to clear territory south of the city.[8]

Hamas and PIJ are coordinating attacks on IDF ground forces in the Gaza Strip. The al Qassem Brigades conducted an attack against IDF ground forces northwest of Gaza City on November 3 with artillery support from the al Quds Brigades.[9] Hamas and PIJ leadership have coordinated throughout the war in bilateral planning meetings. [10] The tactical coordination on the ground and coordination at the senior level is consistent with the reality that the IDF is facing a coalition of several Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip.

The IDF said its forces recently took over a Hamas military stronghold used by Nukhba—a naval special forces unit of Hamas’ militant wing—and Hamas’ operational intelligence headquarters in Jabaliya.[11] The Assistant to the Israeli director of military intelligence said that Jabaliya is a hub of Hamas’ tunnel network used for weapons stockpiles, rocket firing positions, and tunnels leading to the coast.[12] The IDF is degrading Hamas’ naval capabilities, which Hamas could use to target Israeli gas rigs and other infrastructure, according to an Israeli journalist.[13] Palestinian militants continued to operate in Jabaliya. The al Quds Brigades claimed to engage IDF forces at a “close distance” east of Jabaliya.[14]

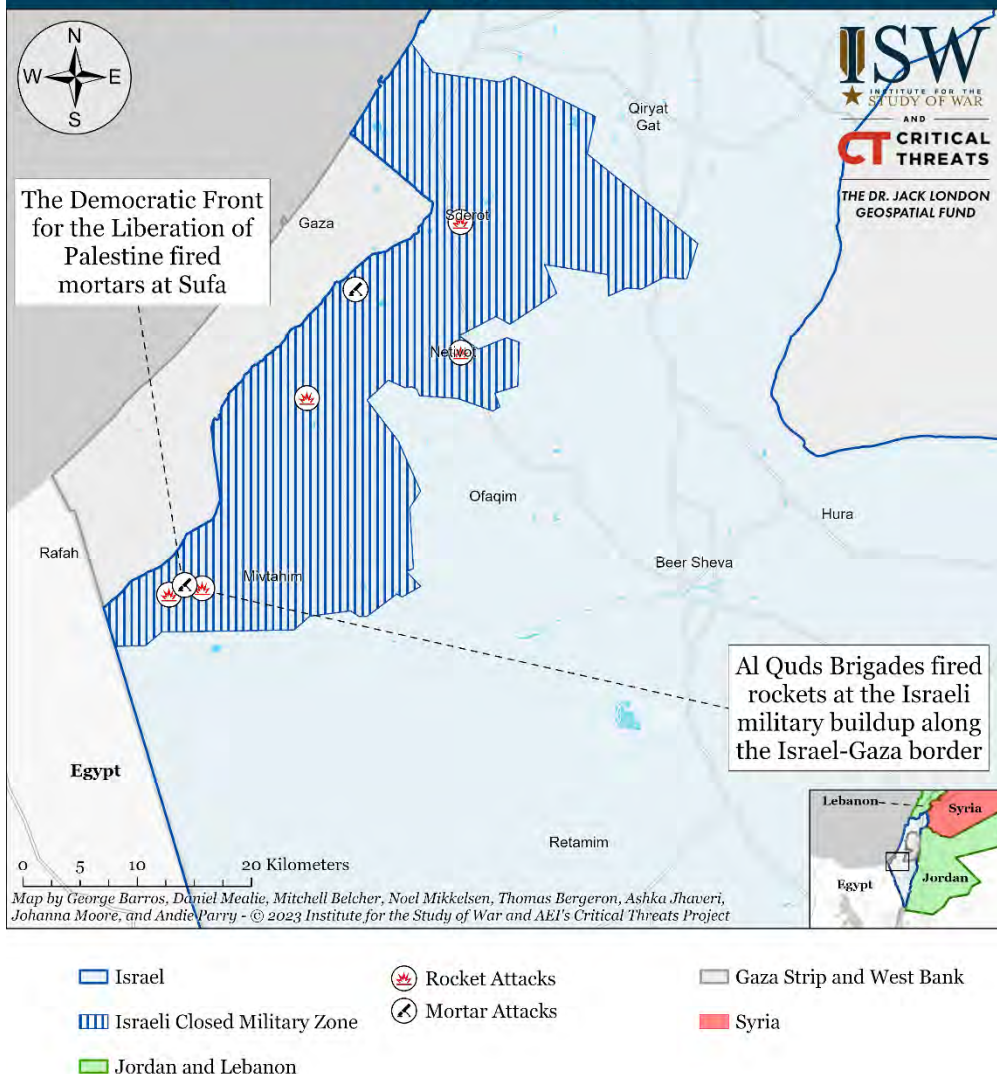


Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory, primarily in Southern Israel. Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israel at a decreased rate on November 3. The al Qassem Brigades claimed responsibility for four indirect fire attacks.[15] The al Quds Brigades claimed responsibility for another four indirect fire attacks. The al Quds Brigades' indirect fire targeted Israeli military concentrations in three locations adjacent to the Gaza Strip.[16] The National Resistance Brigades—the militant wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)—claimed one indirect fire attack into southern Israel.[17]



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 3, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

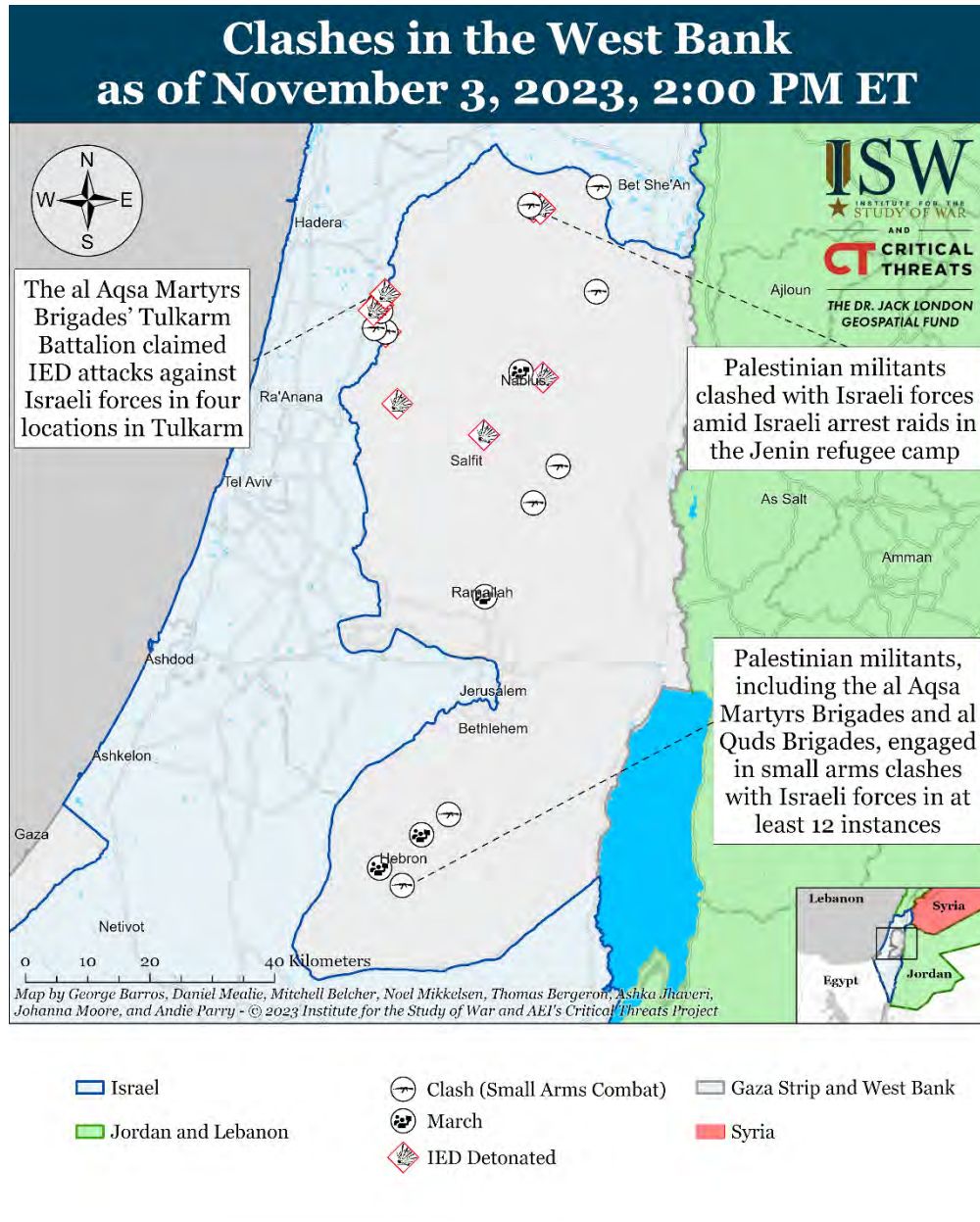
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
CTP-ISW recorded 12 separate clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants in the West Bank on November 3. CTP-ISW also recorded 10 instances of IED attacks against Israeli forces in the West Bank, which is an increase compared with the daily average of IED attacks in the area over the past week. The Tulkarm Battalion of the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed IED attacks against Israeli forces in four locations in Tulkarm on November 3.[18] The Tulkarm Battalion of the al Quds Brigades engaged Israeli forces with small arms and IEDs in Tulkarm at the same time as the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades' attack on November 3, indicating possible coordination between the groups.[19] The al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and al Quds Brigades previously conducted combined attacks in Tulkarm on October 30.[20]

Palestinian militants engaged Israeli forces in small arms and IED attacks in the Jenin refugee camp overnight on November 2-3 amid Israeli arrest raids.[21] The Jenin Brigade of the al Quds Brigades claimed it conducted small arms and IED attacks on Israeli forces on November 3, presumably in Jenin,

though the brigade did not indicate where the attacks occurred.[22] The IDF conducted an airstrike which it said killed multiple militants in the Jenin refugee camp on November 3.[23] The IDF also dropped leaflets calling for West Bank residents not to work with Hamas and other militant groups.[24] The attacks came after West Bank residents in Jenin and Tulkarm broadcasted a speech by al Qassem Brigades spokesperson Abu Obaida on November 2, who said its fighters would "make the enemy pay."[25]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

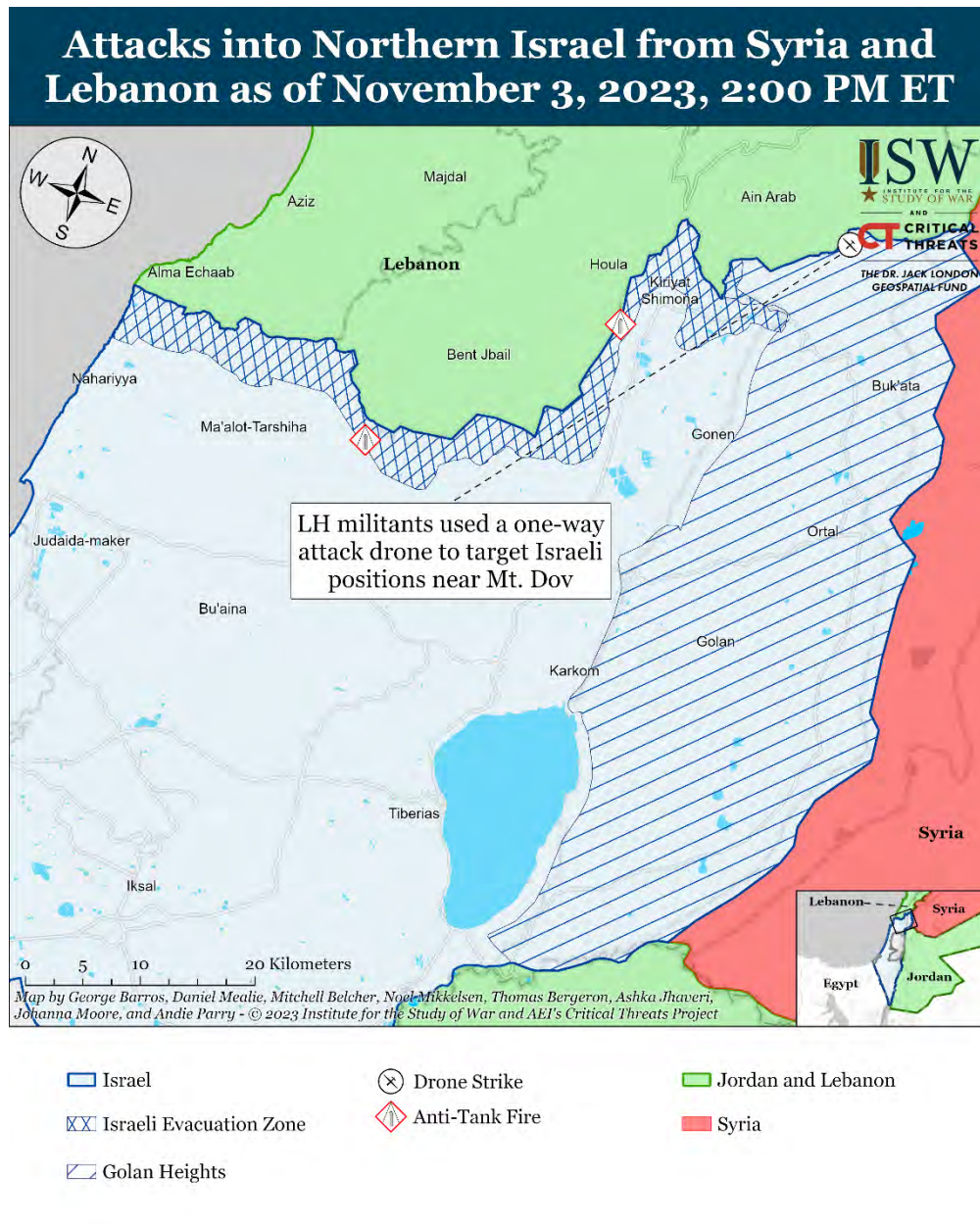
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Lebanese Hezbollah and other Axis of Resistance militias conducted three attacks from southern Lebanon into Israel on November 3, including one attack using a one-way attack drone. LH claimed two attacks, including a one-way attack drone targeting Israeli forces near Mt. Dov.[26] The IDF reported that the drone attack wounded two soldiers, and that the IDF targeted an LH military position with an airstrike in

response.[27] Unspecified militants also fired an anti-tank guided missile targeting an Israeli military site near Manara.[28]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

LH Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah's November 3 speech supports a long-running Iranian and Axis of Resistance information operation that claims Israeli actions are an extension of US policy.[29] Nasrallah said that the United States is "completely responsible" for Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip.[30] He added that to avert US involvement in the war, Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip must cease.[31] Nasrallah also threatened that if the war expands, the United States will suffer the most and "endure the greatest losses." [32] This information operation is implicitly threatening that LH will expand the war if the United States does not constrain Israeli ground operations. Nasrallah's threats and the information

operation are consistent with Iran's and its so-called Axis of Resistance's objectives. We assess these objectives to be (1) deter Israel from trying to destroy Hamas in the Gaza Strip, (2) prevent Israel from destroying Hamas if deterrence fails, and (3) deter the United States from providing military support for Israel's ground operation in the Gaza Strip.[33]

Nasrallah also identified halting the fighting in Gaza and securing a victory for Hamas in the region as LH's two primary objectives as part of his justification for failing to increase support to Hamas. Nasrallah said that LH seeks to halt the fighting in Gaza and secure a victory for Hamas, which he claims would further the interests of the people of the region.[34] Nasrallah justified the relatively low-level of support that LH has provided for Hamas by arguing that LH has successfully fixed large numbers of Israeli forces on the Israel-Lebanon border.[35] Nasrallah noted that any further LH actions depend on Israeli operations in Gaza, adding that "all options are on the table." [36] These statements are consistent with CTP's assessment of LH's activity on the Israel-Lebanon border, which aims to draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel while setting conditions for successive campaigns into Israel.[37]

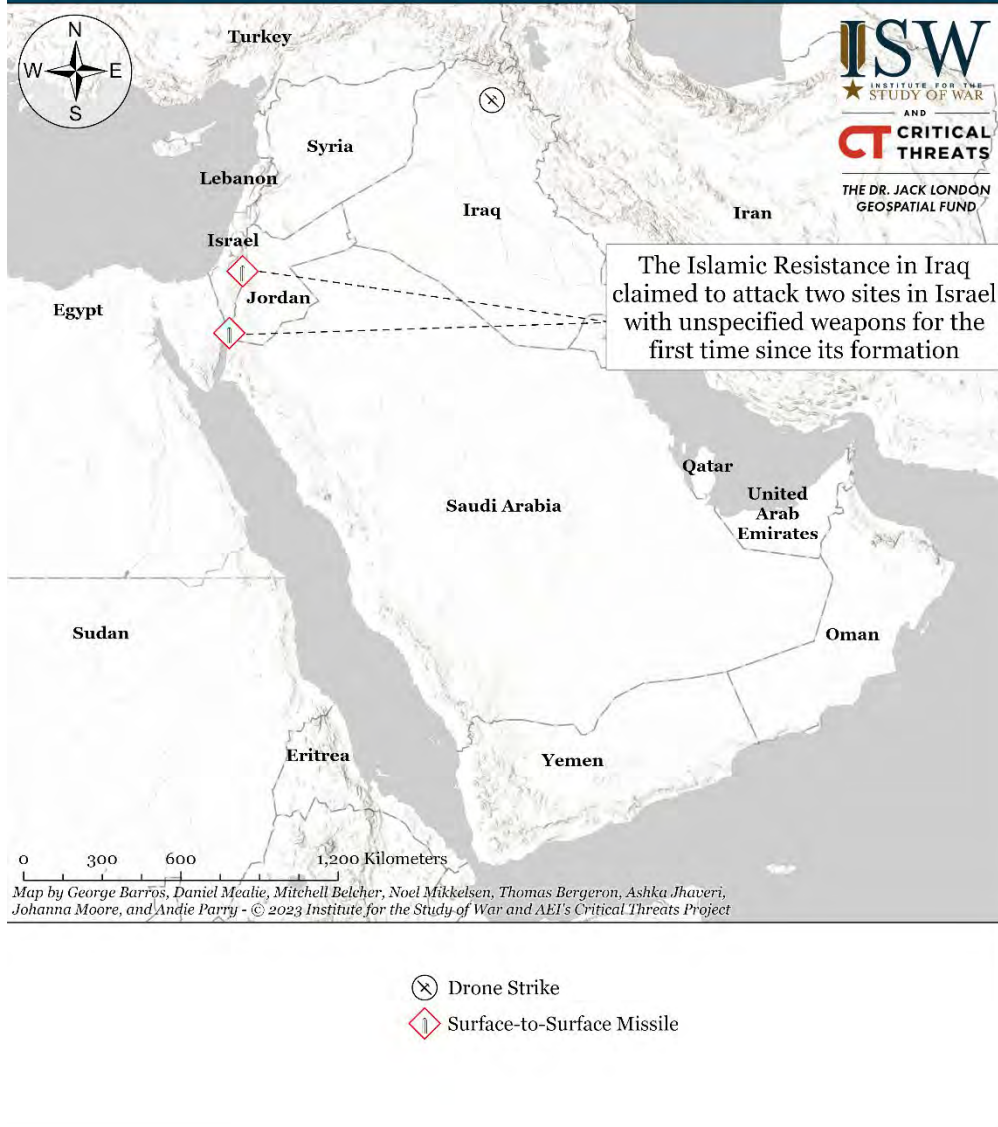
Iranian state media widely covered Nasrallah's speech on November 3.

- State-controlled outlets primarily focused on Nasrallah's threats to US assets and forces in the region, warnings about the expansion of the war to new fronts, and claims that the Al Aqsa Flood Operation was "100 percent" a Palestinian initiative.[38] The Iranian regime, like Nasrallah, has in recent weeks accused the United States of being directly involved in the war.[39] The regime has additionally set informational conditions to blame the United States and Israel for any further escalation of the war, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[40]
- IRGC-affiliated Fars News Agency framed Nasrallah's speech as marking the opening of a new front against Israel that can "inflict a final blow on the Israeli military and government." [41] This framing differed from other Iranian media coverage of Nasrallah's speech in that it framed the speech itself as an escalation, rather than as a warning of future escalation. Fars notably published this statement approximately 10 minutes after the conclusion of Nasrallah's speech.
- Iranian officials and media emphasized Israel's "fear" of Nasrallah and LH on November 3. Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Friday Prayer Leader Mohammad Ali al Hashim stated that Nasrallah "terrifies" Israel, which he described as a "victory." [42] Al Hashim added that Israel's "fear" of Nasrallah underscores the "high importance of Nasrallah in equations in West Asia and even in the world." Iranian media separately recirculated Israeli reporting that LH is waging a "psychological war" against Israel and that the IDF had been in "full alert" and "on standby" ahead of Nasrallah's speech.[43]
- Iranian media highlighted Iranians' support for Nasrallah. Raisi administration-affiliated *IRNA* reported that "thousands" of Iranians gathered in Tehran on November 3 to support Palestinians and watch Nasrallah's speech.[44] Fars similarly reported that university students gathered near the former US Embassy in Tehran to watch Nasrallah's speech.[45] Various state-controlled outlets livestreamed Nasrallah's speech on November 3.

Harakat Hezbollah al Nubja (HHN) leader Akram al Kaabi released a statement on November 3 in reaction to Nasrallah's speech stating that the Iraqi resistance is ready to participate in the Israel-Hamas war with ground forces. [46] Kaabi said Iraqi ground forces can take on Israel side-by-side with Palestinian and Lebanese militias. Kaabi also affirmed that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq's battle with American forces is an existential battle and will not end without total liberation. Kaabi previously announced on November 1 that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq would liberate Iraq by military force and to expect greater attacks.[47]

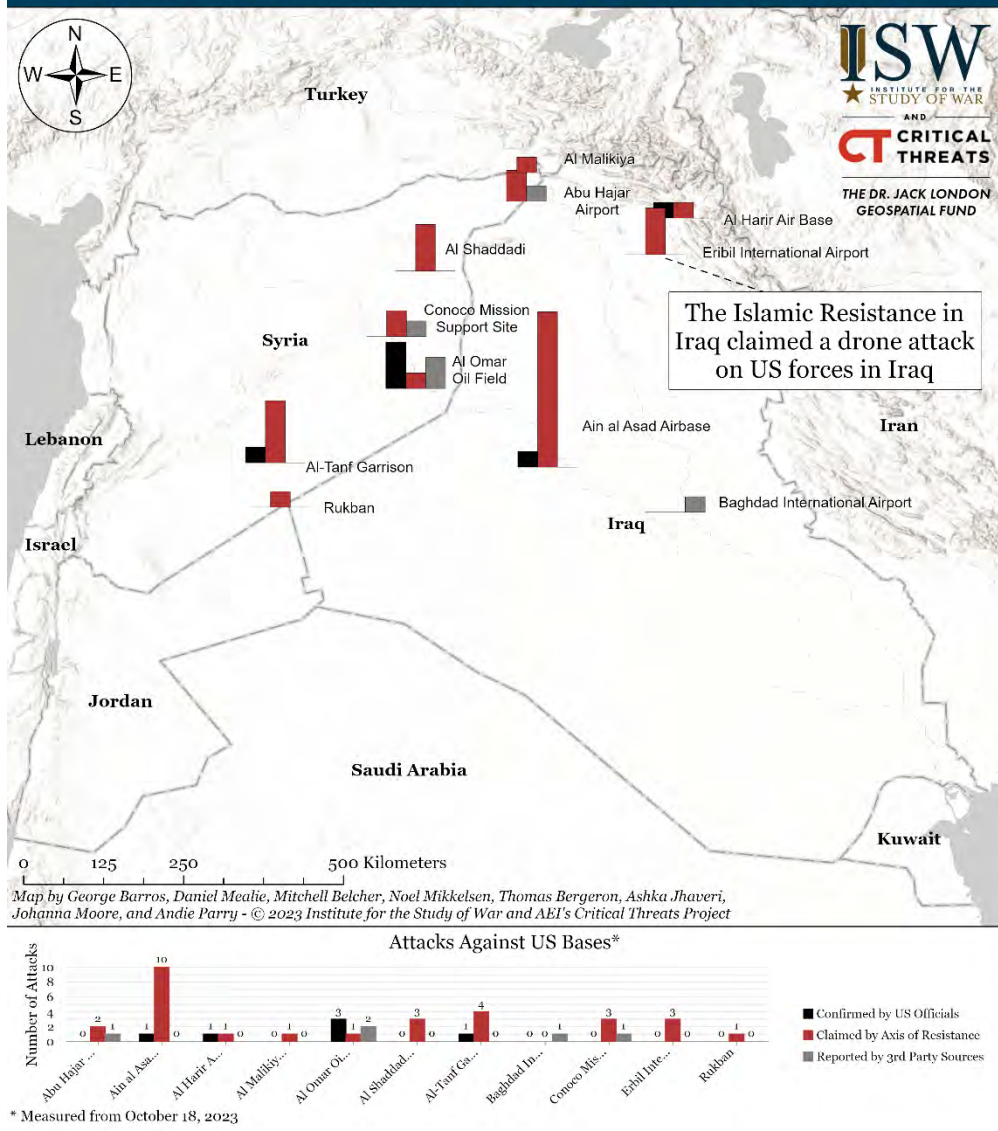
The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed two attacks inside Israel on October 3, the group's first time attacking outside Iraq and Syria. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed to attack vital Israeli infrastructure on the coast on the Dead Sea with unspecified weapons.[48] The group also claimed an unspecified attack on the Israeli Red Sea city of Eilat in response to Israeli attacks against Palestinian civilians.[49] The Al Qassem Brigades reposted the Islamic Resistance in Iraq's Eilat claim.[50] Islamic Resistance in Iraq said it would start a new phase of confrontation next week that will be more severe and wider across the region.[51]

Iranian-sponsored Attacks in the Middle East as of November 3, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



The Islamic Resistance in Iraq also claimed responsibility for a one-way drone attack targeting US forces in Iraq on November 3. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed it launched two drones targeting US forces near the Erbil International Airport in Iraqi Kurdistan and achieved “direct hits.”[52] Reuters cited two security sources reporting that US forces shot down two drones targeting the al Harir base, which is a separate location thirty miles north of Erbil International Airport.[53] The US Department of Defense stated on November 2 that there had been 28 attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria since October 17.[54]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 3, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



An Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)-linked Mahan Air flight purportedly transporting shoulder-mounted anti-aircraft missiles (MANPADs) landed at the Russian Hmeimim military airport in northern Syria from Tehran on November 2.[55] Israeli media said that the airplane carried five tons of weapons and arrived at the airport, which it said appears to provide a safe cover for the IRGC.[56] Four trucks carried the plane's cargo to central and southern Syria, according to local opposition media.[57] CTP-ISW cannot corroborate or verify these claims. Sources at Hmeimim Airport reported to opposition media that Russia agreed to let Iran use its military airport in Syria for weapons transfers.[58] This claim is consistent with a report from Kuwaiti newspaper al Jarida on October 2 that LH would provide weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine in exchange for Russian forces transporting Iranian weapons through Syria to LH in Lebanon. CTP-ISW previously reported on this supposed Iran-LH-Syria-Russia deal in detail on October 2.[59] Russia may be able to facilitate weapons shipments without risking Israeli airstrikes interdicting them. Russia and Israel have a complex relationship in Syria, as Israel has historically relied on Russia to curb Iranian activities in Syria.[60] Israel has stopped giving Russian forces advanced warning of its strikes into Israel, however.[61]

Wagner elements in Syria will reportedly transfer Russian Pantsir-S1 air defense systems that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has agreed to provide to Iranian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah. (NOTE: This text also appeared in the Institute for the Study of War's November 3 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment) CNN reported on November 3 that two people familiar with US intelligence stated that Assad agreed to provide the Russian air defense systems to Hezbollah and tasked Wagner with their delivery during joint conversations between the three actors.[62] The *Wall Street Journal* reported on November 2 that US intelligence indicated that Wagner itself would give the Russian air defense systems to Hezbollah.[63] Israel frequently conducts airstrikes on Iranian weapons shipments into and through Syria, and Assad may have asked Wagner to deliver the air defense systems to Hezbollah to act as a deterrent to potential Israeli interdiction efforts.[64] CTP-ISW has previously assessed that Russia may be able to facilitate weapons shipments in Syria without risking Israeli airstrikes, and the Kremlin may believe that this Israeli reticence will extend to Wagner.[65] Russia and Israel have a complex relationship in Syria, as Israel has historically relied on Russia to curb Iranian activities in Syria.[66]

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held separate phone calls with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on November 3.

[67] Abdollahian emphasized the readiness of Axis of Resistance members to act against Israel during his meeting with Mekdad.[68] These phone calls follow Iranian Supreme National Security Council Secretary Rear Admiral Ali Akbar Ahmadian's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin's Special Representative for Syrian Affairs Alexander Lavrentiev in Tehran on November 2.[69] Iranian media additionally recirculated on November 3 Western reporting that Israel is not giving Russian forces advanced warning of its strikes into Syria.[70]

Iraqi Prime Minister Shia al Sudani removed two professional, experienced military commanders on November 1, possibly due to pressure from the Iranian-backed Shia Coordination Framework. Sudani removed Counter-Terrorism Service commander LTG Abdul Wahhab al Saadi and Baghdad Operations Commander LTG Ahmed Salim Bahjat, replacing them with experienced CTS LTG Karim Abboud Mohammed and former Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki-linked MG Walid Khalifa al Tamimi respectively.[71] An Iraqi political analyst said that the sackings were due to "political influences," adding that the Shia Coordination Framework fears the CTS after it conducted raids targeting Iranian-backed factions under former Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhimi.[72] The analyst added that the Framework is attempting to "control" the CTS and that "those in power" are fearful of a CTS-led coup.[73]

The Secretary General of the Iraqi Defense Ministry issued instructions to the Iraqi Army Chief of Staff on October 28 to ensure troop and materiel readiness on account of the rapidly changing security situation.[74] The leaked letter instructed forces to protect weapons and ammunition depots, to repair all military equipment and weapons, and secure barracks and bases, and advised additional intelligence collection against future threats.

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian is continuing to coordinate politically with senior Hamas leadership. Abdollahian held a phone call with Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh on November 2, marking the fourth time Abdollahian and Haniyeh have discussed the Israel-Hamas war since October 7.[75] Iranian media did not provide details of what Abdollahian and Haniyeh discussed. Their phone call notably comes amid IDF spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari's November 2 announcement that Haniyeh is slated to travel to Tehran.[76] Iranian diaspora and anti-regime media recirculated Hagari's announcement, although state-controlled outlets have not responded to or denied the announcement.[77]

Anti-regime outlet Iran International claimed on November 3 that senior Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba (HHN) commanders are in Tehran.[78] CTP cannot independently verify this claim, although it is entirely plausible that HHN commanders are coordinating their actions vis-à-vis the Israel-Hamas war with Iranian officials. HHN has previously attacked US forces in Iraq and is affiliated with the Iranian-backed militia Asaib Ahl al Haq, which is a member of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq.[79] HHN was one of three Iranian-backed militias that released a statement on November 1 signaling that they may escalate against US forces in Iraq and Syria, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[80].

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- [1] <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/03/middleeast/israel-advance-gaza-city-map-i...>
- [2] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/214>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/220>; ht... <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/216>
- [3] <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1720419773517811779>
- [4] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/220>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/224>
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- [9] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/216>
- [10] <https://www.dotfarsnews.ir/en/news/14020803000608/Lebanese-Palesinian-Resisance-Leaders-Discss-Ways-Achieve-%E2%80%98Real> ; <https://www.dottasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/08/03/2977725/%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%85%D8%AA-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%DB%8C%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%AF-%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%86-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%AA%D8%A3%DA%A9%DB%8C%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D9%87%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%87%D9%86%DA%AF%DB%8C-%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D9%87-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%85%D8%AA> ; <https://www.dotpresstv.ir/Detail/2023/10/25/713381/Lebanese-Palestinian-resistance-leaders-discuss-cooperation-against-Israel> ; <https://www.dotimesofisrael.com/nasrallah-senior-hamas-and-pij-leaders-talk-of-achieving-victory-over-israel/>
- [11] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/172050124776579956>
- [12] <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-hamas-war-gaza-strip-2023-11-01/...>
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- [25] <https://t.me/QudsN/322724>; <https://t.me/QudsN/322740>; <https://t.me/QudsN/322714>
- [26] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38188; <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1720347185085075688>
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- [30] <https://x.com/PressTV/status/1720426874365493290?s=20>; SITE " Hezbollah Leader Nasrallah Holds U.S. Primarily Responsible for Events in Gaza, Declares America Bears Accountability," November 3, 2023, available by subscription at: ent.siteintelgroup.com.
- [31] <https://x.com/PressTV/status/1720426874365493290?s=20>; SITE " Hezbollah Leader Nasrallah Holds U.S. Primarily Responsible for Events in Gaza, Declares America Bears Accountability," November 3, 2023, available by subscription at: ent.siteintelgroup.com.
- [32] <https://x.com/PressTV/status/1720426874365493290?s=20>; SITE " Hezbollah Leader Nasrallah Holds U.S. Primarily Responsible for Events in Gaza, Declares America Bears Accountability," November 3, 2023, available by subscription at: ent.siteintelgroup.com.
- [33] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-25-2023>

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[67] <https://www.mehrnews dot com/news/5929319> ;
<https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1402/08/12/2982630>

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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 4, 2023

Iran Update, November 4, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Andie Parry, Johanna Moore, Brian Carter, Amin Soltani and Frederick W. Kagan

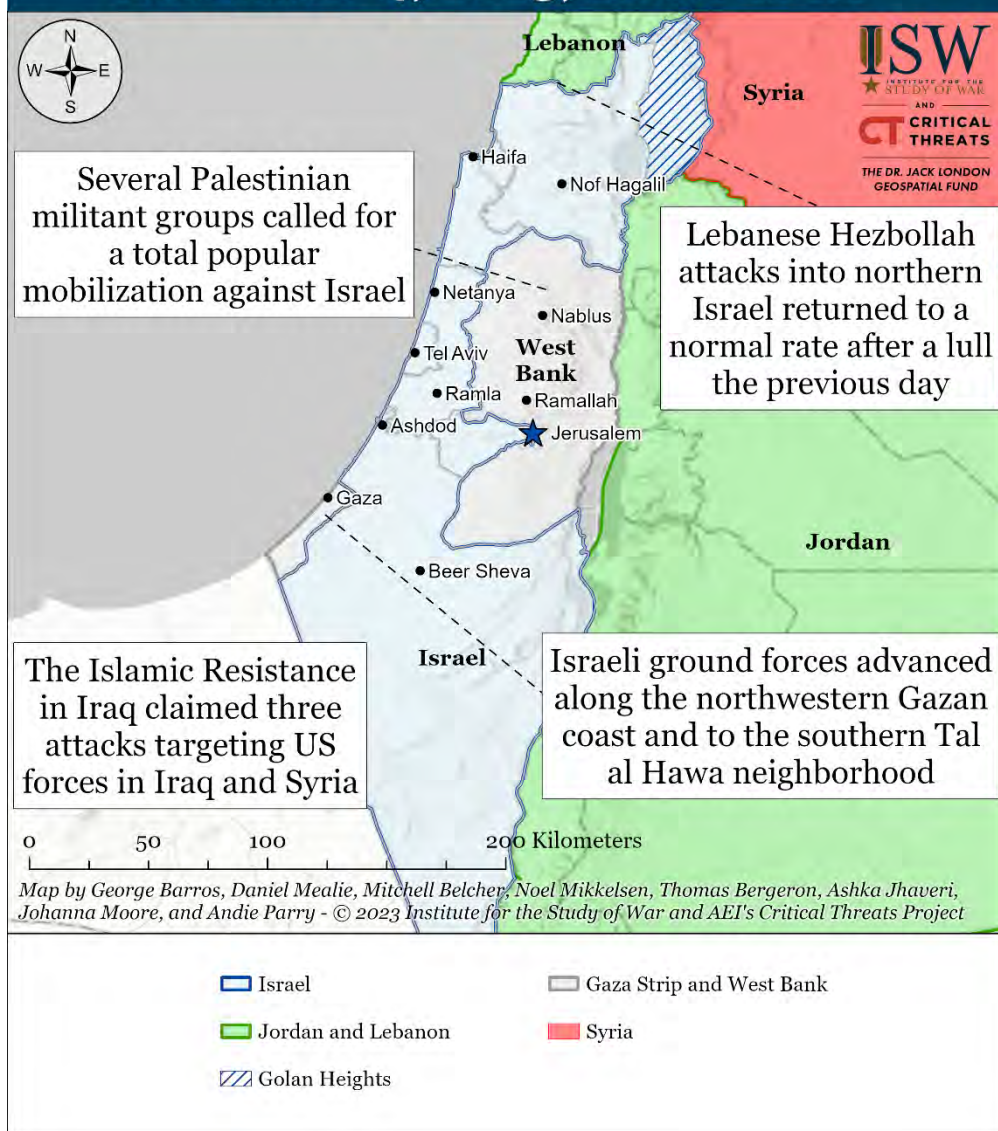
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Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports. Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Captured Hamas plans suggest that Hamas has not heavily committed to defending parts of the northern outskirts of Gaza City, which may indicate that Hamas units in parts of that area are screening for a main defensive effort in central Gaza City.
2. Israeli ground forces advanced along the northwestern Gazan coast on November 4.
3. Israeli forces advanced to the southern Tal al Hawa neighborhood, Gaza City, on or around November 3.
4. Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory, primarily in southern Israel.
5. The Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade West Bank Branch responded negatively to LH Secretary General Nasrallah's November 3 speech and called for permanent mobilization.
6. Lesser-known West Bank militias also called for Palestinians to revolt against Israel.
7. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—an umbrella group of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for three attacks targeting US forces in Iraq between November 3 and 4.
8. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held separate phone calls with his Brazilian and British counterparts on November 3 and 4.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 4, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Captured Hamas plans suggest that Hamas has not heavily committed to defending parts of the northern outskirts of Gaza City, which may indicate that Hamas units in parts of that area are screening for a main defensive effort in central Gaza City. The IDF captured and published a Hamas map apparently showing a Hamas company's area of responsibility between al Toam and Falouja roads west of Jabaliya during a raid on a Hamas intelligence headquarters in Jabaliya.[1] The sector is roughly half a kilometer deep and 1.5 kilometers across, which is a large sector for a company-sized unit defending against a mechanized advance in an urban area, depending on how Hamas tactical units are structured. Most of the area is not heavily built up, however, and Hamas commanders may simply have chosen not to focus on it. Palestinian militant attacks behind the Israeli forward line of advance are probably another supporting effort intended to harass and disrupt Israeli forces, rather than defeat them.

Israeli Clearing Operations

Israeli ground forces advanced along the northwestern Gazan coast on November 4. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) released footage of engineering and infantry forces conducting route clearance operations along the coast.[2] The IDF reported that armor and engineering units cleared areas of explosive devices and targeted Palestinian militants.[3] Independent analyst on X (Twitter) identified Israeli vehicles traveling southwest from areas in which CTP-ISW previously reported Israeli clearing operations.[4] IDF spokesperson Daniel Hagari said that the IDF is encircling Gaza City from the air land, and sea.[5] Palestinian militias continued to attack Israeli ground forces in the northern Gaza Strip with small arms, anti-tank munitions, and indirect fire. The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—published footage of its militants maneuvering through tunnel systems in Beit Hanoun and attacking IDF forces with various weapons.[6] A Palestinian journalist said that the clashes occurred on the al Karamah Street which runs north-south through the Beit Hanoun.[7] The *Wall Street Journal* published a map of the tunnel system that Hamas has created below the Gaza Strip, which includes a system underneath Beit Hanoun.[8] Hamas and PIJ-affiliated media reported violent clashes near the border fence east of Beit Hanoun.[9] Al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed to clash with IDF forces in the same area.[10]

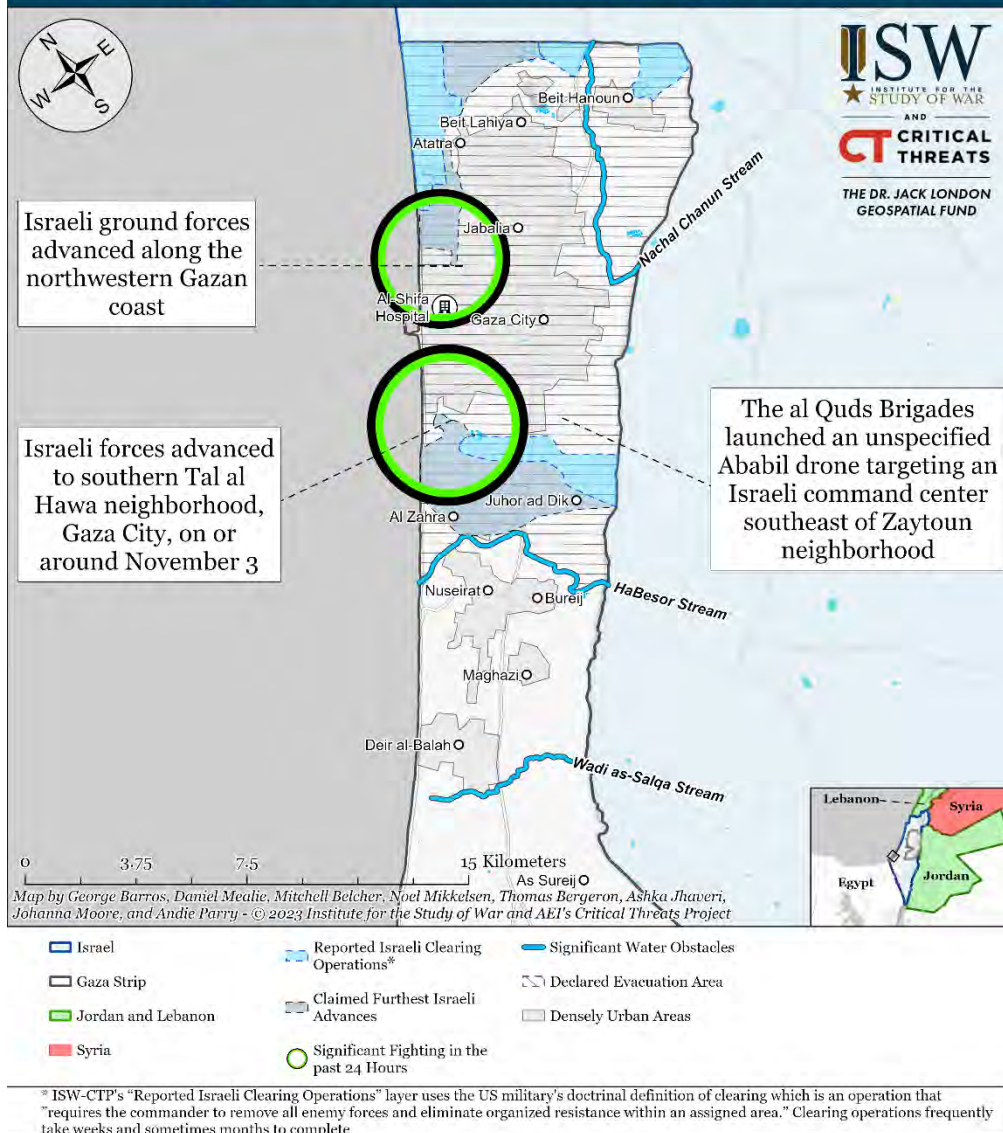
The al Qassem Brigades claimed to attack IDF forces in the areas northwest of Beit Lahia and west of Atatra.[11] CTP-ISW has tracked IDF advances west of Beit Lahia along the coast since October 27. A Palestinian journalist reported Israeli ground forces are “actively operating” in northwestern Beit Lahia.[12] Sounds of nearby small arms fire in local footage from the area corroborate the claims of small arms clashes in Atatra.[13]

Israeli forces advanced to southern Tal al Hawa neighborhood, Gaza City, on or around November 3. Satellite imagery released on November 3 showed Israeli forces arrayed from north of Juhor ad Dik to southern Tal al Hawa on November 3.[14] The al Quds Brigades and al Qassem Brigades fired mortars in a combined operation targeting Israeli vehicles south of Tal al Hawa on November 4.[15] The al Qassem Brigades also fired two anti-tank rockets at two IDF vehicles south of Tal al Hawa.[16] The al Qassem Brigades continued to attack Israeli forces near Juhor ad Dik on November 4.[17] The al Qassem Brigades claimed that it fired anti-tank rockets at Israeli vehicles near Juhor ad Dik on November 3.[18] The group also said it mortared Israeli vehicles east of Juhor ad Dik on November 4 in a separate attack.[19]

The IDF opened the Salah al-Din road—the primary north-south thoroughfare in the Gaza Strip—to allow civilians to evacuate Gaza City.[20] The IDF spokesperson said on November 4 that al Qassem Brigades fighters used mortars and anti-tank rockets against IDF forces securing the evacuation route during the humanitarian window.[21]

The al Quds Brigades launched an unspecified Ababil drone targeting an Israeli command center southeast of Zaytoun neighborhood on November 4.[22] The al Quds Brigades did not specify if the “Ababil” drone was the Iranian-built Ababil-1 or the locally Gazan-produced Ababil-1, which was developed by Hamas.[23] An al Quds Brigades operations officer said on November 3 that the al Quds Brigades and al Qassem brigades are coordinating at the tactical and operational levels to defend against the IDF ground operation.[24]

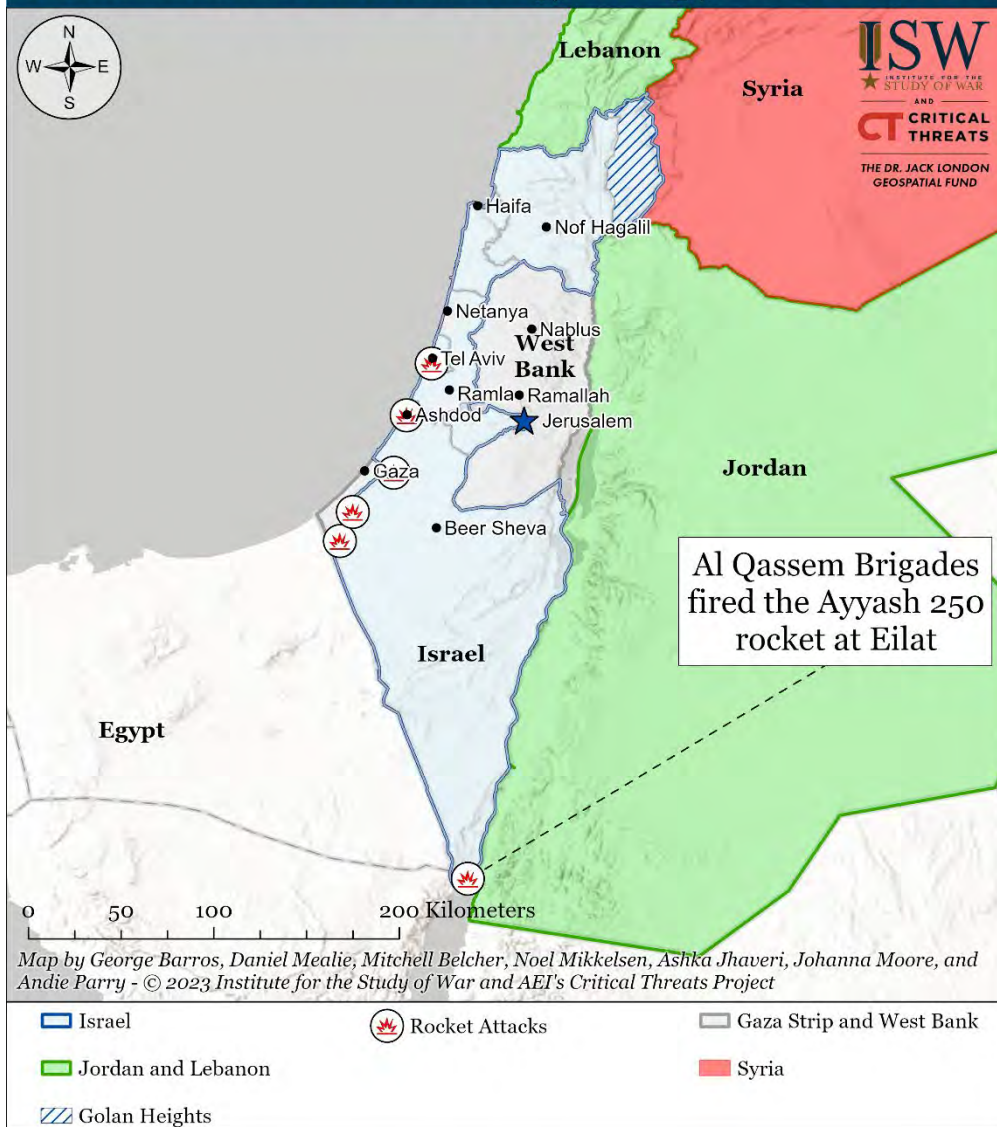
Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 4, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory, primarily in southern Israel. The al Qassem Brigades claimed responsibility for four indirect fire attacks into the areas immediately adjacent to the Gaza Strip.[25] Al Qassem Brigades fired the Ayyash 250 rocket at Eilat in southern Israel for the second time since the war started.[26] Hamas introduced the Ayyash 250 rocket during the 2021 Gaza conflict.[27] Local reporting circulated claims that Qassem Brigades' naval unit attempted to infiltrate Zikim beach, which is the first infiltration attempt since October 30.[28] The al Quds Brigades claimed responsibility for one indirect fire attack on November 3 and no attacks on November 4.[29]

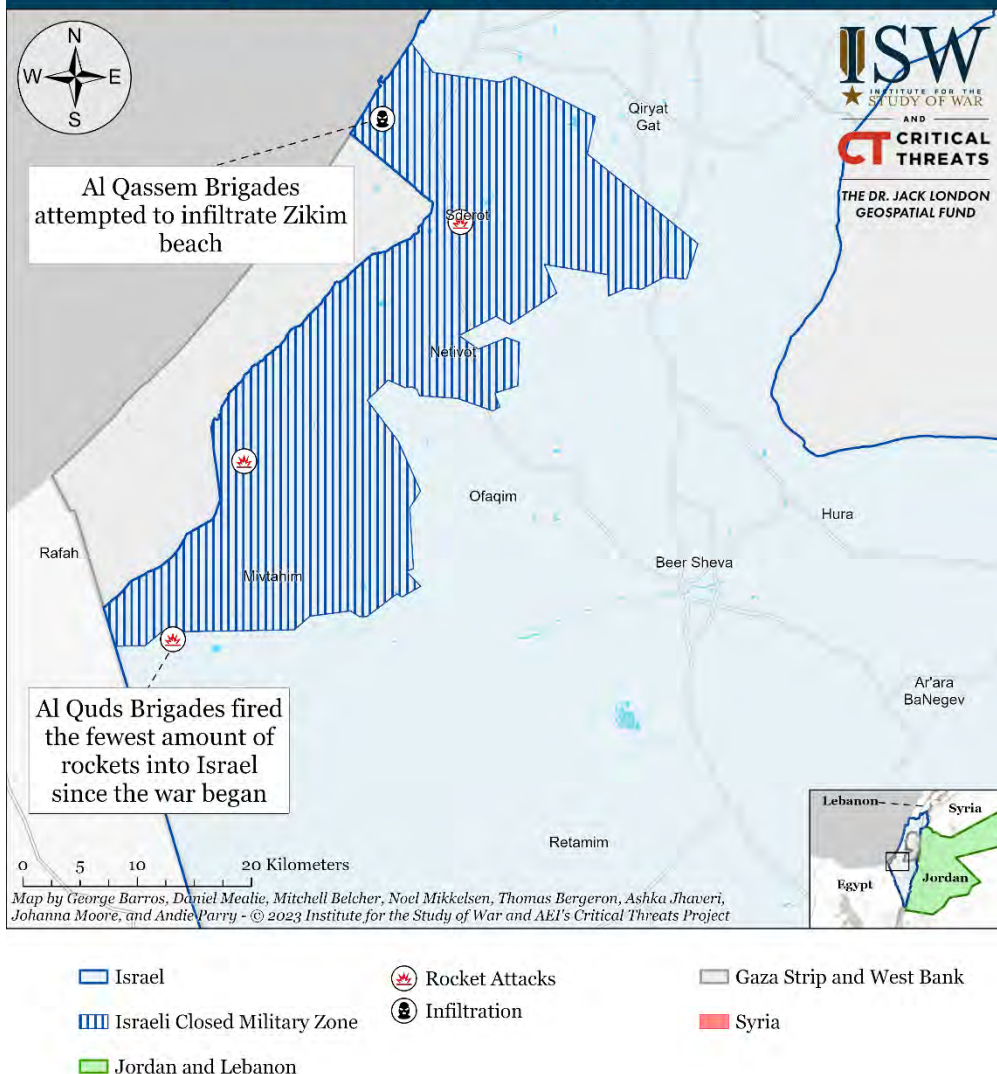
Hamas official Osama Hamdan on November 4 said that Hamas is proud of the support it is receiving from Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), the Islamic Resistance of Iraq, and the Yemeni Houthi movement in response to LH leader Hassan Nasrallah's November 3 speech.[30]

Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 4, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 4, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

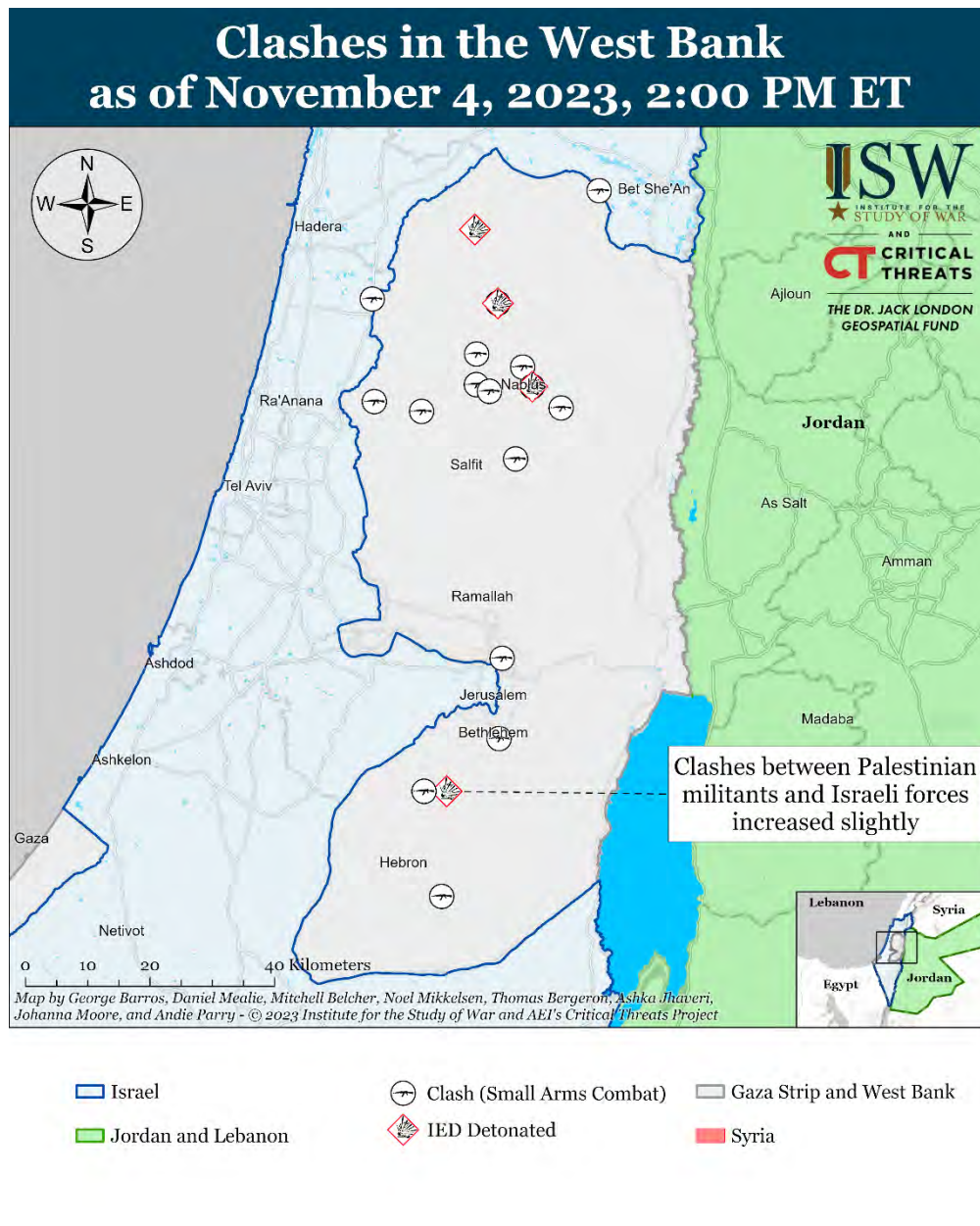
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
- Clashes between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces in the West Bank increased slightly on November 4.** CTP-ISW recorded 17 clashes in the West Bank, an increase from 12 the day prior.[31] CTP-ISW also recorded five instances of Palestinian militants conducting IED attacks in the West Bank.[32] IDF raids across the West Bank likely contributed to the number of armed clashes.[33] CTP-ISW did not record anti-Israeli demonstrations on November 4.

The Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade West Bank Branch responded negatively to LH Secretary General Nasrallah's November 3 speech and called for permanent mobilization. The group's military communique issued a few hours after Nasrallah's speech stated, "we have seen that the Palestinian people and the resistance are alone." [34] The statement also called for a permanent mobilization in the West Bank, the unification of all armed Palestinian factions and for small arms attacks on Israeli settlers. The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade claimed responsibility for an attack targeting the Israeli settlement of Aveni Hevetz on

October 29.[35] The Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade is the self-claimed militant wing of Fatah, but Fatah does not claim association with the Brigade.

Lesser-known West Bank militias also called for Palestinians to revolt against Israel. Previously unknown West Bank militia group the “Mountain Guardians Gathering” called on Jenin residents to close roads and sabotage Israeli settler property at midnight on November 5.[36] The militia also called for sabotage around the major West Bank cities of Jerusalem, Jericho, Tubas, Salfit, Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus, Jenin, Ramallah, Qalqiya, and Tulkarm.[37] Other militias called for popular protection committees to attack the IDF using weapons, incendiary bombs, and stones.[38] Student groups in the West Bank have planned non-violent protests and strikes for November 5.[39] Well-organized Palestinian militias like PIJ’s Jenin Branch and the Lions’ Den have previously called for armed mobilization in the West Bank with limited success, however.[40]



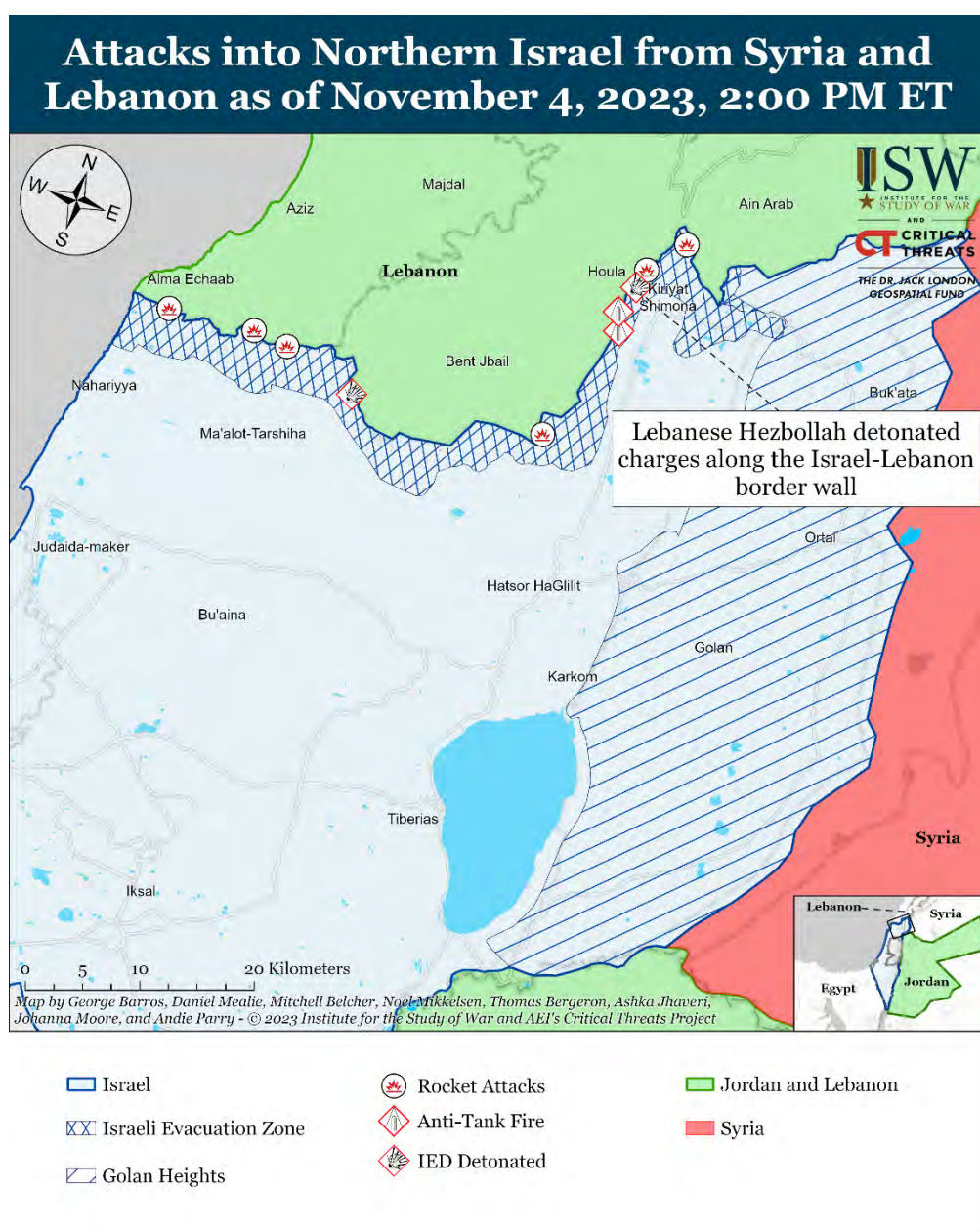
This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Iranian-backed militants resumed cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 4 at their normal rate after a lull the previous day. LH claimed eight attacks out of the 11 conducted on Israeli military and communications points along the border.[41] LH used a Burkan rocket against Israeli sites for the first time in this conflict according to LH-affiliated Al Mayadeen re-reporting Israeli media.[42] The Burkan has a 400kg warhead and a range of five kilometers.[43] CTP-ISW cannot independently confirm the type of rocket used. LH also claimed to detonate pre-planted explosives along the Israel-Lebanon border wall and fence, creating gaps.[44] LH published two video compilations of the group's attacks on Israeli communication towers and military infrastructure on November 2 and 4.[45] Israeli forces continued retaliatory attacks targeting LH anti-tank missile squads and conducted airstrikes on LH infrastructure in Lebanon including rocket warehouses. [46]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

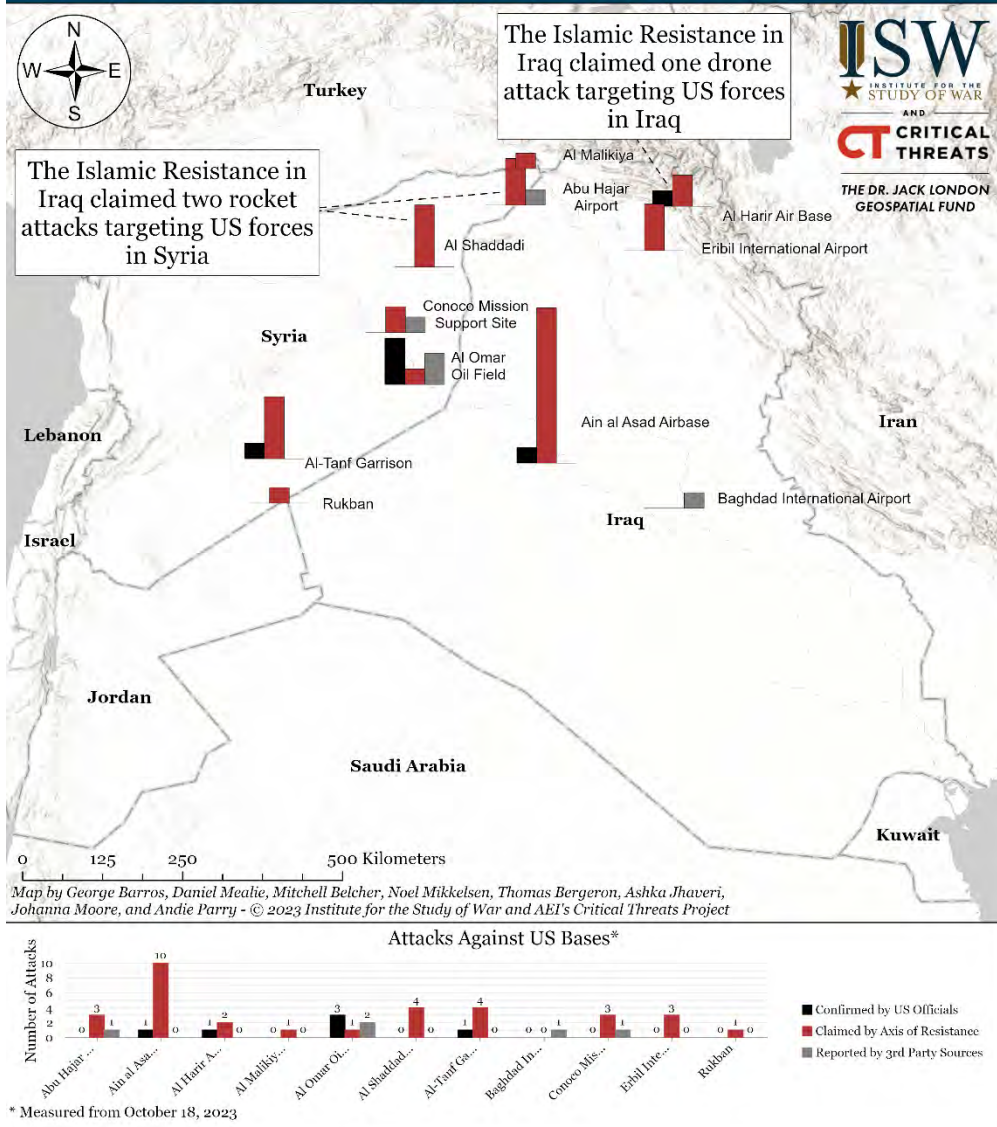
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—an umbrella group of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for three attacks targeting US forces in Iraq between November 3 and 4. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed 32 attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East since October 18. CENTCOM has not commented on the claimed attacks at the time of publication. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify these claims.

- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed a rocket attack targeting US forces stationed at Abu Hajar airport, Hasakah Province, Syria on November 3.[47] The group claimed that the rockets successfully hit their targets. [48]
- This is the third attack the Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed targeting Abu Hajar airport in Syria.[49]
- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed a drone attack targeting US forces stationed at al Harir airbase, Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan on November 3.[50] The group claimed it fired two drones at the airbase and that both successfully hit their target.[51] This is the third attack on the Harir airbase the Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed since October 18.[52]
- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed a rocket attack targeting US forces stationed at al Shaddadi base, Hasakah Province, Syria on November 4.[53] The group fired three rockets at al Shaddadi according to the head of local Syrian news outlet Deir ez Zor 24.[54] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed that its rockets were successful in hitting their target.[55]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 4, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held separate phone calls with his Brazilian and British counterparts on November 3 and 4.[56] Abdollahian called for further humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip and urged Brazil to introduce another Israel-Hamas war ceasefire resolution in the UN Security Council during his phone call with the Brazilian foreign minister. Abdollahian again called for humanitarian aid and a ceasefire and claimed that the United States was “spreading flames of war” during his phone call with the British foreign secretary. Abdollahian’s effort to frame the United States as an antagonist in the war and portray Iran as the promoter of peace is consistent with the regime’s ongoing information operation to deflect responsibility for any further escalation of the conflict away from Iran, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[57]

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- [1] <https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1720510546464682141>
 - [2] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1720683450171044070>
 - [3] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1720683450171044070>
 - [4] https://twitter.com/tom_bike/status/1720190924339237351
 - [5] <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/03/middleeast/israel-advance-gaza-city-map-i...>
 - [6] <https://t.me/qassambrigades/28963>
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 - [9] <https://t.me/QudsN/323674>
 - [10] <https://t.me/newpress1/57061>
 - [11] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/248>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/251>
 - [12] <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1720586988120653991?s=20>
 - [13] <https://t.me/newpress1/57079>
 - [14] <https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1720652759521714291>
 - [15] <https://t.me/QudsN/323716>
 - [16] <https://t.me/QudsN/323711>
 - [17] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/250>
 - [18] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/246>
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 - [23] <https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1396825826994311168.html>; <https://...>
 - [24] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16581>
 - [25] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/266>; <https://t.me/QudsN/323718>; <https://t...>
 - [26] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1720819613875745202>; <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1720820648484691974>; <https://t....>
 - [27] <https://twitter.com/JoeTruzman/status/1720837653774680537>
 - [28] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/5548>; <https://t.me/newpress1/57046>
 - [29] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16583>
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 - [32] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1720731275449807322> ; <https://t.m...> <https://t.me/QudsN/323370>
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 - [45] <https://twitter.com/alishoeib1970/status/1720731370488561754> ; <https://twitter.com/alishoeib1970/status/1720860761071755497>

- [46] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1720558649519542466> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1720714767373898018> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1720558649519542466> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1720774030251245965> ; <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1720748478735814742>
- [47] <https://t.me/elamharbi/69>
- [48] <https://t.me/elamharbi/69>
- [49] <https://t.me/elamharbi/37> ; <https://t.me/elamharbi/39> ; <https://t.me/elamharbi/69>
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- [54] <https://twitter.com/OALD24/status/1720710195314119096>
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- [56] <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2023/11/04/713992> ; <https://mfa.ir/portal/NewsView/733114> ; <https://x.com/amirabdolahian/status/1720515410175402463?s=46&t=WJ33Mk8l8...>
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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 5, 2023

Iran Update, November 5, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Andie Parry, Brian Carter, Annika Ganzeveld, and Frederick W. Kagan

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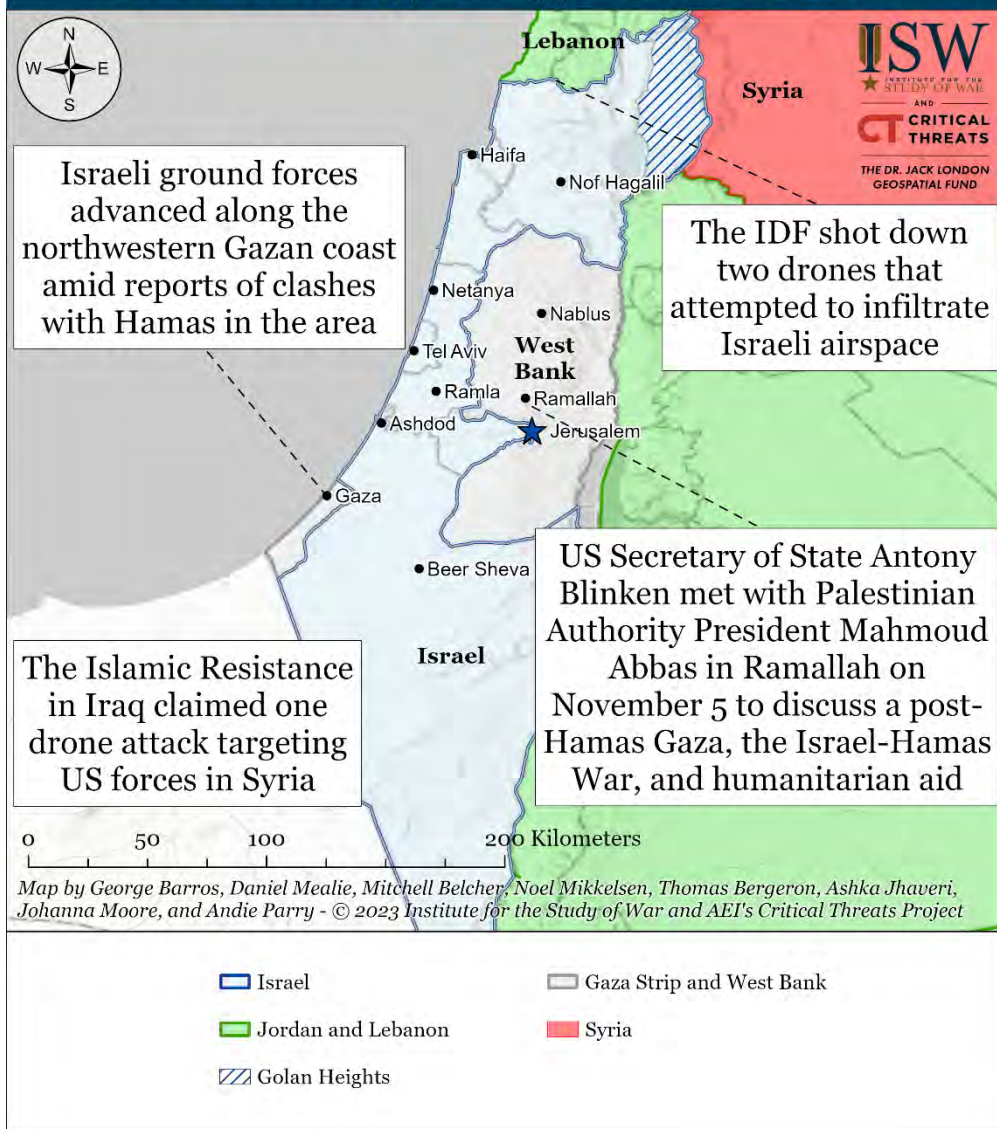
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Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

- 1. Israeli ground forces advanced along the northwestern Gazan coast amid reports of clashes with Hamas in the area. The IDF continued its advance into Tal al Hawa on November 5.**
- 2. Clashes between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces in the West Bank continued at their usual rate on November 5, indicating that November 4's calls for uprisings across the West Bank failed to materialize.**
- 3. Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Iranian-backed militants continued cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 5 at their normal rate.**
- 4. Iranian-backed Iraqi proxy militia Kataib Hezbollah threatened to escalate attacks against US forces in Iraq and to target "US regional interests" ahead of Blinken's visit to Iraq, which indicates that Iran and its proxies and partners may target US interests outside of Iraq and Syria.**
- 5. Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh discussed the Israel-Hamas war with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in Tehran on November 5.**

Israel-Hamas War as of November 5, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israeli ground forces advanced along the northwestern Gazan coast amid reports of clashes with Hamas in the area. IDF spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said Israeli ground forces have fully encircled Gaza City and split the whole Gaza Strip into two.^[1] The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—released footage of its militants operating in or around the al Shati Refugee Camp.^[2] Independent analyst on X (Twitter) geolocated the footage to the Ahmed Oraby road north of the al Shati camp.^[3] The footage shows militants launching rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) at IDF tanks.^[4] Both the al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade said they targeted Israeli vehicles in northwestern Gaza on November 5.^[5]

The IDF is continuing its advance in Beit Hanoun in the northeastern Gaza Strip. The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—published footage of its militants maneuvering through tunnel systems in Beit Hanoun and attacking IDF forces with various weapons on November 4.[6] A Palestinian journalist said that the IDF clashed with Hamas forces on al Karamah Street, the main north-south street in Beit Hanoun, on November 4.[7]

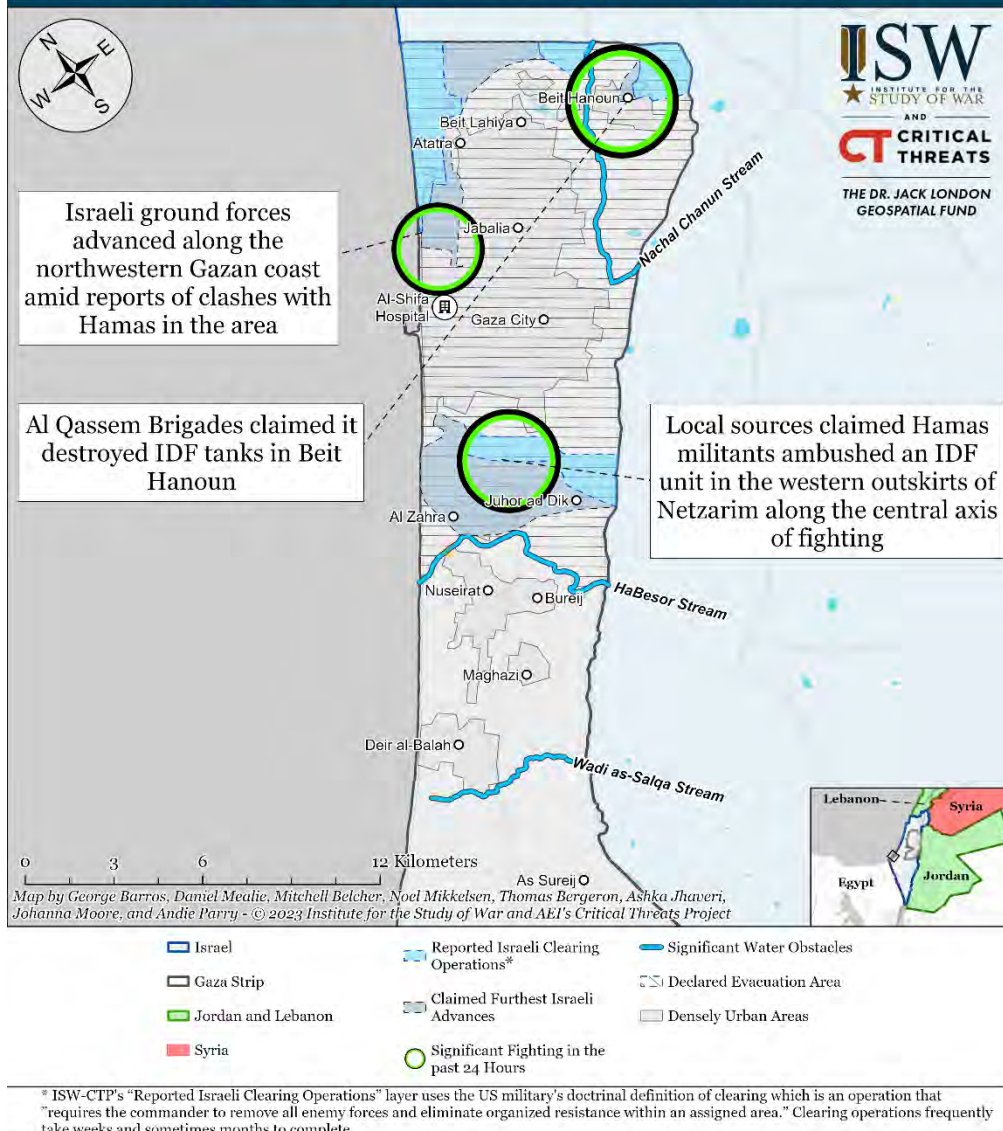
Hamas fired mortars targeting Israeli military vehicles west of the Erez military checkpoint on November 5, possibly as part of an effort to harass and disrupt Israeli ground lines of communication there.[8] Israeli forces crossed into the Gaza Strip at and near Erez on October 29 and Hamas will likely continue to attack this and other IDF crossing points and the roads leading from them.[9]

IDF spokesperson Daniel Hagari released videos and pictures showing how Hamas uses the Indonesian Sheikh Hamad Hospital for military operations.[10] The videos show Hamas militants firing small arms at the IDF from the hospital.[11] Another video shows a tunnel shaft that the IDF says connects to a tunnel network underneath the hospital.[12] CTP-ISW previously reported that the *Wall Street Journal* published a map of the tunnel system that Hamas has created below the Gaza Strip, which includes a system underneath Beit Hanoun.[13]

The IDF continued its advance into Tal al Hawa on November 5. The Al Qassem Brigades claimed that it defended against Israeli advances from southwest of Tal al Hawa.[14] The National Resistance Brigades—the military wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine—mortared Israeli forces and fired anti-tank rockets at advancing Israeli vehicles southeast of Zaytoun neighborhood and south of Gaza City on November 5.[15] The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades also mortared Israeli vehicles entering the al Samouni area near Zaytoun.[16]

Al Qassem Brigades and the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades mortared advancing Israeli forces east of Juhor ad Dik, which is close to where Israeli forces entered the central Gaza Strip at the beginning of the ground operation.[17] Local sources claimed Hamas fighters ambushed an Israeli military unit in the western outskirts of Netzarim, west of Juhor ad Dik.[18] Israeli forces south of the Gaza Strip are continuing to undertake clearing operations. Fighting behind the Israeli forward line of advance is consistent with the doctrinal definition of "clear," which is a tactical task that "requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area." IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari stated on November 5 that the IDF will still allow civilians to leave north Gaza and head south.[19]

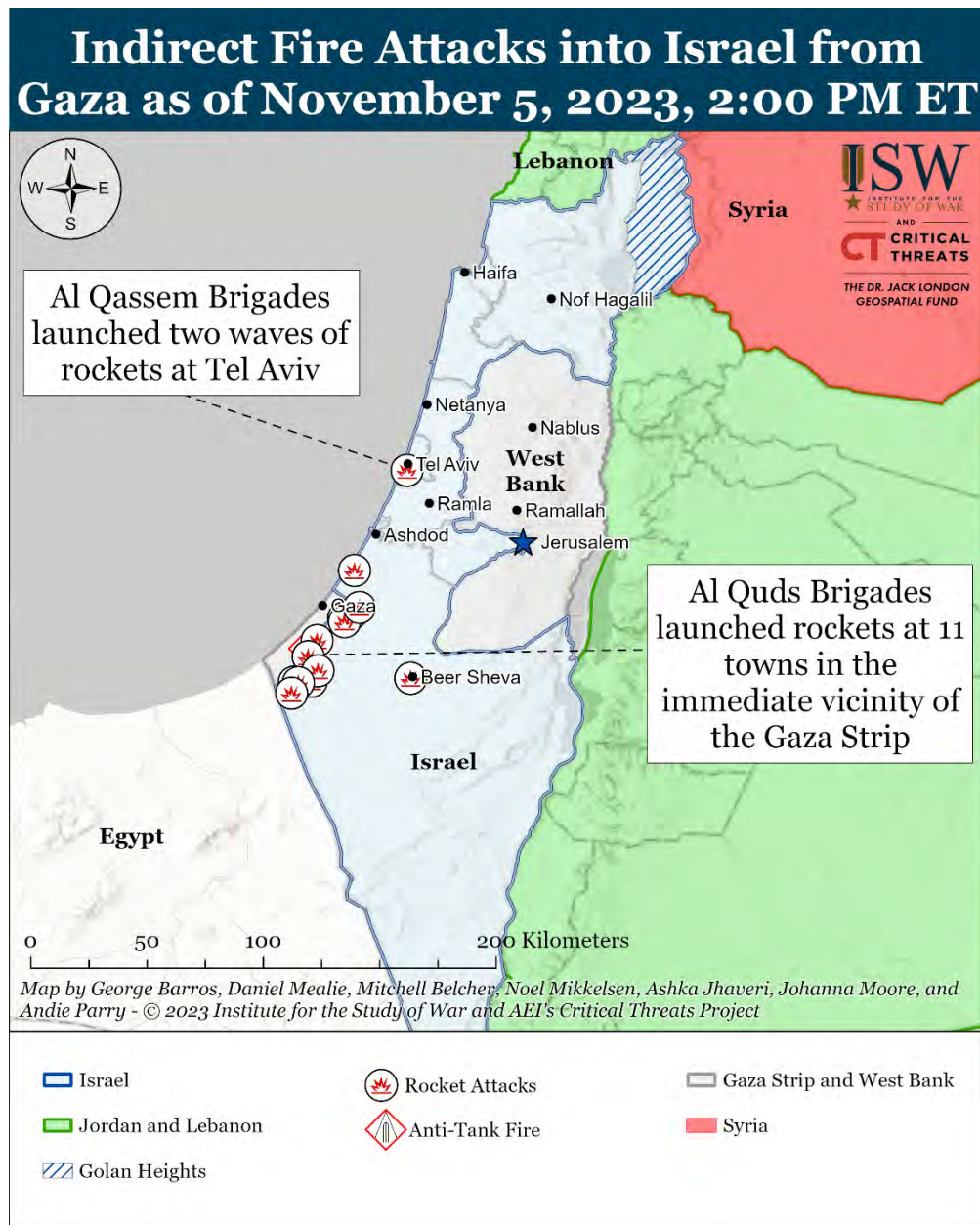
Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 5, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory, primarily in southern Israel. The al Qassem Brigades claimed responsibility for four indirect fire attacks into the areas immediately adjacent to the Gaza Strip, and for two attacks targeting Tel Aviv.^[20] The al Quds Brigades claimed responsibility for 12 indirect fire attacks on November 5.^[21] The al Quds Brigades' indirect fire primarily targeted Israeli towns adjacent to Gaza and North Gaza governorates in the northern Gaza Strip. Lebanese Hezbollah (LH)-aligned media also reported that unspecified militants fired anti-tank guided missiles at Israeli forces near Kissufim on November 4.^[22]

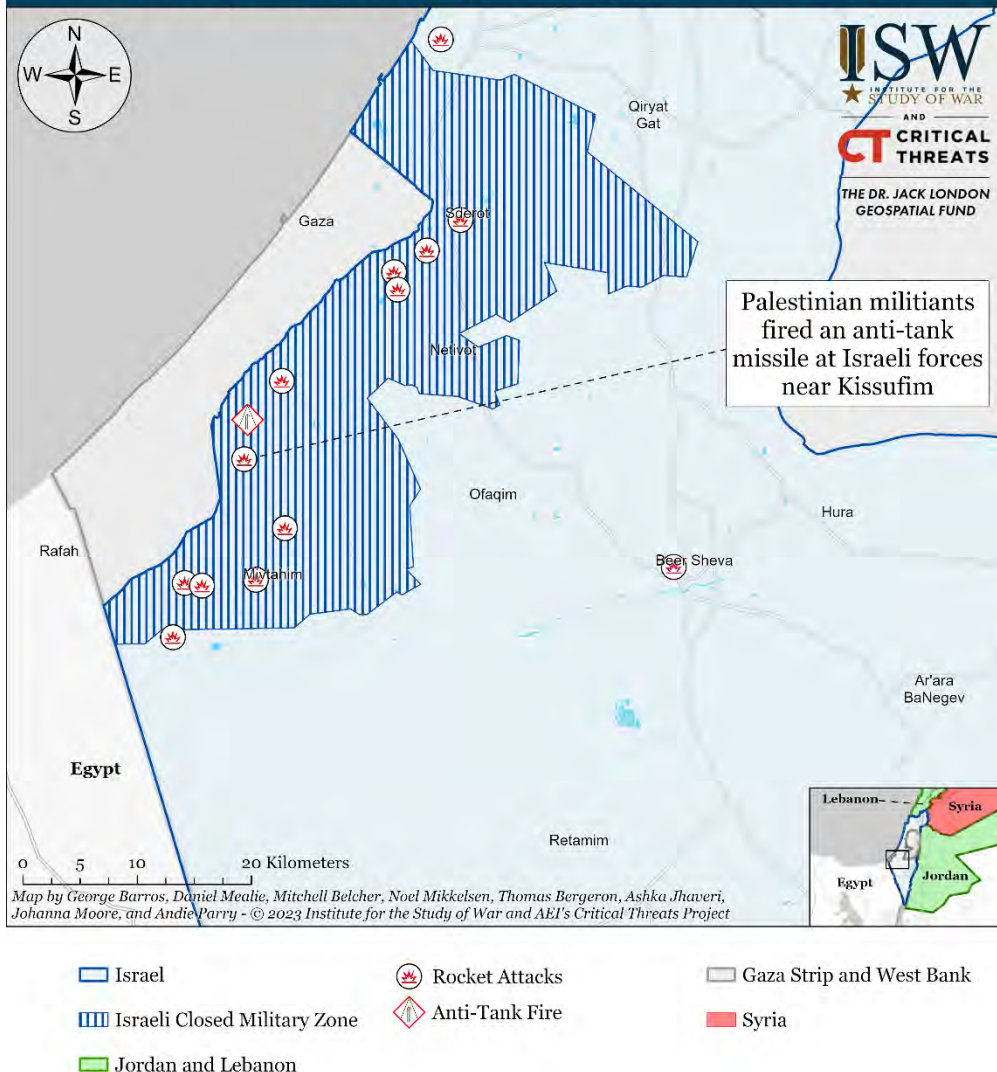
Hamas condemned the Israeli Heritage Minister's suggestion that Israel could use a nuclear weapon on the Gaza Strip. Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu made the comment in a radio interview.^[23] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the comment and suspended Eliyahu from participation in cabinet meetings.^[24] Hamas called on the United Nations and international community to take the statement seriously and warned that the statement will ignite the region.^[25]

Al Qassem Brigades spokesperson Abu Ubaida claimed that Israeli airstrikes have killed 60 Israeli hostages, which is consistent with a Hamas information campaign that seeks to prepare the information environment to blame Israel for the possible deaths of hostages.[26] Netanyahu restated that there will not be a ceasefire without the return of Israeli hostages.[27] Hamas political bureau member Khalil al Hayya said on November 5 that Israel and Hamas were on the verge of an agreement to release hostages, but the negotiations are now back to square one.[28]



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 5, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

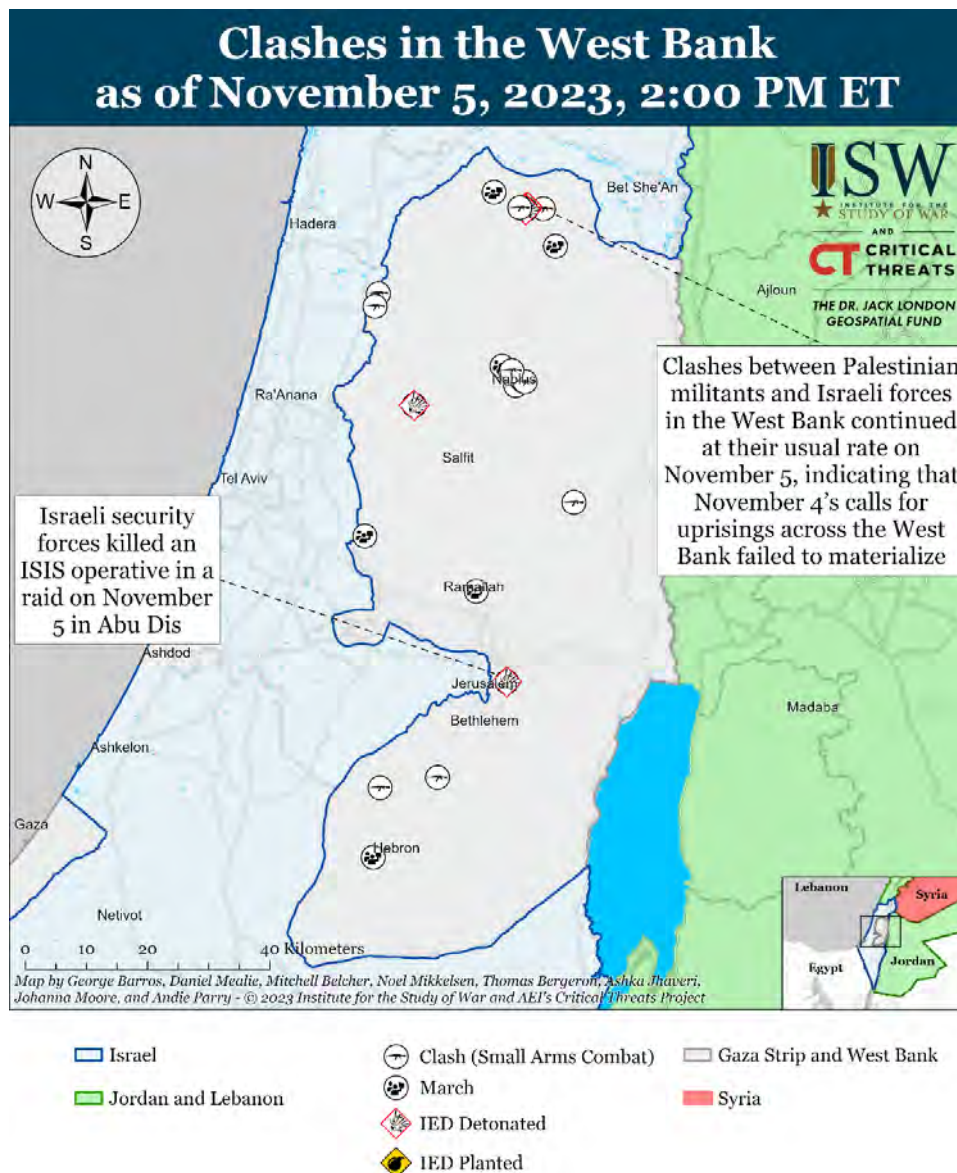
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
Clashes between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces in the West Bank continued at their usual rate on November 5, indicating that November 4's calls for uprisings across the West Bank failed to materialize. CTP-ISW recorded 13 clashes in the West Bank, including several hours of continual fighting in Jenin.[29] CTP-ISW also recorded five instances of Palestinian militants conducting IED attacks in the West Bank.[30] The IDF recovered multiple IEDs planted on roads in Jenin.[31] IDF raids across the West Bank likely contributed to the number of armed clashes.[32] CTP-ISW recorded six anti-Israel demonstrations on November 5.[33]

Israeli security forces killed an ISIS operative in a raid on November 5 in Abu Dis, near Jerusalem.[34] Israel released the operative from prison in July 2023. The ISIS fighter was recruiting a small cell to conduct small arms attacks against Israeli forces.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah on November 5 to discuss a post-Hamas Gaza, the Israel-Hamas War, and humanitarian aid.^[35] Abbas said that Gaza is “an integral part” of a future Palestinian state, but noted that the Palestinian Authority will assume its responsibilities within a “comprehensive political solution” applying to both the West Bank and Gaza.^[36] Abbas emphasized the need for an “immediate ceasefire” and added that humanitarian aid must be allowed into Gaza.^[37] A US State Department spokesperson said that Blinken told Abbas that the United States is committed to restoring essential services in Gaza and “getting aid into Gaza.”^[38] The spokesperson added that Blinken expressed his commitment to “the realization of the Palestinians’ legitimate aspirations” for a Palestinian state.^[39]

Palestinian militant groups, including Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), continued to call for uprisings against Israel in the West Bank. Palestinian militant groups have repeatedly called for demonstrations and attacks since October 7, but the calls have so far failed to generate widespread protests or attacks. PIJ called for “comprehensive confrontation” with the IDF.^[40] Separately, Hamas called for demonstrations to “pressure” Israel in response to Israeli treatment of Palestinian prisoners.^[41] A militia with members in the Palestinian security services gave a 24-hour deadline for Abbas to declare a confrontation with the IDF.^[42] The militia said it will rebel against the Palestinian Authority if its demands are not met.



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

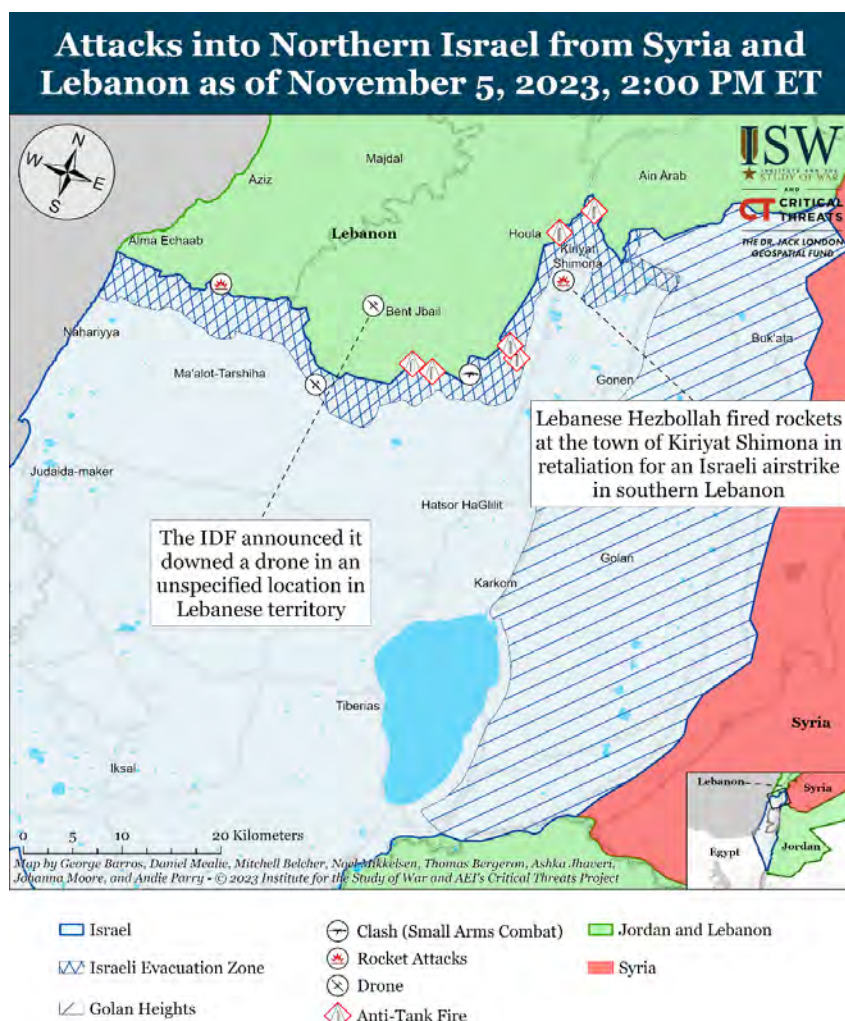
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Iranian-backed militants continued cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 5 at their normal rate. LH claimed nine attacks out of the 10 conducted on Israeli military and communications points along the border.[43] Lebanese Hezbollah launched rockets at Kiryat Shmona on November 5 in retaliation for an Israeli airstrike that killed four Lebanese civilians.[44] The IDF intercepted two drones attempting to cross into Israeli airspace, one over southern Lebanon and one near Matat in northern Israel.[45] Israeli forces continued retaliatory attacks targeting the sites in Lebanon that militants used to launch projectiles into Israel.[46]

Political Bureau Head of the Islamic Group in Lebanon Ali Abi Yassin stated that his group's military wing, the Fajr Forces, would participate in a war with Israel in support of Gaza on November 5, which is consistent with the group's previous statements and activity.[47] The Fajr Forces claimed one rocket attack into northern Israel on October 18.[48] The Sunni armed group operates in southern Lebanon and made a resurgence during the Israel-Hamas war after almost 20 years of dormancy. The deputy head of the Islamic Group's political bureau said on October 30 that the group is not in complete alignment with LH but that the group supports LH in terms of resistance.[49] LH almost certainly permits militant groups operating in southern Lebanon, such as the Fajr Forces, to conduct attacks from southern Lebanon given the extent to which LH controls the area.



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

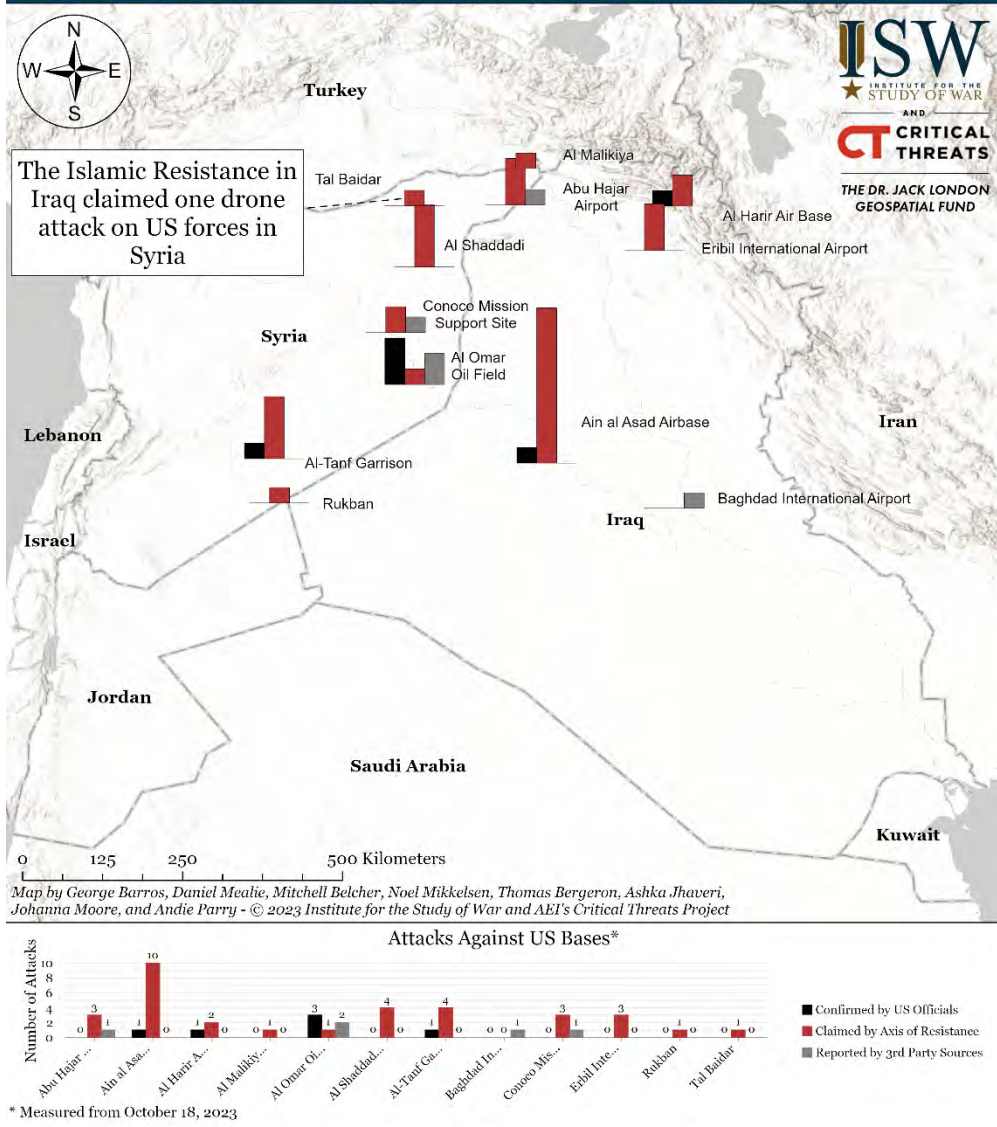
The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—an umbrella group of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for one attack targeting US forces in Syria on November 5. This Islamic Resistance in Iraq said it launched one drone targeting US forces at Tal Baidar, west of Hasakah city, Syria.^[50] The group has not previously targeted this position. Local Syrian sources reported that US forces shot down an unspecified drone near the base.^[51] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed 33 attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East since October 18. CENTCOM has not commented on the November 5 attack at the time of publication.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed al Sudani on November 5 in Baghdad to discuss threats to US forces. Blinken said that he “made very clear” that attacks on US positions in Iraq are “totally unacceptable” and that the United States will “take every necessary step to protect our people” during the meeting with Sudani.^[52] Iraqi government sources told an Iraqi Fayli Kurdish outlet on November 4—notably before Blinken’s travel was publicly announced—that Blinken would visit Baghdad on November 5 and that the meeting between Blinken and Sudani would focus on attacks against US forces.^[53] The source claimed that Blinken would deliver a warning that the United States will respond to attacks on US forces, presumably within Iraq.^[54] Retaliation against Iranian-backed groups in Iraq would be a break from the Biden Administration’s pattern of striking targets in Syria in response to Iranian-backed attacks in Iraq.^[55] US aircraft struck an IRGC-affiliated compound on October 26 in Syria in response to Iranian-backed attacks in Iraq.^[56]

Iranian-backed Iraqi proxy militia Kataib Hezbollah threatened to escalate attacks against US forces in Iraq and to target “US regional interests” ahead of Blinken’s visit to Iraq, which indicates that Iran and its proxies and partners may target US interests outside of Iraq and Syria. Kataib Hezbollah spokesperson Abu Ali Askari said on November 4—notably before Blinken’s travel was publicly announced—that Kataib Hezbollah would “work to end” the US presence in Iraq and “disable US regional interests” if the United States continued to support Israel’s ground operation in Gaza.^[57] Kataib Hezbollah has the capabilities to target the US interests in the Arab Gulf states and has targeted US allies in the Gulf previously.^[58] A Kataib Hezbollah-linked militia group targeted Saudi oil infrastructure in 2019 and in 2021.^[59] Iran is also more likely to choose Kataib Hezbollah to target US interests regionally because the Yemeni Houthi movement is less likely to target US assets in the Arab Gulf states due to the Houthis’ ongoing peace efforts with Saudi Arabia.^[60]

The Iranian foreign affairs minister discussed the Israel-Hamas War with the Iraqi foreign minister ahead of the Iraqi prime minister’s visit to Tehran on November 6. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian discussed the Israel-Hamas war in a phone call with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hossein on November 4.^[61] Abdollahian warned that the United States’ “growing violence” against civilians in the Gaza Strip will “inevitably” cause the war to expand. Iranian media separately reported on November 5 that Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani will travel to Tehran on November 6.^[62] Sudani’s visit comes on the heels of his meeting with the US secretary of state.

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 5, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh discussed the Israel-Hamas war with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in Tehran on November 5.^[63] Haniyeh and Khamenei discussed “the latest developments” in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Khamenei reiterated Iran’s support for Palestinian resistance groups and praised Gazans’ “patience and endurance.” Khamenei condemned the United States’ support for Israel and called on Islamic governments to support Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Iranian officials have engaged with senior Hamas leadership on numerous occasions since October 7. Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has discussed the war with Haniyeh on four separate occasions since October 7, for example.^[64]

Iranian Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani warned the United States on November 5 that it will suffer “heavy blows” if it does not immediately halt attacks on the Gaza Strip and implement a ceasefire. Ashtiani’s warning is part of Iran’s ongoing efforts to deter the United States from providing further military support to Israel.^[65] His warning is also consistent with previous Iranian claims that the United States is “directing” Israel’s war against Hamas.^[66] Other Iranian military officials have issued similar warnings to the United States in recent weeks. IRGC spokesperson Brigadier General Ramazan Sharif recently warned the United States in an interview

with LH-affiliated al Mayadeen on October 28 that “those who cannot reach Israel [in battle] may be able to reach the US forces that are managing this war,” as CTP-ISW previously reported.^[67]

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- [1] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1721232654861803706>
 - [2] <https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1720874278269096251>; <https://t.me/qassambrigades/28967>
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 - [6] <https://t.me/qassambrigades/28963>
 - [7] <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1720824341657514297?s=20>
 - [8] <https://t.me/newpress1/57239>
 - [9] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-october-29-2023>
 - [10] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1721167071076085894>
 - [11] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1721167298151522634>
 - [12] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1721167071076085894>
 - [13] <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-hamas-war-gaza-strip-conflict/ca...>
 - [14] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/277>
 - [15] <https://t.me/QudsN/324012> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/324198>
 - [16] <https://t.me/QudsN/324299>
 - [17] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/281> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/285> ; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5830> ;
 - [18] <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1720976612676538822>
 - [19] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1721232654861803706>
 - [20] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/272>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/294>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/283>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/284>; <https://t.me/jeninnews1/72319>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/290>
 - [21] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16588>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16593>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16594>
 - [22] <https://t.me/almanarnews/134902>
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 - [26] <https://t.me/hamasps/17466>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-october-24-2023>
 - [27] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-netanyahu-says-no-gaza...>
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 - [30] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1721104614114656286>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1721104615909839032>; <https://t.me/sarayajneen/1131>; <https://t.me/sarayajneen/1132>; <https://t.me/QudsN/324081>; <https://t.me/QudsN/323980>
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 - [34] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1721104610650210540>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1721104612483018881>
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 - [36] <https://www.reuters.com/world/blinden-visits-west-bank-meet-palestinian-leader-abbas-gaza-war-rages-2023-11-05/>

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[41] <https://t.me/QudsN/324280>

[42] <https://t.me/jeninnews1/72320>

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[44] <https://twitter.com/alishoeib1970/status/1721225753239429573> ; <https://twitter.com/alishoeib1970/status/1721216722609262695>

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[54] <https://www.shafaq.com/ar/%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%A8%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%83%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%AB-%D9%85%D9%84%D9%81-%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9>

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https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-28-2023#_ed...

IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 6, 2023

Iran Update, November 6, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Peter Mills, Annika Ganzeveld, Kathryn Tyson, and Brian Carter

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

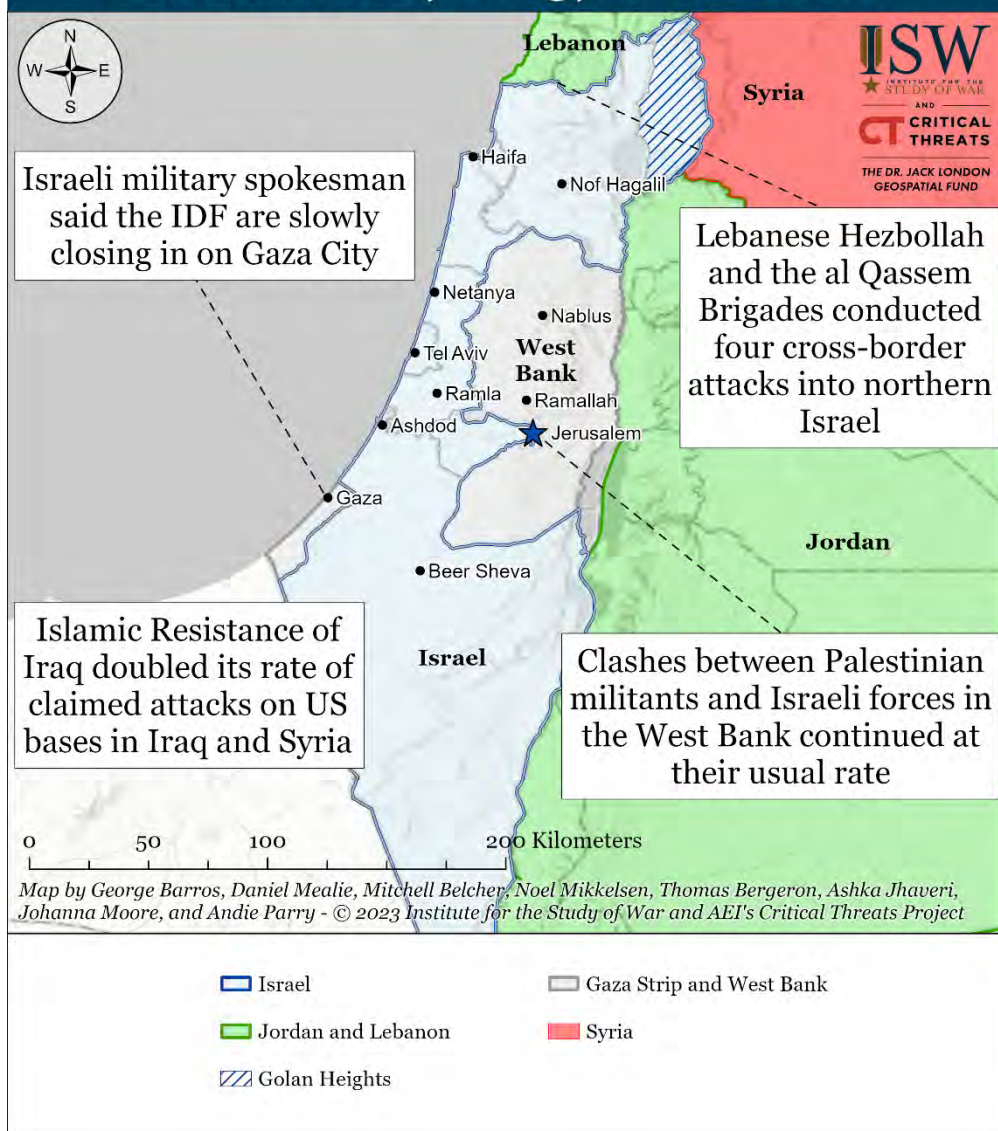
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports. Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

CORRECTION: CTP-ISW mistakenly reported on November 6 that Israeli ground forces advanced toward the Indonesian Sheikh Hamad Hospital in northwestern Gaza. Israeli ground forces actually advanced toward the Sheikh Hamad Hospital in northwestern Gaza. We apologize for the error.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hecht said the IDF is slowly closing in on Gaza City.
2. Israeli ground forces advanced toward the Sheikh Hamad Hospital along the northwestern Gazan coast.
3. Palestinian militias mortared Israeli forces on the Gaza Strip's border with Israel on November 6, which is consistent with CTP-ISW's assessment that Palestinian militias are attempting to harass and disrupt Israeli ground lines of communication (GLOC).
4. The IDF reportedly advanced toward Tal al Hawa on November 6.
5. Clashes between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces in the West Bank continued at their usual rate on November 6.
6. The Hebron branch of the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade threatened suicide attacks against Israeli forces on November 5.
7. Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and the al Qassem Brigades conducted four cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 6.
8. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei dismissed US calls for Iran to restrain its proxies in Iraq during a meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed al Sudani in Tehran on November 6.
9. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—an umbrella group of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—doubled its rate of claimed attacks on US bases in Iraq and Syria and claimed that it fired a missile at US forces.
10. Iranian-backed Iraqi proxy Ashab al Kahf threatened to target the US Embassy in Iraq, which is consistent with calls for escalation from Kataib Hezbollah.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 6, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israeli Clearing Operations

Israeli military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hecht said the IDF is slowly closing in on Gaza City.^[1] The IDF Air Force and Navy struck over 450 targets in the previous 24 hours, including Hamas military compounds, observation posts, and firing positions.^[2] The IDF said that it seized a Hamas position used for various military operations.^[3] Additionally, the IDF published footage on November 6 of its effort to transport ammunition, medical equipment, food, and advanced weapons to support fighting in Gaza.^[4]

Hamas militants attacked IDF forces advancing inland from the northwest Gaza Strip coast. The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—claimed that it fired an anti-tank missile at an IDF tank and engaged the IDF with small arms in the Sultan neighborhood south of Beit Lahiya.^[5] Commercially available

satellite imagery captured on November 6 shows flattened terrain in the area between Sultan and al Toam Roads, which indicates that Israeli tanks or bulldozers operated in the Sultan neighborhood south of Beit Lahiya. Palestinian militias claimed that they engaged IDF forces further south operating in or around the al Shati Refugee Camp on November 6. Gazan residents said on November 6 that Israeli airstrikes hit close to the al Shati camp^[6] The al Qassem Brigades claimed that it destroyed four IDF vehicles on the outskirts of the camp, and 27 military vehicles in the last 48 hours.^[7] The al Quds Brigades —the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed that it destroyed an IDF vehicle near al Maqousi with a bomb stuck to the vehicle.^[8] Other insurgent groups in the region used “sticky bombs” to assassinate targets inside vehicles.^[9]

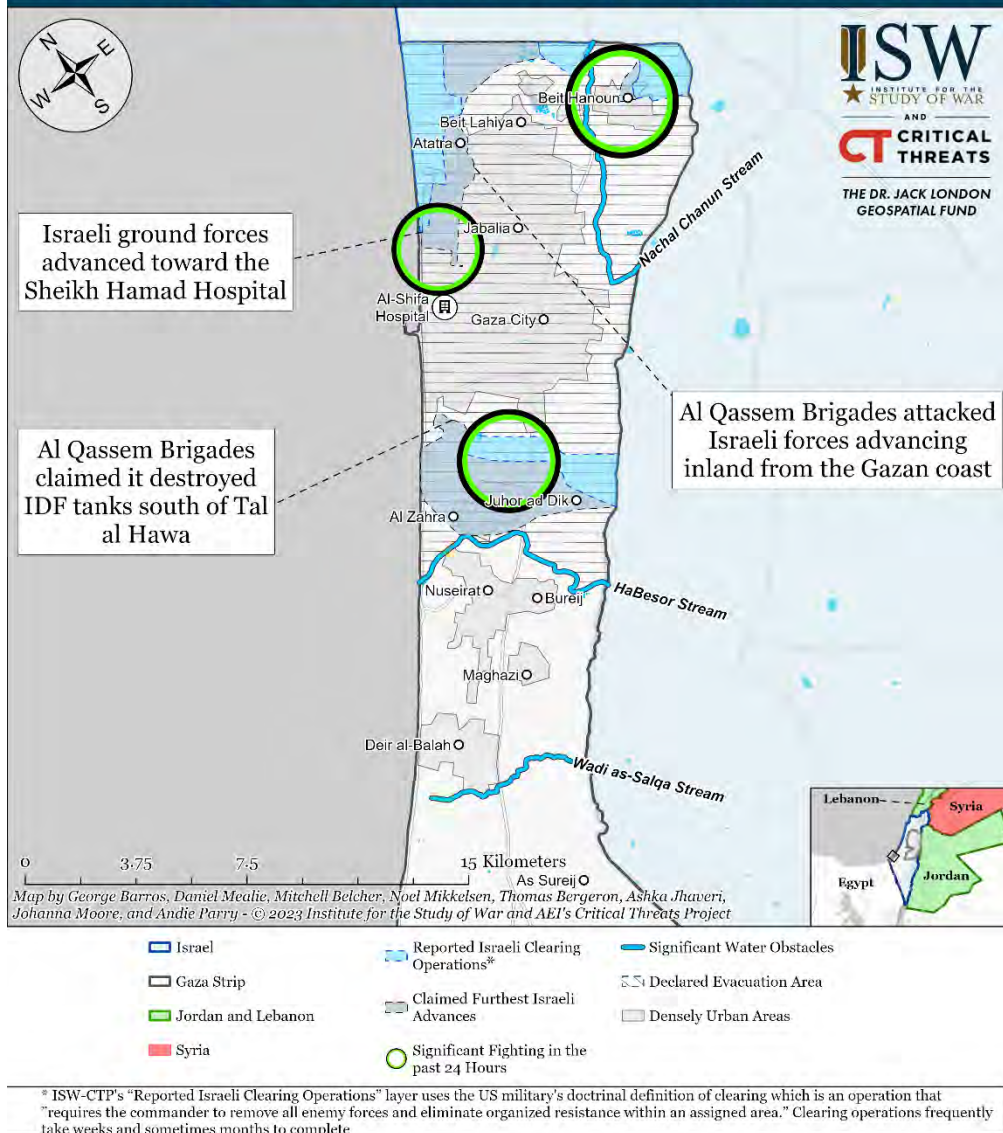
Israeli ground forces advanced toward the Sheikh Hamad Hospital along the northwestern Gazan coast. IDF spokesperson Daniel Hagari released footage on November 5 that shows Hamas fighters using the Hamad Hospital for military operations.^[10] The videos show Hamas militants firing small arms at the IDF from the hospital.^[11] Independent analysts on X (Twitter) geolocated the footage of clashes and a tunnel shaft to the Hamad Hospital.^[12]

Palestinian militias mortared Israeli forces on the Gaza Strip’s border with Israel on November 6, which is consistent with CTP-ISW’s assessment that Palestinian militias are attempting to harass and disrupt Israeli ground lines of communication (GLOC).^[13] The al Qassem Brigades and al Quds Brigades mortared IDF vehicles near the Erez military checkpoint in the northern Gaza Strip. Israeli forces crossed into the Gaza Strip at and near Erez on October 29.^[14] The al Qassem Brigades mortared IDF forces east of Juhor ad Dik.^[15] Israeli forces crossed into the central Gaza Strip from near Juhor ad Dik at the beginning of the ground operation.

Fighting behind the Israeli forward line of advance is consistent with the doctrinal definition of “clear,” which is a tactical task that “requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area.” The IDF opened a secure population evacuation corridor on November 6 to enable residents in the northern Gaza Strip to move south in view of military activity.

The IDF reportedly advanced toward Tal al Hawa on November 6. A Palestinian journalist reported that the IDF is making advances to the Tel al Hawa neighborhood south of Gaza City. The journalist said that a local hospital closed as the IDF destroyed all access roads in the area.^[16] The al Qassem Brigades claimed that it destroyed an IDF tank south of the neighborhood with an RPG on November 6.^[17] Palestinian militias have claimed that they attacked Israeli advances from south of Tal al Hawa for three consecutive days.^[18]

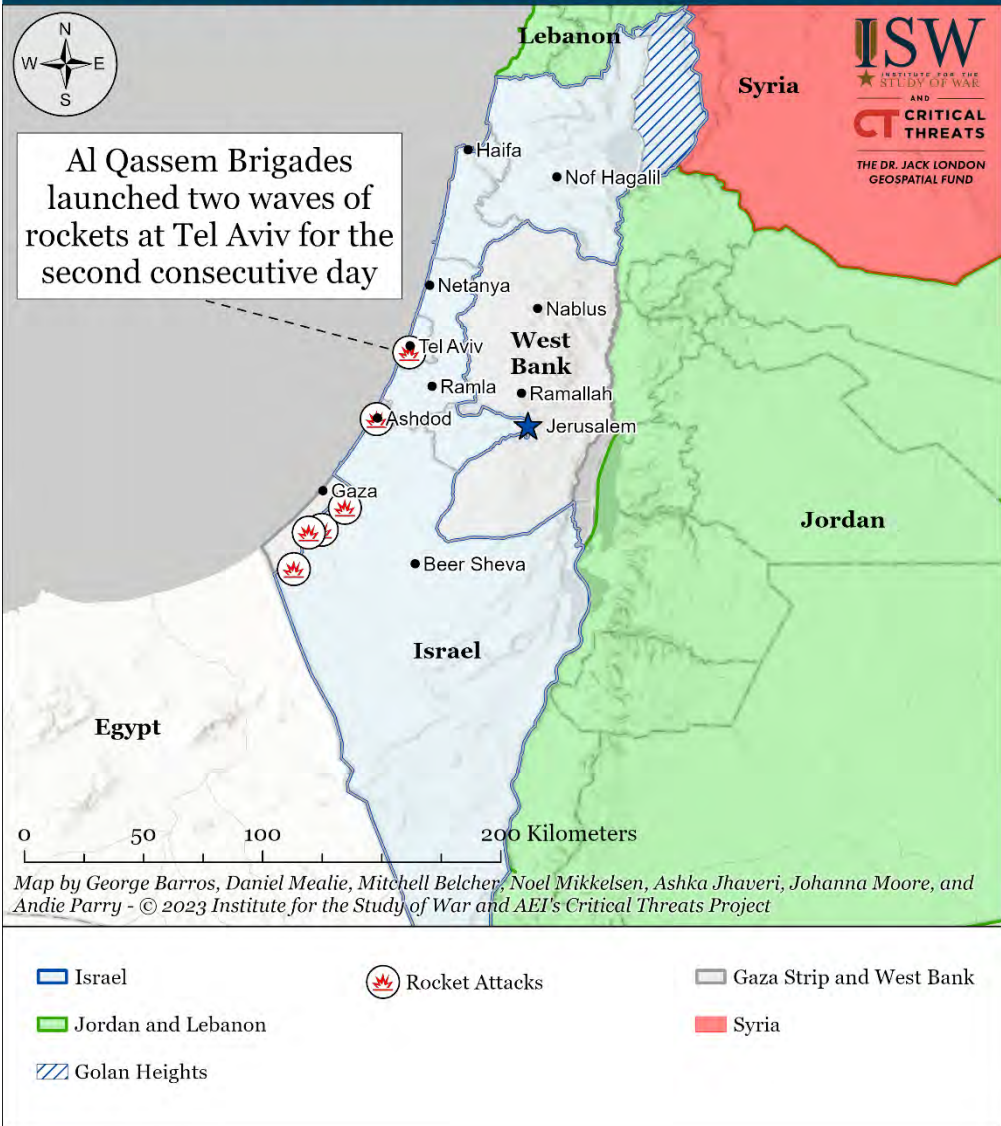
Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 6, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory, primarily in southern Israel. The al Qassem Brigades claimed responsibility for four indirect fire attacks into the areas immediately adjacent to the Gaza Strip, including two targeting Tel Aviv.[19] The militants launched rockets at the Reim military base, where the IDF unveiled a reestablished observation room on November 6 for one of its intelligence battalions.[20] The al Quds Brigades claimed responsibility for four indirect fire attacks on November 6.[21] The al Quds Brigades' indirect fire exclusively targeted Israeli towns adjacent to the Gaza Strip.

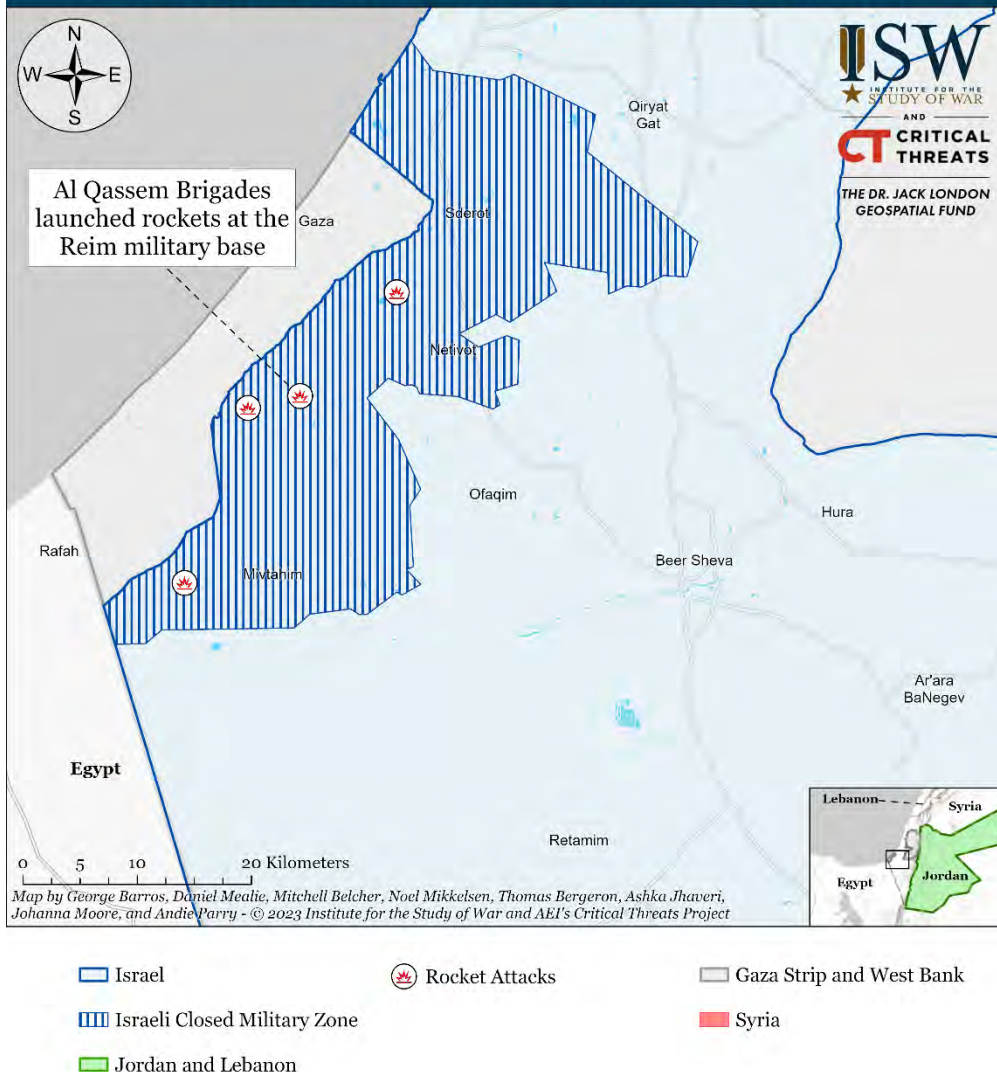
Hamas is messaging that it can sustain a prolonged war with Israel. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that unspecified regional officials said that Hamas has privately stated that its weapons arsenal can sustain a prolonged conflict. The Lebanese foreign minister reported that shortly after the October 7 attack, Hamas told the Iranian foreign minister that it could fight for months without additional weapons. Hamas and PIJ have taken measures to prepare for a prolonged war, including reducing indirect fire attacks to conserve stockpiles.[22]

Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 6, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 6, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

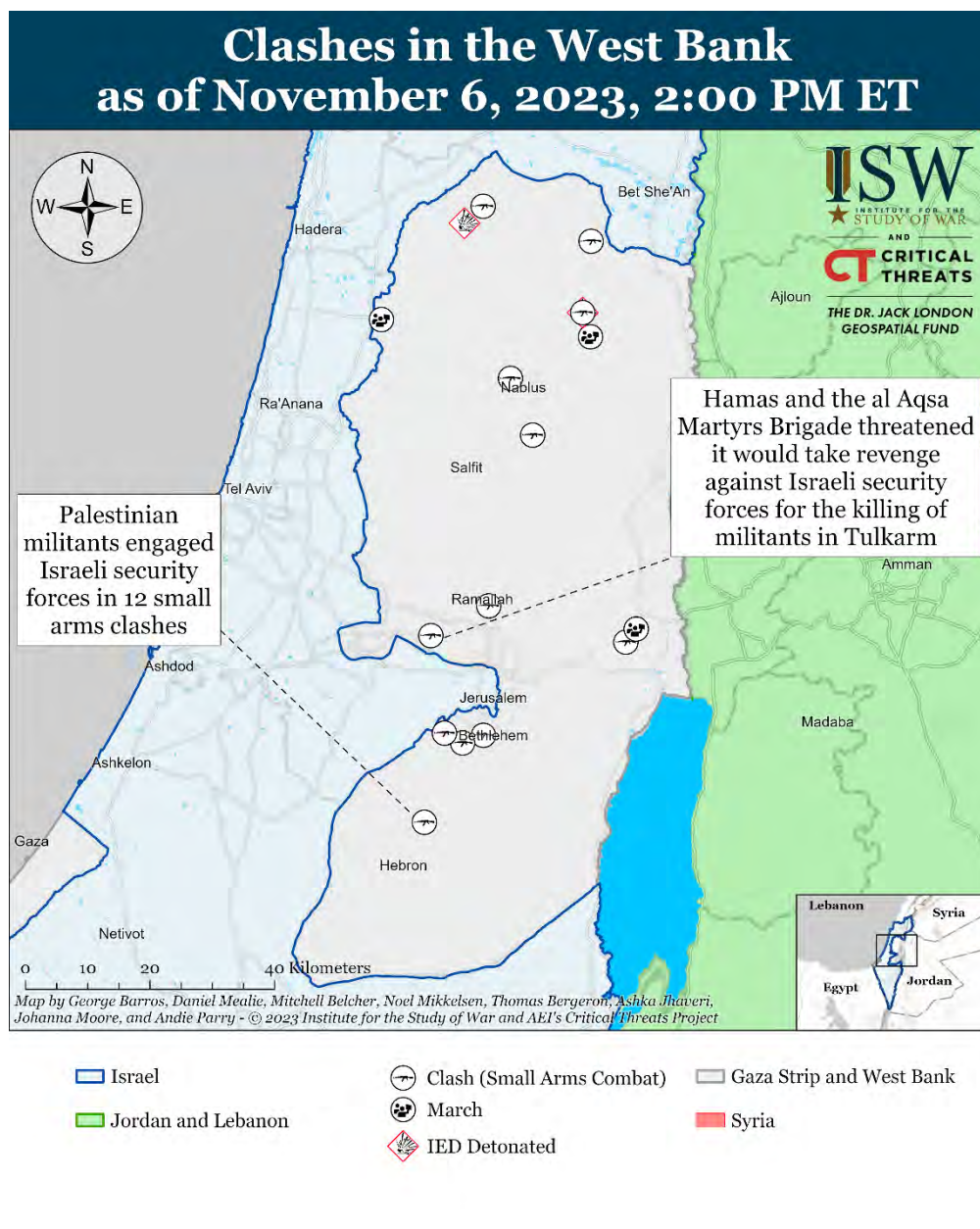
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
Clashes between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces in the West Bank continued at their usual rate on November 6. CTP-ISW recorded 13 clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants in the West Bank.^[23] CTP-ISW also recorded two instances of Palestinian militants conducting IED attacks against Israeli forces.^[24] These clashes and attacks occurred in major West Bank cities including Bethlehem, Jenin, and Nablus. CTP-ISW recorded three anti-Israel demonstrations on November 6.^[25]

The al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade's Tulkarm Battalion threatened revenge on November 6 after Israeli security forces killed Hamas and al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade fighters in a raid on the same day. Israeli forces killed at least three Hamas and al Aqsa fighters during a raid in Tulkarm in the northern West Bank.^[26] The al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade's Tulkarm Battalion said it would avenge its fighters within 24 hours and held a large funeral march for the fighters on November 6.^[27] Hamas said that Israeli security forces conducted assassinated the three fighters.^[28]

The Hebron branch of the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade threatened suicide attacks against Israeli forces on November 5. The al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade did not provide an explanation for the use of suicide bombs and has not employed suicide attacks since the war began on October 7.[29] The group claimed on November 4 that it had received new weapons and ammunition in Hebron for its fighters, but it did not corroborate these claims.[30]

The Hebron branch of the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade separately claimed that the Palestinian militia group Sons of Commander Abu Jandal is attempting to generate strife through false statements and called for unity on November 6.[31] The militia gave a 24-hour deadline for Mahmoud Abbas to declare a confrontation with the IDF on November 5. The group released a list of its members' names, which it claimed defected from the Palestinian security services, on November 6.[32] A Palestinian journalist said they vetted the list on November 6 and reported that all of the individuals on the list disavowed involvement with the militia.[33]

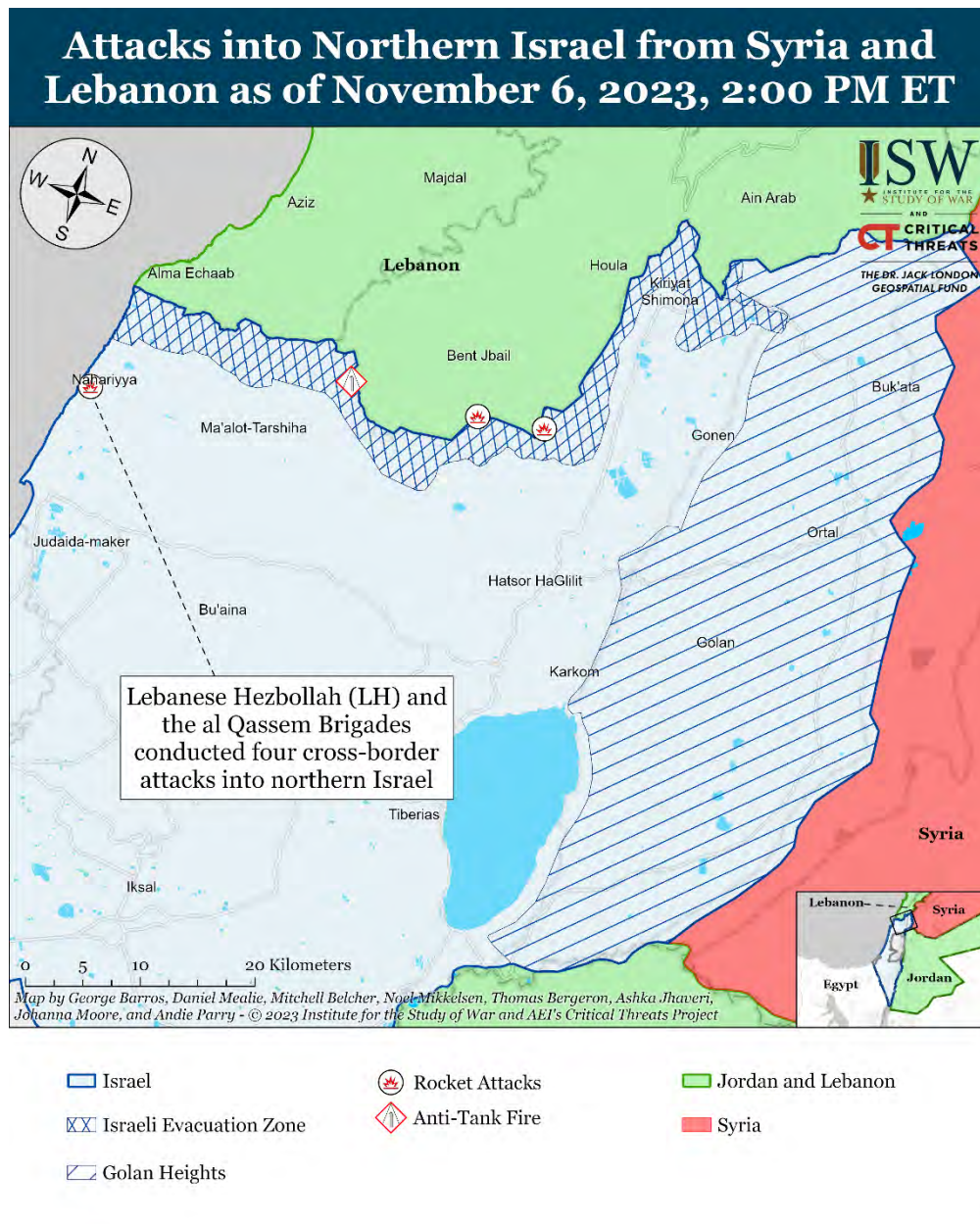


This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and the al Qassem Brigades conducted four cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 6. LH claimed two indirect fire attacks and one direct fire attack targeting Israeli positions in northern Israel.[34] The al Qassem Brigades fired one salvo of 16 rockets from southern Lebanon targeting civilians in Nahariya, east of Acre, northern Israel, on November 6.[35] The al Qassem Brigades last fired a rocket salvo into northern Israel on November 2, when it fired a salvo of 12 rockets at Kiryat Shmona, a border town in northern Israel.[36]

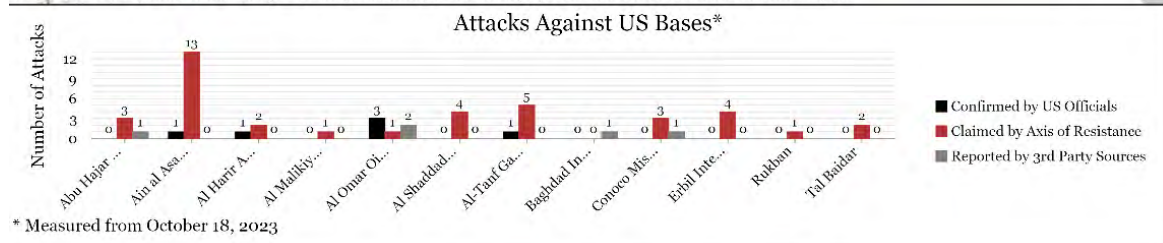
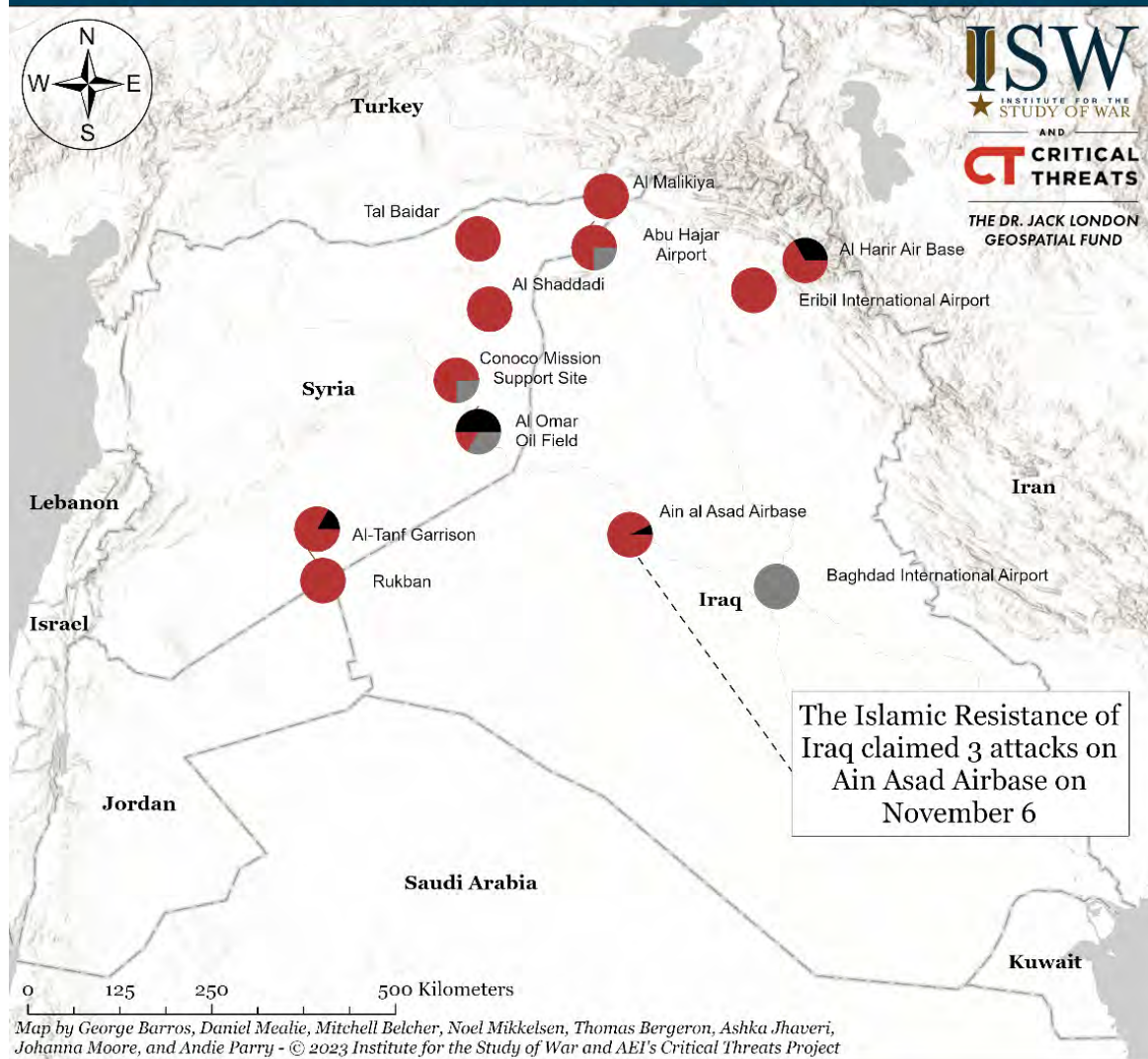


Iran and the Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 6, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei dismissed US calls for Iran to restrain its proxies in Iraq during a meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed al Sudani in Tehran on November 6. Khamenei stated that Iran and Iraq should coordinate to “increase political pressure” on the United States and Israel.[37] Khamenei also repeated previous claims that the United States is “directing” Israel’s war against Hamas and abetting “Israeli crimes.” Sudani met with Khamenei after meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Baghdad on November 5, during which he and Blinken discussed threats to US forces.[38] Blinken emphasized during his meeting with Sudani that attacks on US positions in Iraq are “totally unacceptable” and that the United States will “take every necessary step to protect [its] people,” as CTP-ISW previously reported.[39]

- Khamenei’s call for “political” pressure is part of the Iranian regime’s ongoing effort to cover up its involvement in the Israel-Hamas war. Iranian officials and media have repeatedly framed Iran as a responsible and non-escalatory actor since the start of the war.[40] This narrative ignores the fact that Iran has already facilitated the expansion of the war to Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria by directing and encouraging its proxy and partner militias in these countries to attack US and Israeli targets.
- Other Iranian officials also dismissed US calls for restraint on November 6. Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanani stated that the United States falsely accuses Iran of directing proxy attacks in the region to distract public opinion from US actions in the Israel-Hamas war.[41] Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian separately announced that the United States sent Iran a message in recent days expressing its desire for a ceasefire. Abdollahian dismissed the message, stating that US calls for a ceasefire contradict US support for “Israel’s genocide in the Gaza Strip.”[42]

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—an umbrella group of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—doubled its rate of claimed attacks on US bases in Iraq and Syria and claimed that it fired a missile at US forces.[43] This shift comes after key Iranian-backed Iraqi proxy militia Kataib Hezbollah threatened to escalate against the United States in Iraq and the region if US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Baghdad, which Blinken did on November 5. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claims one to three attacks on US bases in Iraq and Syria per day on average.

- The group released a video showing the launch of several drones and a missile targeting US forces at Tal Baydar, al Tanf, Erbil International Airport, and Ain al Assad Airbase.[44] The group did not say which systems targeted which positions. The missile in the video bears visual similarities to the Iranian-built Fateh-313, which the Iranians used to target US positions in Iraq in January 2020 in retaliation for the US airstrike that killed IRGC-QF commander Qassem Soleimani.[45] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed 39 attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East since October 18. CENTCOM has not commented on the November 6 attacks at the time of publication.
- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed it conducted three unspecified separate attacks on Ain al Assad airbase in Anbar Province, Iraq, and a separate attack on Erbil International Airport in northern Iraq on November 6.[46] The group has claimed four attacks on Erbil International Airport and thirteen attacks on Ain al Assad since October 18.
- The Islamic Resistance of Iraq claimed it conducted an unspecified attack on US bases at Tal Baydar, in northern Syria, and al Tanf in eastern Syria. The group targeted Tal Baydar for the second time on November 6. It first targeted this position on November 5.[47] Islamic Resistance of Iraq has targeted al Tanf five times since October 18.
- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed that it targeted an unspecified US base in Iraq and Syria with a medium-range “Aqsa 1” missile for the first time.[48] Prior Islamic Resistance in Iraq-claimed attacks used drones and short-range rockets.

Iranian-backed Iraqi proxy Ashab al Kahf threatened to target the US Embassy in Iraq, which is consistent with calls for escalation from Kataib Hezbollah. Ashab al Kahf is not linked to Kataib Hezbollah, but it is close to other top Iranian proxy groups in Iraq.[49] Ashab al Kahf circulated a statement signed by the Islamic Resistance in Iraq announcing the group’s intent to target the US Embassy in Iraq on November 5.[50] Ashab al Kahf released the statement after Blinken’s November 5 meeting with Sudani,

during which he discussed ongoing attacks targeting US forces in Iraq and warned of possible US retaliation.[51] The statement claimed that diplomatic efforts to close US bases in Iraq had been exhausted and that military force must be used.

Ashab al Kahf last fired rockets at the US embassy in November 2020.[52] Ashab al Kahf issued several threats to target US forces in Iraq in June and July 2023 and conducted an IED campaign targeting US logistics convoys managed by Iraqi contractors in Iraq, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[53] Ashab al Kahf previously issued threats to target the US embassy in July and August 2023.[54] Iranian-backed Iraqi proxy militia Kataib Hezbollah also threatened on November 4 to escalate attacks on US forces if Blinken visited Baghdad.[55]

Iranian officials condemned Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu's suggestion that Israel could use a nuclear weapon on the Gaza Strip. Eliyahu made the comment in a radio interview on November 5.[56] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the comment and suspended Eliyahu from participation in cabinet meetings.[57] Iranian Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanani stated on November 6 that Eliyahu's comment underscores the threat Israel poses to international safety and security.[58] Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian separately called on the UN Security Council and International Atomic Energy Organization to denuclearize Israel.[59]

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- [1] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israeli-military-poised-for-battle...>; <https://vnexplorer.net/israeli-military-poised-for-battle-for-gaza-city-...>
- [2] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1721409602896457890>
- [3] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1721409527789105474>
- [4] <https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1721471387464782198>
- [5] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/301>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/305>
- [6] <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-hamas-war-gaza-strip-2023-11-06/...>; <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/buildings-leveled-gazas-shati-refugee-17380010...>
- [7] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/298>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/315>
- [8] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16605>
- [9] https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2010/10/101025_sticky_bombs_iraq
- [10] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1721167071076085894>
- [11] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1721167298151522634>
- [12] <https://x.com/TuiteroMartin/status/1721181303238799682?s=20>; <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1721167298151522634?s=20>; <https://x.com/neonhandrail/status/1721407544198144016?s=20>
- [13] <https://t.me/newpress1/57239>
- [14] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-october-29-2023>
- [15] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/296>
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- [18] <https://t.me/QudsN/323719>; <https://t.me/QudsN/323716>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/291>; <https://t.me/newpress1/57256>
- [19] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/295>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/303>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/306>; <https://t.me/qassambrigades/29009>
- [20] <https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1721498731416035664>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/303>
- [21] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16599>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16602>
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[29] <https://twitter.com/JoeTruzman/status/1721366898661855667>; <https://t.me/KhalilRahmanBrigades/104>
[30] <https://t.me/KhalilRahmanBrigades/97>
[31] <https://t.me/KhalilRahmanBrigades/109>
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[34] https://t.me/C_Military1/38745; https://t.me/C_Military1/38747
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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 7, 2023

Iran Update, November 7, 2023

Peter Mills, Brian Carter, Kathryn Tyson, Johanna Moore, Annika Ganzeveld, Amin Soltani, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

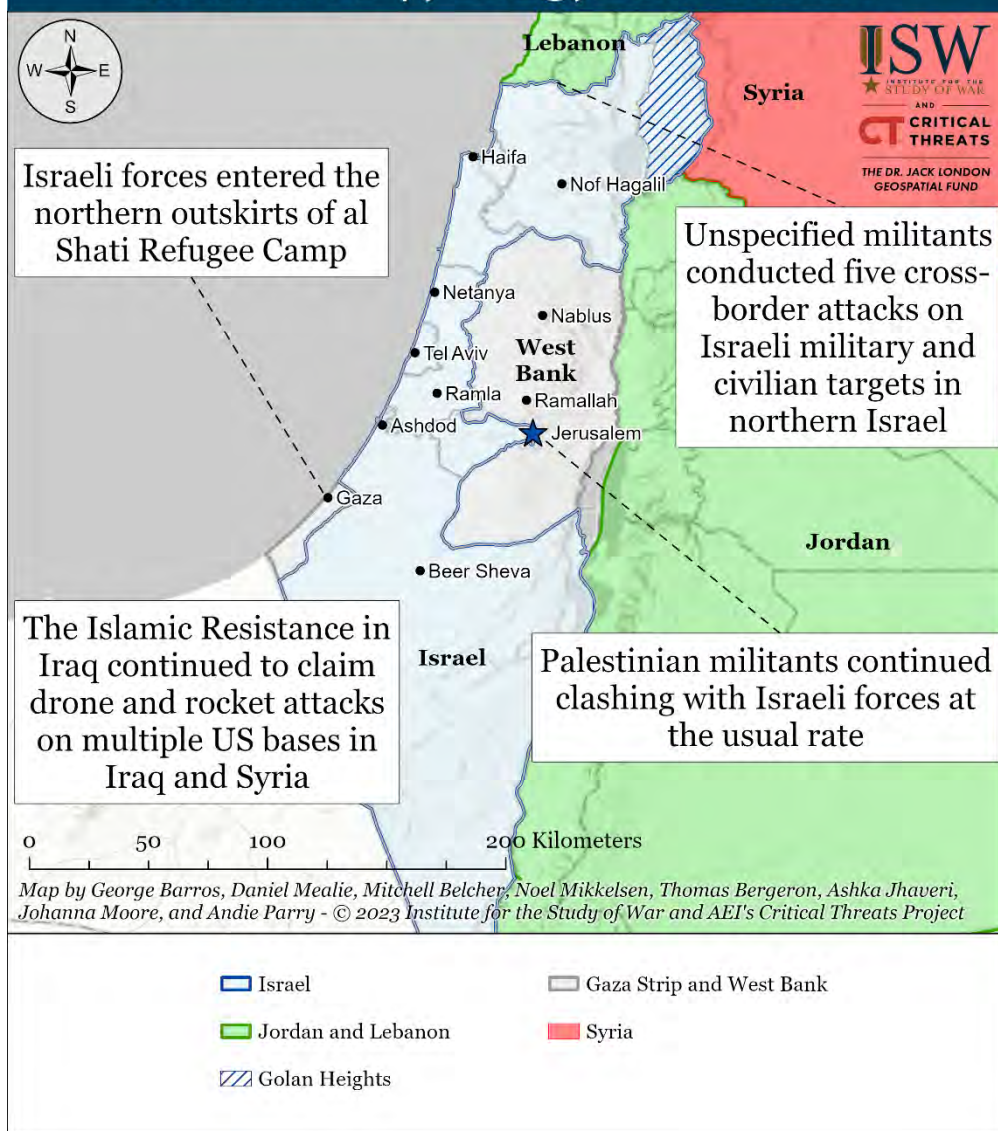
Note: CTP and ISW has refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli forces entered the northern outskirts of al Shati refugee camp in the northwestern Gaza Strip, according to local and Axis of Resistance-affiliated reporting as well as geolocated footage.
2. Hamas and other Palestinian militants are continuing their attacks against the IDF behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations.
3. CTP-ISW recorded seven indirect fire attacks into Israel, five of which targeted Israeli military facilities.
4. The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade conducted eight attacks on Israeli forces in the West Bank after threatening revenge for an Israeli raid that killed fighters from the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade and Hamas.
5. Iranian-backed militants continued cross-border attacks into northern Israel at their normal rate.
6. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for four attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria.
7. UK-based outlet Amwaj Media reported that senior Axis of Resistance officials traveled to Iran in the summer of 2023 to establish a regional joint operations room.
8. Iranian officials are continuing their attempts to rally the Arab and Muslim world against Israel.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 7, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

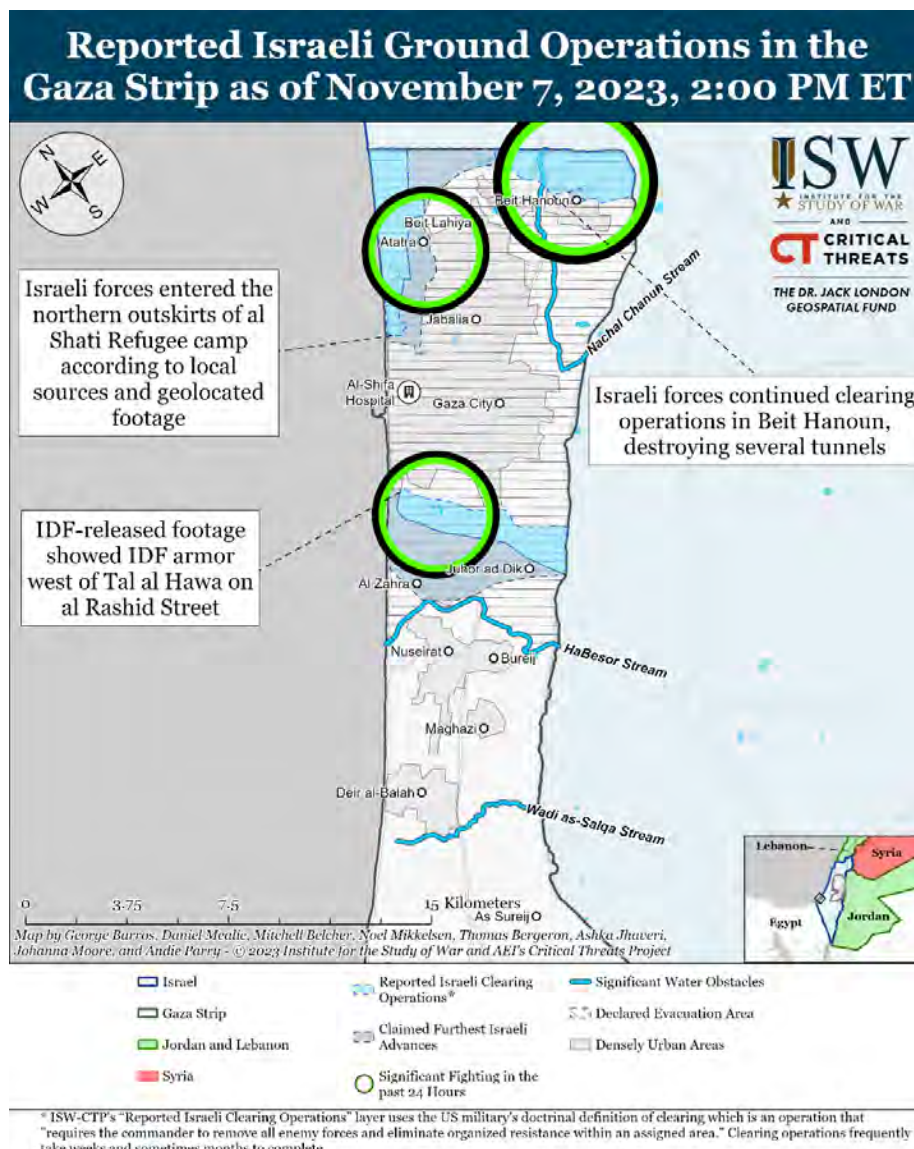
- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israeli forces entered the northern outskirts of al Shati refugee camp in the northwestern Gaza Strip on November 7, according to local and Axis of Resistance-affiliated reporting as well as geolocated footage. A Palestinian journalist cited local sources that said that the IDF reached an apartment building just north of al Shati camp.[1] An Axis of Resistance-affiliated source similarly claimed that the IDF engaged unspecified Palestinian militants at positions east and west of the building.[2] Geolocated Hamas footage from November 4 furthermore showed Hamas militants firing tandem charge anti-tank rockets at Israeli armor north of al Shati camp.[3]

Israeli forces continued clearing operations in Beit Hanoun on November 7. The IDF said that it forces destroyed several Hamas tunnels inside a residential home in Beit Hanoun.[4]

Hamas and other Palestinian militants are continuing their attacks against the IDF behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations. Axis of Resistance-affiliated media reported fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants in the al Amoudi area near Atatra.[5] An independent social media account geolocated IDF footage of the fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants near Atatra.[6] Unidentified Palestinian militants separately attacked an IDF unit near the Sharm amusement park in Netzarim on November 7, according to a Palestinian journalist.[7] Fighting behind the Israeli forward line of advance is consistent with the doctrinal definition of "clear," which is a tactical task that "requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area." Clearing operations frequently take weeks and sometimes months to complete. Enemy counterattacks will often persist throughout a clearing operation until the clearing force has successfully eliminated organized resistance in its sector. Attacks may still occur infrequently even after the end of a clearing operation due to the re-infiltration of enemy forces.

The IDF reported that its forces located a Hamas unit planning to attack advancing Israeli forces from a building adjacent to the al Quds Hospital outside Gaza City and called in air support for a strike.[8] The strike caused several secondary explosions. The IDF suggested that there had been a weapons stockpile at the site.[9] A Palestinian journalist reported that the IDF is making advances to the Tal al Hawa neighborhood south of Gaza City on November 6, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[10]

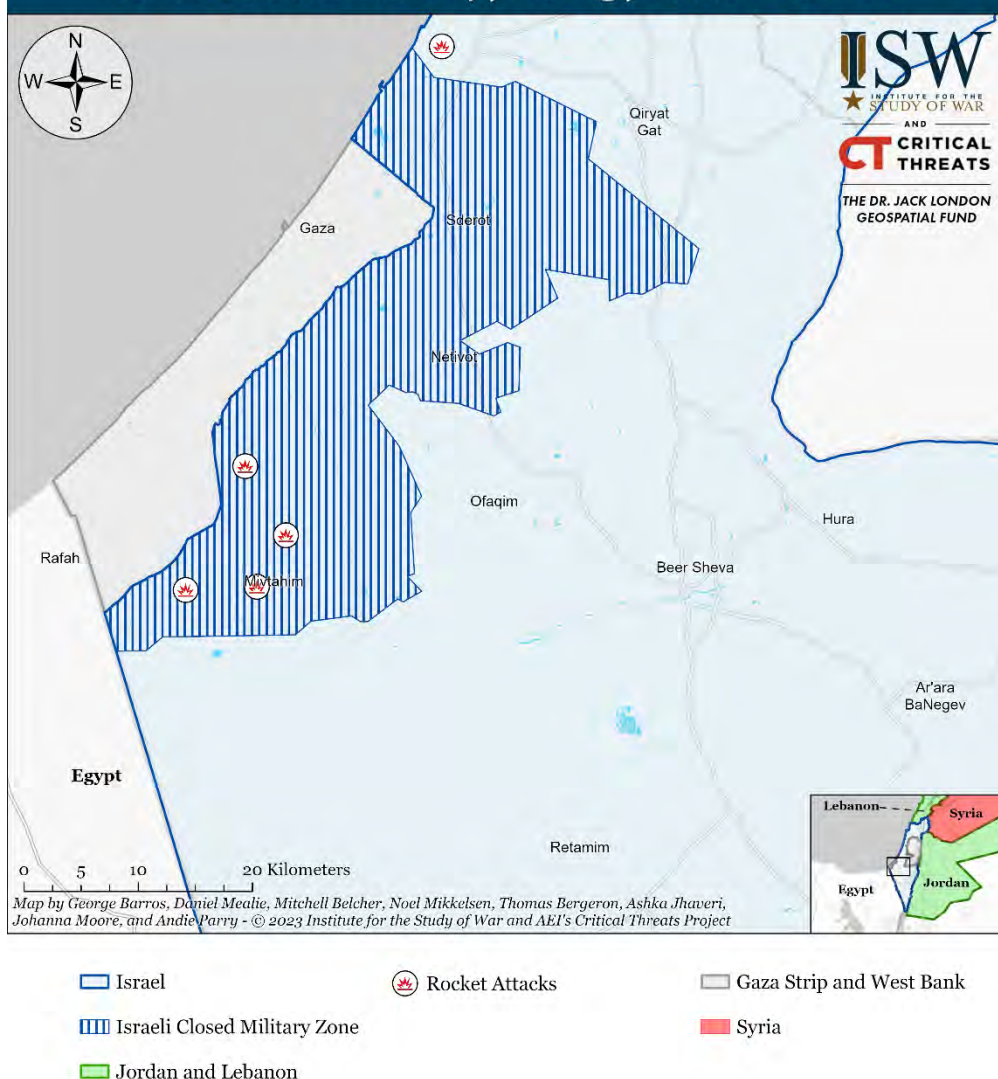


CTP-ISW recorded seven indirect fire attacks into Israel, five of which targeted Israeli military facilities.^[11] The al Qasem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—claimed two rocket attacks targeting Ashdod and Tel Aviv.^[12] Axis of Resistance-affiliated media claimed that the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade—the self-claimed military wing of Fatah—conducted three rocket attacks targeting Israeli military facilities.^[13] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade has not claimed responsibility for any three of these reported attacks at the time of publication. Axis of Resistance-affiliated media also claimed that unidentified Palestinian militants destroyed several wings of the Barzilai Hospital in Ashkelon in a rocket attack.^[14] Half as many indirect fire attacks into Israel occurred at the time of publication on November 7 compared to November 6.



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 7, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

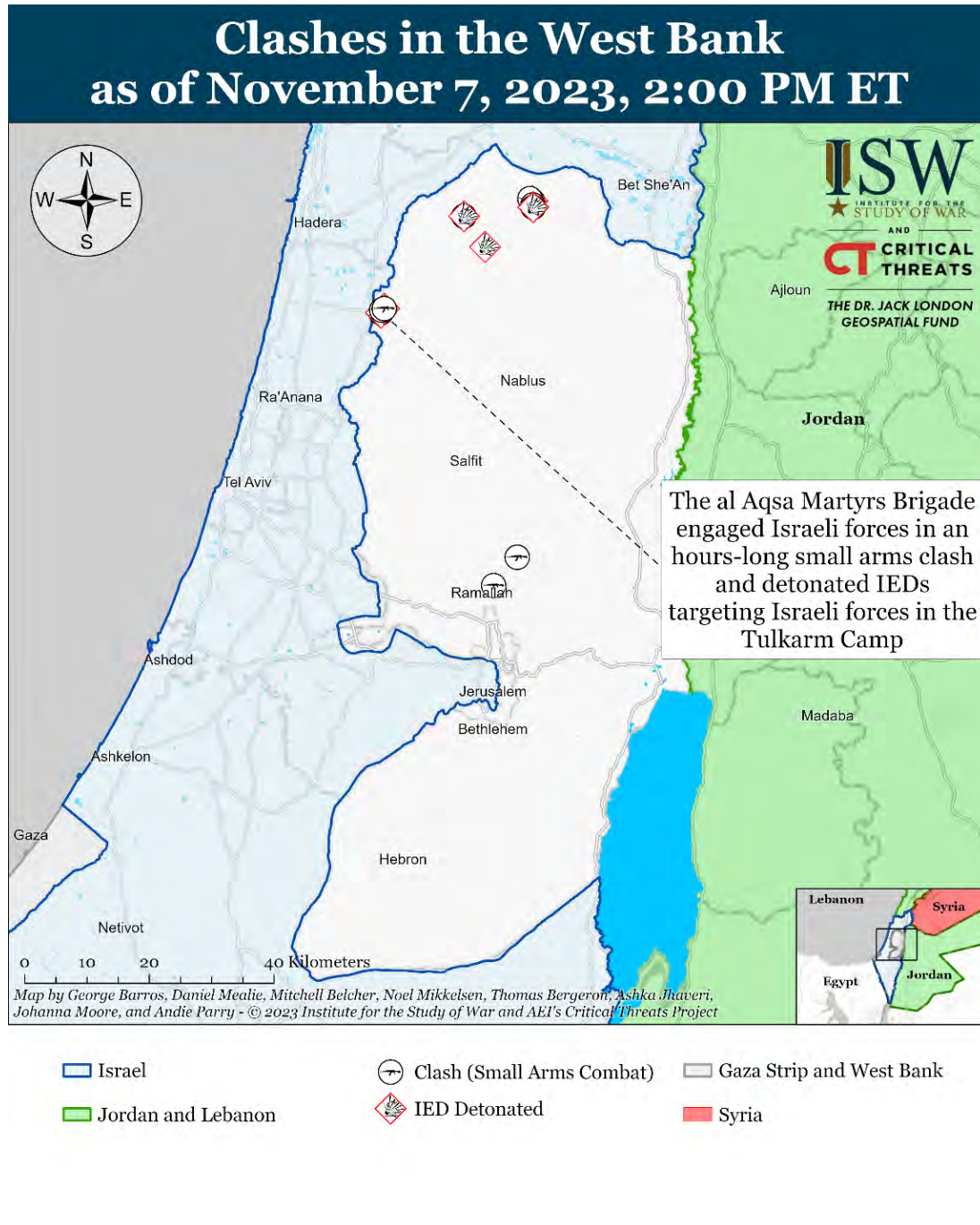
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
Palestinian militants continued clashing with Israeli forces at the usual rate in the West Bank on November 7. The al Qassem Brigades, al Quds Brigades, and al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade engaged Israeli forces in 12 small arms clashes and conducted seven IED attacks targeting Israeli forces.^[15] These attacks occurred primarily around Jenin and Tulkarm in the northern West Bank. Unspecified militants also detonated an IED targeting Israeli forces in Jenin.^[16] Unspecified militants separately clashed with Israeli forces with small arms fire in Ramallah.^[17]

The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade conducted eight attacks on Israeli forces in the West Bank on November 7 after threatening revenge for an Israeli raid that killed fighters from the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade and Hamas. Israeli forces killed at least three al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade and Hamas fighters during a raid in Tulkarm on November 6.^[18] The Tulkarm Battalion of the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade said on November 6 that it would avenge these fighters within 24 hours and appears to be acting on its threat.^[19] Most of the al

Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade attacks on November 7 occurred in Tulkarm in the northern West Bank, which included an hours-long engagement between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces in the Tulkarm camp.^[20] The Tulkarm Battalion of the al Quds Brigades also engaged Israeli forces in the Tulkarm camp at the same time, indicating possible coordination between the groups. The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade and al Quds Brigades claimed combined attacks in Tulkarm in October 2023.^[21]



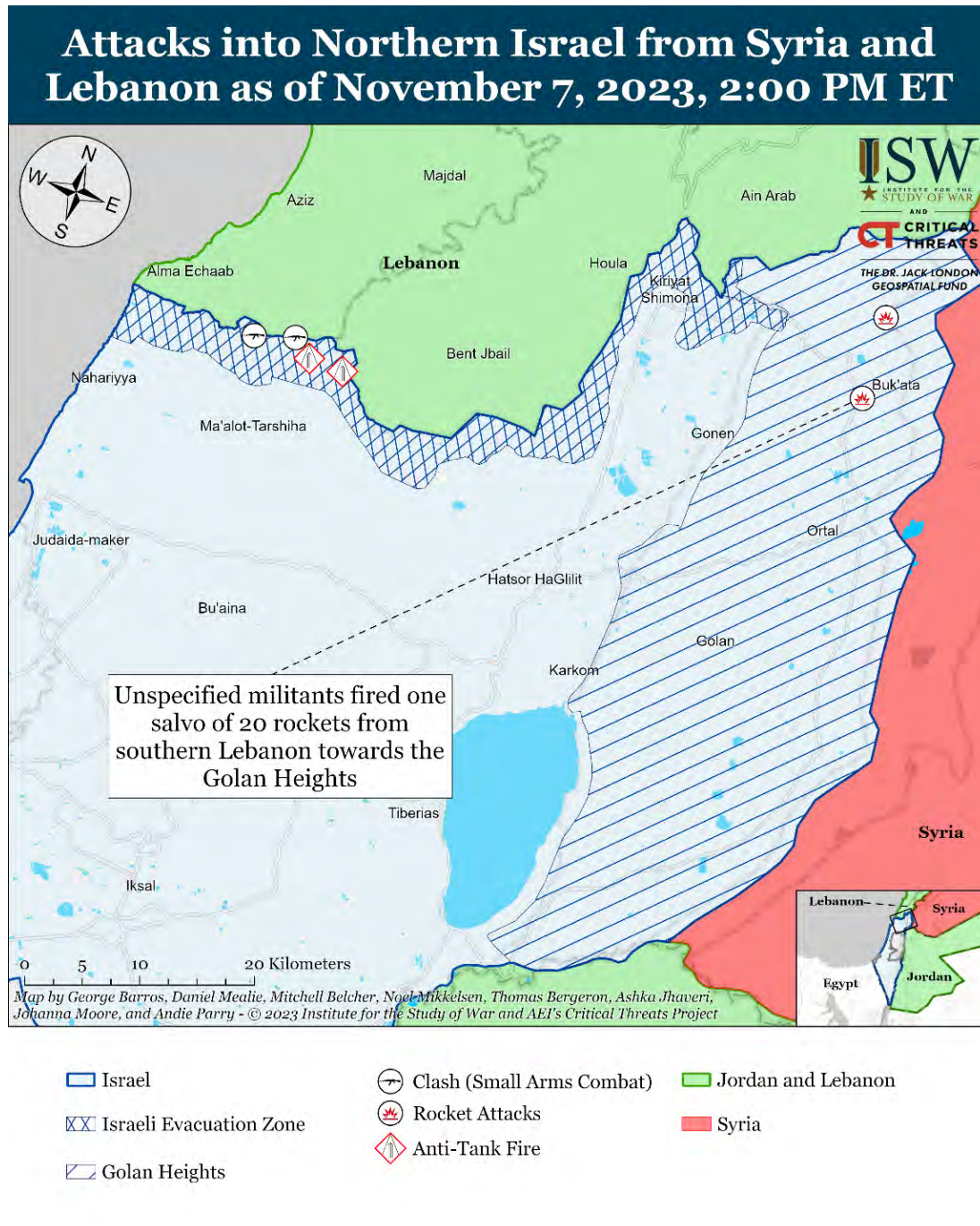
This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

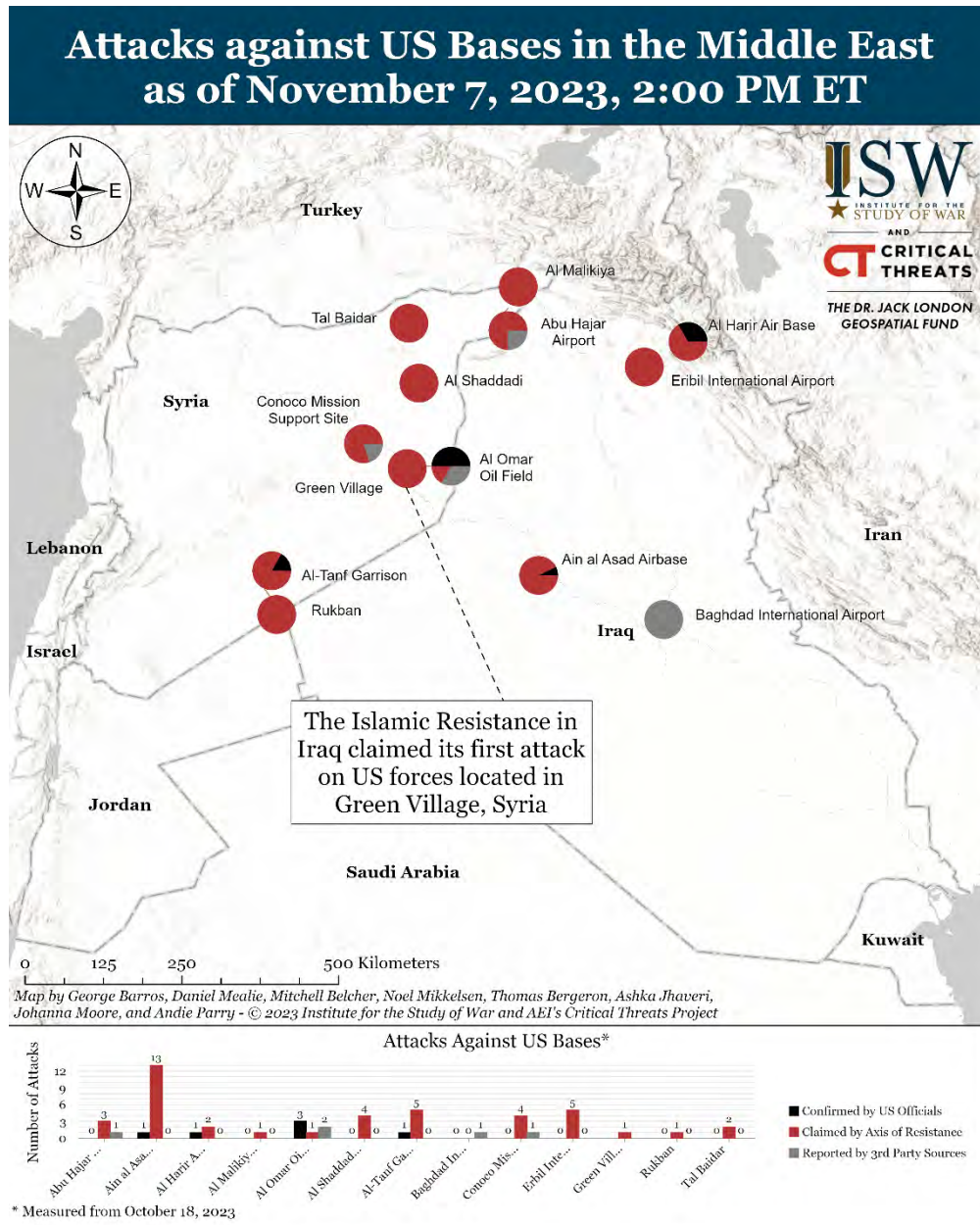
Iranian-backed militants continued cross-border attacks into northern Israel at their normal rate on November 7. Unspecified militants conducted five attacks on Israeli military and civilian targets in northern Israel with anti-tank missiles, rockets, and small arms fire.[22] Unspecified militants also fired one salvo of 20 rockets from southern Lebanon toward the Golan Heights on November 7.[23] The IDF responded by firing artillery at the source of the attacks in Lebanon.[24]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts



The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for four attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria on November 7. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed 42 attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East since October 18. A Syrian regime-affiliated social media account claimed the Islamic Resistance in Iraq is using variants of the Samad-2 drone to attack US forces in Iraq and Syria.^[25] The Houthi movement is the primary operator of the Samad-2 drone, although Lebanese Hezbollah and Kataib Hezbollah in Iraq also maintain variants of this platform.^[26]

- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed that it conducted two separate one-way drone attacks targeting Erbil International Airport and al Harir airbase in northern Iraq on November 7.^[27] The group has claimed five attacks on Erbil International Airport and four attacks on al Harir airbase since October 18.

- The Islamic Resistance al Dhaferin Group, which is affiliated with the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, previously threatened to attack al Harir airbase on November 5.[28]
- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed that it conducted one-way drone and rocket attacks on US bases at the Green Village and Conoco bases in northeastern Syria.[29] The group's claimed attack on US forces at Green Village is its first claimed attack there since October 18, although it previously targeted a nearby US base at al Omar oil field on October 24. The group has also claimed three attacks on the Conoco base since October 18.

The Houthi military spokesperson claimed that the group launched an unspecified number of attack drones at “sensitive sites” in Israel on November 6.[30] The Houthis released a video on November 7 showing the launch of 10 drones.[31] The IDF did not comment on the Houthi's claimed drone attack.[32] Israeli media reported that no alarms were activated in southern Israel, suggesting the drones did not reach Israel.[33] CTP-ISW cannot independently confirm this drone attack. It would mark the fifth attempted Houthi attack against Israel since the Israel-Hamas war began if it did, in fact, occur.

Iranian officials are continuing their attempts to rally the Arab and Muslim world against Israel. Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf discussed holding an extraordinary meeting of the “Permanent Palestine Committee,” which is composed of the parliamentary heads of some Muslim countries, to support the “oppressed people of Palestine” during a phone call with Algerian Assembly President Ebrahim Boughali on November 7.[34] Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian similarly discussed Egyptian-Iranian cooperation ahead of the upcoming Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting in Riyadh on November 12 with Egyptian Foreign Affairs Minister Sameh Shoukry.[35] Iranian state media reported that President Ebrahim Raisi will attend the OIC meeting.[36] Iran has repeatedly used the OIC as a platform for uniting Arab and Muslim countries against Israel, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[37]

UK-based outlet Amwaj Media reported on November 7 that senior Axis of Resistance officials traveled to Iran in the summer of 2023 to establish a regional joint operations room.[38] Representatives and leaders from Hamas, PIJ, the Houthi movement, and numerous Iraqi militias met with senior Iranian leaders, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani. The Axis of Resistance originally established the operations room to “counter challenges” from the United States and Israel and is currently using the operations room to coordinate Axis of Resistance activities vis-a-vis the Israel-Hamas war. Ghaani has coordinated Axis of Resistance activities from the joint operations room in Beirut, according to an earlier Amwaj Media report.[39] Amwaj Media noted at the time that LH Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah is essentially leading the joint operations room. The establishment of this regional joint operations room is consistent with CTP-ISW's previous observation that Iran pursued greater coordination with Palestinian groups in the year leading up to Hamas' October 7 attack into Israel.[40] Senior PIJ and Hamas officials met with Iranian leaders, including Khamenei, in Tehran in June 2023, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[41]

[1] <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1721881215320334347>

[2] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38726; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38646

[3] <https://x.com/hengenahm/status/1721890230574456913?s=20>

[4] <https://x.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1721850966712918035?s=20>

[5] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38663

[6] <https://x.com/LoLManya/status/1721624923108438393?s=20>

[7] <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1721639564291289509?s=20>

[8] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2023/nov/07/israel-hamas-war-live...>

[9] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2023/nov/07/israel-hamas-war-live...>

[10] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-6-2023>

[11] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38696 ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38696 ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38696 ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16608> ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38708 ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38711 ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/330> ; <https://t.me/almanarnews/135303> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/334> ; <https://t.me/almanarnews/135332>

[12] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/330> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/334>

[13] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38696 ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38696 ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38696

- [14] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38711
- [15] <https://t.me/sarayatulqarm/403>; <https://t.me/sarayatulqarm/405>; <https://t.me/sarayatulqarm/407>; <https://t.me/sarayatulqarm/411>; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5836>; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5836>; <https://t.me/sarayajineen/1139>; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5838>; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38651; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5839>; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38679; https://t.me/alqassam_jenin/482; <https://t.me/newpress1/57471>
- [16] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/5962>; <https://t.me/almanarnews/135321>
- [17] <https://t.me/HebronNewss/28605>; <https://t.me/HebronNewss/28612>; <https://t.me/HebronNewss/28618>
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- [19] <https://t.me/jeninnews1/72570>
- [20] <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5836>; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5836>; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5838>; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5838>; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5839>; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38679; <https://t.me/newpress1/57471>; <https://t.me/newpress1/57471>
- [21] <https://t.me/QudsN/321153>; <https://t.me/QudsN/321145>
- [22] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1721821776181637446>; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1721844918123958650>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1721857998534918485>; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38706; <https://twitter.com/nourabohsn/status/1721914891584364753>; <https://twitter.com/nourabohsn/status/1721916977973809260>
- [23] <https://twitter.com/guyelster/status/1721904173145542968>
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- [25] <https://twitter.com/SAMSyria0/status/1721593451915948461>
- [26] <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Yemen%E2%80%99s-Houthis-a...>; <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/kataib-hezbollah-lea...>
- [27] <https://t.me/elamharbi/80>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/79>
- [28] <https://t.me/alzafren/7>
- [29] <https://t.me/elamharbi/81>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/82>
- [30] <https://twitter.com/army21ye/status/1721592644944494911>
- [31] <https://twitter.com/army21ye/status/1721948105258492014>
- [32] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/yemens-houthis-claim-new-drone-attack-on-i...>
- [33] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/yemens-houthis-claim-new-drone-attack-on-i...>
- [34] <https://www.iribnews dot ir/fa/news/4046226>
- [35] <https://mfa dot ir/portal/NewsView/733358>
- [36] <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1402/08/16/2984686>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/irans-raisi-attend-oic-talks-r...>
- [37] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-april-7-2023>
- [38] <https://amwaj dot media/article/inside-story-the-secret-arab-visitors-in-iran-and-the-liberation-of-jerusalem>
- [39] <https://amwaj.media/article/axis-gaza-gaani>
- [40] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-16-2023>
- [41] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-june-23-2023>

IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 8, 2023

Iran Update, November 8, 2023

Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Kathryn Tyson, Peter Mills, and Amin Soltani

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

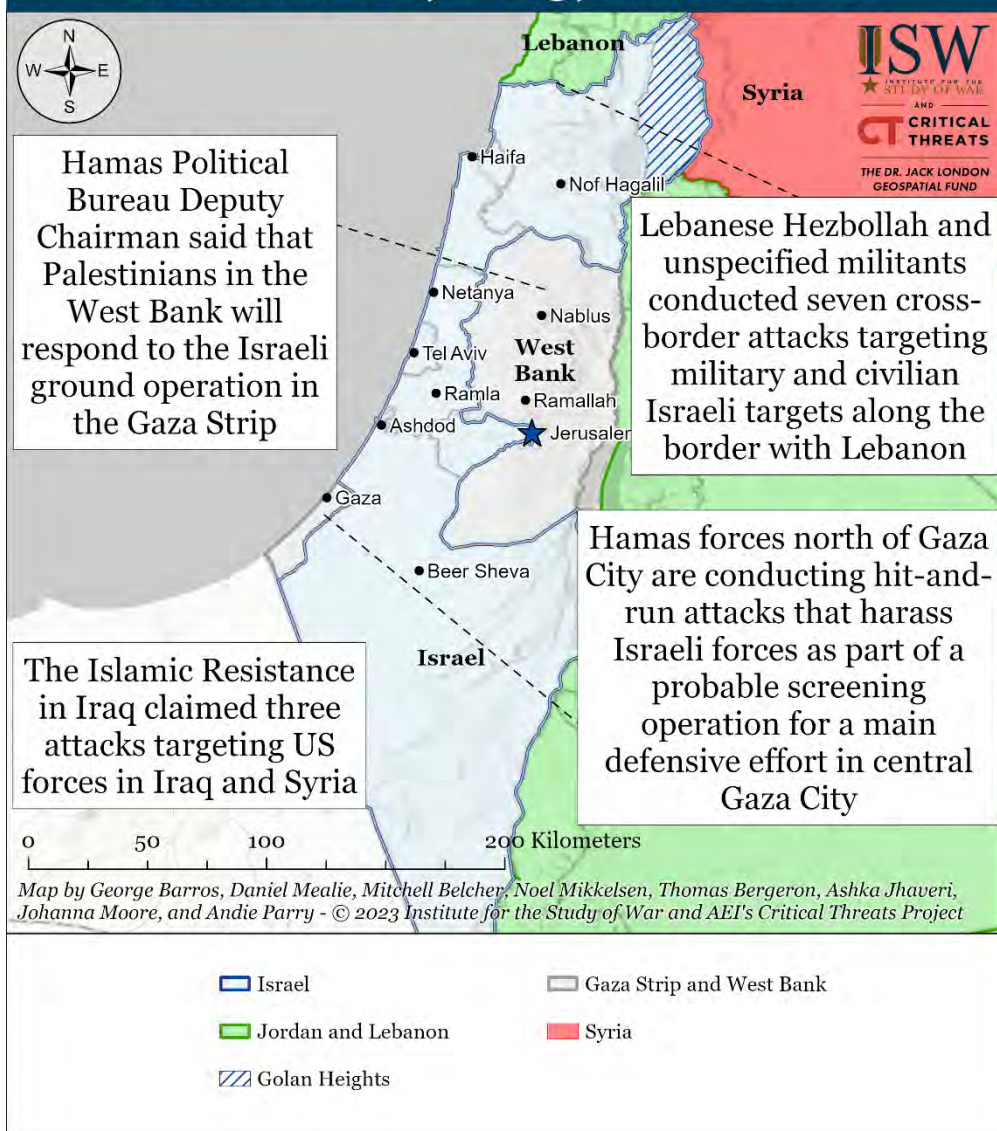
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Note: This update has been revised to clarify that the reconciliation deal between Hamas and Fatah occurred in 2022. A previous version of this update did not specify the year. Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Hamas forces north of Gaza City conducted hit-and-run attacks that harassed Israeli forces, which supports CTP-ISW's previous assessment that Hamas units in the northern Gaza Strip are screening a main defensive effort in central Gaza City.
2. Hamas Political Bureau Deputy Chairman Saleh al Aroui said that Palestinians in the West Bank will respond to the Israeli ground operation in the Gaza Strip, which is consistent with repeated Hamas calls for further resistance in the West Bank.
3. Hamas political leaders continue to call for Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) to increase its involvement in the Hamas-Israel war to alleviate the pressure that Hamas is facing in Gaza.
4. Brazilian police working with Mossad arrested LH operatives who were planning an attack on Jewish targets in Brazil on November 8.
5. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for three attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria on November 8. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed 45 attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East since October 18.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 8, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

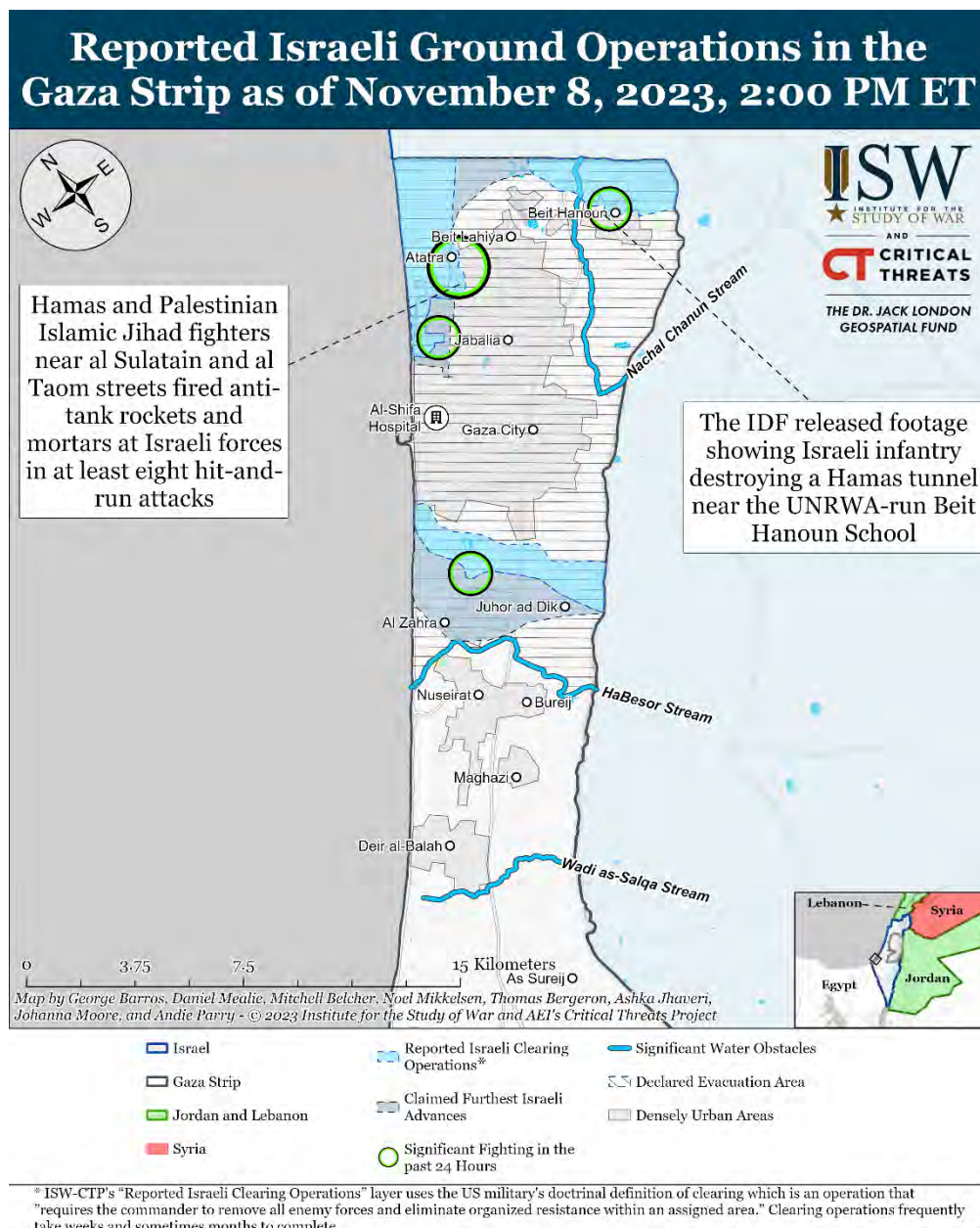
- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Hamas forces north of Gaza City conducted hit-and-run attacks that harassed Israeli forces, which supports CTP-ISW's previous assessment that Hamas units in the northern Gaza Strip are screening a main defensive effort in central Gaza City. This is consistent with Hamas's intent to fight a "long war...to force" Israel into a ceasefire.[1] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) published a map showing the area of responsibility of one Hamas company between al Toam and al Falouja roads in the northern Gaza Strip on November 3.[2] Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) fighters near al Sulatain and al Taom streets, which are in or in the vicinity of this sector, fired anti-tank rockets and mortars at Israeli forces in at least eight hit-and-run attacks.[3] Commercially available satellite imagery also showed tank tracks and cleared terrain consistent with Israeli clearing operations. Palestinian media also reported Israeli activity south of the al Toam-al Falouja sector.[4] This sector is large for a company-sized unit defending against a mechanized

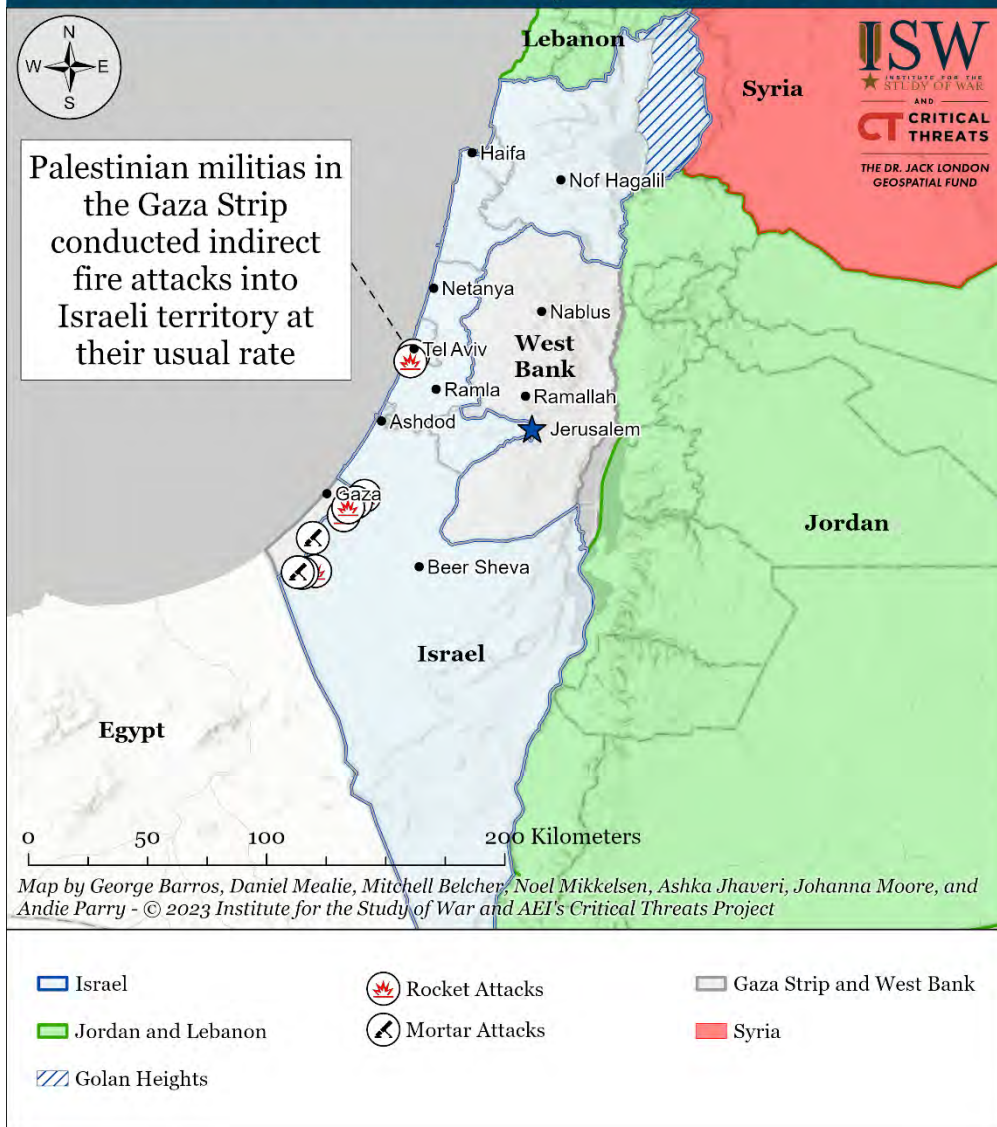
advance in an urban environment, assuming that Hamas tactical units are roughly similar to or smaller than US infantry units.[5] Hamas has not used more complex or advanced systems and tactics, such as house-borne improvised explosive devices, explosively-formed penetrators, advanced anti-tank missiles, or larger and more complex road-buried improvised explosive devices. This suggests that Hamas is weighting its main effort in Gaza City rather than the northern Gaza Strip.[6]

Israeli forces continued clearing operations in Beit Hanoun in the northeastern Gaza Strip on November 8. The IDF released footage showing Israeli infantry destroying a Hamas tunnel near the UNRWA-run Beit Hanoun School.[7] The Israeli infantry and engineering units are tasked with clearing and destroying Hamas tunnels, according to the IDF.[8]

Israeli forces continued operations in the vicinity of al Shati Refugee Camp on November 8. Hamas claimed that it targeted IDF armor using anti-tank tandem rockets in Sheikh Radwan, which is east of al Shati Refugee Camp.[9]



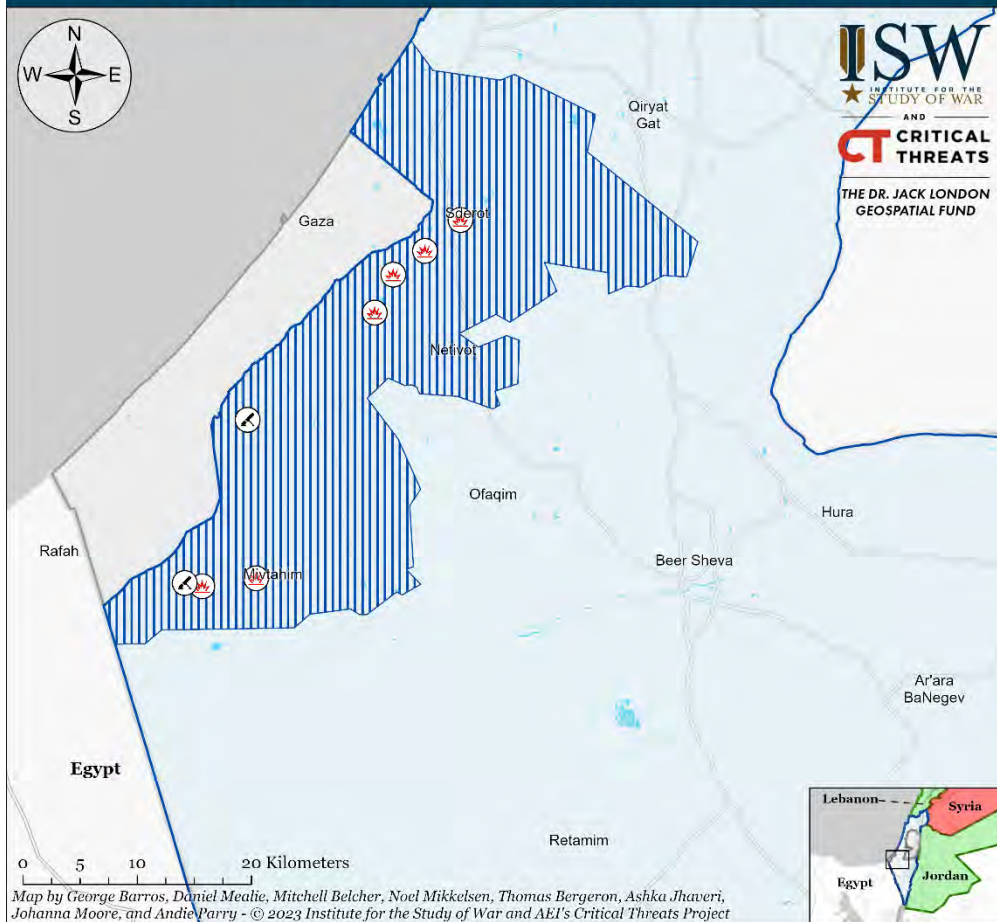
Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 8, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory at their usual rate. The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—claimed responsibility for three indirect fire attacks, including two attacks against Tel Aviv.^[10] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed responsibility for nine indirect fire attacks on November 7-8, primarily targeting civilian and military targets in southern Israel.^[11] The National Resistance Brigades—the militant wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)—conducted one mortar attack targeting a southern Israeli town.^[12] The al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades—the self-appointed militant wing of Fatah—claimed responsibility for one rocket attack targeting an Israeli town in the south.^[13]

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 8, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Israel | Rocket Attacks | Gaza Strip and West Bank |
| Israeli Closed Military Zone | Mortar Attacks | Jordan and Lebanon |
| | | Syria |

Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

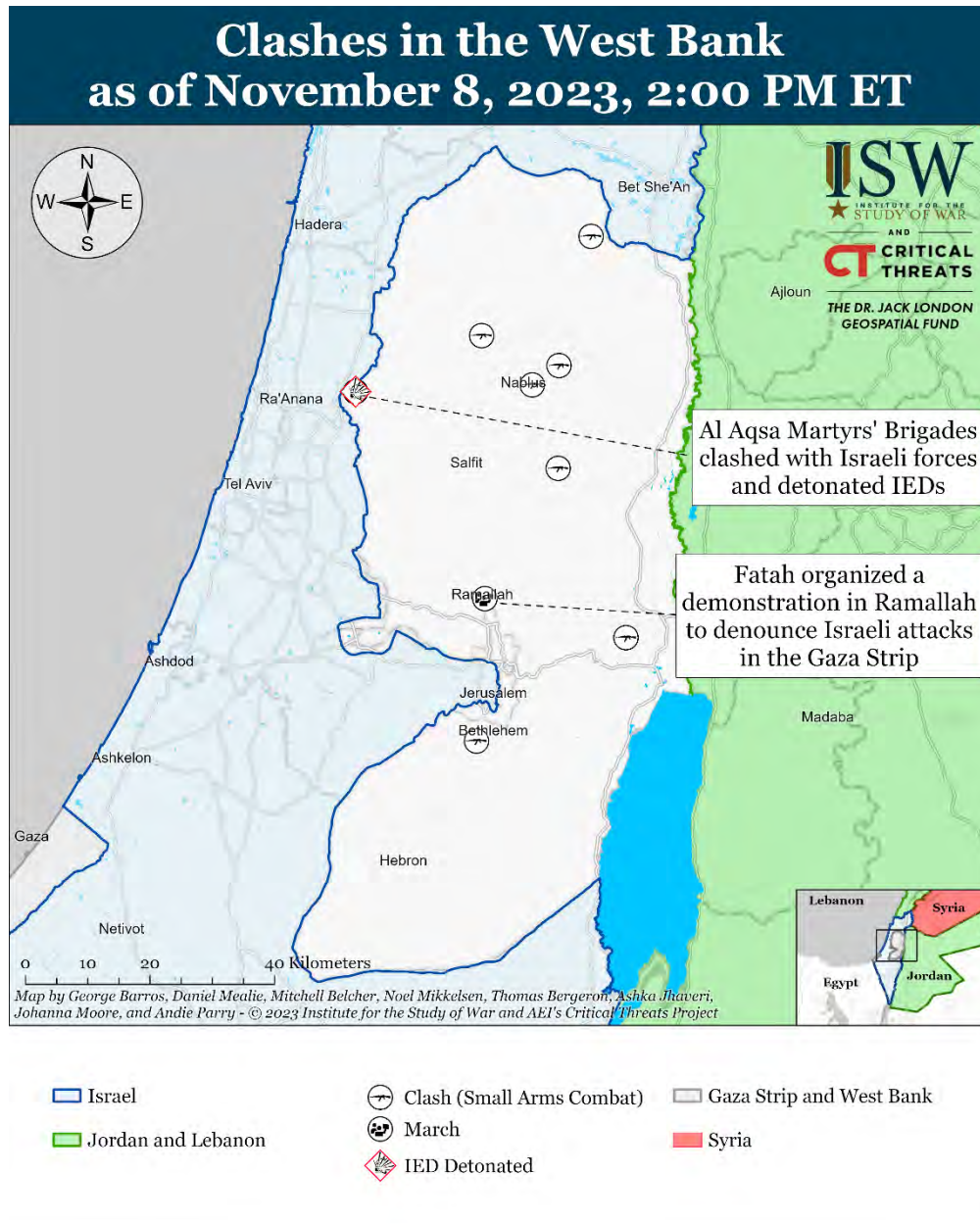
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Palestinian militants clashed with Israeli forces nine times across the West Bank on November 8. The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade claimed it engaged Israeli forces with small arms fire and detonated an IED in Qalqilya city.^[14] The Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades-affiliated Tulkarm Battalion said one of its militants died during clashes on November 7 and threatened revenge against Israel.^[15] Most small arms clashes occurred in the northern West Bank.^[16] Unspecified militants shot at an Israeli settlement near Nablus amid heightened tension between Palestinians and settlers in the West Bank.^[17] The attacks on Israeli settlements are consistent with Iranian and Hamas rhetoric describing Israeli settlers in the West Bank as legitimate military targets. The IDF detained 27 wanted persons in raids in the West Bank, 10 of whom are affiliated with Hamas.^[18]

Hamas Political Bureau Deputy Chairman Saleh al Arouri said Palestinians in the West Bank will respond to the Israeli ground operation in the Gaza Strip, which is consistent with repeated Hamas calls for further resistance in the West Bank.[19] Arouri praised the Fatah fighters on the ground and called on everyone in the West Bank to actively participate in resistance.[20] Hamas and Fatah signed a reconciliation deal on October 13, 2022, after having been at odds for more than a decade.[21] Hamas chairman Khaled Mashaal called on Fatah to defeat Israel together with Hamas in late October 2023.[22] CTP-ISW previously assessed that the Israel-Hamas War may be driving Palestinian militia coordination in the West Bank despite continued tension between the two groups.[23]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

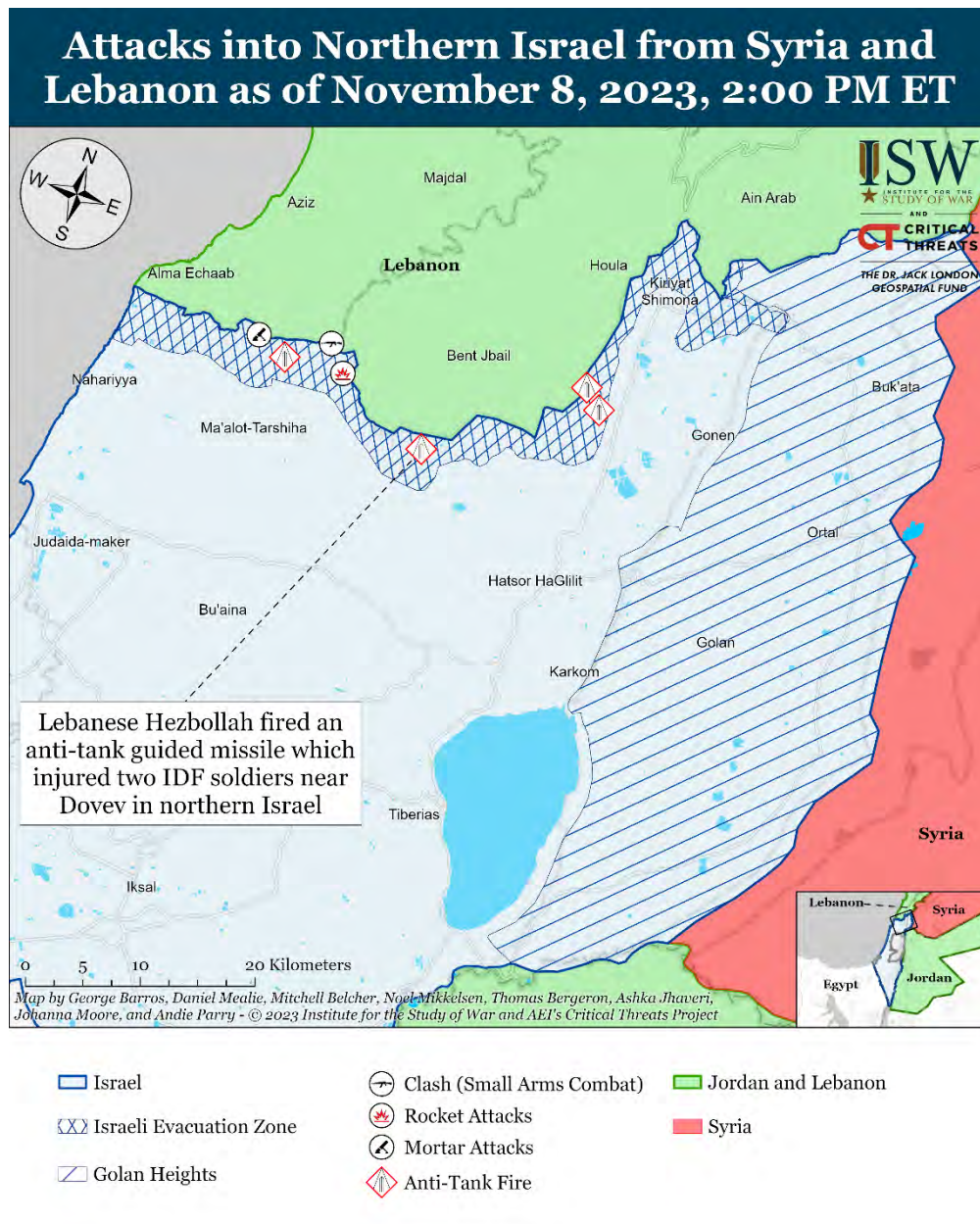
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), continued cross-border attacks into northern Israel at their normal rate on November 8. LH claimed two unspecified attacks on Israeli border

positions and one anti-tank guided missile attack near Dovev in northern Israel.[24] Israeli media reported that two IDF soldiers were wounded in the attack on Dovev.[25] The IDF responded by firing artillery at the source of the attacks in Lebanon.[26] Unspecified militants fired rockets, mortars, and anti-tank missiles in four separate attacks on Israeli military and civilian targets in northern Israel.[27]

Hamas political leaders continue to call for LH to increase its involvement in the Hamas-Israel war to alleviate the pressure that Hamas is facing in the Gaza Strip. Hamas Political Bureau Deputy Chairman Saleh al Arouri praised LH and called for it to increase its attacks on northern Israel on November 8.[28] LH Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem expressed support for Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel but did not say on November 8 that LH would increase operations against Israel.[29]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

Brazilian police working with Mossad arrested LH operatives who were planning an attack on Jewish targets in Brazil on November 8. Brazilian Federal Police arrested two people, whom LH allegedly recruited and financed, on terrorism charges in Sao Paulo.^[30] The Israeli Prime Minister's Office stated Iran directed and financed the attempted terror attack, which was planned by LH.^[31] LH has operated networks in South America for decades to launder money and conduct terror attacks.

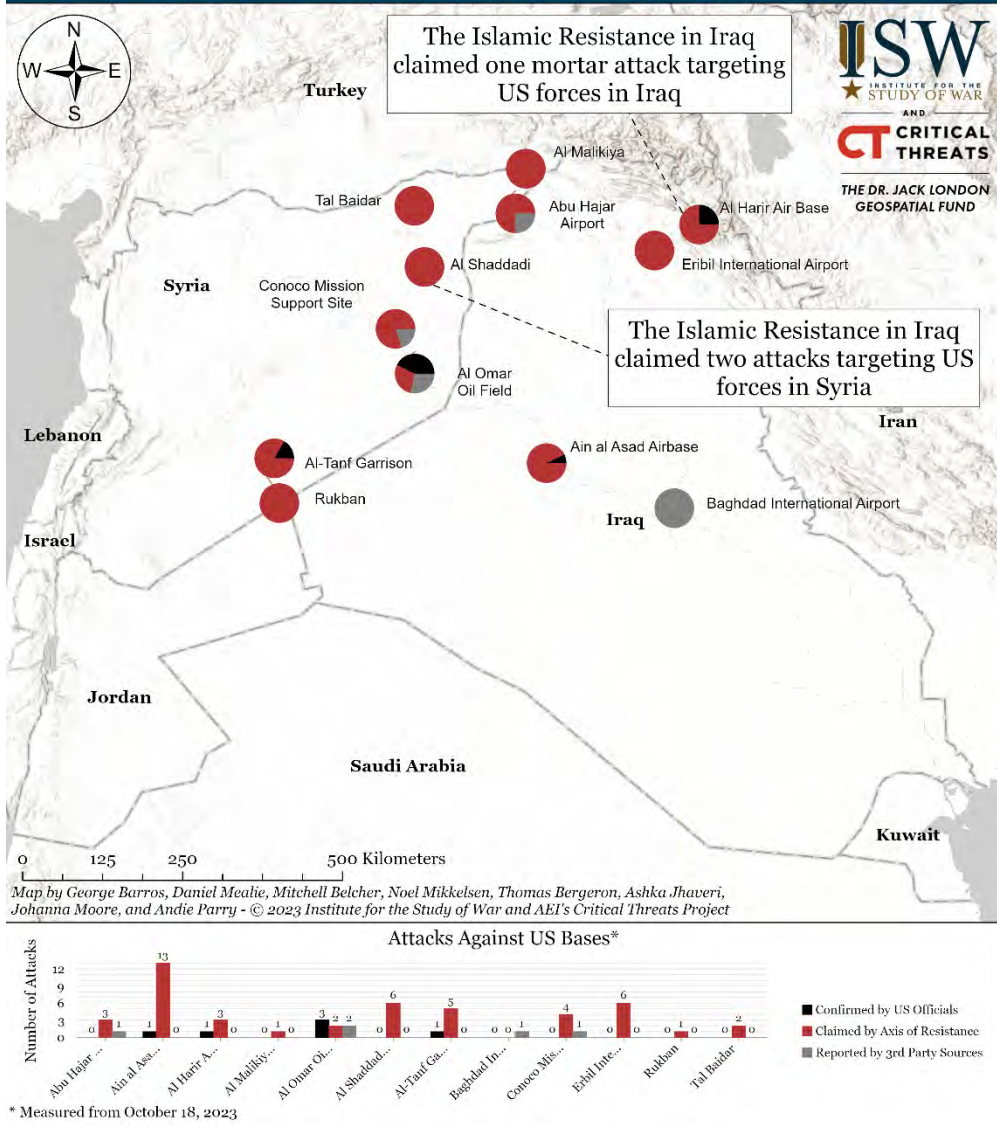
- LH conducted two terror attacks targeting the Israeli embassy and a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1992 and 1994, respectively.^[32] The US Treasury Department designated four LH operatives in September 2023, who were connected to these terror attacks and continue to facilitate financing for LH across Latin America.^[33]

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for three attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria on November 8. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed 45 attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East since October 18.

- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed a rocket attack targeting a US position in al Shadaddi, Hasakah Province, Syria on November 8. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq separately claimed a drone attack targeting a US position in al Shadaddi and released a video showing the launch of two drones.^[34]
- The al Dhaferin Group of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed a mortar attack targeting US forces at the al Harir Air Base in Erbil, Iraq on November 8.^[35] This is the first mortar attack on the al Harir Air Base since October 18. Mortars have significantly shorter ranges than drones, meaning that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq cell that conducted the attack was operating from deep within Iraqi Kurdistan. Mortar attacks are also more difficult, though not impossible, for counter-rocket, artillery, and mortar systems to intercept. The attack came after the group released graphics on November 6 and 7 threatening further attacks.^[36]

The Houthi military spokesperson claimed that the Houthis shot down a US drone over Yemeni territory on November 8. The Houthi spokesperson said the US MQ-9 Reaper drone was “carrying out hostile monitoring and spying activities” in Yemeni airspace.^[37] The Houthis previously claimed they shot down US drones over Yemen in 2021, but the US military denied some of these claims.^[38]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 8, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



The IRGC Navy commander warned that the presence of the *USS Florida Ohio-class*

submarine endangers the Persian Gulf region on November 8.[39] The IRGC Navy commander said that “maintaining the security of the Persian Gulf is a red line for the IRGC.” This official consistently repeats similar threats in response to US deployments of naval assets to the region and does not constitute an actual red line, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[40] The United States deployed the *Ohio-class* submarine to the region on November 5 to deter further Iranian escalation of the Israel-Hamas war.[41]

Iranian officials are claiming the United States coordinated nuclear threats with Israel after an Israeli minister suggested nuking the Gaza Strip. This adds a new element to the Iranian information operation to frame the United States and Israel as the antagonists in the war. Senior Iranian officials, including President Ebrahim Raisi, condemned Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu's November 4 suggestion that Israel could use a nuclear weapon on the Gaza Strip and argued that it demonstrated Israel's threat to global security on November 8.[42] IRGC-affiliated Tasnim News Agency similarly claimed that Israeli officials coordinated Eliyahu's suggestion with American officials.[43] Tasnim added that the United States has taken control of Israeli nuclear facilities.[44] These allegations are consistent with the long-running Iranian information campaign that claims the United States directs Israeli policy.[45] CTP-ISW

previously assessed that Iran is attempting to portray the United States and Israel as the antagonists in the war and deflect responsibility for any further escalation of the conflict away from itself.[46].

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- [1] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/how-hamas-aims-trap-israel-gaz...>
 - [2] <https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1720510546464682141>
 - [3] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38851; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38841; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/339>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/340>; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38822; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/345>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16626>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/342>
 - [4] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/6010>
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 - [6] https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1888.html; https://www.dotterrorism-info.org.il/Data/pdf/PDF1/hamas_080408_501786899.pdf
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 - [8] <https://idf.dot.il/147757>
 - [9] <https://web.telegram.org/a/#-1001137333589>
 - [10] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/337>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/338>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/354>
 - [11] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16616>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16618>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16620>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16621>
 - [12] https://t.me/kataeb_mogawma/3960
 - [13] <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5841>
 - [14] <https://t.me/newpress1/57605>
 - [15] <https://t.me/alredalsrey/431>; <https://t.me/alredalsrey/433>
 - [16] <https://t.me/alredalsrey/433>
 - [17] <https://t.me/almanarnews/135407>; <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-hamas-war-gaza-strip-2023-11-08/...>
 - [18] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1722178097217257899>
 - [19] <https://t.me/QudsN/325974>; <https://t.me/QudsN/325973>
 - [20] <https://t.me/QudsN/325974>; <https://t.me/QudsN/325973>
 - [21] <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/news/palestinian-factions-agree-end-divisi...>
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 - [24] <https://twitter.com/alishoeib1970/status/1722235620087746736>; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38845; https://t.me/C_Military1/38855
 - [25] <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1722242558091477232>
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 - [29] <https://defapress.dot.ir/en/news/84413/operation-al-aqsa-storm-sows-seeds-of-israeli-regime%E2%80%99s-downfall-hezbollah>
 - [30] <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-arrests-two-with-suspected...>; <https://apnews.com/article/brazil-hezbollah-terrorist-attack-federal-pol...>
 - [31] <https://twitter.com/IsraeliPM/status/1722334407653048688>
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 - [33] <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1726>
 - [34] <https://t.me/elamharbi/83>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/84>
 - [35] <https://t.me/alzafren/9>
 - [36] <https://t.me/alzafren/8>; <https://t.me/alzafren/7>
 - [37] <https://twitter.com/army21ye/status/1722282125607518298>
 - [38] <https://www.dot.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/yemen-rebels-claim-to-shoot-down-us-drone-in-marib/2376101>; <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/06/24/yemen-rebels-claim-downin...>
 - [39] <https://www.farsnews.dot.ir/gilan/news/14020817000440>

- [40] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-july-20-2023-64b9d7...> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-july-25-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-august-4-2023>
- [41] <https://time.com/6332014/middle-east-nuclear-submarine/> ; <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-11-06/us-attack-submarine-e...>
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- [45] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-13-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-17-2023>
- [46] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/iran-update-october-25-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-4-2023>

IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 9, 2023

Iran Update, November 9, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Peter Mills, Kathryn Tyson, Brian Carter, Amin Soltani, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

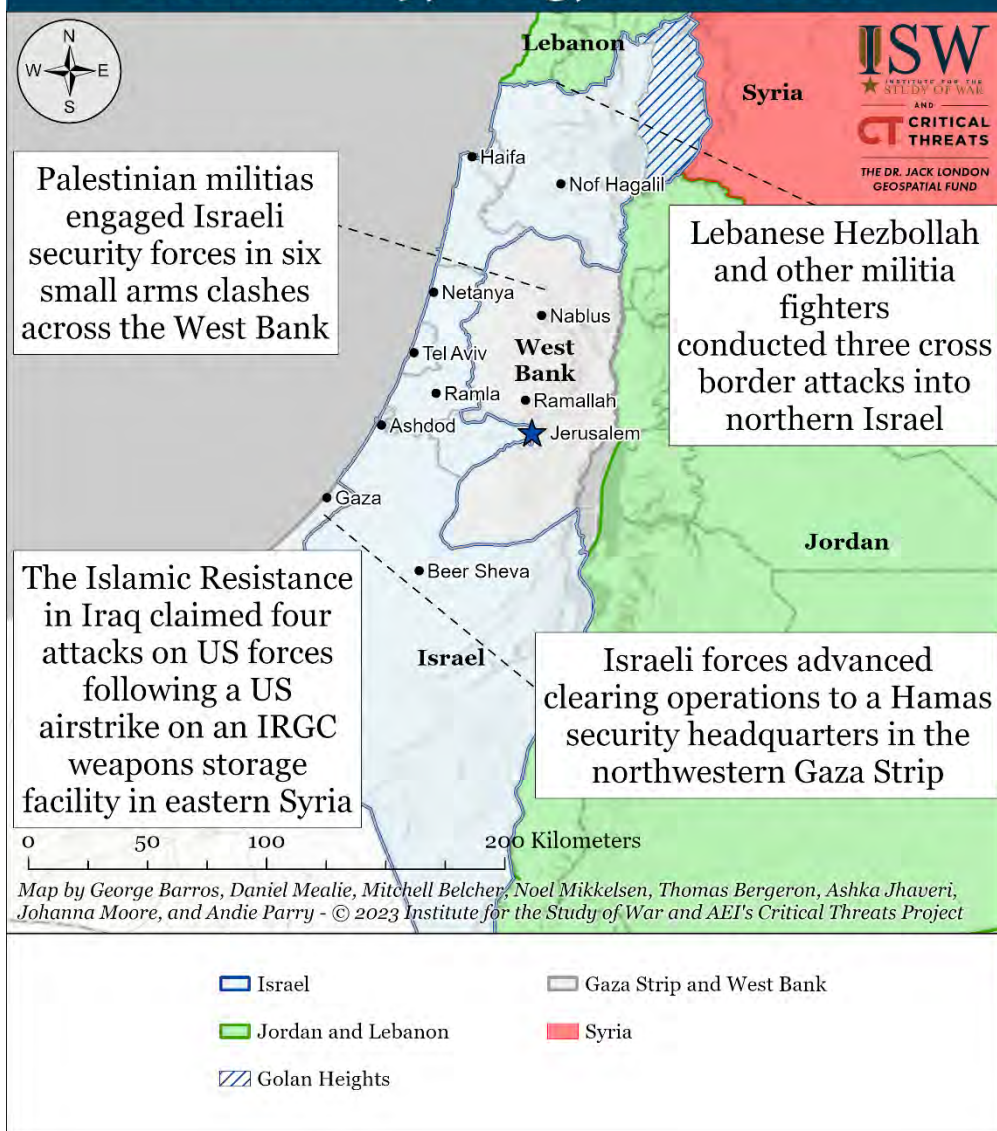
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli forces advanced to a Hamas security headquarters in the northwestern Gaza Strip.
2. Israeli forces conducted clearing operations west of Jabaliya city in the northwestern Gaza Strip.
3. Hamas and other Palestinian militia fighters are continuing their attacks against the IDF behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations.
4. Palestinian militias launched the fewest number of indirect fire attacks into Israel since the Israel-Hamas war began.
5. Palestinian militia fighters clashed with Israeli forces six times in the West Bank.
6. The Lions' Den claimed its first attacks in the West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war began. The Lions' Den continues to emphasize its alignment with Hamas.
7. Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Iranian-backed militias conducted three cross-border attacks into northern Israel.
8. The United States conducted an airstrike on an IRGC weapons storage facility in eastern Syria in response to continued Iranian-sponsored attacks in Iraq and Syria, which injured three US servicemembers.
9. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for an additional five attacks on US forces in Iraq, most of which occurred after the US airstrike in Syria. Abu Alaa al Walai—the secretary general of Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Seyyed ol Shohada—announced his group's support for attacks against US forces in Iraq.
10. The Houthi movement claimed that it fired multiple unspecified ballistic missiles targeting “sensitive sites” near Eilat in southern Israel on November 9, marking the sixth attempted Houthi attack on Israel.
11. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of the Economic Cooperation Organization summit in Tashkent to discuss the Israel-Hamas war.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 9, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

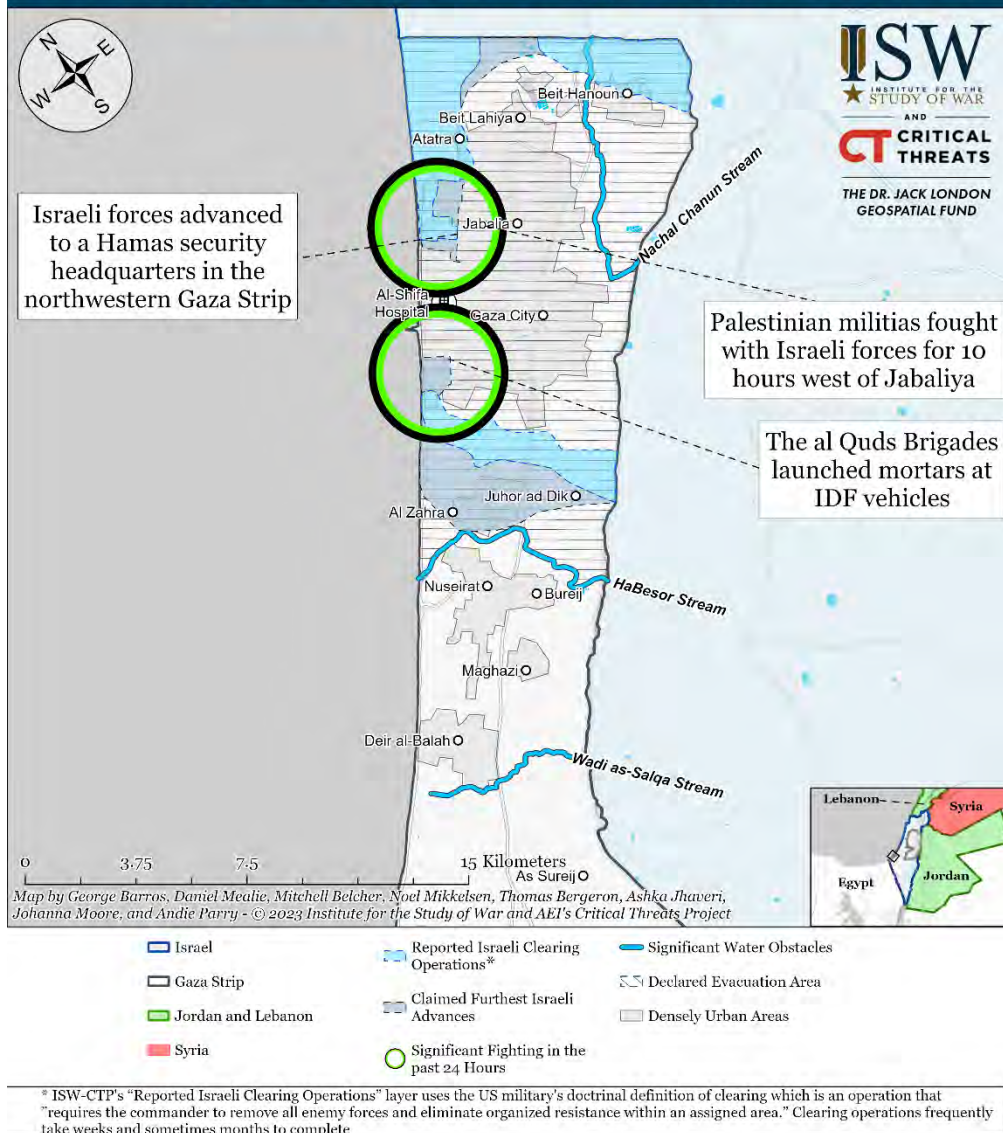
Israeli forces advanced to a Hamas security headquarters in the northwestern Gaza Strip. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said that infantry, armor, engineering, and special forces units raided the security headquarters, which included intelligence and air defense headquarters.^[1] The IDF killed 50 Palestinian fighters while clearing the infrastructure, which included an underground tunnel system. The IDF published a map of the area, detailing several tunnel shafts in close proximity to each other. These clusters of tunnels could enable the hit-and-run attacks on Israeli forces that CTP-ISW has observed.^[2] An independent analyst on X (Twitter) geolocated footage that Hamas published on November 8 showing militia fighters firing rocket propelled grenades (RPG) at Israeli forces in the security headquarters.^[3]

Israeli forces conducted clearing operations west of Jabaliya city in the northwestern Gaza Strip. The IDF located a Hamas weapons production and storage facility inside a residential building in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood. Israeli forces found drone parts, explosives, and operational plans in addition to a tunnel shaft with a cooling system.^[4] IDF spokesperson Daniel Hagari said on November 8 that the militia fighters have connected the tunnels to water and oxygen systems in preparation for a prolonged stay in them.^[5] The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—claimed to destroy an IDF tank with an RPG north of Sheikh Radwan neighborhood on November 9.^[6] An IDF combat team engaged in 10 hours of fighting in western Jabaliya on November 8, during which it seized weapons and exposed tunnel shafts.^[7] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—launched mortars at Israeli forces operating in the area.^[8]

Hamas and other Palestinian militia fighters are continuing their attacks against the IDF behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations. Local media reported violent clashes east of Beit Hanoun on November 9 after the IDF reported that its forces conducted ground operations there the previous day.^[9] The al Qassem Brigades claimed to ambush Israeli infantry forces near Juhur al Dik, which is consistent with CTP-ISW's assessment that Palestinian militias are attempting to harass and disrupt Israeli ground lines of communication.^[10] Palestinian militia fighters separately launched mortars at an Israeli command center in the northwestern Gaza Strip on November 8.^[11] Fighting behind the Israeli forward line of advance is consistent with the doctrinal definition of "clear," which is a tactical task that "requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area."

The National Resistance Brigades—the militant wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)—claimed an RPG attack on an IDF personnel carrier northwest of Gaza city.^[12] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades—the self-declared militant wing of Fatah—similarly claimed to fire mortars at Israeli forces in the northwestern Gaza Strip.^[13]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 9, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Palestinian militias launched the fewest number of indirect fire attacks into Israel since the Israel-Hamas war began. The al Qassem Brigades claimed responsibility for two indirect fire attacks all in southern Israel. The al Quds Brigades claimed responsibility for one indirect fire attack. Hamas and PIJ have taken measures to prepare for a prolonged war, including reducing indirect fire attacks to conserve stockpiles.^[14]

Hamas leaders met with officials from the Egyptian Intelligence Agency in Cairo to discuss a hostage exchange for humanitarian aid. Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh, former Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Khaled Meshaal, and senior Hamas official Khalil al Haya met Egyptian Intelligence Agency chief General Abbas Kamal, according to reports on November 9.^[15] Egyptian officials said that the group discussed a deal in which Hamas releases hostages in exchange for humanitarian aid.^[16] Unnamed sources from Egypt, the United Nations, and a Western diplomat said that a three-day truce is being negotiated to allow humanitarian aid and fuel to enter the Gaza Strip in exchange for hostages.^[17] An unnamed source separately told Reuters that CIA Director William J. Burns and Mossad chief David Barnea met with Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al Thani in Doha to discuss hostage

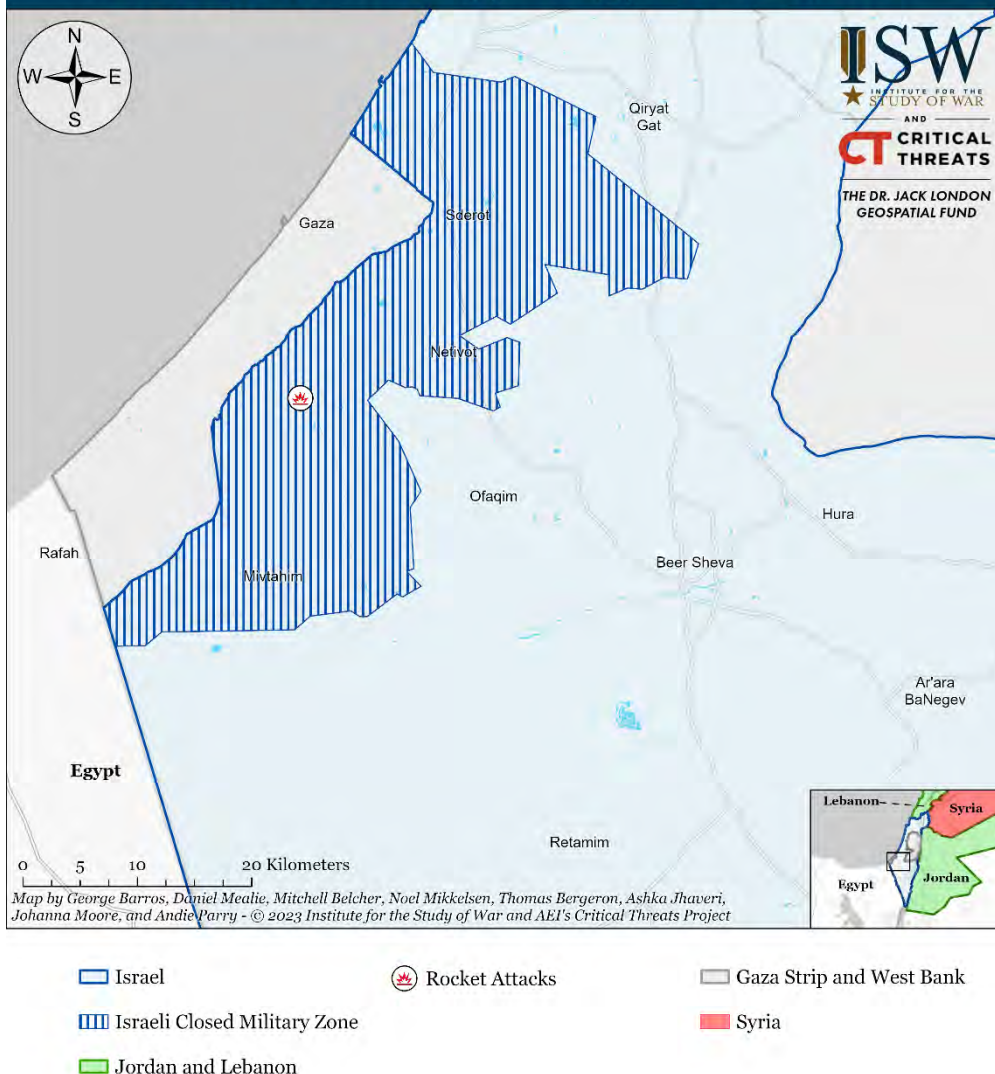
negotiations and releases.[18] The source stated that this meeting intended to bring all three sides of the deal together for a quicker process.[19]

US National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said that Israel will begin to implement a daily four-hour humanitarian pause in areas of the northern Gaza Strip.[20] Kirby said during a press briefing that there will be no military operations in these areas during the pause and that the process is starting on November 9.[21] A pause is temporary, localized, and for a specific purpose to help with hostage releases and for humanitarian assistance, according to Kirby.[22] The IDF said there have been three humanitarian pauses in the northern Gaza Strip at the request of the United States.[23] The United States and Israel have been clear that a ceasefire—a mutual agreement between warring parties to stop hostilities—is not in order.[24]



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 9, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

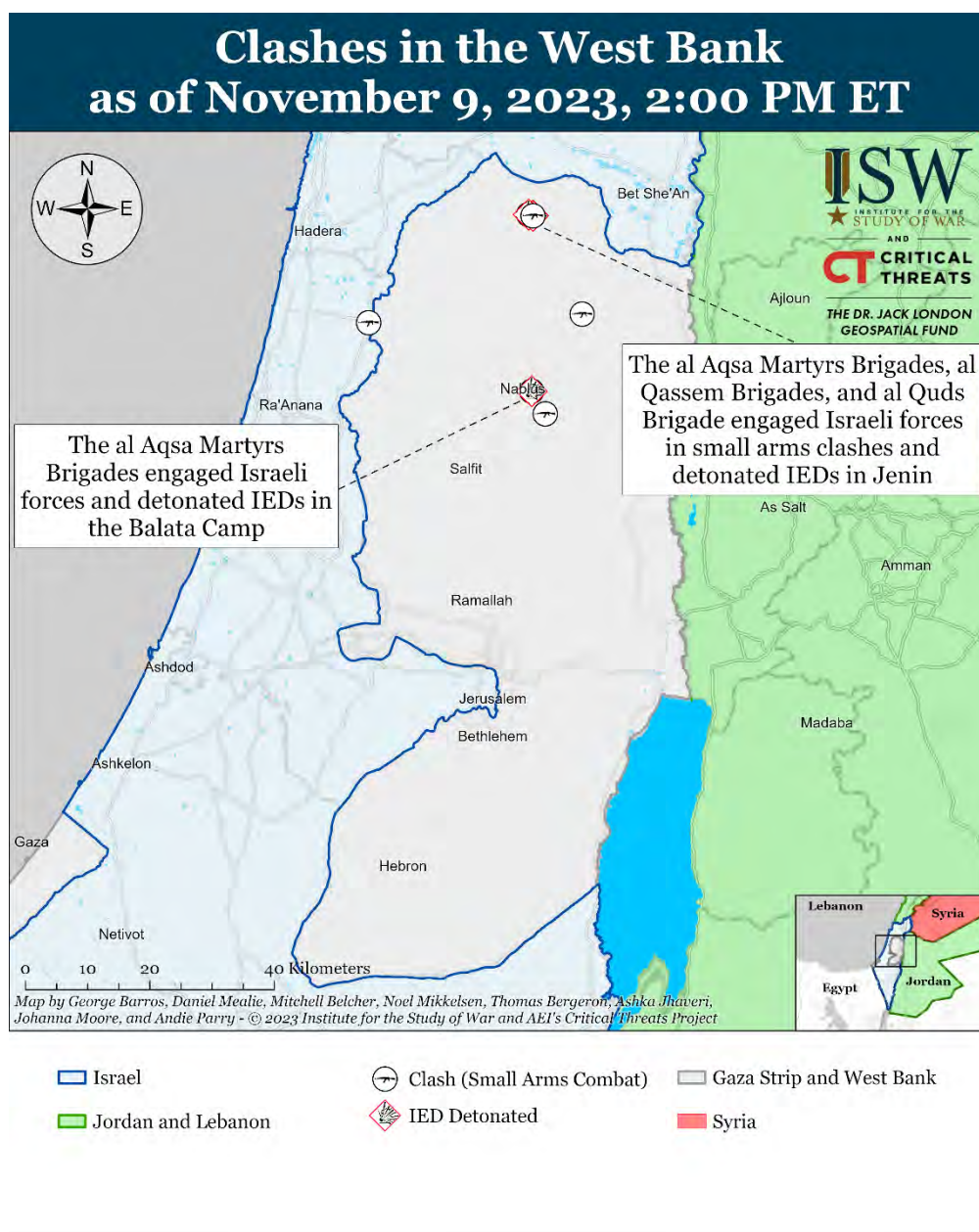
- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Palestinian militia fighters clashed with Israeli forces six times in the West Bank on November 9. The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades engaged Israeli forces in four small arms clashes and conducted two IED attacks across the West Bank.^[25] These attacks included an hours-long small arms engagement and IED attacks targeting Israeli forces in the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank.^[26] The al Qassem Brigades also clashed with Israeli forces in the Jenin camp.^[27] The Jenin Battalion of the al Quds Brigade clashed with Israeli forces and conducted IED attacks targeting Israeli forces in unspecified areas in Jenin.^[28] A Palestinian journalist reported that some forces from the Palestinian Authority (PA) joined the clashes against Israeli forces in Jenin but that the PA did not order these fighters to engage Israeli forces.^[29] The IDF claimed to have killed 12 fighters during the raids in the Jenin camp and arrested two al Quds Brigade fighters on November 9.^[30] The IDF also conducted a drone strike on fighters in Jenin who had "endangered" Israeli forces.^[31] Hamas and the Lions' Den—a West Bank-based Palestinian militia—

released statements on November 9 calling for further mobilization against Israeli forces across the West Bank, especially in the Jenin camp.[32]

The Lions' Den claimed its first attacks in the West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war began in a statement on November 9. The Lions' Den claimed that it had participated in 14 shootings in multiple areas near Nablus but did not specify the dates of the attacks.[33] Unspecified fighters have conducted shooting attacks targeting Israeli forces and civilians in October and November 2023 in the same locations that the Lions' Den claimed it has attacked.

The Lions' Den continues to emphasize its alignment with Hamas. The Lions' Den said that the West Bank will be "a sword and a shield for Mohammed Deif and Saleh al Arouri" on November 9.[34] Mohammed Deif is the commander of Hamas' al Qassem Brigades and Saleh al Arouri is Hamas Political Bureau deputy chairman. The Lions' Den previously described itself as "a sword in the hand of Commander Mohammad Deif" on October 26.[35] These statements mark a departure from previous Lions' Den claims that described the group as being not affiliated with any specific Palestinian faction.[36]

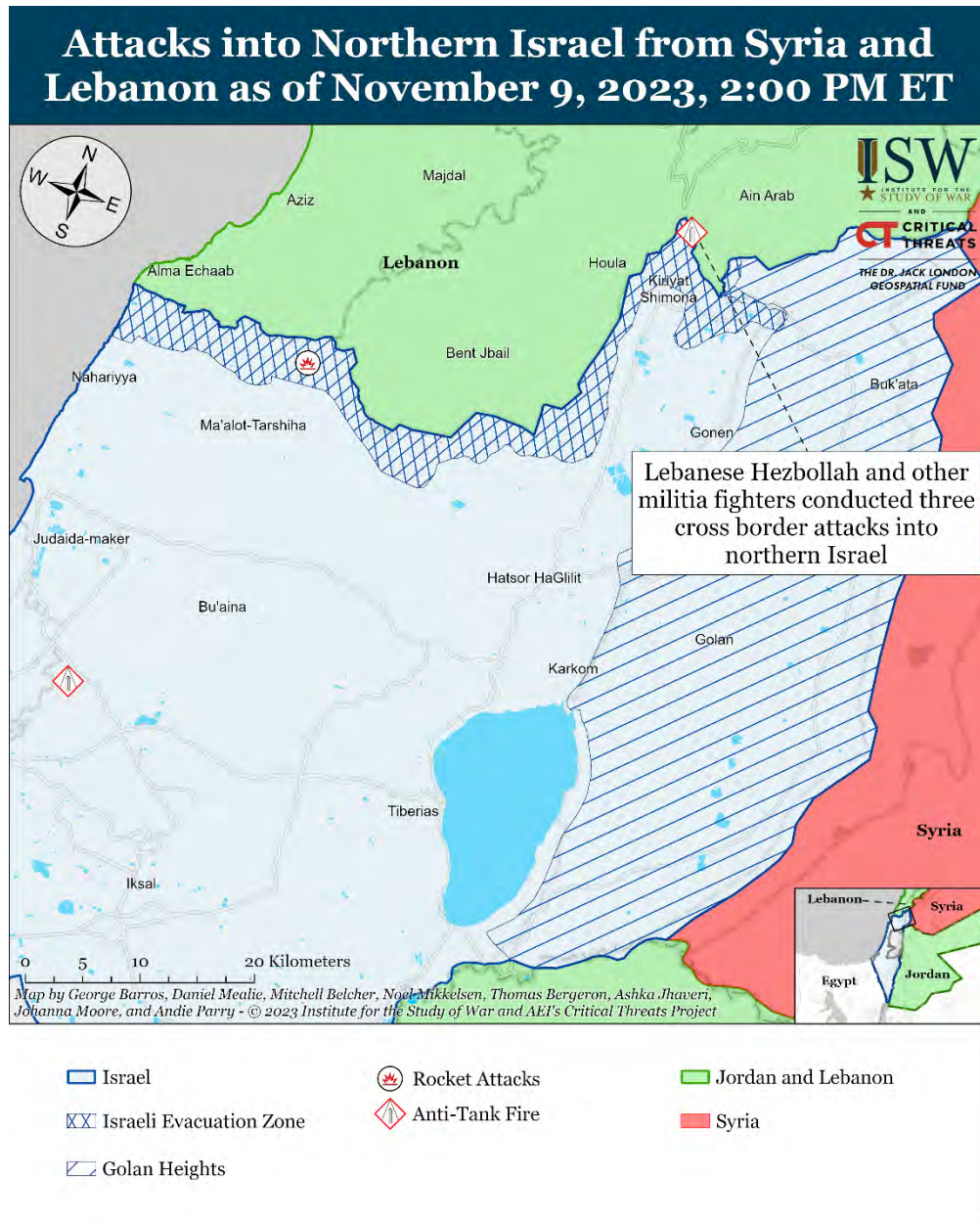


This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Iranian-backed militias conducted three cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 9. LH claimed a rocket attack targeting an Israeli mechanized infantry unit near the northern Israeli town of Shomera.[37] LH also conducted an anti-tank guided missile attack targeting an Israeli Merkava tank operating in Metula.[38] Unspecified fighters separately fired one anti-tank guided missile targeting Israeli forces near Mitzpe Adi.[39]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The United States conducted an airstrike on an IRGC weapons storage facility in eastern Syria in response to continued Iranian-sponsored attacks in Iraq and Syria, which injured three US servicemembers on November 8.

[40] Unspecified Iranian-backed militias fired rockets targeting US forces in eastern Syria on November 8. [41] US officials reported that the attacks inflicted minor injuries on three US servicemembers, who quickly returned to duty after the attacks. [42] Iranian-backed militias again fired short-range rockets targeting US forces at al Omar oil field following the US airstrike. [43]

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for an additional five attacks on US forces in Iraq, most of which occurred after the US airstrike in Syria. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq and its affiliated groups have claimed 50 attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East since October 18.

- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed two separate one-way attack drone attacks targeting US forces at al Harir Air Base in northern Iraq on November 8 and 9. [44] One attack occurred on November 8 before the US airstrike in Syria. The other occurred on November 9 after the US airstrike. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq released a video showing the launch of two unspecified drones. [45] Iraqi Kurdistan counterterrorism forces reported that the attack on November 9 destroyed one of the fuel depots at al Harir airbase. [46]
- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed three separate missile and one-way drone attacks targeting US forces at Ain al Assad airbase in western Iraq on November 9. [47] The group released a video showing it launching two drones and three missiles. The missiles bore visual similarities to the group's al Aqsa-1 missile. [48] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed on November 6 it launched its al Aqsa-1 missile at an unspecified US base in the Middle East for the first time. [49] The al Aqsa-1 missile bears visual similarities to the Iranian-built Fateh-313, which the Iranians used to target US positions in Iraq in January 2020 in retaliation for the US airstrike that killed IRGC Quds Force Commander Major General Qassem Soleimani. [50]
- Unspecified fighters conducted an IED attack targeting a joint US-Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service patrol near the Mosul dam in northern Iraq on November 9. [51] A US official reported that the attack caused no casualties. [52]

Abu Alaa al Walai—the secretary general of Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Seyyed ol Shohada—announced his group's support for attacks against US forces in Iraq. Walai stated that attacks on US forces would continue until there is a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. [53] Kataib Seyyed ol Shohada was formerly part of another Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah and has fought in Syria on behalf of Iran in Syria in recent years. [54]

The Houthi movement claimed that it fired multiple unspecified ballistic missiles targeting “sensitive sites” near Eilat in southern Israel on November 9, marking the sixth attempted Houthi attack on Israel. [55] The Houthi military spokesperson stated that these attacks would continue until Israel halts its military operations in the Gaza Strip. [56] The IDF used its Arrow anti-ballistic missile defense system to shoot down a missile south of Eilat. [57]

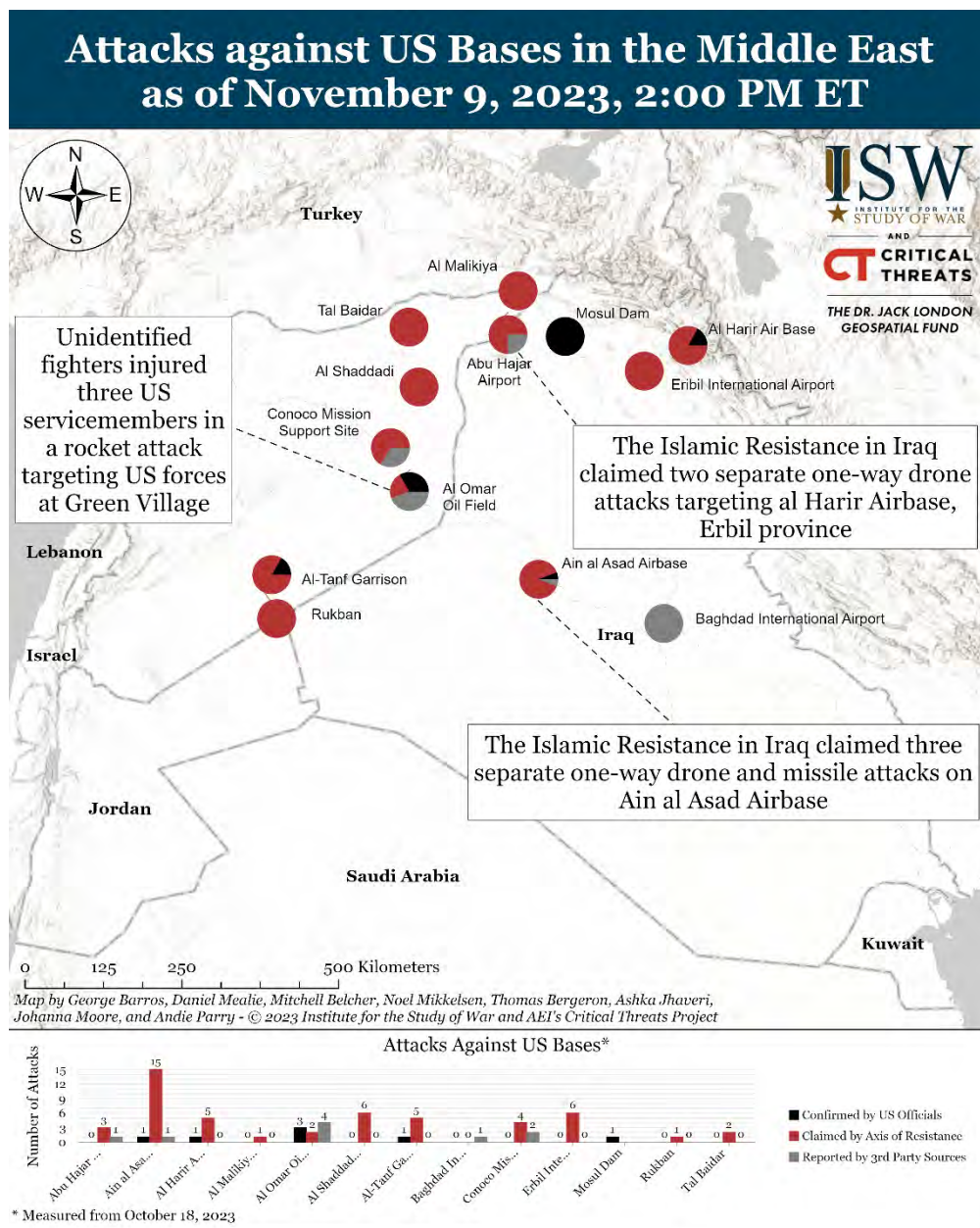
Unidentified fighters separately conducted a one-way drone attack into Eilat on November 9. [58] The attack caused no casualties, and no actor has claimed responsibility for the attack at this time. [59]

US officials confirmed that the Houthis shot down a US MQ-9 Reaper drone on November 8 in international airspace near Yemen. [60] The Houthi military spokesperson released a video on November 8 showing the shoot down of the drone. [61]

A Syrian journalist said that Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba's Syria-based Golan Liberation Brigade announced that it is in a “state of full mobilization” on November 8. [62] Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba is active in Syria and formed the Golan Liberation Brigade in 2017 with the expressed mission of liberating the Golan Heights from Israel. [63] The Golan Liberation Brigade operates in Syria along the Israeli border. [64] CTP-ISW has not yet observed this brigade conducting attacks against

US forces or into Israel, though Iraqi militias like Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba frequently have overlapping membership between the formal militia subordinated to the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PF) and covert action cells that conduct attacks against US forces.[65]

The reported announcement from Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba's Golan Liberation Brigade is consistent with an effort by Iran's Iraqi proxy network to mobilize its forces in preparation to fight the United States and Israel. The PMF Chief of Staff and Iranian proxy Abu Fadak al Mohammadawi previously said that the PMF is in a "state of emergency" on November 2 in response to "American threats" to respond to attacks against US forces.[66] US Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed al Sudani that the United States would "protect its people" in response to Iranian-backed Iraqi militia attacks in a meeting on November 5.[67] Abu Fadak is also the secretary general of Iranian-backed Iraqi militia and US-designated foreign terrorist organization Kataib Hezbollah.[68] Abu Fadak replaced key Iranian proxy Abu Mahdi al Muhandis as head of Kataib Hezbollah in 2020.[69] KH has repeatedly threatened to attack US military positions in recent weeks and is part of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq.



Iranian-sponsored Attacks in the Middle East as of November 9, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of the Economic Cooperation Organization summit in Tashkent on November 9 to discuss the Israel-Hamas war.[70] Raisi emphasized Iranian-Turkish coordination ahead of the upcoming Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting on November 12 to ensure “effective action” to halt Israeli attacks into the Gaza Strip and to provide humanitarian aid. Other Iranian officials have been coordinating with other Arab and Muslim countries in anticipation of the OIC meeting, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[71] This is consistent with the Iranian effort to disrupt Israeli normalization with Arab states by concentrating attention on the Palestinian cause.[72] Iran has repeatedly used the OIC as a platform for uniting Arab and Muslim countries against Israel and impeding the Arab-Israeli normalization process, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[73]

- [1] <https://www.idf dot il/148630>
- [2] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/gaza-says-israels-strikes-refugee-camp-kill-more-than-195-people-2023-11-02/>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-november-8-2023>
- [3] <https://x.com/hengenahm/status/1722639180390338878?s=46&t=SOgF7XQTnfAAhf...>
- [4] <https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1722530305817407956/video/1>
- [5] <https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/172253752156266602>
- [6] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/365>
- [7] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1722497379054620815>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1722497532767478221>
- [8] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16630>
- [9] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/6213>; <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1722367216086024391>
- [10] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/367>
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- [12] https://t.me/kataeb_moqawma/3961
- [13] <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5848>
- [14] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16397>
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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 10, 2023

Iran Update, November 10, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, Annika Ganzeveld, Amin Soltani, Kathryn Tyson, and Peter Mills

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

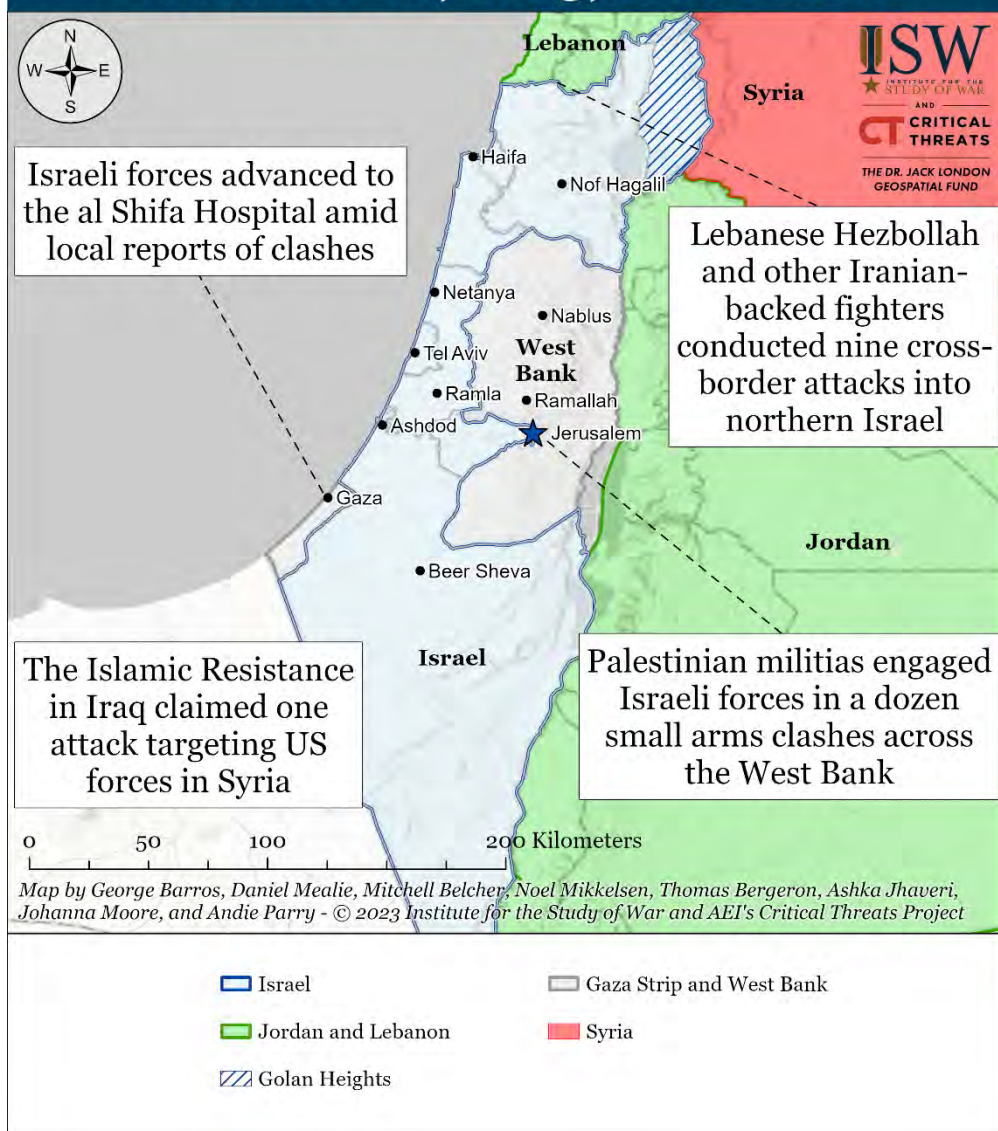
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli forces advanced to the al Shifa Hospital, where Israel says Hamas maintains a critical command center. Local sources reported heavy armed clashes in the vicinity of the hospital along the Gaza Strip coast. Israeli forces and tanks also advanced inland in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood west of Jabaliya.
2. Palestinian militants claimed seven indirect fire attacks into Israel. Palestinian fighters also clashed with Israeli forces a dozen times, primarily in Hebron and Jenin, in the West Bank.
3. Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Iranian-backed fighters conducted nine cross-border attacks into northern Israel.
4. The IDF reported that unidentified Iranian-backed militants based in Syria were responsible for the November 9 drone attack that hit the Tze'elim Elementary School in Eilat.
5. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq – an umbrella term for Iranian-backed Iraqi militias – claimed one attack targeting US forces stationed at al Tanf Garrison, Syria.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 10, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israeli forces advanced to the al Shifa Hospital, where Israel says Hamas maintains a critical command center.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the al Shifa Hospital is evacuating as Israeli forces converge on the medical compound after a series of explosions in the area.[1] The Hamas-run Ministry of Health claims that 50,000-60,000 people are sheltering inside and around the hospital.[2] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Army Radio reported that the medical complex is surrounded.[3] A doctor inside the hospital said the situation is extremely dangerous.[4] A pro-Israel analyst on Twitter (X) reported on November 10 that IDF forces entered the compound, although CTP-ISW cannot independently verify Israeli activity within the compound at the time of this publication.[5] The IDF has repeatedly said that Hamas uses humanitarian infrastructure for its military activities.[6] Hamas uses underground compounds under the hospital to facilitate entry to headquarters and maintains an internal security control center from which it directs rocket fire and

militia fighters, for example.^[7] The IDF says that Hamas is using patients and staff at the hospital as human shields. The hospital has 1,500 beds and 4,000 staff members.^[8]

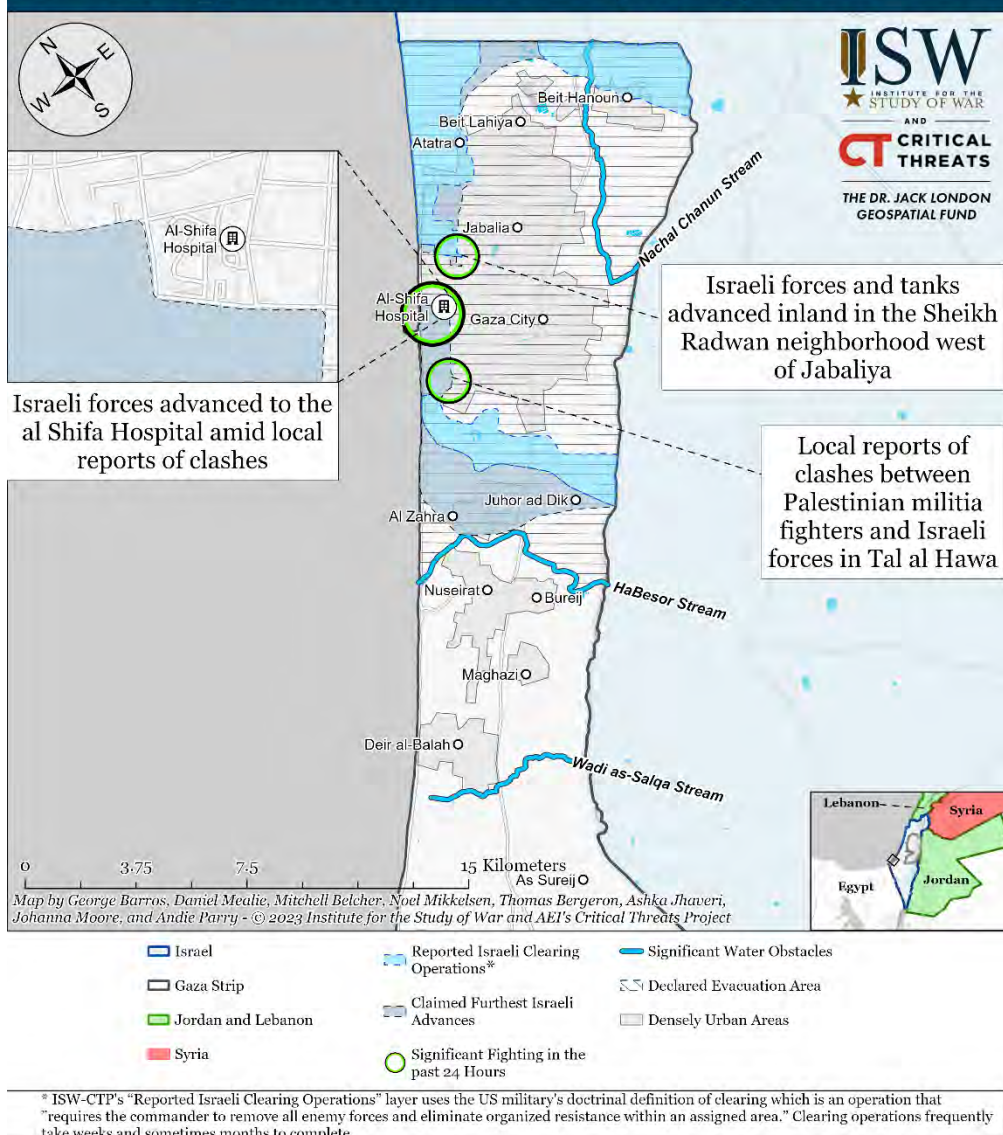
Local sources reported heavy armed clashes in the vicinity of the al Shifa Hospital along the Gaza Strip coast. A Palestinian journalist said that IDF forces are operating inside several buildings in the vicinity of the hospital.^[9] Local sources said there were clashes on Charles de Gaulle Street and near the al Abbas police station which is approximately one kilometer south of the al Shifa Hospital.^[10] Local media said al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—militia fighters are clashing with advancing Israeli forces on the al Nasr Street northeast of al Shifa Hospital.^[11] The media outlet also said senior al Qassem Brigades commanders have already fled the area.^[12]

The al Qassem Brigades have employed a variety of capabilities to attack IDF forces and vehicles since the Israeli ground operations began. The militia fighters have claimed to attack IDF tanks and bulldozers with Yassin 105 rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) and have engaged in small-arms combat with IDF ground forces.^[13] The al Qassem Brigades claimed on November 9 to bomb a gathering of IDF soldiers using a drone in an unspecified location, which they previously claimed to do on November 1.^[14] The al Qassem Brigades claimed to fire mortars at Israeli forces and RPGs at an Israeli military vehicle near Juhr al Dik, which is consistent with CTP-ISW's assessment that Palestinian militias are attempting to harass and disrupt Israeli ground lines of communication.^[15]

The Palestinian Red Crescent reported that Israeli forces are operating near the al Quds Hospital in the Tal al Hawa neighborhood.^[16] Locals reported that there are civilian injuries and that the IDF is besieging those in the hospital.^[17]

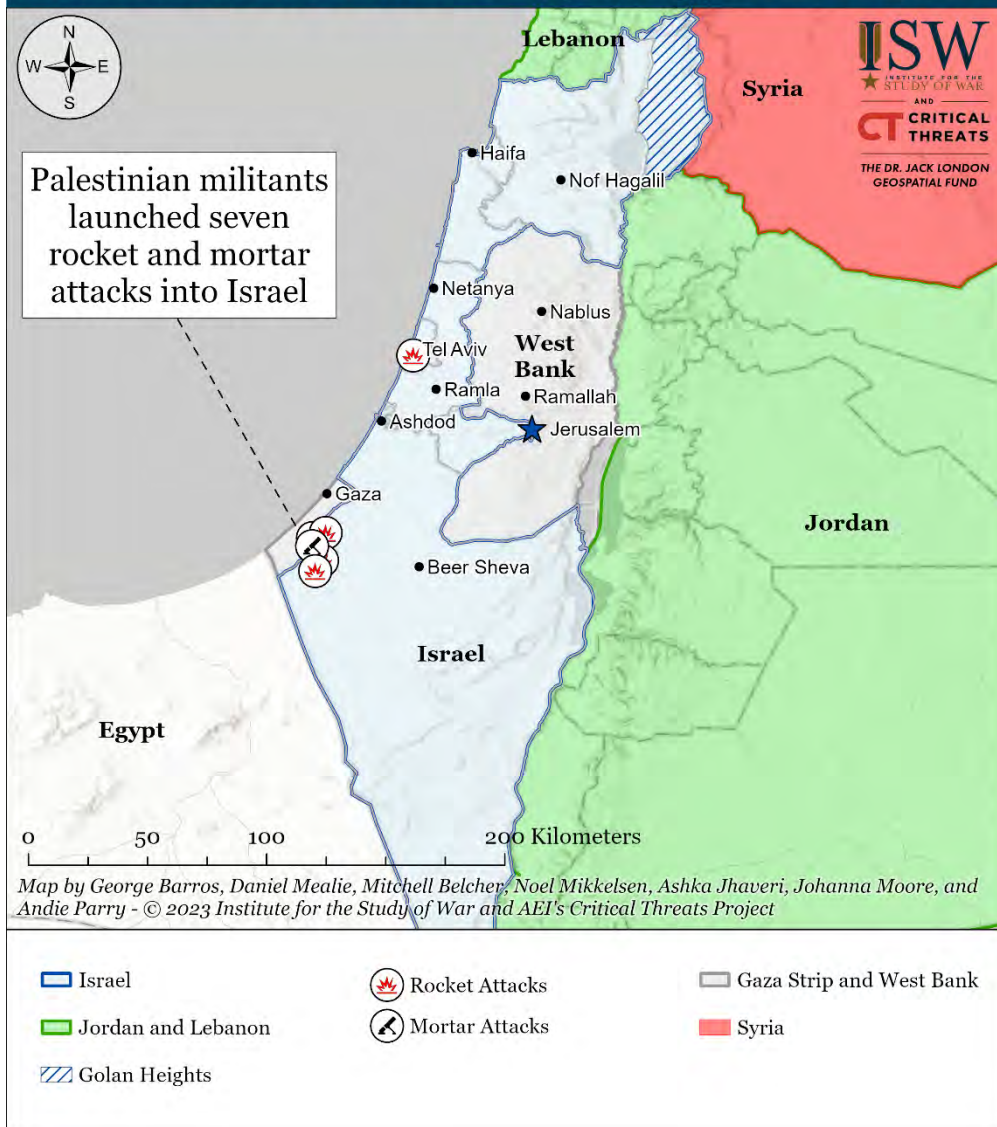
Israeli forces and tanks advanced inland in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood west of Jabaliya. An independent analyst on X (Twitter) geolocated footage of Israeli tanks operating near the Rantis Specialist Clinic in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood.^[18] An employee inside the al Nasr Hospital said that the hospital is surrounded by tanks and heavy gunfire.^[19] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—launched mortars at Israeli forces operating near Karama.^[20] The IDF conducted an operation to assassinate Nukhba operatives, who are the naval commandos of the al Qassem Brigades.^[21] The IDF killed a company commander and platoon commander, one of whom was directing offensive activity in western Jabaliya.^[22]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 10, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



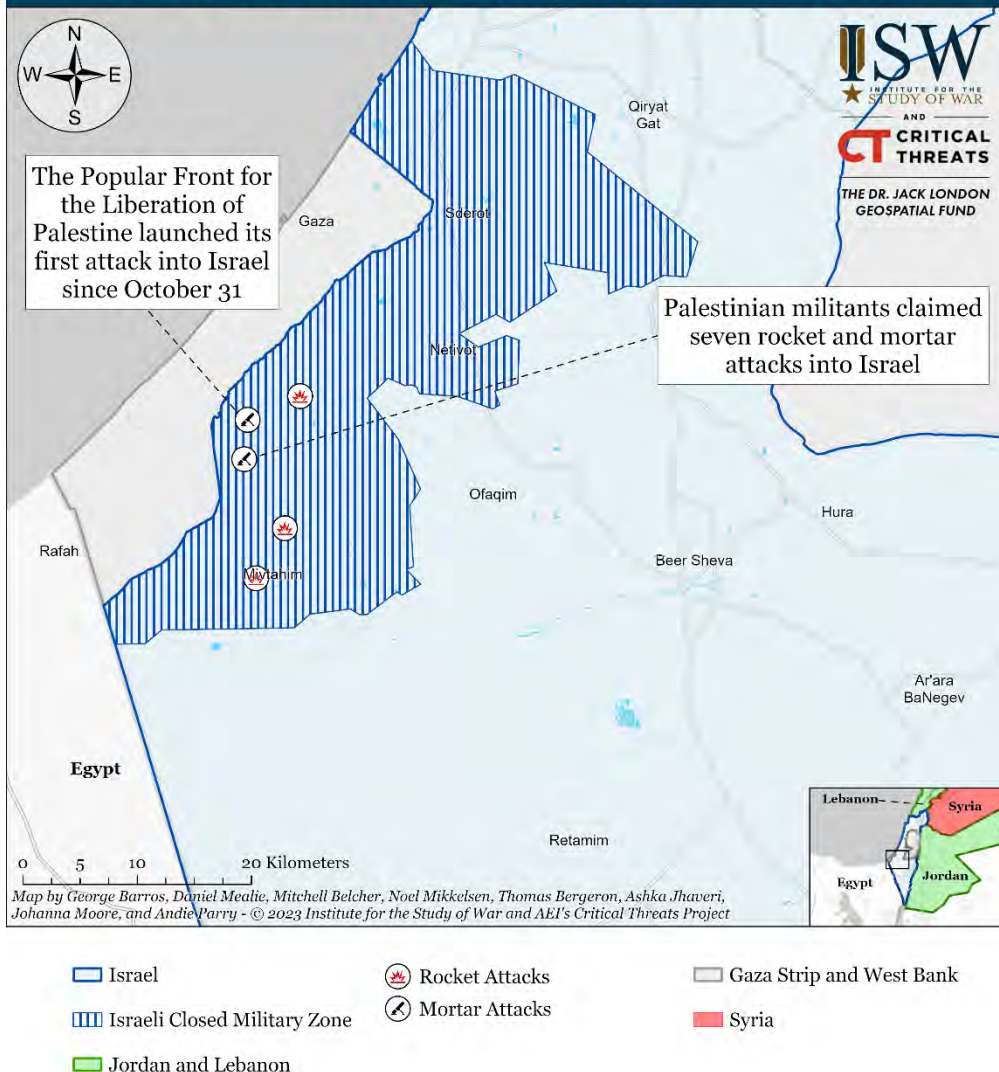
Palestinian militants claimed seven indirect fire attacks into Israel on November 10. The Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine claimed its first indirect fire attack targeting US forces since October 31.[23] The al Qassem Brigades claimed two rocket attacks and one mortar attack targeting Miftahim, Nirim, and Tel Aviv on November 10.[24] The group also claimed a rocket attack targeting an Israeli base in southern Israel.[25] The al Quds Brigades claimed two rocket attacks targeting Nirim and Ein HaBsr.[26] **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said there is no timetable to defeat Hamas.**[27] Netanyahu said in an interview that aired on November 9 with Fox News that Israel is proceeding in the Gaza Strip while trying to reduce and minimize civilian casualties and maximize Hamas casualties.[28] Netanyahu said that the fighting continues against Hamas despite the four-hour pauses in the northern Gaza Strip that allow civilians to evacuate.[29] Israeli media N12 reported that the IDF estimates fighting in the Gaza Strip will last a year while the intensity of military operations and combat methods will vary.[30] Netanyahu told Fox News that, "We don't seek to occupy Gaza. And we don't seek to govern Gaza".[31] Netanyahu said on November 10 in a meeting with mayors of towns bordering the Gaza Strip that the IDF will remain in control of the Gaza Strip after the current war ends and will not rely on international forces to oversee security along the border.[32]

Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 10, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 10, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



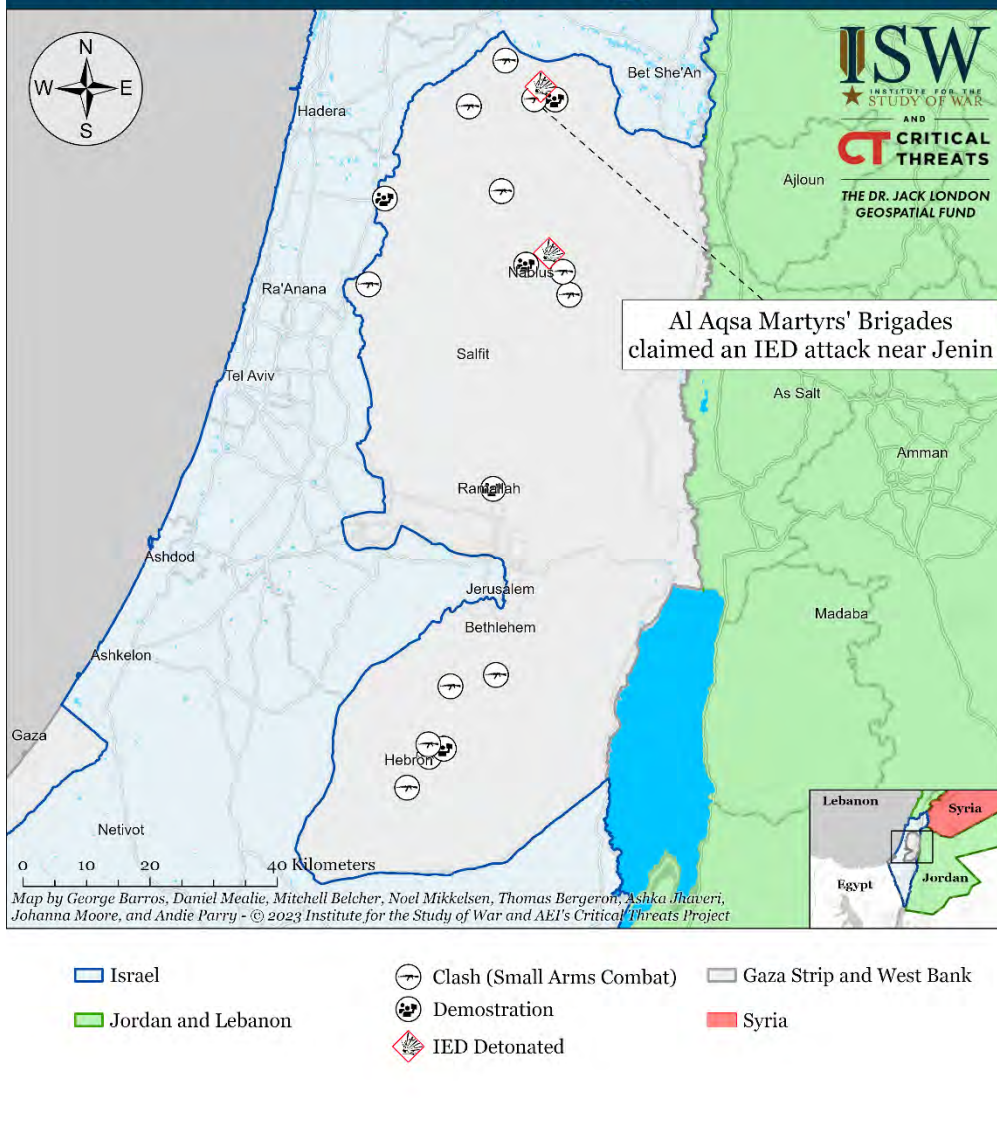
Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
Palestinian fighters clashed with Israeli forces a dozen times, primarily in Hebron and Jenin, in the West Bank on November 10. The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades engaged Israeli forces in two small arms clashes and conducted one IED attack across the West Bank.[33] Palestinians demonstrated in support of Gaza in Nablus, Hebron, Ramallah, and Tulkaram, in the West Bank.[34] Palestinians also demonstrated in Jenin on November 10 following extensive clashes with Israeli forces on November 9 which killed 12 Palestinian fighters.[35] The IDF reported that Israeli forces arrested 41 people across the West Bank, of whom 14 were affiliated with Hamas.[36]

Clashes in the West Bank as of November 10, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

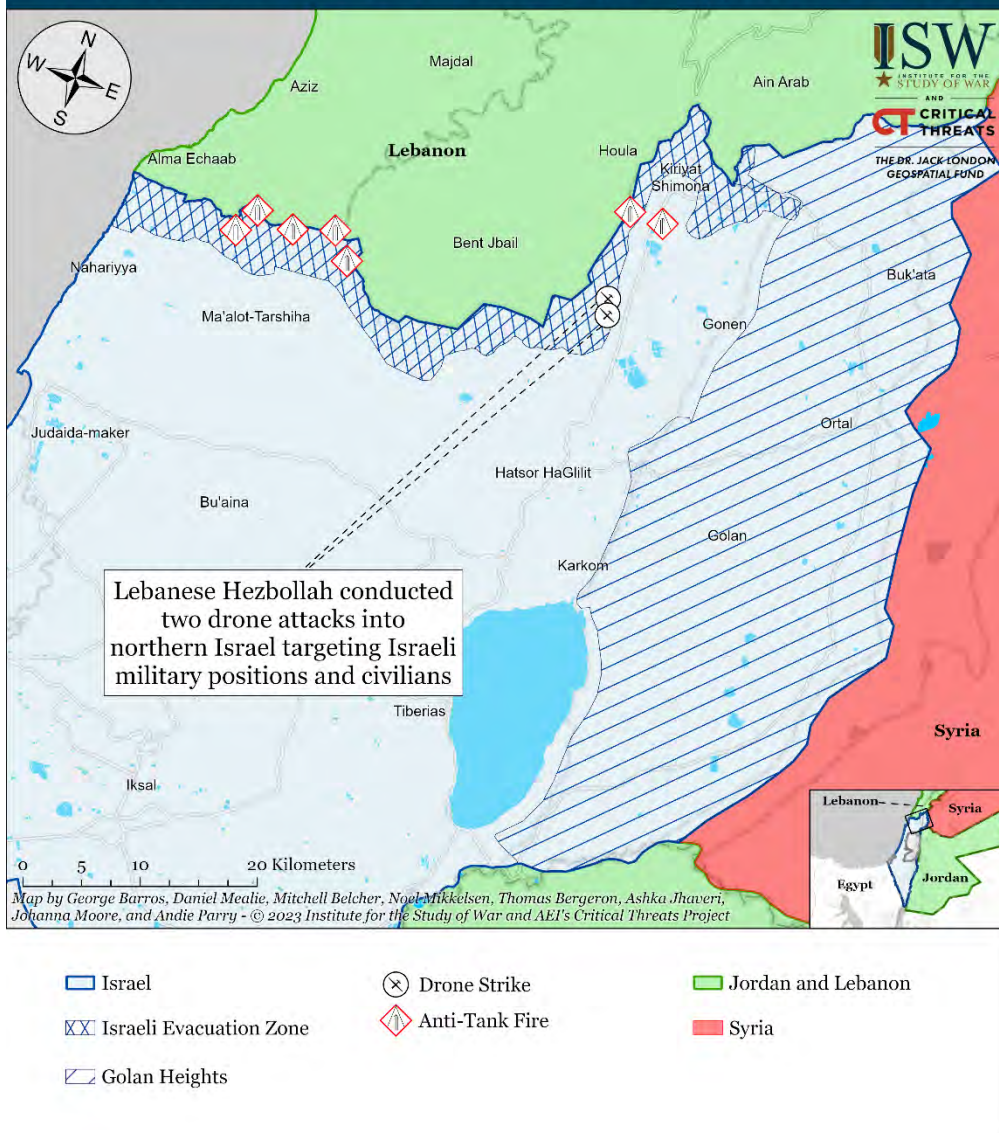
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Iranian-backed fighters conducted nine cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 10. LH launched three one-way drones in two attacks and conducted six anti-tank guided missile attacks targeting Israeli forces and civilians.[37] Unspecified fighters separately attacked an Israeli military position with anti-tank guided missiles.[38] The IDF said that the attacks injured five IDF soldiers and that the IDF struck LH sites in southern Lebanon with artillery in response.[39] LH announced on November 9 that seven of its fighters had been killed. It also said on November 10 that 70 LH fighters had been killed since the Israel-Hamas war began.[40] LH Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah is set to give a speech on November 11, which will mark his second public statement on the war.[41]

Attacks into Northern Israel from Syria and Lebanon as of November 10, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

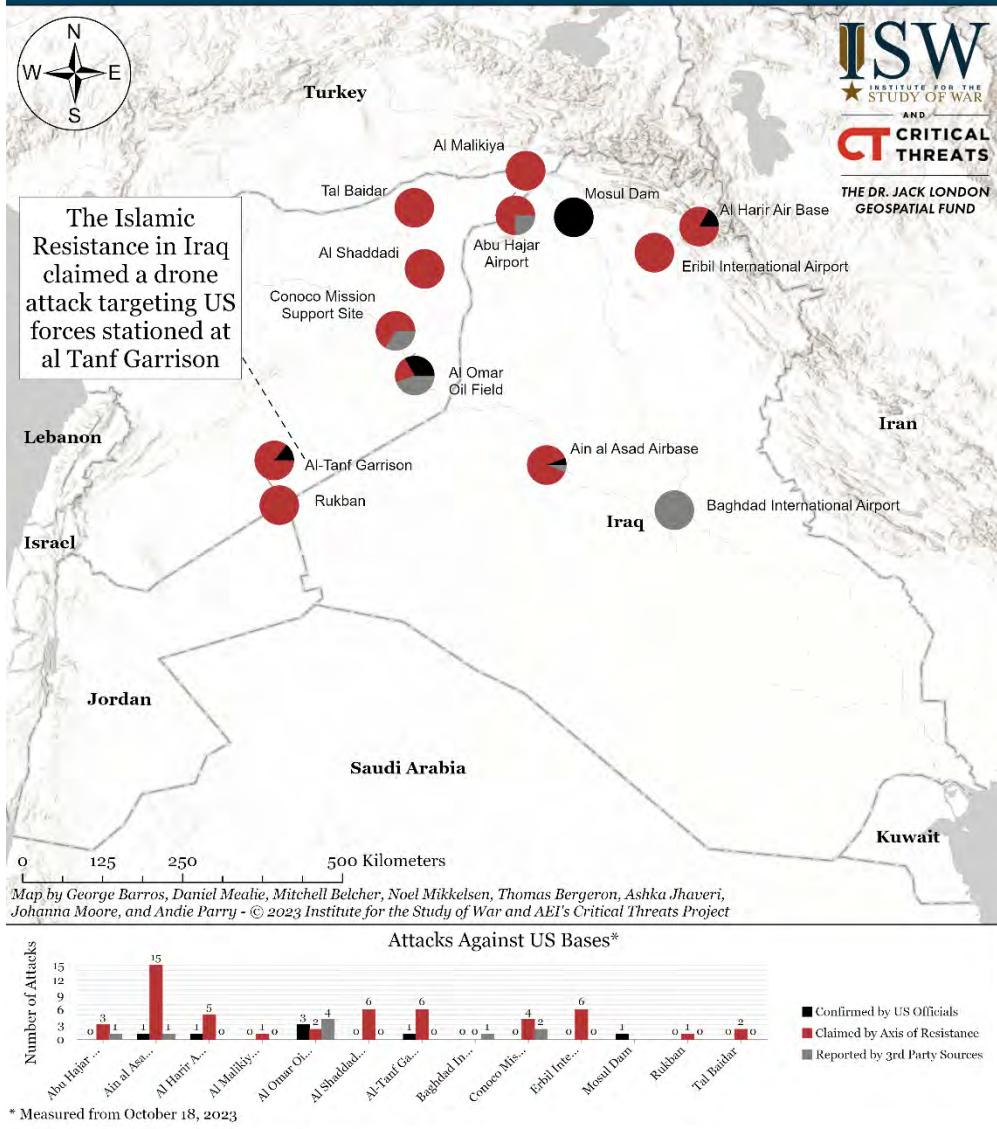


Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 10, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



The IDF reported that unidentified Iranian-backed militants based in Syria were responsible for the November 9 drone attack that hit the Tze'elim Elementary School in Eilat.[42] The IDF reported that its forces conducted airstrikes into Syria on November 9 in retaliation for the attack.[43] The *Jerusalem Post* reported that the same unidentified Iranian-backed militants fired a second drone into Israeli territory from Syria on November 10.[44] The Israeli open-source media outlet Israel Radar cited an unidentified Israeli defense official who claimed that the Iranian-backed Imam Hussein Division was responsible for both drone attacks into Israel.[45] The IRGC formed the Imam Hussein Division, also known as the Imam Hussein Brigades, in 2016. The Imam Hussain Division is armed with Iranian-made drones and surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, according to Israeli intelligence.[46] The Imam Hussein Division has conducted attacks into Israel from the Golan Heights and has targeted US forces stationed in eastern Syria.[47]

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq – an umbrella term for Iranian-backed Iraqi militias – claimed one attack targeting US forces stationed at al Tanf Garrison, Syria on November 10.[48] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq stated that its militants launched a one-way attack drone at the base and claimed that the drone successfully hit its intended target.[49] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed 52 of the 63

reported attacks targeting US forces in Iraq and Syria since October 18. This is the sixth attack the Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed targeting US forces stationed at al Tanf Garrison since October 18.[50]

An Iranian state media delegation traveled to Beirut on November 9 to meet with LH-affiliated media officials, likely as part of the Iranian regime's ongoing effort to coordinate Axis of Resistance messaging and information operations.[51] Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) head Peyman Jebelli and IRIB World Service head Ahmed Norouzi met with LH-controlled outlet al Manar officials on November 10.[52] IRIB is a state-controlled outlet whose head is directly appointed by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.[53] The US State Department banned al Manar from broadcasting in the United States in 2004 and the US Treasury Department designated it as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity" in 2006.[54] Jebelli emphasized IRIB's support for Axis of Resistance-affiliated media and praised al Manar's "faithful representation" of the Israel-Hamas war during his meeting with al Manar officials. Iranian officials and media have repeatedly accused Western media of spreading lies about Hamas and "covering up Israeli crimes" since the start of the war on October 7.[55] Iranian officials have also accused Israel of killing journalists to prevent them from exposing "Israeli crimes." [56] The IRIB delegation is slated to meet with Axis of Resistance leaders and Lebanese officials in the coming days. Unspecified Iranian media officials recently traveled to Beirut on November 2 to meet with representatives of Hamas and PIJ, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[57]

The Iranian regime is seizing on Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's pro-Hamas, anti-Israel stance on the Israel-Hamas war to try to undermine Turkish-Israeli rapprochement. President Ebrahim Raisi urged Turkey to cut its economic and political ties with Israel during a meeting with Erdogan on the sidelines of the Economic Cooperation Organization summit in Tashkent on November 9.[58] Raisi stated that Muslim countries, including Iran and Turkey, are facing a "divine test" to confront "Israeli crimes." [59] Iranian state and IRGC-affiliated media separately highlighted student protests against Turkish exports of food and oil to Israel in front of the Turkish Embassy in Tehran on November 9.[60] The students chanted slogans such as "Turkish food and oil bring fire to the battle" and "Your barrels of oil are accomplices in the [killings] of children." [61] Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian met with Erdogan and Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Hakan Fidan in Ankara on November 1, during which time he praised Erdogan's "strong and accurate" positions on the Israel-Hamas war.[62] Turkey and Israel have taken steps to improve relations in recent years. Israeli President Isaac Herzog met with Erdogan in Ankara in March 2022.[63] This meeting marked the highest-level engagement between Israeli and Turkish officials in 14 years.[64] Israel and Turkey additionally restored full diplomatic ties in August 2022.[65] Erdogan has adopted a pro-Hamas stance since the start of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7, however.[66] Erdogan described Hamas as a "liberation group" on October 25 and organized a pro-Palestine rally in Istanbul on October 28, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[67] The Iranian regime thus seeks to capitalize on the current strain in Turkish-Israeli relations to advance its objective to isolate Israel in the Middle East.

Moderate Iranian political figures are likely coordinating an attack on the regime's conduct vis-à-vis the Israel-Hamas war to exploit domestic anti-Axis of Resistance sentiments in advance of the parliamentary elections in March 2024. Former President Hassan Rouhani warned the regime against taking any "imprecise action" that could draw Iran into a war with Israel while noting divisions between Iranians over support for the Palestinian resistance during a Moderation and Development Party Central Council Meeting in Tehran on November 9.[68] Rouhani's former Foreign Affairs Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif similarly warned against Iran being drawn into the Israel-Hamas war during a panel on the application of international law to the war at the Central Bar Association in Tehran on November 8.[69] Zarif also argued that ordinary Iranians are "tired of paying the cost" of the regime's support for regional proxies and criticized the overly enthusiastic support of regime officials for the Palestinian cause.

- Iranian protesters have long been critical of Iranian regime support for the Axis of Resistance, particularly in Lebanon and Palestine. These anti-Axis sentiments have resurfaced since the start of the Israel-Hamas war. Social media users claimed that unspecified individuals set fire to a propaganda banner expressing support for Hamas in Mashhad on November 6.[70] An unidentified Iranian individual published a video on his social media account that expressed support for Israel behind a homemade Israeli flag on November 5.[71] Unidentified individuals expressed contempt for the speaker voicing support for Hamas during a pro-Hamas rally in Tehran on October 18.[72]
- CTP-ISW previously assessed that Rouhani is trying to reestablish himself and other like-minded moderates in the domestic political arena ahead of the 2024 elections.[73] Rouhani has been

consistently promoting his administration's economic, foreign, defense, and health policies in publicized meetings with his former cabinet members. Iranian state media has reported that Rouhani will promote a list of moderate candidates in the 2024 elections, as CTP-ISW previously reported.^[74]

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 - [22] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1722866475222876469>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1722866522580742336>
 - [23] <https://t.me/QudsN/327125>
 - [24] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/379> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/380> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/387>
 - [25] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/375>
 - [26] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16634> , <https://t.me/sarayaps/16634>
 - [27] <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/foreign/israeli-pm-benjamin-netanyahu-rejects-notion-of-international-force/>
 - [28] <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/foreign/israeli-pm-benjamin-netanyahu-rejects-notion-of-international-force/>
 - [29] <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/netanyahu-tells-bret-baier-cease-fire-m...>; <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/foreign/israeli-pm-benjamin-netanyahu-rejects-notion-of-international-force/>
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 - [32] <https://timesofisrael dot com/netanyahu-says-idf-will-control-gaza-after-war-rejects-notion-of-international-force/>
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 - [34] <https://t.me/QudsN/327095> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/327052> ; <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/6228> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/327011>
 - [35] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1722672061561151567> ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/39037
 - [36] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1722897488472883635>
 - [37] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1722726547893674110>; <https://t.me/almanarnews/135751>; <https://t.me/almanarnews/135791>; <https://t.me/almanarnews/135794>; https://t.me/C_Military1/39038; https://t.me/C_Military1/39042
 - [38] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1722926860932096230>

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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 11, 2023

Iran Update, November 11, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, Annika Ganzeveld, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

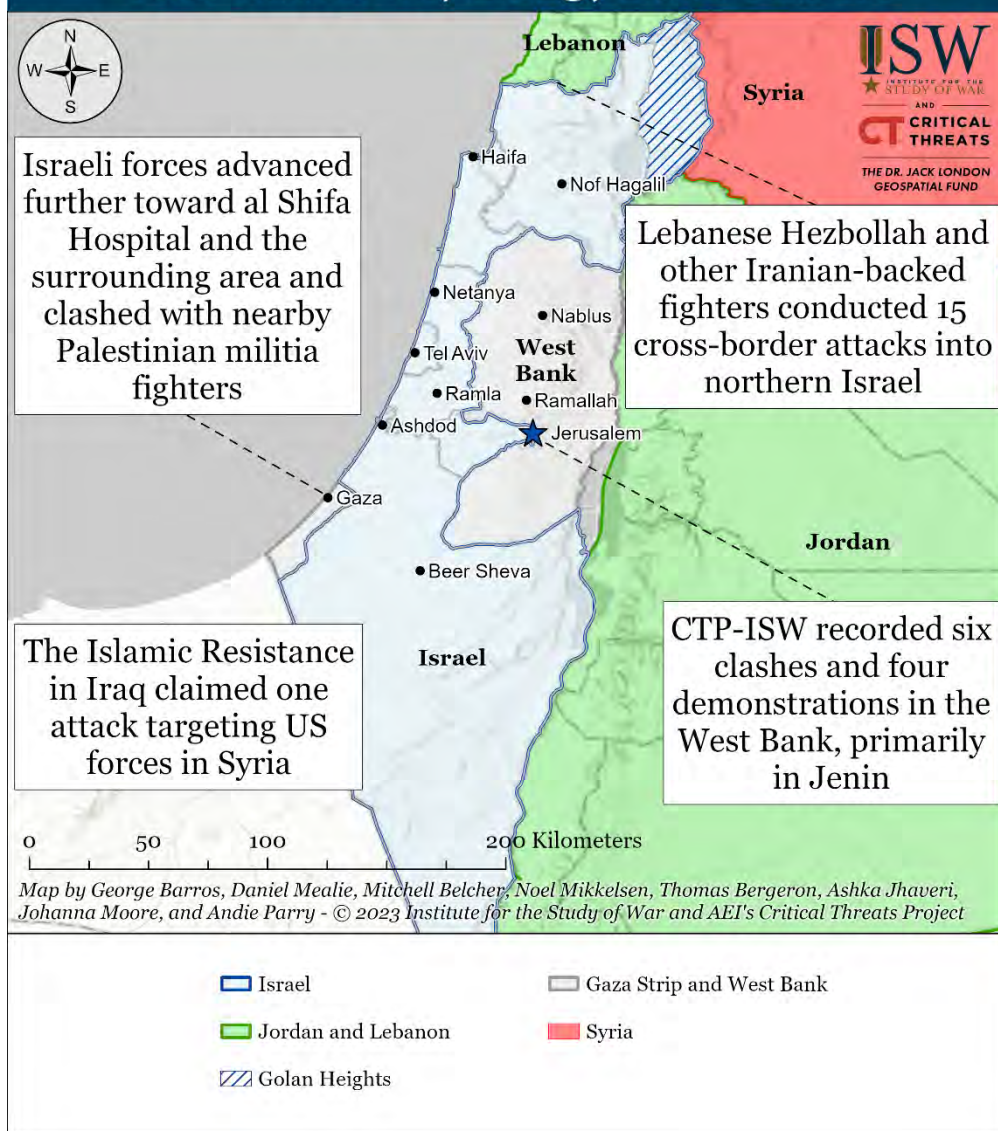
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli forces advanced further toward al Shifa Hospital and the surrounding area and clashed with nearby Palestinian militia fighters.
2. Hamas and other Palestinian militia fighters are continuing their attacks against the IDF behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations.
3. Palestinian militants claimed three indirect fire attacks into Israel. Palestinian militias have reduced their rates of indirect fire attacks into Israel in recent days compared to the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war.
4. CTP-ISW recorded six clashes and three demonstrations in the West Bank, primarily in Jenin.
5. Lebanese Hezbollah and other Iranian-backed fighters conducted 15 cross-border attacks into northern Israel.
6. Lebanese Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah gave his second public speech on the Israel-Hamas war. Nasrallah highlighted Iran's support for members of the Axis of Resistance and warned that Iranian-backed militias will continue attack US forces in Iraq and Syria unless the United States intervenes to stop Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip.
7. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—an umbrella group for Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed one attack targeting US forces stationed in Rmelan, Hasakah Province, in northeastern Syria.
8. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi traveled to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to attend a joint Arab League-OIC meeting. Raisi's visit to Riyadh marked the first official visit by an Iranian president to Saudi Arabia in 11 years and was part of Iran's ongoing effort to rally Arab and Muslim countries against Israel.
9. Iranian Intelligence and Security Minister Esmail Khatib warned of the long-term consequences of Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip for US forces in the Middle East.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 11, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

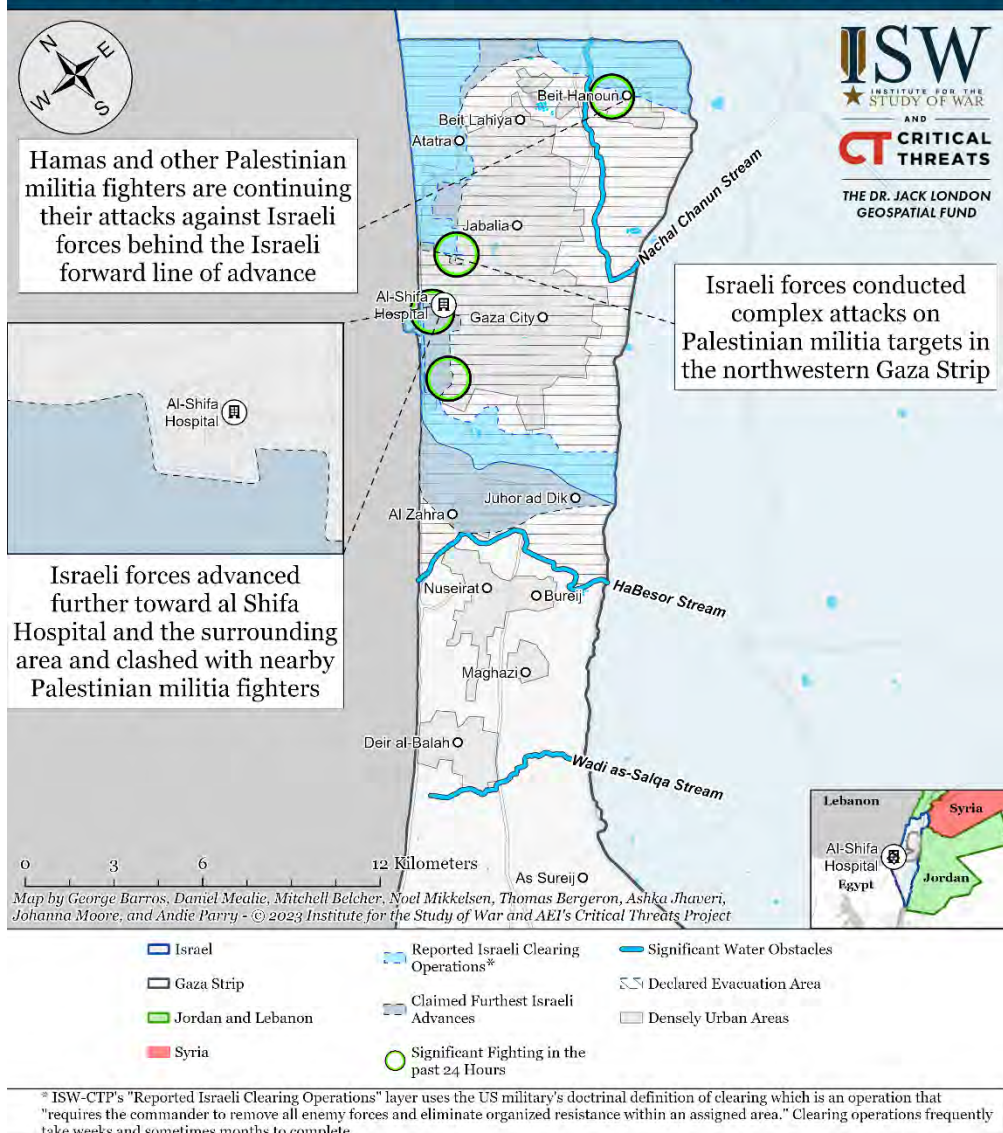
Israeli forces advanced further toward al Shifa Hospital and the surrounding area and clashed with nearby Palestinian militia fighters. The Hamas-led Gaza Strip Health Ministry director general said that there are Israeli tanks in the streets and snipers on nearby roofs.^[1] An independent analyst on X (Twitter) geolocated footage taken from a building on the corner of the medical complex with audible small arms fire.^[2] The al Quds Brigades—the military wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed on November 11 that its fighters fought the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the vicinity of al Shifa hospital and the nearby Nasr neighborhood and al Shati refugee camp.^[3] The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—said its militia fighters are engaged in clashes at “all the pivots and points” of Israeli progress in the Gaza Strip.^[4] Local media said that al Qassem Brigades fighters previously clashed with advancing Israeli forces on the al Nasr Street northeast of al Shifa hospital on November 10.^[5] Israeli military spokesman Rear

Admiral Daniel Hagari said that the IDF would help evacuate the infants from al Shifa hospital.^[6] Head of the Gaza Coordination and Liaison Administration said that the IDF is not shooting at the hospital or besieging the area and has left the east side of the hospital open.^[7]

The IDF Givati Brigade Combat Team advanced on the Lababidi Street east of al Shati refugee camp and killed the Hamas company commander who held hostage 1,000 Gaza Strip residents at the Rantis Specialist Clinic, according to the IDF.^[8] The IDF has repeatedly said that Hamas uses civilian and humanitarian infrastructure to mask its military activities.^[9]

Hamas and other Palestinian militia fighters are continuing their attacks against the IDF behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations. The al Qassem Brigades published footage on November 11 of its fighters conducting hit-an-run attacks with rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) to harass Israeli forces in Beit Hanoun.^[10] The IDF continued clearing operations in Beit Hanoun as the 551st Brigade fought in Beit Hanoun and destroyed Hamas infrastructure.^[11] The al Qassem Brigades separately launched mortars at Israeli vehicles west of the Erez military checkpoint, which is consistent with CTP-ISW's assessment that Palestinian militias are attempting to harass and disrupt Israeli ground lines of communication.^[12] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades—the self-claimed militant wing of Fatah—mortared IDF soldiers in al Nasr neighborhood on November 11.^[13] Israel is conducting joint attacks on Palestinian militia infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. IDF infantry forces identified military targets inside buildings of the al Shati refugee camp, where CTP-ISW has observed clashes for several days before Israeli naval forces attacked the buildings from the Mediterranean Sea.^[14]

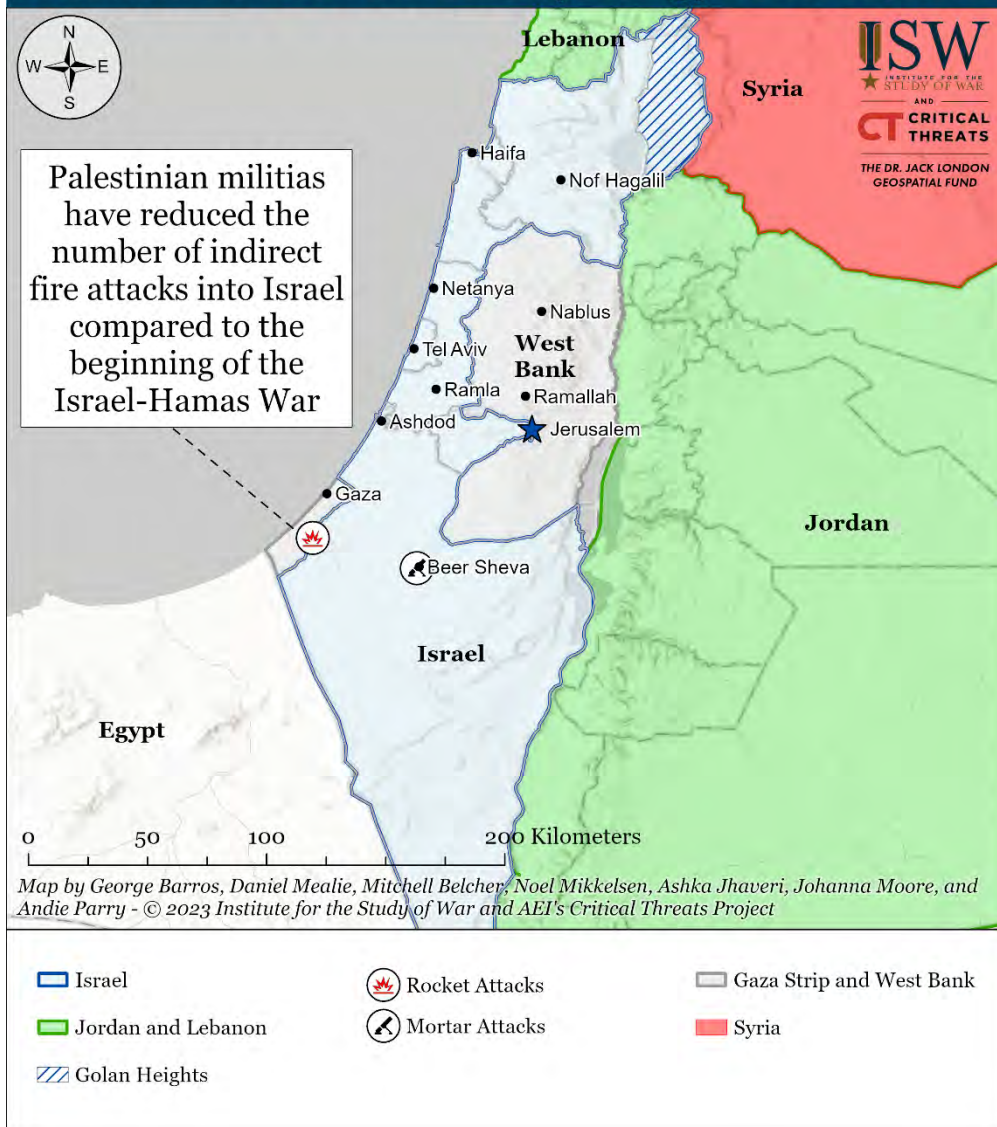
Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 11, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Palestinian militants claimed three indirect fire attacks into Israel on November 11. The al Qassem Brigades claimed two mortar attacks into southern Israel.^[15] The al Quds Brigades claimed one rocket attacks targeting Kissufim in southern Israel.^[16] The IDF intercepted a "suspicious" target that crossed from the Gaza Strip into Sderot.^[17] Palestinian militias have reduced their rates of indirect fire attacks into Israel in recent days compared to the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war. CTP-ISW previously reported that Hamas and PIJ began reducing its rate of attacks from the Gaza Strip in mid-October 2023 to conserve munitions.^[18]

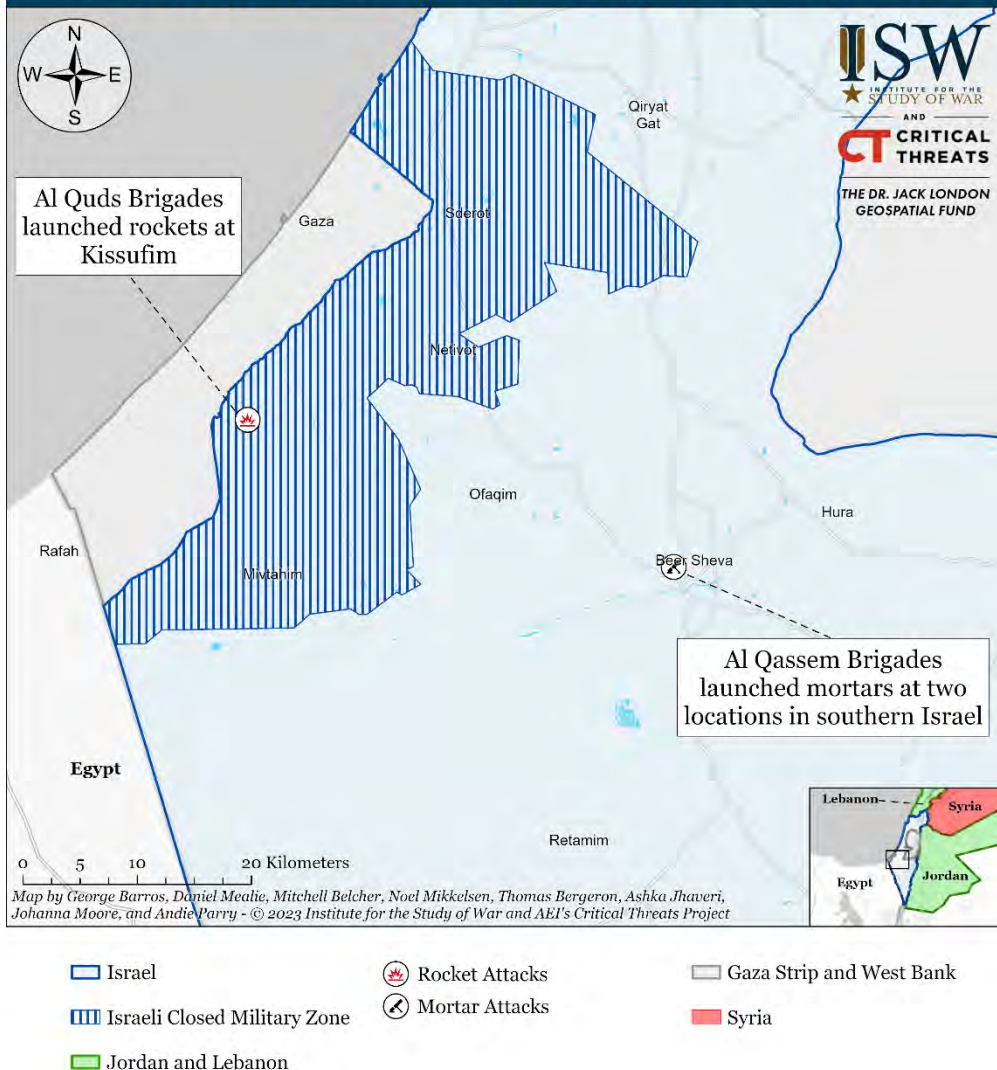
Al Qassem Brigades Military spokesperson Abu Ubaida claimed that Palestinian militia fighters are effectively attacking Israeli forces. Ubaida said that the militia fighters have destroyed or damaged over 160 Israeli military vehicles since the start of the Israeli ground operations and over 25 vehicles in the last 48 hours.^[19] CTP-ISW has not observed any evidence of this assertion. The al Qassem Brigades primarily uses the Yassin-105 anti-tank RPG to conduct hit-and-run attacks on Israeli tanks.^[20] Ubaida claimed that the militia fighters are targeting Israeli ground forces with rockets, car bombs, mortars, and anti-personnel bombs, likely referring to dropping bombs using a quadcopter drone.^[21]

Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 11, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 11, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

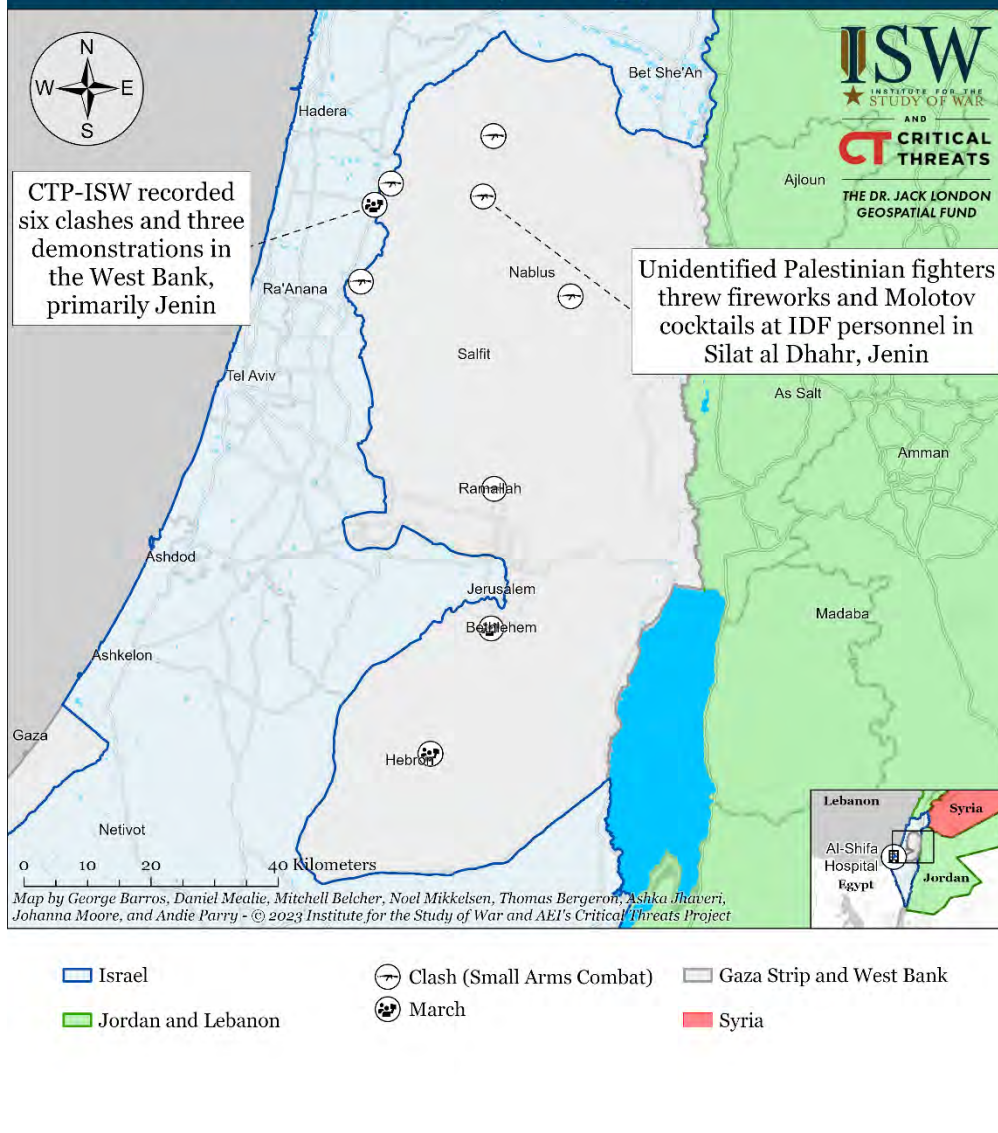
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

CTP-ISW recorded six clashes and three demonstrations in the West Bank, primarily in Jenin, on November 11.^[22] Unidentified Palestinian fighters threw fireworks and Molotov cocktails at IDF personnel in Silat al Dhahr, Jenin, according to a video circulated by Palestinian media.^[23] Unidentified Palestinian fighters separately clashed with Israeli forces at Arraba, Jenin.^[24] Palestinian media circulated a call for youth demonstrations in Jenin in support of the Gaza Strip on November 10.^[25] CTP-ISW recorded two youth demonstrations in Bethlehem and Tulkarm on November 11.^[26]

Clashes in the West Bank as of November 11, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

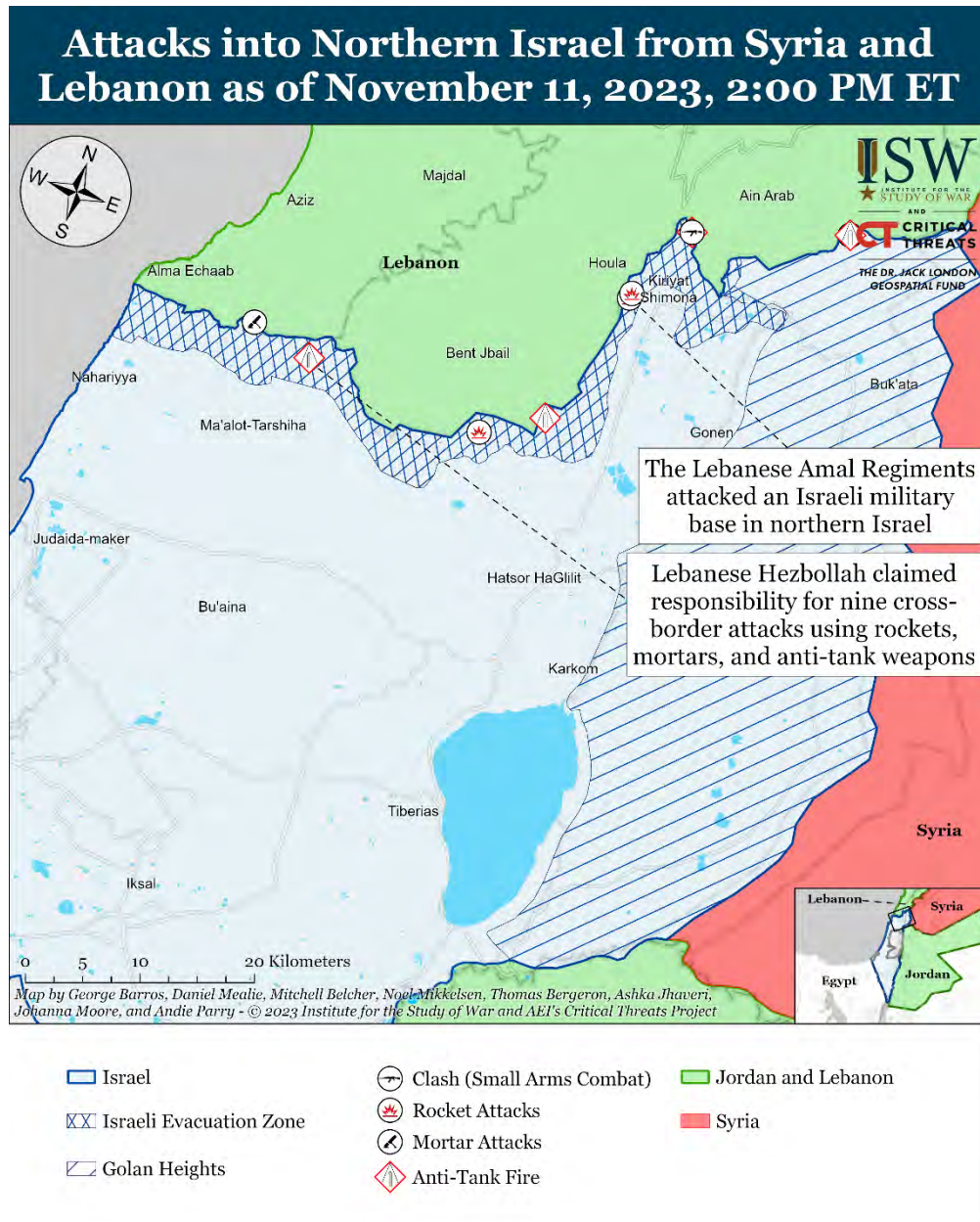
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Iranian-backed fighters conducted 15 cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 11. LH claimed responsibility for nine cross-border attacks using rockets, mortars, and anti-tank munitions along the Israel-Lebanon border and in the disputed Sheba Farms.[27] LH fighters targeted two IDF outposts in the Shebaa Farms as part of an ongoing attack campaign targeting IDF radar and sensor sites and military targets.[28] The IDF said unspecified fighters in Lebanese territory launched mortars and rockets that landed into open areas in Israel.[29] The IDF separately said unspecified fighters fired at an Israeli drone operating near the border and that Israeli air defense forces shot down or intercepted three aerial targets.[30] The Lebanese Amal Regiments carried out several military operations on November 11, including attacking the Israeli Ramim barracks.[31] This attack is the first time the Amal

Regiments have claimed attacks since the Israel-Hamas war began. LH separately claimed to fire rockets at the Ramim barracks on November 11.[32]

LH Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah gave on November 11 his second public speech on the Israel-Hamas war. Nasrallah stated that LH will continue to use southern Lebanon to pressure Israel, implying that it will conduct further attacks on Israeli targets. Nasrallah also claimed that the Lebanese diplomatic and political establishment supports the LH attacks against Israel.[33] He lastly asserted that LH has expanded the quantity of its attacks into northern Israel and begun using new military capabilities, such as the Burkan missile and various surveillance drones.[34]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

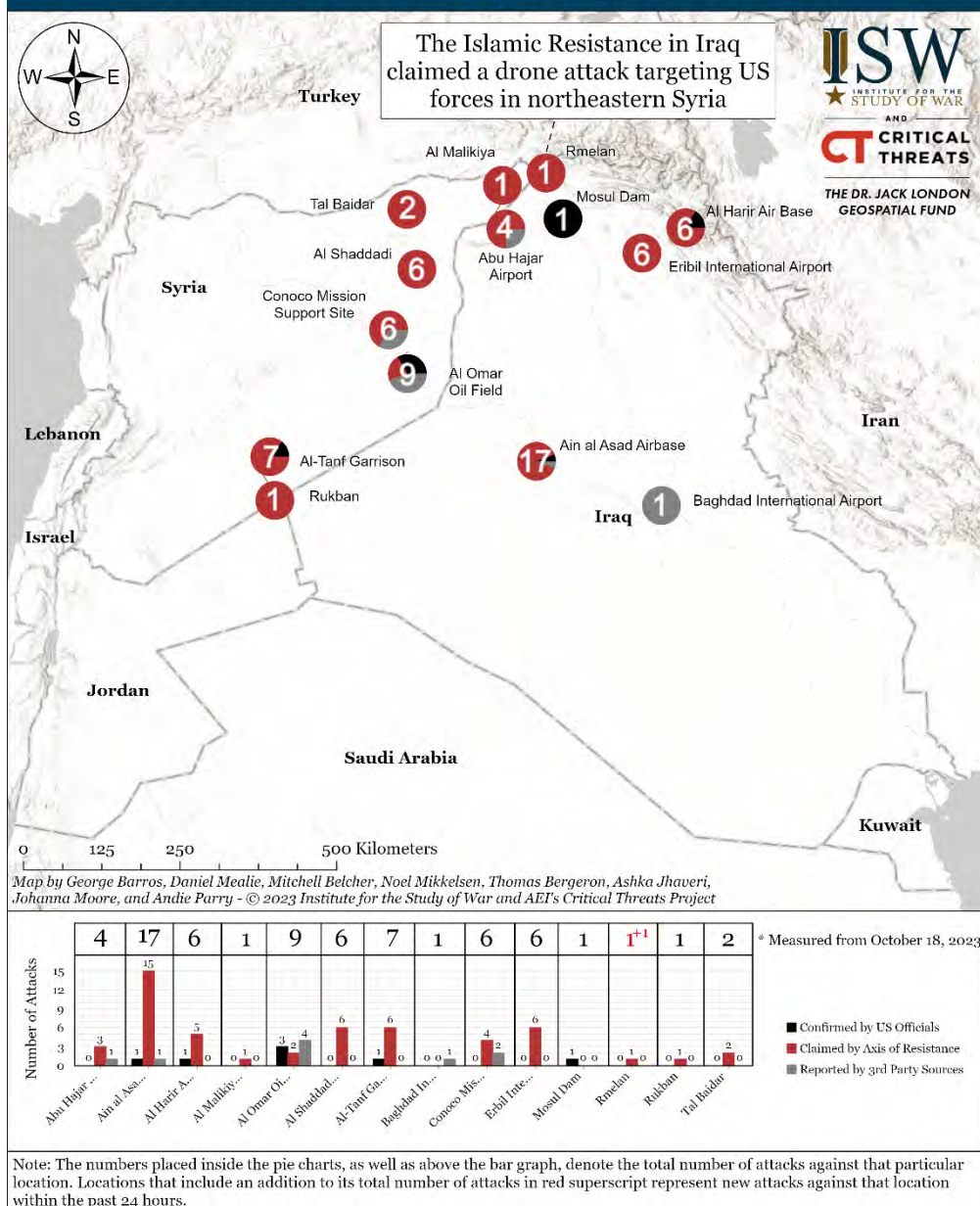
- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—an umbrella group for Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed one attack targeting US forces stationed in Rmelan, Hasakah Province, in northeastern Syria on November 11.[35] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed that it launched two one-way drones in the attack and that both successfully hit their targets. CENTCOM has not commented on the attack at the time of publication. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify the claim from the Islamic Resistance in Iraq. This attack is the first targeting US forces in Rmelan since the Israel-Hamas war began.

LH Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah highlighted Iran’s support for members of the Axis of Resistance in a speech on November 11.[36] Nasrallah claimed that Iran has not wavered in its support for its Axis of Resistance and has continued to arm, finance, and train “Lebanon, Palestine, and the region.” Nasrallah may be responding to the possible frustrations within the Axis of Resistance toward Iran given that Iran has had a relatively restrained response to the Israeli ground operation into the Gaza Strip.

Nasrallah also warned that Iranian-backed militias will continue attack US forces in Iraq and Syria unless the United States intervenes to stop Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip. Nasrallah praised the Islamic Resistance in Iraq for fighting to remove US forces and the Houthis for conducting drone and missile attacks targeting Israel.[37] Nasrallah’s warning of additional attacks is noteworthy given that he has reportedly played a prominent role in leading joint operations room overseeing Axis of Resistance activity across the region.[38]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 11, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi traveled to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 11 to attend a joint Arab League-OIC meeting.[39] Raisi's visit to Riyadh marked the first official visit by an Iranian president to Saudi Arabia in 11 years and was part of Iran's ongoing effort to rally Arab and Muslim countries against Israel.[40] Raisi called on Arab and Muslim governments to cut all economic and political ties with Israel and to label the IDF a terrorist organization. Iranian state media specifically called on Azerbaijan and Turkey to stop exporting oil to Israel in their coverage of the joint meeting.[41] The emphasis from Iranian state media on Turkey is consistent with CTP-ISW's previous observation that the Iranian regime is seizing on Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's pro-Hamas, anti-Israel stance on the Israel-Hamas war to try to undermine Israeli-Turkish rapprochement.[42] Raisi additionally called for the IDF to immediately withdraw from the Gaza Strip and stated that Arab and Muslim countries should arm Palestinians if Israeli "war crimes" and US "management" of the war persist.

Raisi met with the leaders of Egypt, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Syria on the sidelines of the joint Arab League-OIC meeting.[43] Raisi warned that people in the region may lose patience with their governments and take up the Palestinian cause themselves if the OIC fails to take effective actions to help Palestinians and stop Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip.[44] Iran has historically—and especially since the start of the war on October 7—sought to rally Muslim countries against Israel and has used the OIC as a platform to do so, hoping to isolate Israel internationally.[45] Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian recently attended an emergency OIC ministerial meeting in Jeddah on October 18 to this end.[46]

Iranian Intelligence and Security Minister Esmail Khatib warned on November 11 of the long-term consequences of Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip for US forces in the Middle East. Khatib stated that the US forces sent to the Middle East amid the Israel-Hamas war may stay in the region after the war ends because Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip have failed to "establish deterrence." [47]

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- [1] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/11/gaza-israel-hamas-war/>
 - [2] <https://twitter.com/Wolttigerhueter/status/1723095375748145632>
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 - [6] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/11/gaza-israel-hamas-war/>
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 - [11] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1723370182402326596>
 - [12] <https://t.me/qassambrigades/29095>
 - [13] <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5858>
 - [14] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1723229885991162279>
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 - [23] <https://t.me/QudsN/327541>; <https://t.me/newpress1/58082>
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 - [25] <https://t.me/newpress1/58036>
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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 12, 2023

Iran Update, November 12, 2023

Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Amin Soltani, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

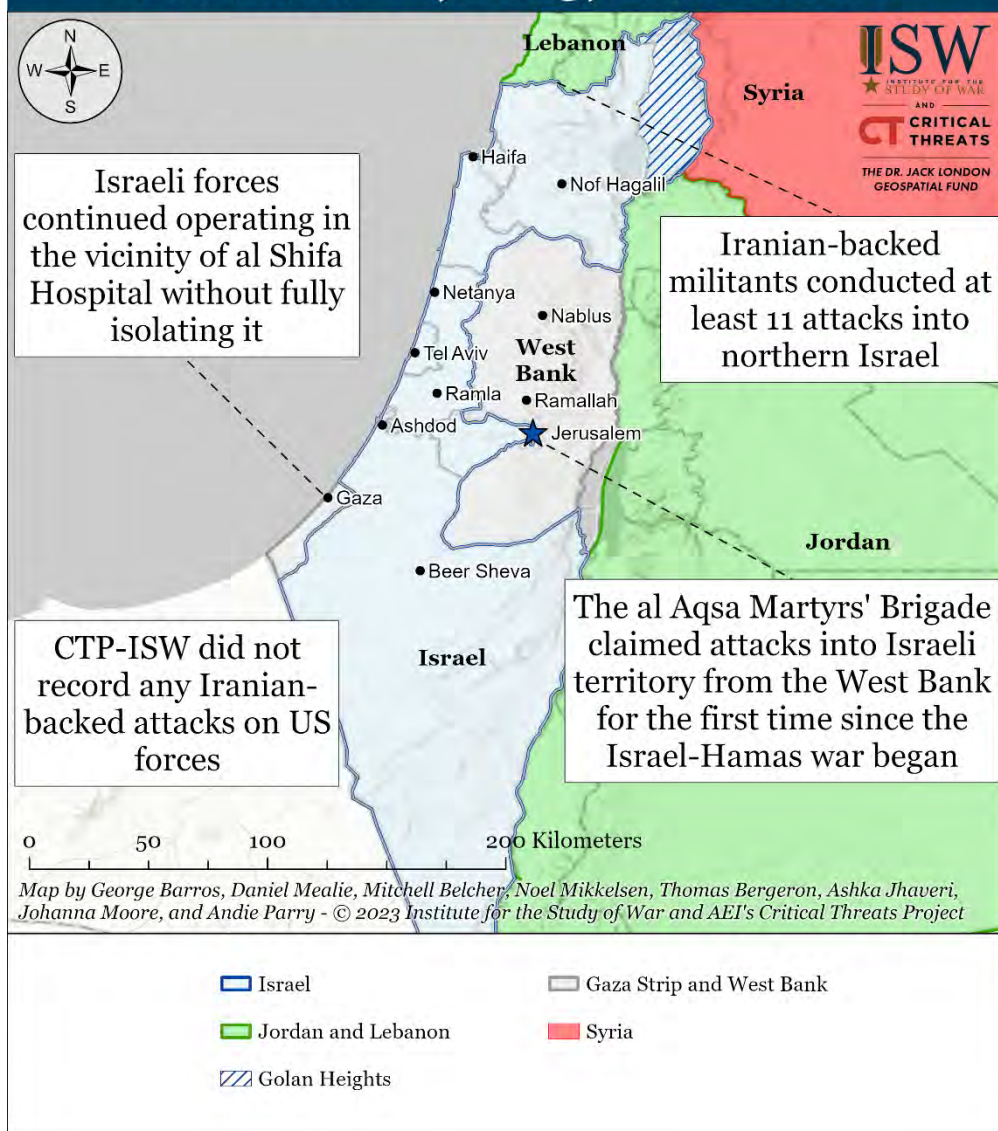
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli forces continued operating in the vicinity of al Shifa Hospital without fully isolating it.
2. Israeli forces said they advanced beyond Beit Hanoun.
3. The al Quds Brigades claimed that it shot down an Israeli drone using a man portable air defense system.
4. The Associated Press reported that Palestinians in the southern Gaza Strip displaced by the fighting are "openly challenging" Hamas' authority on a limited basis.
5. Palestinian militias conducted five indirect fire attacks into Israel.
6. CTP-ISW recorded three clashes between Palestinian fighters and Israeli forces in the West Bank, primarily in Tulkarm.
7. The Tulkarm Battalion of the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade claimed attacks into Israeli territory from the West Bank for the first time since the Israel-Hamas war began.
8. Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah, conducted at least 11 attacks into northern Israel.
9. The IDF conducted an airstrike in southwestern Syria in retaliation for unidentified militants in Syria conducting a rocket launch into the Golan Heights.
10. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed an attack on Eilat in southern Israel.
11. CTP-ISW did not record any Iranian-backed attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East on November 12. CTP-ISW has recorded a steep decline in claimed attacks targeting US forces in the region following the US airstrike on an IRGC facility in eastern Syria on November 8.
12. Officials from the Chinese and Iranian foreign affairs ministries engaged in political coordination vis-a-vis the Israel-Hamas War in Tehran.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 12, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israeli forces continued operating in the vicinity of al Shifa Hospital without fully isolating it on November 12. Israeli forces fought Palestinian militia fighters near the Square of the Unknown Soldier less than half a kilometer from the al Shifa Hospital complex.^[1] A Palestinian journalist reported that the al Qassem Brigades—the military wing of Hamas—ambushed Israeli forces south of the Square of the Unknown Soldier on Shuhada Street.^[2] Other Palestinian militia fighters fought Israeli forces on Omar Mukhtar Street, which bounds the square.^[3]

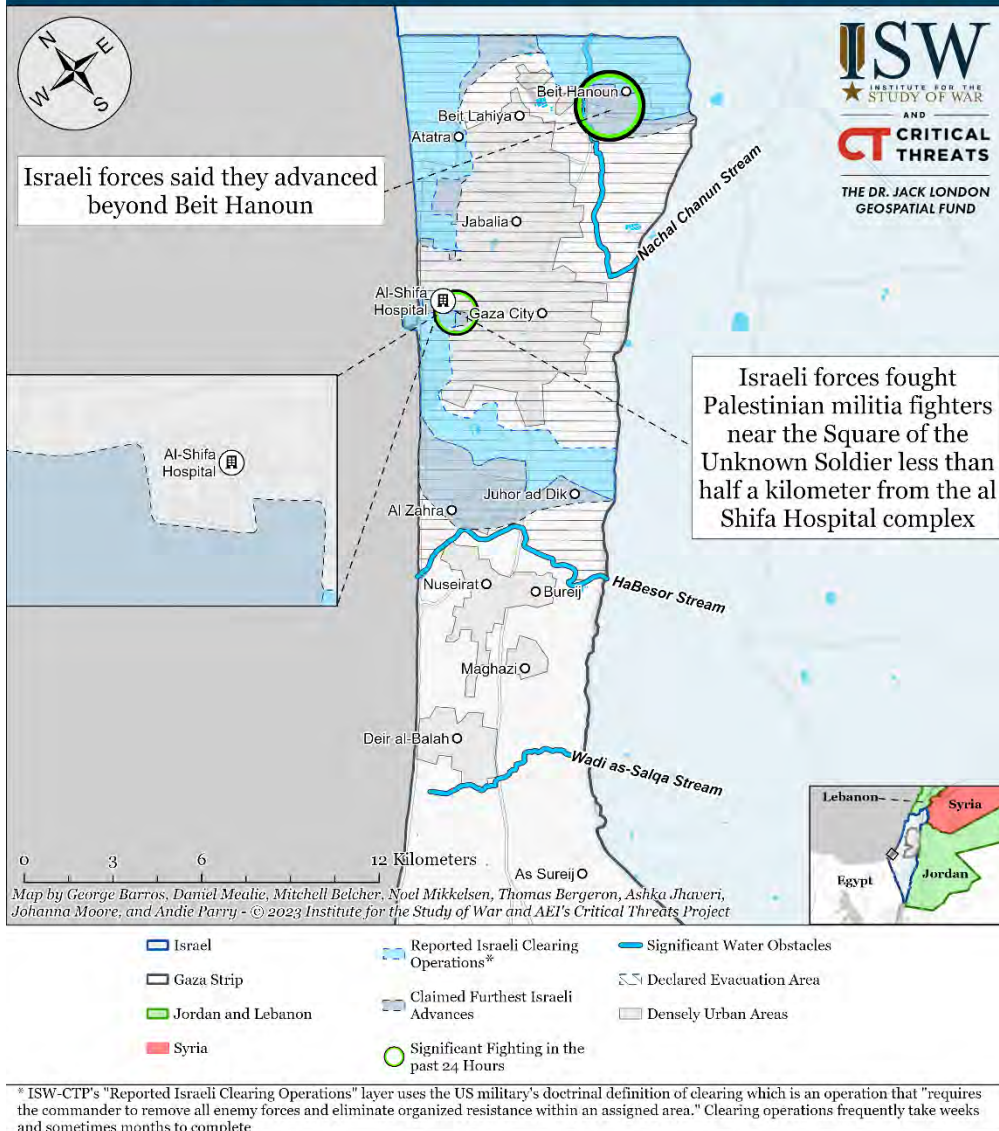
Israeli forces said they advanced beyond Beit Hanoun on or prior to November 12. The IDF released a video on November 12 showing the IDF Harel Brigade operating south of Beit Hanoun.^[4] Palestinian media reported that the IDF engaged Palestinian militia fighters near Abraj al Awda and north of Jabaliya, which is

consistent with the IDF video and statements.^[5] The IDF said it destroyed Hamas military infrastructure, including tunnels, rocket and anti-tank missile launch sites, and observation posts.^[6] Hamas fighters are continuing to attack the IDF in Beit Hanoun behind the IDF's forward line of advance, which is consistent with a clearing operation. The al Qassem Brigades said that it detonated an anti-personnel improvised explosive device (IED) targeting IDF forces sheltering in a house in Beit Hanoun.^[7]

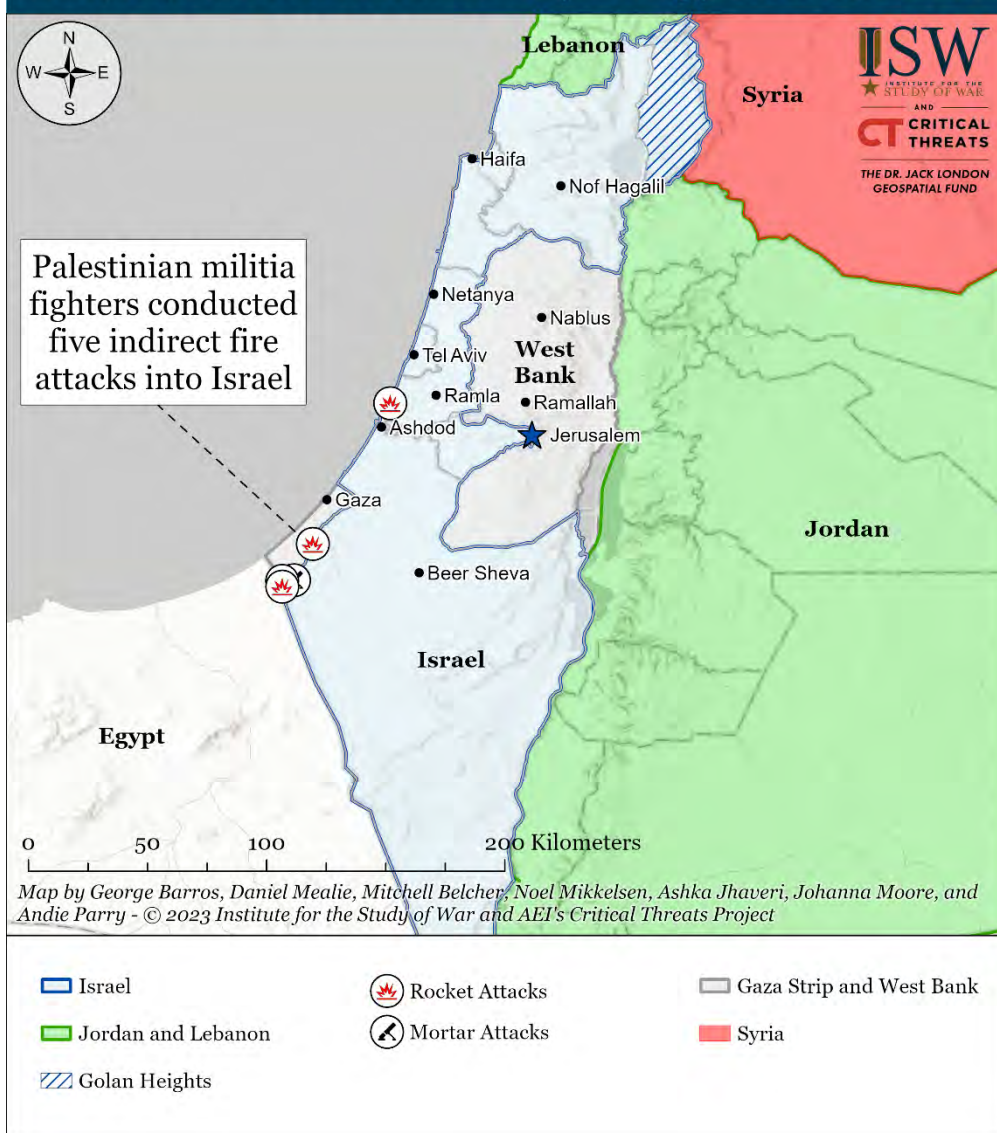
The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed that it shot down an Israeli drone using a man portable air defense system (MANPADS) on November 11.^[8] The al Quds Brigades released a video of one of its fighters firing the MANPADS, but the video did not show the target.^[9] CTP-ISW cannot independently verify that the al Quds Brigades successfully shot down the Israeli drone, as the group claimed.

The Associated Press reported that Palestinians in the southern Gaza Strip displaced by the fighting are “openly challenging” Hamas’ authority on a limited basis. The Associated Press cited four anonymous Palestinians who told the wire service that some Gazans are repeatedly voicing their dissent with Hamas’ rule publicly.^[10] The report said that “hundreds” of Gazans insulted Hamas during the night and called for an end to the war at an unspecified UN shelter in Gaza City.^[11] Witnesses told the outlet that some locals are “beating up policemen.”^[12] A spokesperson for the UN agency focused on Palestinian refugees said that the Gaza Strip's social fabric is “fraying” amid widespread violence among local civilians.^[13] The Associated Press report highlighted “riots” in food and water lines, as well as the level of violence “jarring” Gazan society.^[14] *The Washington Post* reported that Hamas aimed to strike deep into Israel during its October 7 attack, including as far as the Israeli-West Bank border.^[15] Two senior Middle Eastern intelligence officials and one former US official told the *Washington Post* that at least one Hamas assault team sought to reach the border with the West Bank.^[16] A current senior Israeli official told the *Washington Post* that Hamas “planned a second phase” that sought to target major Israeli cities and military bases, citing classified Israeli intelligence.^[17]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 12, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

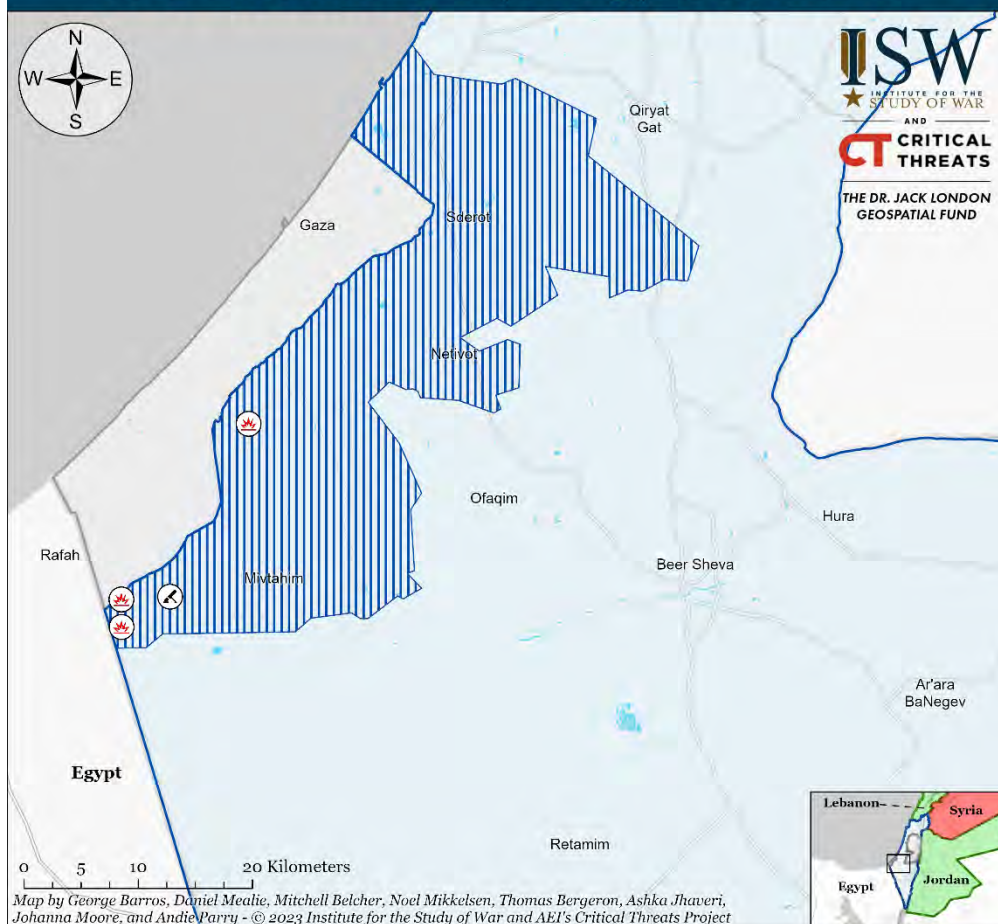


Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 12, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 12, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Israel | Rocket Attacks | Gaza Strip and West Bank |
| Israeli Closed Military Zone | Mortar Attacks | Syria |
| Jordan and Lebanon | | |

Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

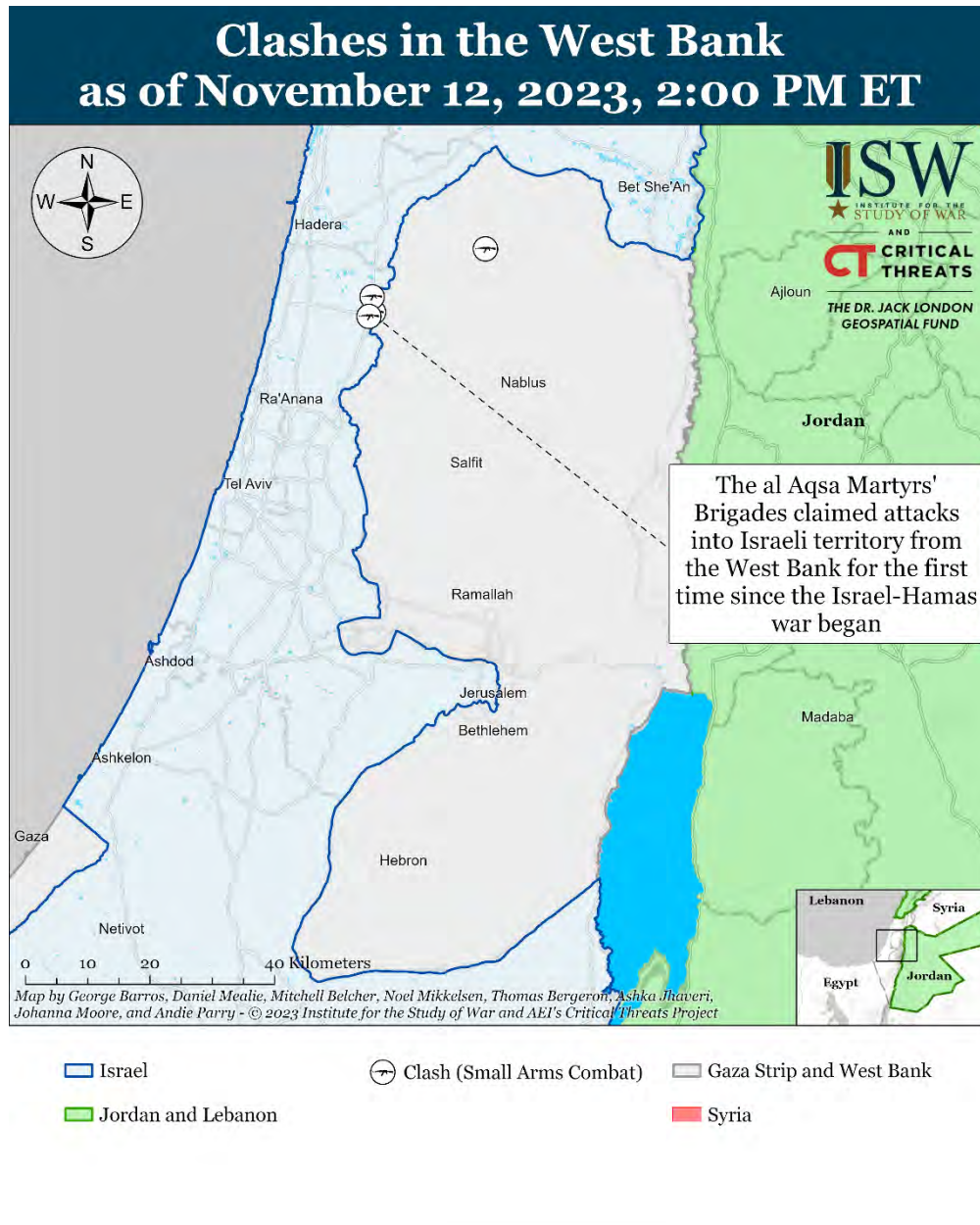
Palestinian militias conducted five indirect fire attacks into Israel on November 12. The al Qassem Brigades claimed one mortar attack.^[18] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades—the self-proclaimed militant wing of Fatah—claimed one rocket attack.^[19] The al Quds Brigades claimed two rocket attacks against southern Israel.^[20] The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades—the militant wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—fired one rocket salvo targeting Palmachim airbase, south of Tel Aviv.^[21]

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
CTP-ISW recorded three clashes between Palestinian fighters and Israeli forces in the West Bank, primarily in Tulkarm. The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claimed to shoot at an IDF unit conducting raids in Tulkarm the evening of November 11.^[22] Unidentified Palestinian fighters separately threw improvised explosive devices (IEDs) at Israeli forces in Arraba, Jenin, on November 12, according to Palestinian media.^[23]

The Tulkarm Battalion of the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade claimed attacks into Israeli territory from the West Bank for the first time since the Israel-Hamas war began. The group claimed two simultaneous attacks targeting Israeli forces stationed in Israeli territory near Tulkarm. The group claimed to target Bat Hefer and Israeli forces at the Nizzane Oz Gate border crossing with small arms, including snipers, the evening of November 11.[24] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade claimed that none of its fighters involved in the two attacks were injured. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify this claim.



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

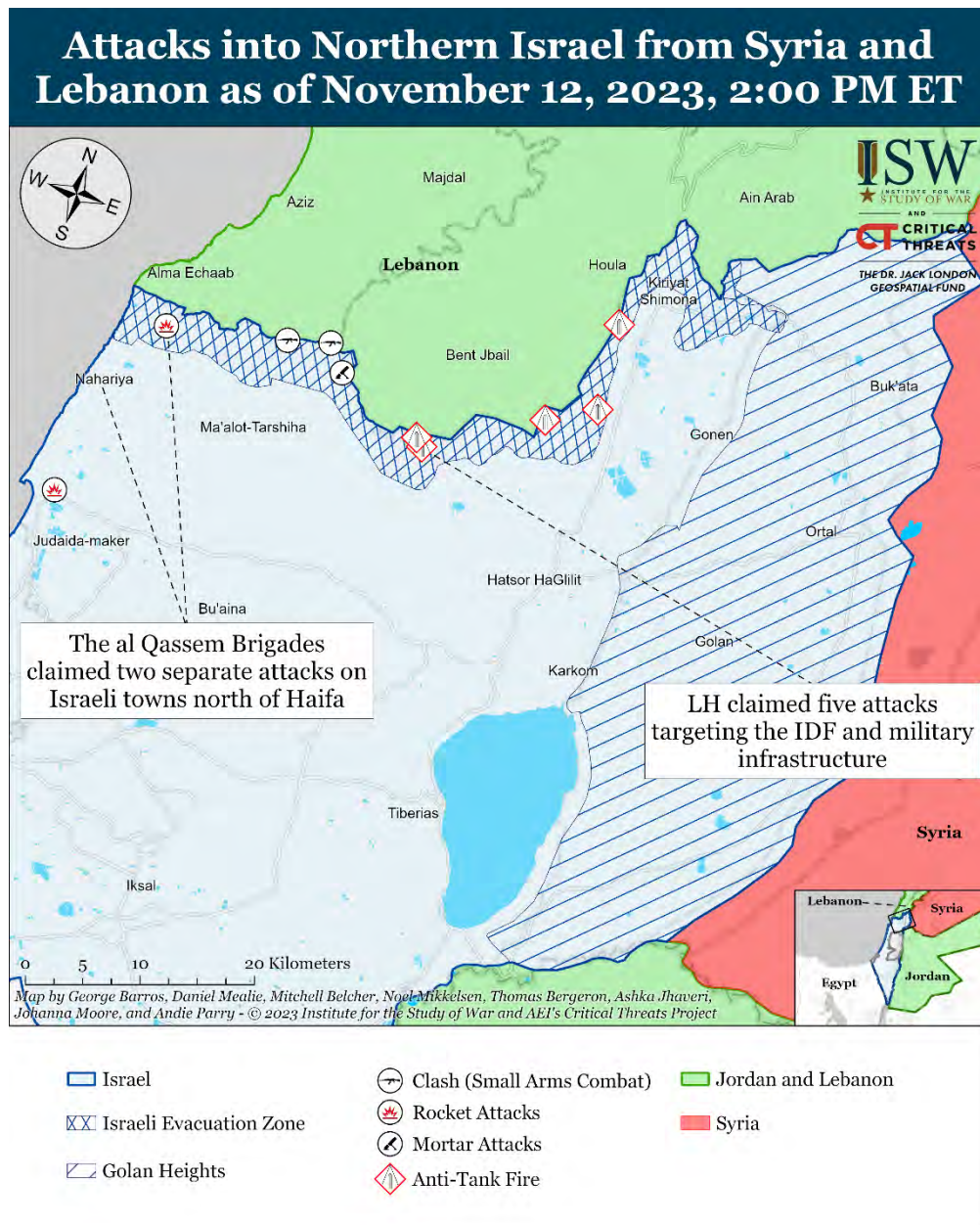
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), conducted at least 11 attacks into northern Israel on November 12.[25] LH claimed five attacks targeting the IDF along the Israel-Lebanon border. LH targeted Israeli radio and surveillance equipment near the Dovev agricultural cooperative site and

Malikiyah.[26] LH also claimed to fire an anti-tank guided missile at an IDF bulldozer and its crew, causing several injuries, at Dovev.[27] The al Qassem Brigades separately claimed a rocket attack from southern Lebanon targeting northern Haifa, Shlomi, and Nahariya.[28]

The IDF conducted an airstrike in southwestern Syria in retaliation for unidentified militants in Syria conducting a rocket launch into the Golan Heights on November 12.[29] The IDF reported that its forces hit “terrorist infrastructure.” Iranian state media reported that the strike caused no casualties or damage.[30]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

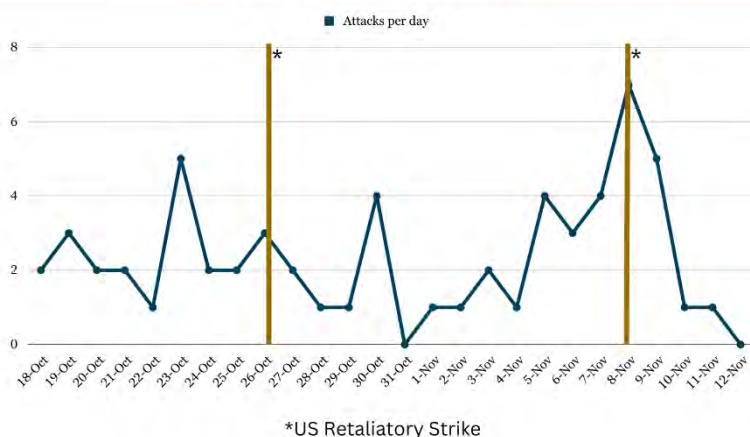
- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi proxies—claimed an attack on Eilat in southern Israel on November 12.[31] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq announced that it intends to

continue to attack Israeli targets.[32] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed two separate attacks into Israel on November 2 and 3.[33] Israeli officials have not commented on the Islamic Resistance in Iraq's claim at the time of publication. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify this claim.

CTP-ISW did not record any Iranian-backed attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East on November 12. CTP-ISW has recorded a steep decline in claimed attacks targeting US forces in the region following the US airstrike on an IRGC facility in eastern Syria on November 8.[34] US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin stated that the airstrike was "a response to a series of attacks against US personnel in Iraq and Syria by IRGC Quds Force affiliates." CTP-ISW has recorded 65 attacks against US positions in Iraq and Syria since the Israel-Hamas war began.

Iranian-Backed Attacks on US Forces in Iraq and Syria



Officials from the Chinese and Iranian foreign affairs ministries engaged in political coordination vis-a-vis the Israel-Hamas War in Tehran on November 12.[35] Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry West Asian and North African Affairs Department Director General Wang Di discussed the war with Iranian Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani and other ministry officials, according to a social media post from the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry. The Iranian officials expressed their hope that China would play a significant role in bringing the conflict under control. China assumed the UN Security Council presidency on November 1.[36]

[1] <https://twitter.com/TwistyCB/status/1723662827733266824>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1723503598045126887>

[2] <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1723508152740495574?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1723506041537675357?s=20>

[3] <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1723503598045126887>

[4] <https://x.com/chrissschmitz/status/1723691158625263901?s=20>

[5] <https://t.me/newpress1/58162>

[6] <https://ynet dot co.il/news/article/hjmkzhaxt>

[7] <https://t.me/qassambrigades/29106>

[8] <https://t.me/newpress1/58147>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16650>

[9] <https://t.me/newpress1/58147>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16650>

[10] <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-palestinians-gaza-water-food...>

[11] <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-palestinians-gaza-water-food...>

[12] <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-palestinians-gaza-water-food...>

[13] <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-palestinians-gaza-water-food...>

[14] <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-palestinians-gaza-water-food...>

[15] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/11/12/hamas-planni...>

- [16] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/11/12/hamas-planni...>
- [17] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/11/12/hamas-planni...>
- [18] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/407>
- [19] <https://x.com/ajmurgent/status/1723629531762688272?s=20>
- [20] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16648>
- [21] <https://t.me/kataebabuali/10471>
- [22] <https://t.me/alredalsrey/444>
- [23] <https://t.me/QudsN/328196>
- [24] <https://t.me/alredalsrey/443>
- [25] https://t.me/C_Military1/39171; https://t.me/C_Military1/39179; https://t.me/C_Military1/39208; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1723654152679563731>; https://t.me/C_Military1/39218; https://t.me/C_Military1/39213; https://t.me/C_Military1/39222; https://t.me/C_Military1/39228; https://t.me/C_Military1/39227; https://t.me/C_Military1/39234; https://t.me/C_Military1/39239; https://t.me/C_Military1/39243; <https://t.me/HebronNewss/29179>; https://t.me/C_Military1/39248; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/410>; <https://t.me/newpress1/58224>; <https://t.me/QudsN/328163>
- [26] https://t.me/C_Military1/39218; https://t.me/C_Military1/39213; <https://t.me/QudsN/328163>
- [27] <https://www.almayadeen.net/news/politics/>; https://t.me/C_Military1/39222
- [28] <https://t.me/jeninnews1/74160>
- [29] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1723511707291590957>
- [30] <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2023/11/12/714461/Fresh-Israeli-airstrike-targets-positions-in-Syria,-no-casualties-reported>
- [31] <https://t.me/elamharbi/95>
- [32] <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2023/11/12/714458/Iraqi-resistance-force-target-Eilat-second-time>
- [33] <https://t.me/elamharbi/60>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/67>
- [34] <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3584458/secretary-...>
- [35] https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?__biz=MzI3MTQwMjg0MQ==&mid=2247560514&idx=1&sn=c8a76ebbcd3f676184317e839da385e0&chksm=eac1ff74ddb6766208fe2273b02568897b1f17d064f10059a398c9ddf00aeb46ed13560333f8&sce ne=0&xtrack=1#rd
- [36] <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/presidency>

IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 13, 2023

Iran Update, November 13, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, Annika Ganzeveld, Amin Soltani, Peter Mills, and Kathryn Tyson.

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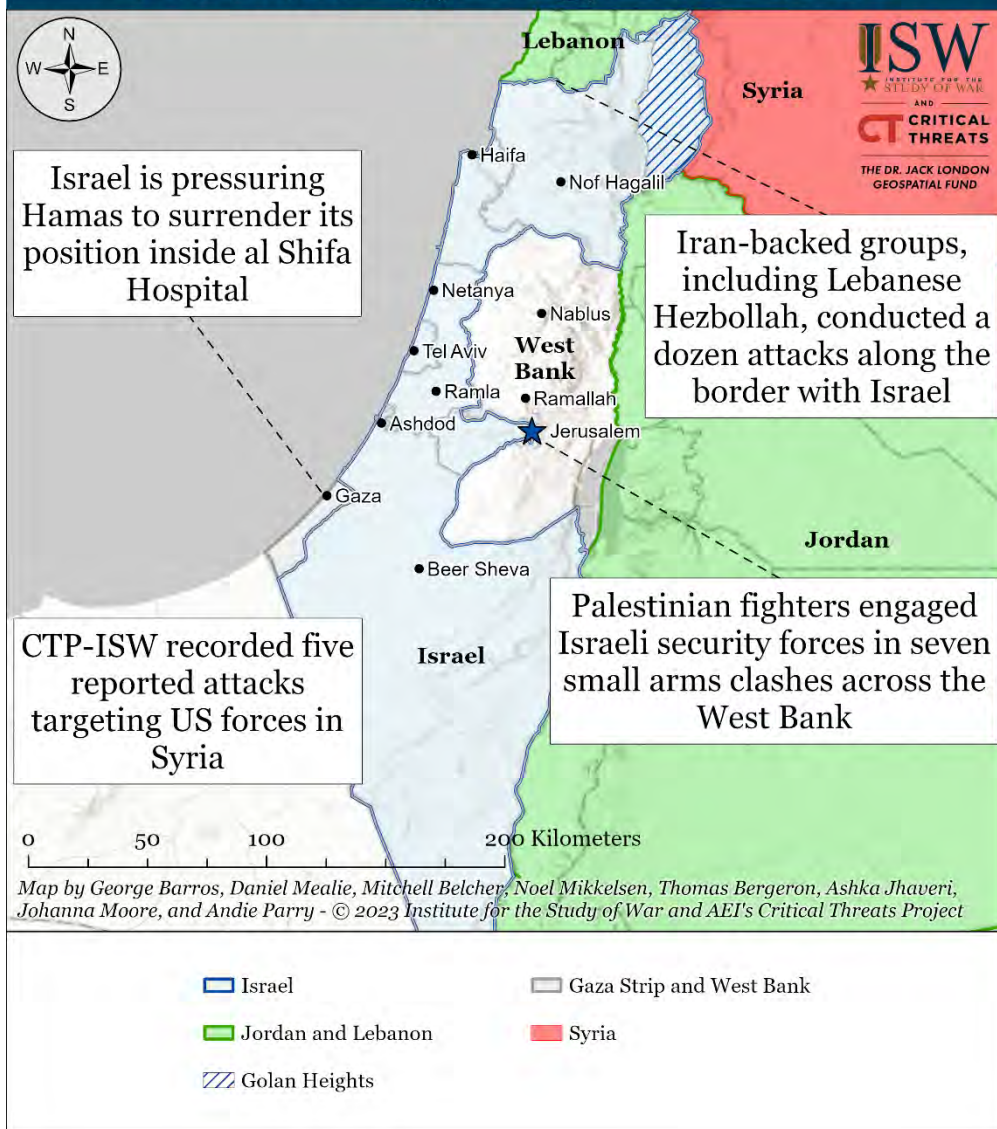
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Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israel is pressuring Hamas to surrender its position inside the al Shifa Hospital. Hamas prevented al Shifa Hospital staff from accepting fuel from Israeli forces, according to the Israel Defense Forces.
2. Israeli forces advanced further into the al Nasr neighborhood in the northwestern Gaza Strip. Israeli forces also fought with Palestinian militia fighters at the al Quds Hospital in southwestern Gaza City. The IDF said it has weakened 10 out of 24 Hamas battalions in the Gaza Strip.
3. Palestinian fighters engaged Israeli forces in seven small arms clashes and detonated five IEDs targeting Israeli forces across the West Bank on November 13.
4. Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), conducted at least 12 attacks into northern Israel on November 13. Israeli officials stated on November 13 that LH attacks on November 12 killed and wounded 17 Israeli soldiers and civilians. LH acknowledged on November 13 that 73 of its fighters have died fighting Israel since October 7.
5. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed one attack targeting US forces in Syria on November 12 and claimed to fire one drone at US forces stationed at Green Village. CTP-ISW recorded four attacks targeting US forces in Syria on November 13.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 13, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israel is pressuring Hamas to surrender its position inside the al Shifa Hospital.[1] Reuters reported on November 13 that Israeli forces and tanks reached the gate of the al Shifa Hospital. Israeli Military International Spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hecht said that the IDF has not entered the hospital yet.[2] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—clashed with Israeli forces in the vicinity of the hospital, marking the fourth day of armed clashes between Palestinian militias and Israeli forces near the hospital.[3] The spokesperson of the Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry said that 650 patients are still inside the hospital.[4] The World Health Organization reported that the al Shifa Hospital is no longer functioning.[5]

Israeli forces arrested Palestinian militia fighters northeast of the al Shifa Hospital on November 12.^[6] A local news organization said that Israeli forces surrounded al Wafa Hospital east of the al Shifa Hospital on November 13 and ordered patients and medical staff to evacuate.^[7]

Hamas prevented al Shifa Hospital staff from accepting fuel from Israeli forces, according to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The IDF reported on November 12 that it left 300 liters of fuel at a location approximately 300 meters from the hospital.^[8] The head of the hospital told Al Araby TV that the amount of fuel is insufficient and that he agreed to accept the fuel so long as it was delivered by the International Committee of the Red Cross.^[9] The IDF reported that Hamas prevented the hospital staff from taking the fuel.^[10] A US official with knowledge of US intelligence said on November 13 that Hamas has a command node underneath the al Shifa Hospital and uses the fuel intended for the hospital.^[11] US and Israeli officials have stated that Hamas uses hospitals and civilian facilities for command and control, storing weapons, and housing fighters.^[12]

Israeli forces advanced further into the al Nasr neighborhood in the northwestern Gaza Strip. The IDF and Shin Bet arrested more than 20 Hamas operatives in the al Shati refugee camp.^[13] The al Quds Brigades clashed with Israeli forces in the al Nasr neighborhood on November 13.^[14] The IDF published footage of ground forces operating in the Ranteesi Specialist Hospital in the al Nasr neighborhood on November 13.^[15] An IDF combat team continued raids on the outskirts of al Shati Refugee Camp, focusing on destroying military infrastructure in the heart of the civilian population including schools, universities, mosques, and homes. The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades artillery unit launched mortars at the Israeli army operating in the vicinity of the camp.^[16] A Palestinian woman told the BBC that the IDF ordered some 800 people taking shelter in a clinic in the camp to leave.^[17]

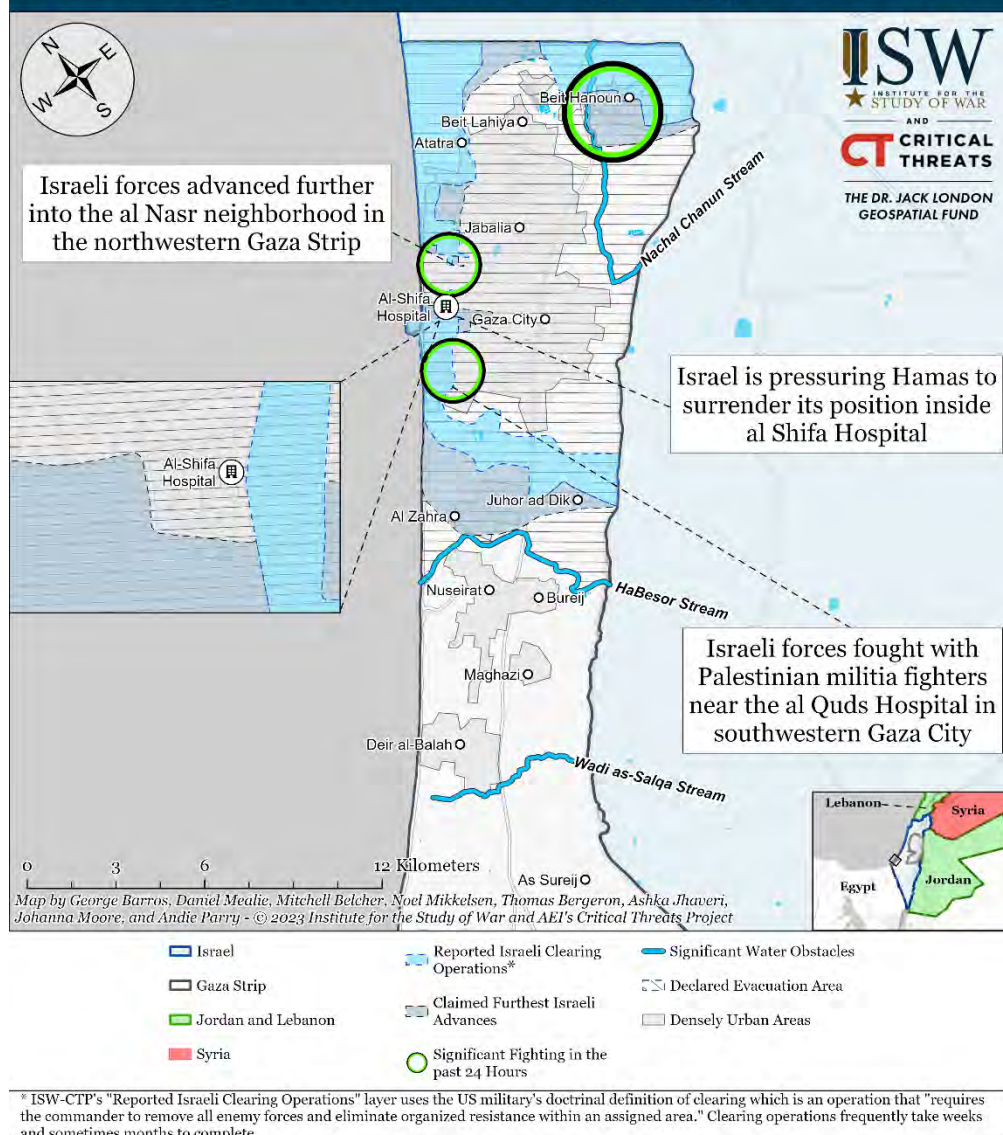
Israeli forces fought with Palestinian militia fighters at the al Quds Hospital in southwestern Gaza City. The IDF said a brigade combat team of armored forces, engineers, and infantry with air support killed 21 militants during a period of intense fighting against Hamas.^[18] The IDF published drone footage of a militant with an RPG taking cover within hospital grounds and an Israeli tank operating outside of the hospital grounds.^[19] The IDF said the incident is another example of Hamas' ongoing exploitation of sensitive sites, including hospitals.^[20] The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said there was heavy shooting and the presence of Israeli military vehicles and forces in the vicinity of the hospital.^[21]

Hamas and other Palestinian militia fighters conducted indirect fire attacks against the IDF behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations. The al Qassem Brigades fired mortars at Israeli forces east of Juhor ad Dik on November 13.^[22] The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades—the militant wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—separately claimed to fire rockets and mortars at Israeli forces east of Juhor ad Dik on November 12 in response to Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip.^[23] The al Quds Brigades fired 60 mortars at Israeli vehicles on Highway 10, where Israeli forces have been crossing to advance into Gaza City.^[24] Palestinian media reported that the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades—the self-claimed militant wing of Fatah—fired mortars at the Israeli army in an unspecified location in the southern Gaza city axis.^[25]

Israeli forces continued clearing operations in Beit Hanoun in the northeastern Gaza Strip on November 11. The IDF said that reservists raided the home of a senior PIJ member in a civilian area in Beit Hanoun where they found various weapons and intelligence materials and located a tunnel shaft.^[26] CTP-ISW previously reported on October 21 that the IDF faces a loose coalition of Palestinian militant groups in the Gaza Strip—rather than just Hamas.^[27] The al Qassem Brigades conducted two attacks on Israeli forces north of Beit Hanoun using a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) and sniper rifle.^[28]

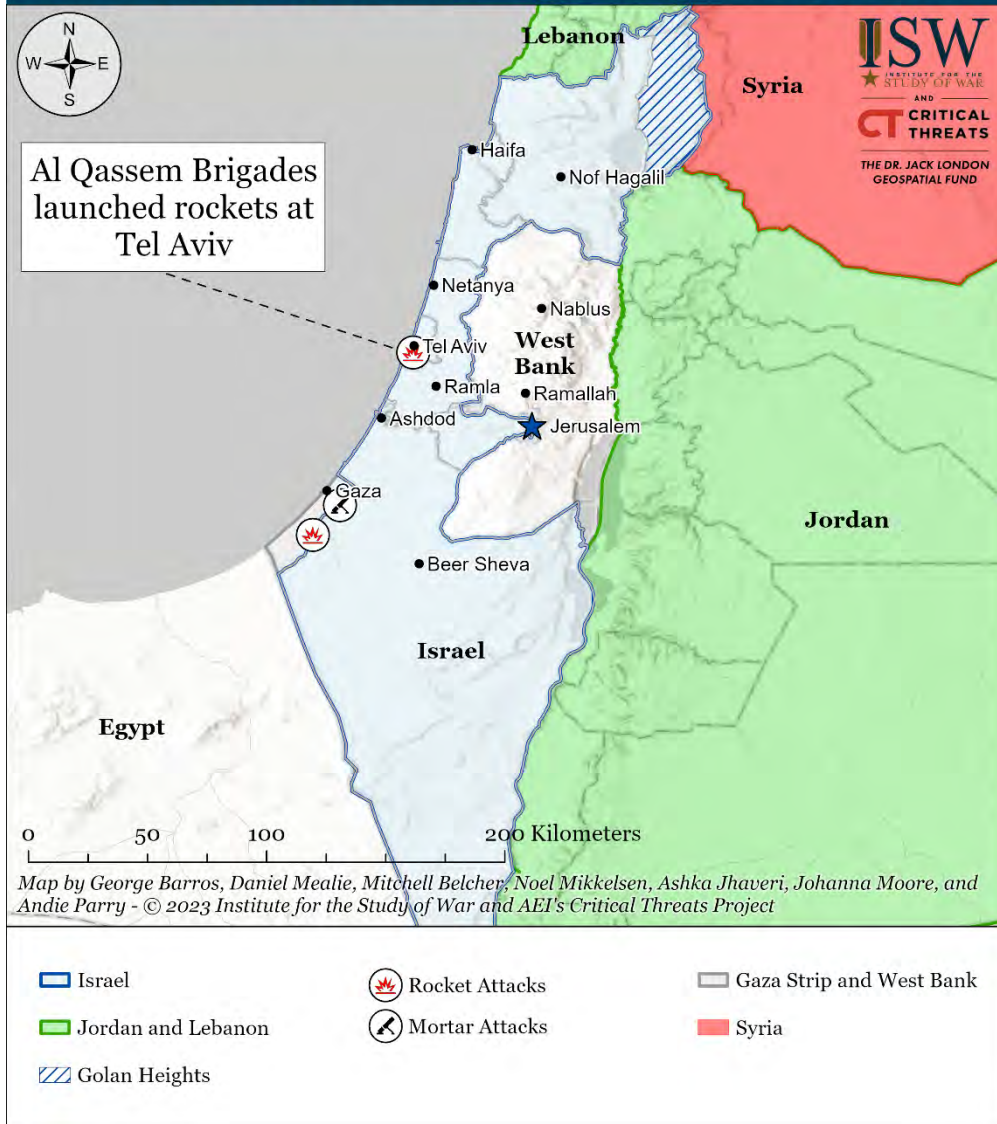
The IDF said it has weakened 10 out of 24 Hamas battalions in the Gaza Strip.^[29] The IDF published a report explaining how it has been working to eliminate Hamas operatives and commanders at the field and senior levels since October 7.^[30] The report says Hamas is comprised of 30,000 militia fighters in the Gaza Strip, which are divided into five regional brigades, 24 battalions, and 140 companies.^[31] Each battalion is comprised of several strongholds and military outposts.^[32] The IDF said that its ground forces are fighting in areas of several battalions.^[33] The IDF has been assassinating several Hamas leaders to dismantle military structures. The IDF said on November 13 that it had assassinated five leaders with various roles in Hamas' intelligence services, anti-armor units, and special forces.^[34]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 13, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



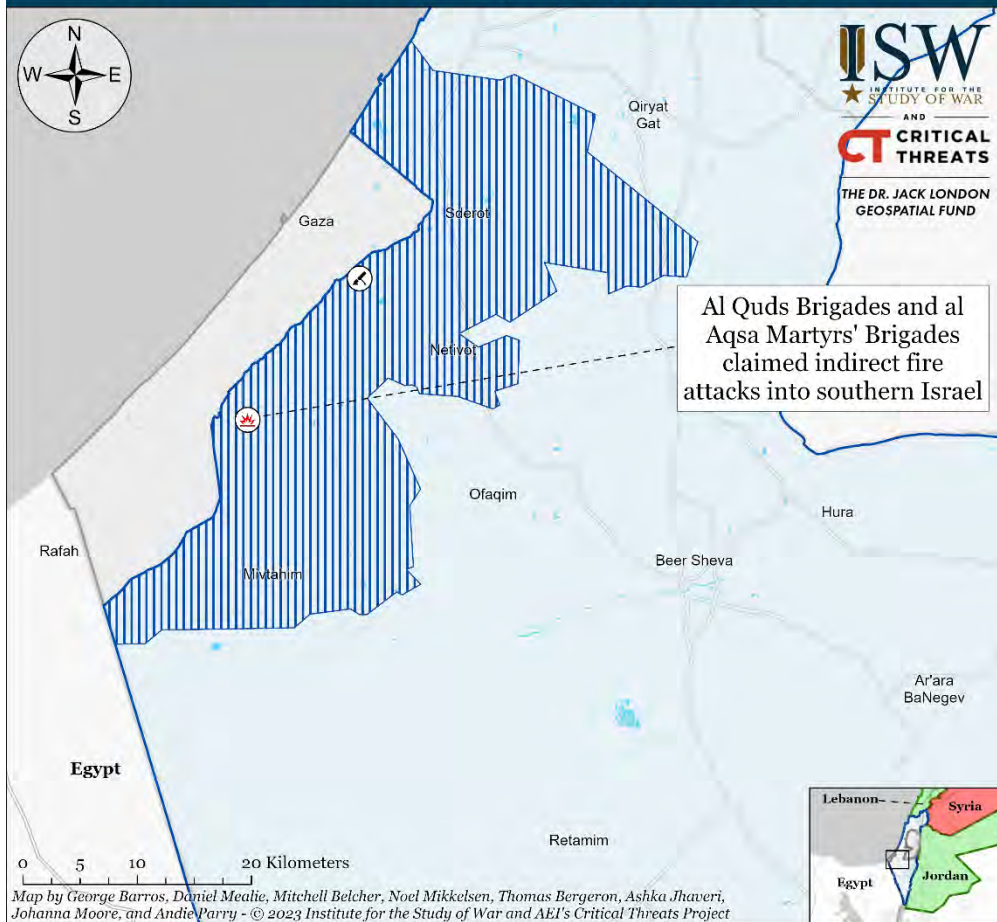
Palestinian militias conducted three indirect fire attacks into Israel on November 13. The al Qassem Brigades claimed one rocket attack at Tel Aviv.[35] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claimed one mortar attack on an Israeli military site in southern Israel.[36] The al Quds Brigades claimed two rocket attacks on Israeli military sites in southern Israel.[37]

Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 13, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 13, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Israel | Rocket Attacks | Gaza Strip and West Bank |
| Israeli Closed Military Zone | Mortar Attacks | Jordan and Lebanon |
| | | Syria |

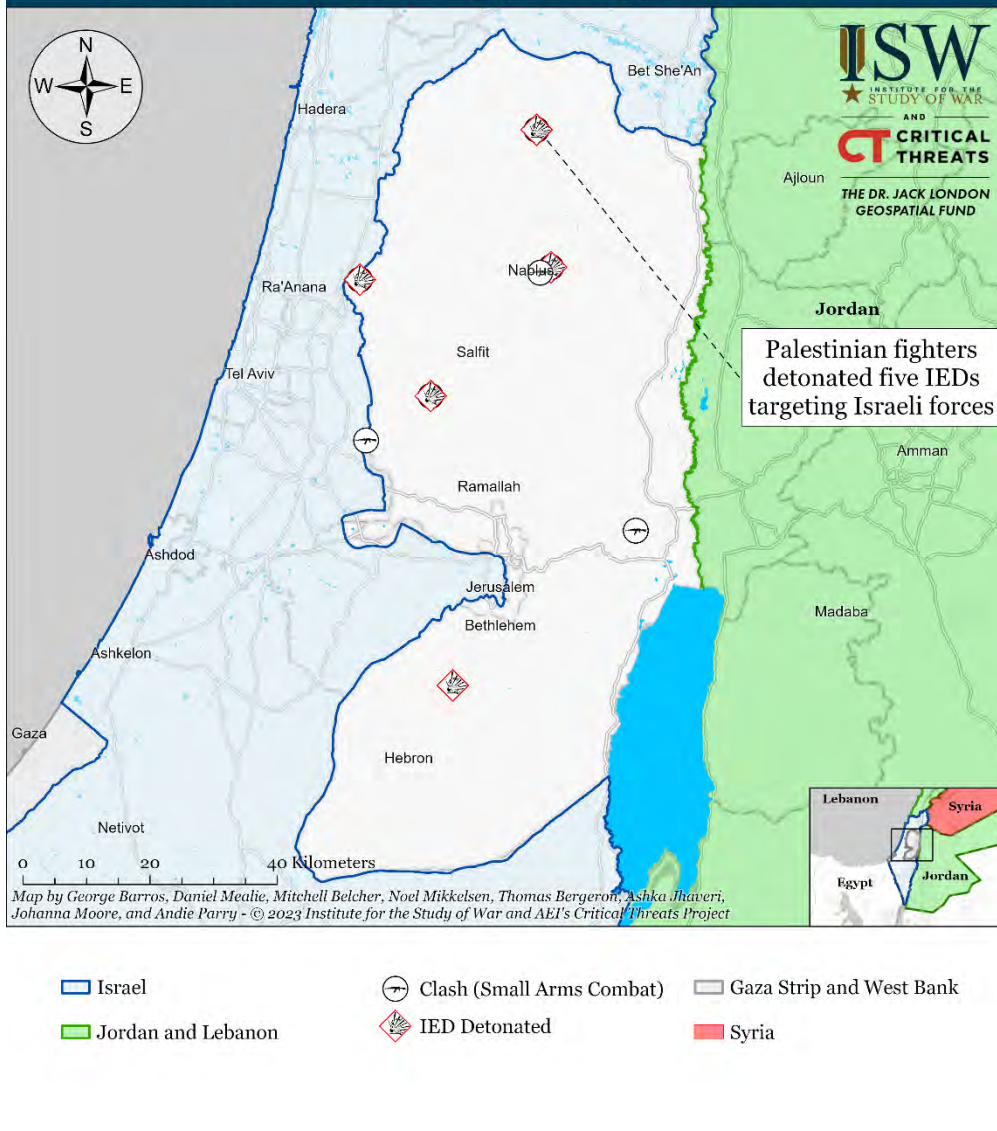
Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
Palestinian fighters engaged Israeli forces in seven small arms clashes and detonated five IEDs targeting Israeli forces across the West Bank on November 13.[38] Palestinian militia groups have not claimed the attacks, which occurred primarily in major cities, including Nablus and Jenin. The attacks came as Israeli security forces continued conducting arrest raids in the West Bank on November 13.[39] The IDF said it detained 14 Hamas operatives during the overnight raids.

Clashes in the West Bank as of November 13, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

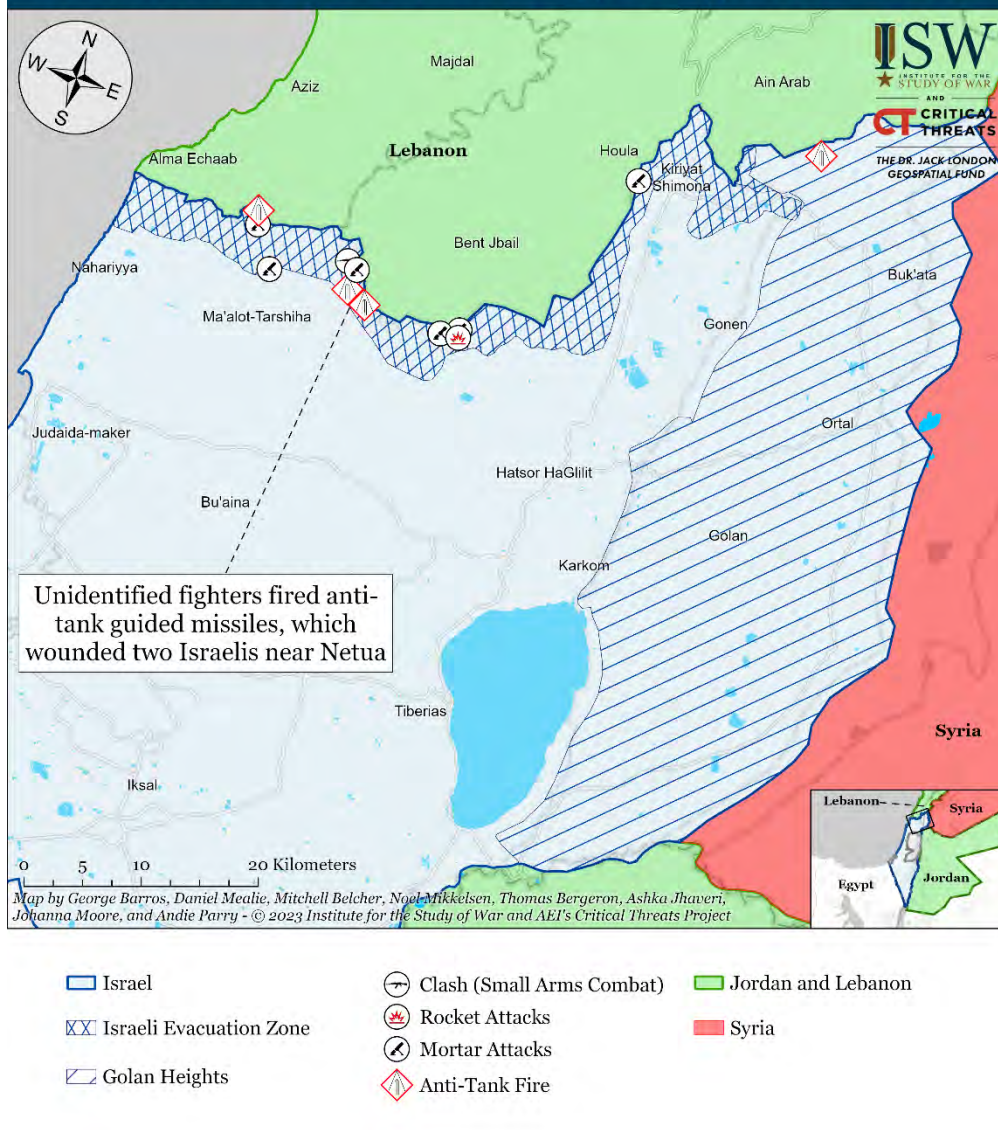
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), conducted at least 12 attacks into northern Israel on November 13. LH claimed five attacks targeting the IDF along the Israel-Lebanon border.[40] Unidentified fighters conducted seven more indirect fire and anti-tank guided missile attacks on Israeli towns and IDF border posts along the Israel-Lebanese border.[41] Israeli officials stated on November 13 that LH attacks on November 12 killed and wounded 17 Israeli soldiers and civilians.[42] LH acknowledged on November 13 that 73 of its fighters have died fighting Israel since October 7.[43] Unidentified fighters also fired an anti-tank guided missile which caused several injuries near Netua, along the Israel-Lebanon border.[44]

Attacks into Northern Israel from Lebanon as of November 13, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that members of the Front for the Liberation of the Golan are currently operating in territory surrounding the Golan Heights.[45] SOHR claimed that approximately 700 fighters deployed to the Qunaitrah countryside, western Rif Dimashque, and western Daraa in October 2023.[46] The Assad regime formed the Resistance of the Front for the Liberation of the Golan in 2006 and is primarily made up of Syrians and Palestinian refugees.[47] The group also has ties to LH according to the Washington Institute.[48] CTP-ISW has previously reported on LH and other Iranian-backed militias deploying to the border of the Golan Heights since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war.[49]

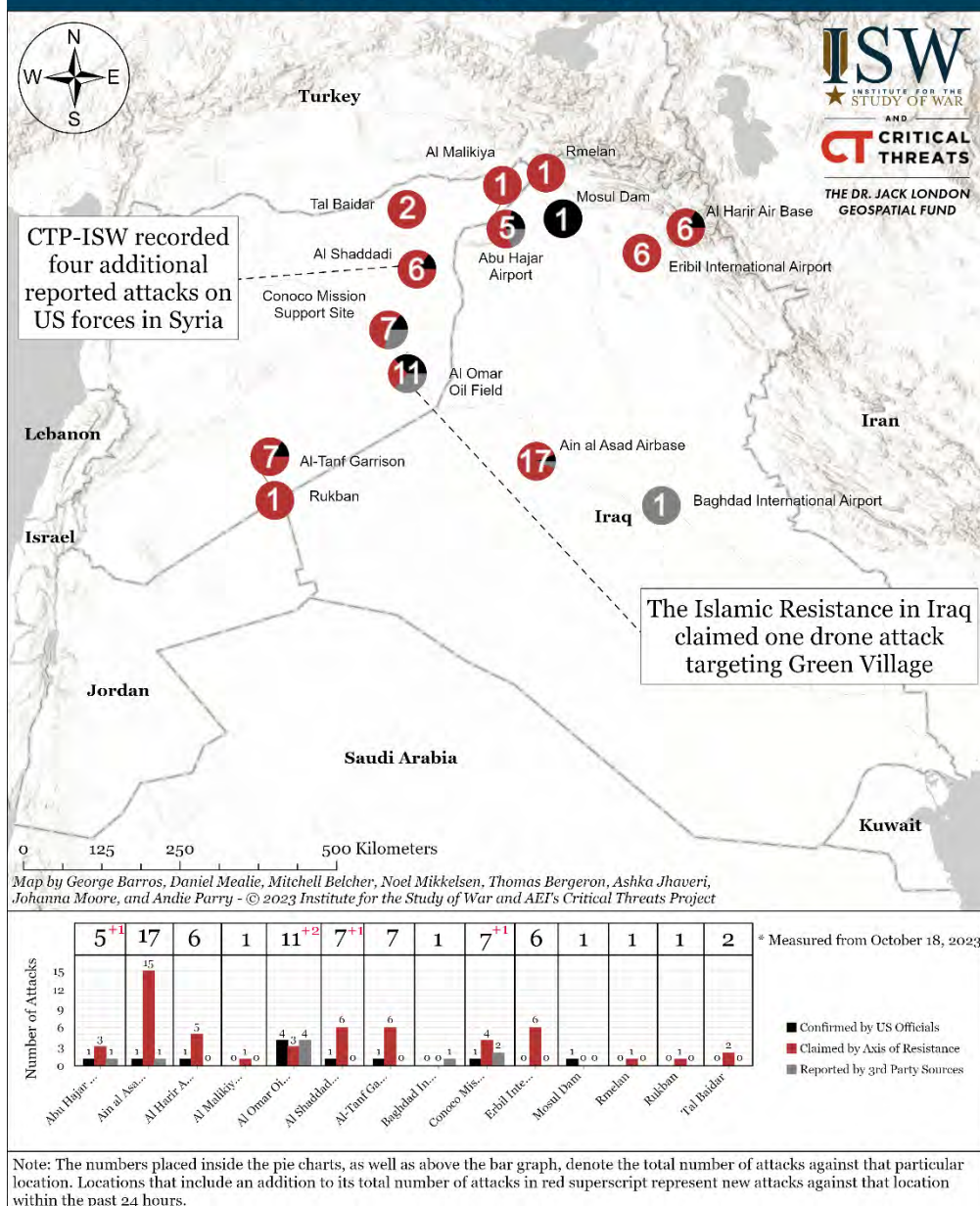
The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed one attack targeting US forces in Syria on November 12.[50] The group claimed to fire one drone at US forces stationed at Green Village.[51] The Islamic

Resistance in Iraq has claimed two attacks targeting US forces stationed at Green Village since October 18.[52] CENTCOM has not commented on the attack at the time of publication. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify this claim.

CTP-ISW recorded four attacks targeting US forces in Syria on November 13. The LH-controlled news outlet al Mayadeen reported that unidentified militants conducted attacks targeting US forces in Syria in retaliation for the US airstrike on an IRGC training facility and safe house on November 12.[53] CTP-ISW has not recorded any group claiming responsibility for the four attacks and cannot independently verify this claim.

- The Iranian-backed Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) fired 15 rockets at US forces stationed at al Omar Oil Field, according to unidentified sources cited by Iranian state news on November 13.[54] Unidentified militants also targeted US forces stationed at Conoco with Grad missiles, according to Iranian state news.[55] The local Syrian news outlet Deir ez Zor 24 reported that Iranian-backed militias were also behind the attack at Conoco.[56]
- Iranian-backed militants fired at least one drone targeting US forces stationed at Abu Hajar Airport on November 13 according to UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR).[57] Iranian state media reported that unidentified Iranian-backed militants launched three drones at US forces stationed at al Shadaddi, Hasakah Province.[58]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 13, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



The Ebrahim Raisi administration is pressuring Egypt to reopen the Rafah crossing to enable humanitarian aid to enter the Gaza Strip. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian urged the Egyptian government to reopen the Rafah crossing in separate meetings with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al Sisi and Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry. The meetings occurred on the sidelines of the joint Arab League-Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting in Riyadh on November 11.^[59] Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanani separately emphasized the need for Egypt to reopen the Rafah crossing in a press conference on November 13.^[60] Iranian media claimed on November 13 that Israeli officials have called on the Egyptian government to turn away 60 tons of Iranian humanitarian aid destined for the Gaza Strip.^[61] The media reports did not specify why Israel is blocking that aid. Iranian Red Crescent Society head Pir Hossein Kolivand announced on October 20 that this organization had sent its first humanitarian aid shipment to Egypt en route to the Gaza Strip.^[62] CTP-ISW cannot independently verify that Iran has sent humanitarian aid shipments to Egypt or that Israel is blocking such shipments from entering the Gaza Strip.

LEC Commander Ahmad Reza Radan met with senior Iraqi officials in Baghdad on November

13. Radan discussed law enforcement and border security cooperation with Iraqi Prime Minister Shia al-Sudani, Interior Minister Lieutenant General Adel al Khaldi, and National Security Adviser Qassem al Araj.^[63] Radan also discussed internal security cooperation with Popular Mobilization Forces Chairman Fali al Fayyadh.^[64] Radan's meetings follow Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's statement that Iran and Iraq should coordinate to "increase political pressure" on the United States and Israel during a meeting with Sudani in Tehran on November 6.^[65] Sudani met with Khamenei after meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Baghdad on November 5, during which he and Blinken discussed Axis of Resistance attacks on US forces.^[66]

- Radan is a hardline member of the IRGC and has extensive experience crushing political dissent and protests.^[67] He joined the Basij and IRGC as a teenager to fight in the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s and transferred to LEC after the war.^[68] Radan served as law enforcement deputy commander from 2008 to 2014, during which time he played critical roles in cracking down on the 2009 Green Movement and suppressing protests in Syria.^[69] Radan traveled to Damascus in 2011 to meet with Syrian security services and support their crackdown against the Syrian people.

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[28] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/419>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/420>
[29] <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1724094773764698321>
[30] <https://idf dot il/150310>
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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 14, 2023

Iran Update, November 14, 2023

Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, Amin Soltani, Annika Ganzeveld, Peter Mills, Kathryn Tyson, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

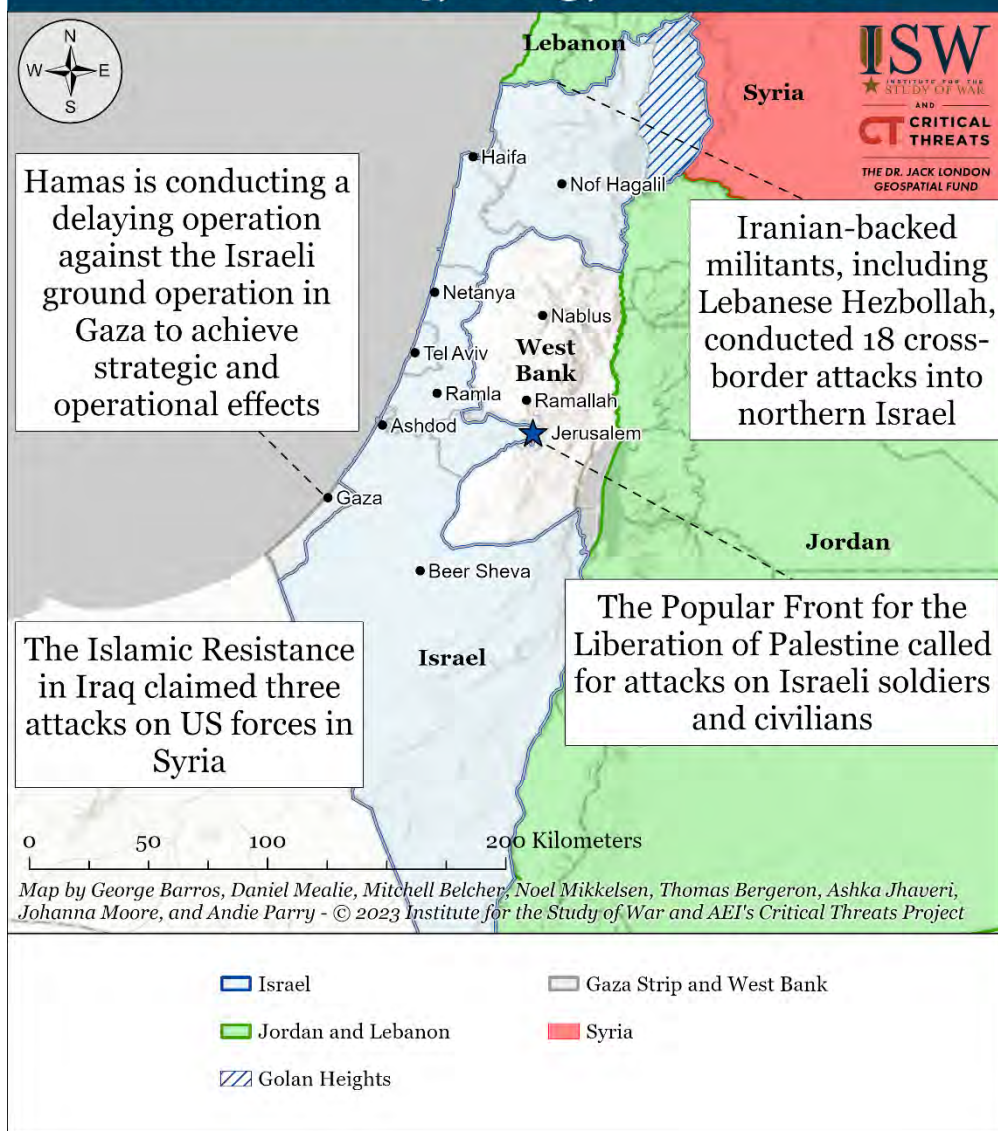
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Hamas is conducting a delaying operation against the advancing Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip to achieve strategic and operational effects. Hamas' delay mission generates strategic effects by helping it rally support for Hamas among its partners, within the region, and internationally. Hamas' delay effort also supports Hamas' operational objectives within the Gaza Strip, which include preserving essential capabilities and key leaders and setting conditions to conduct an insurgency against Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip if necessary.
2. Israeli forces continued their advance toward al Shifa Hospital from the north and south. Israeli forces continued clearing operations north of Gaza City. Palestinian militias conducted two indirect fire attacks on Israeli forces in the central Gaza Strip. The IDF opened two humanitarian corridors leading to Salah al Din Street for civilians to evacuate the northern Gaza Strip.
3. Palestinian militias continued their usual rate of indirect fire from the Gaza Strip into Israel.
4. Palestinian fighters clashed with and conducted IED attacks against Israeli forces in Tulkarm. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine called for Palestinians to attack Israeli soldiers and civilians in the West Bank.
5. Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah, conducted 18 cross-border attacks into northern Israel.
6. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi proxies—claimed three attacks on US bases in Syria. The al Dhaferin Group of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq threatened to escalate attacks against the United States in the region.
7. The Houthi movement Leader Abdul Malik al Houthi threatened to target Israeli ships in the Red Sea, specifically around the Bab al Mandeb, echoing a long-repeated threat. Israel intercepted a missile over the Red Sea targeting Eilat in southern Israel.
8. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held a telephone call with his Qatari counterpart Mohammad bin Abdulrahman al Thani.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 14, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Hamas is conducting a delaying operation against the advancing Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip to achieve strategic and operational effects. This assessment is a change to CTP-ISW's previous assessment that Hamas fighters in the northern Gaza Strip were screening a main defensive effort in Gaza City.[1] According to US military doctrine, a delay mission is when a force "trades space for time by slowing" an enemy and "inflicting maximum damage . . . without . . . becoming decisively engaged." [2] A delay mission also seeks to "wear down the enemy so that friendly forces can regain the initiative through offensive action [or] establish an effective defense." [3] The IDF captured a Hamas battle plan on November 4 that suggested that Hamas had not heavily committed its forces to the defense of the northern Gaza Strip, which is consistent with a delay mission. [4] A Gaza Strip-focused X (Twitter) account reported on November 10 that senior Hamas fighters fled al Shifa Hospital, where Hamas maintains key military and tunnel infrastructure. [5] The delaying operation would have enabled these fighters to escape, and their escape lets Hamas preserve some of its core leadership. Reuters reported on November 3 that Hamas believes it can "frustrate" Israeli forces through "urban guerrilla tactics." [6]

Hamas' delay mission generates strategic effects by helping it rally support for Hamas among its partners, within the region, and internationally. Hamas officials have repeatedly outlined their strategic objectives in the war against Israel since October 7. These objectives include generating renewed support for the Palestinian cause internationally and regionally.^[7] A delay mission supports Hamas' strategic objectives by protracting the fighting and avoiding a decisive Hamas defeat. Reuters reported on November 3 that Hamas is prepared for a long war that it hopes will force Israel to agree to a ceasefire.^[8] Top Hamas official Khalid al Hayya said on November 8 that the October 7 attack and the war "succeeded in putting the Palestinian issue back on the table" and that Hamas knew the October 7 attack would spur a "big reaction."^[9] Hayya added that Hamas sought to "change the entire equation," a reference to the ongoing normalization negotiations and agreements between Israel and major Arab states.^[10] This statement of objectives is consistent with Hamas' 1988 charter, which called for generating support from "the Palestinian circle, the Arab circle, and the Islamic circle."^[11] Hamas officials have called consistently for greater support from Arab states against Israel since the beginning of the war.^[12]

Hamas' delay effort also supports Hamas' operational objectives within the Gaza Strip, which include preserving essential capabilities and key leaders and setting conditions to conduct an insurgency against Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip if necessary. Israeli reports suggesting that Hamas fighters have fled south along with the fact that Hamas has not reportedly used some of the higher-end capabilities it is assessed to have suggest that its leaders seek to preserve combat power rather than become decisively engaged.^[13] An insurgency and prolonged conflict in the Gaza Strip could also reinforce Hamas' strategic objectives. Hamas leaders could find a prolonged war desirable because they believe that it would degrade international and regional support for Israel. Hamas' ability to retain more advanced capabilities and senior leaders by delaying Israeli forces will allow it to coordinate and execute an insurgency or to rapidly reconstitute its military capabilities after a ceasefire.

Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israeli forces continued their advance toward al Shifa Hospital from the north and south on November 14. The IDF reported on November 14 that it expects two of its divisions to link up at al Shifa Hospital "soon," adding that one of the divisions was 300 meters from the hospital.^[14] The Hamas-controlled Gazan Health Ministry also reported that IDF vehicles had reached the southeastern gate of the hospital on the evening of November 13.^[15] A surgeon at the hospital told the *Wall Street Journal* that unspecified forces fired on civilians attempting to leave the hospital on November 13.^[16] Israeli officers said that their forces had informed hospital staff of "safe corridors" for civilians to evacuate the hospital and that Hamas was therefore firing on civilians along those corridors.^[17] Israeli forces also continued operations in al Shati refugee camp on November 13. Geolocated footage showed Israeli forces using a large-caliber weapon to target a building along the Gaza City coast in al Shati camp on November 13.^[18] The IDF spokesperson reported that IDF infantry and armor continued operations in al Shati camp.^[19] Israeli forces continued their eastward advance from the Square of the Unknown Soldiers on November 14, operating in the vicinity of Isra Towers and Sayyara Square.^[20]

Israeli forces continued clearing operations north of Gaza City on November 14. The al Quds Brigades mortared IDF positions in al Nasser neighborhood, northern Gaza City, on November 13.^[21] Other al Quds Brigades fighters engaged IDF forces in small arms clashes near Sulatayn road, west of Beit Lahia.^[22] The al Qassem Brigades also mortared and clashed with IDF forces in two separate engagements in Beit Hanoun, northeastern Gaza Strip, on November 14.^[23]

Palestinian militias conducted two indirect fire attacks on Israeli forces in the central Gaza Strip on November 14.^[24] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed a mortar attack on a concentration of Israeli forces located in Juhor ad Dik.^[25] The al Quds Brigades claimed that it successfully destroyed Israeli forces in the attack.^[26] CTP-ISW has not observed any confirmation of this claim. The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—claimed that it conducted an attack on

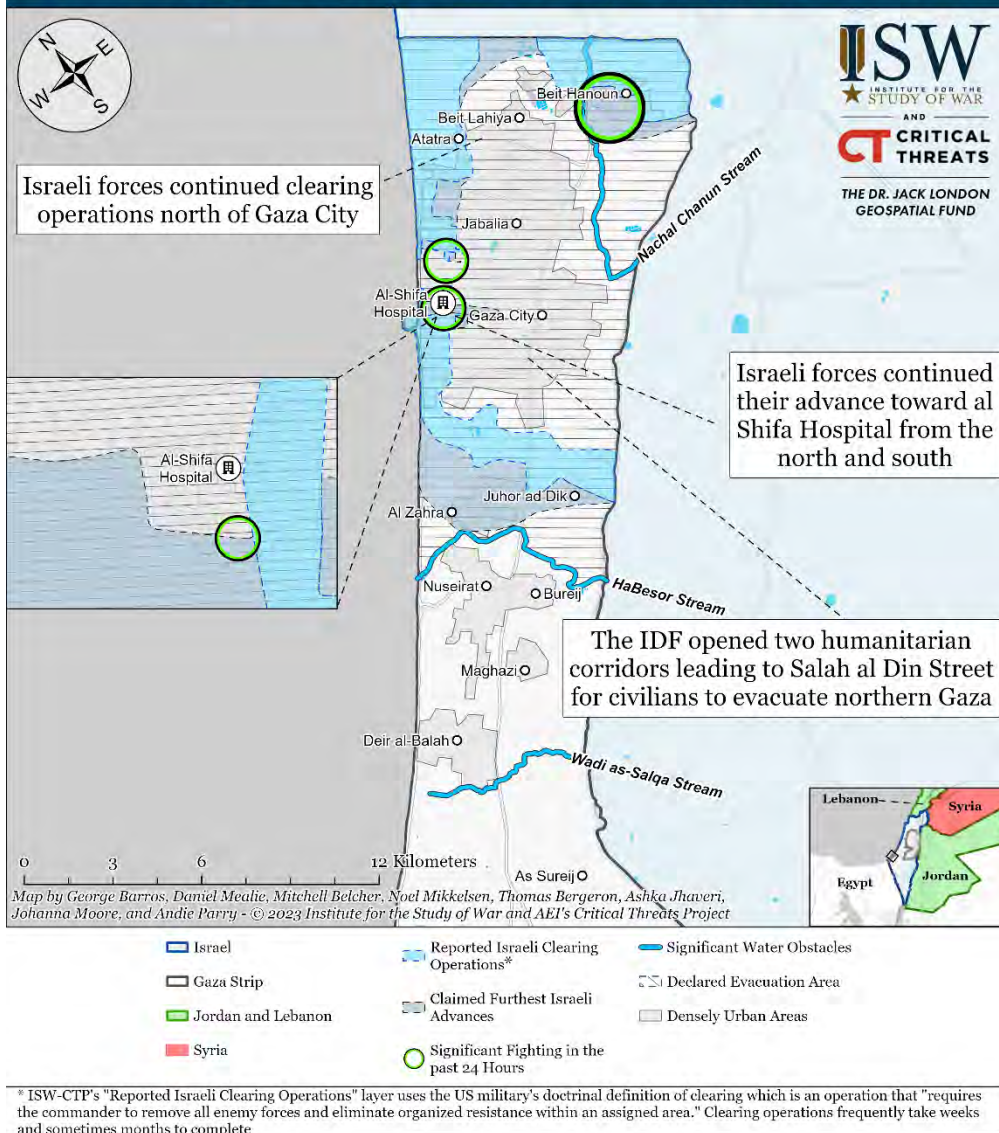
Israeli forces east of Juhor ad Dik with the 144mm Rajum rocket system.^[27] The al Qassem Brigades did not report any damage to Israeli forces from the attack.

The IDF opened two humanitarian corridors leading to Salah al Din Street for civilians to evacuate the northern Gaza Strip on November 14.^[28] IDF spokesperson Avichay Adraee released an official statement announcing open evacuation corridors from the Gaza Strip coast and from the al Daraj and al Tuffah neighborhoods.^[29] The statement also provided two different resources for civilians to report any Hamas attempts to block civilians from evacuating.^[30]

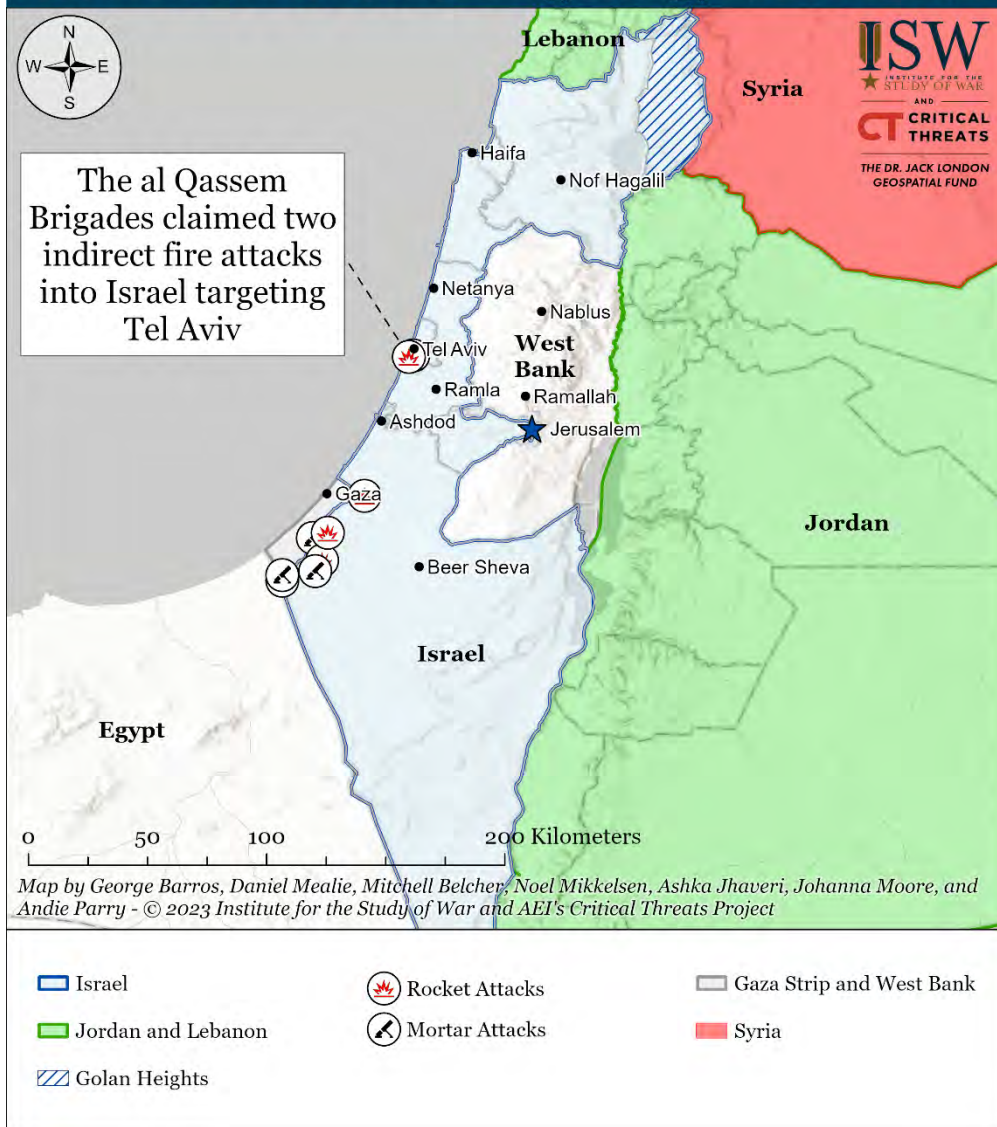
- The IDF opened a humanitarian evacuation corridor leading away from the Gaza Strip coast to move civilians away from active fighting areas.^[31] Civilians were instructed to evacuate via Youssef al Azma Street to Salah al Din Street between 1000 to 1600 local time on November 14.^[32]
- The IDF announced that it suspended military operations in al Daraj and al Tuffah neighborhoods between 1300 and 1400 local time for civilians to evacuate.^[33] Civilians were encouraged to leave the area and evacuate south via Salah al Din Street.^[34]

Palestinian militias continued their usual rate of indirect fire from the Gaza Strip into Israel. CTP-ISW recorded ten indirect fire attacks on November 14.^[35] The al Quds Brigades claimed eight indirect fire attacks, five of which targeted Israeli military facilities surrounding the Gaza Strip.^[36] The al Qassem Brigades claimed two indirect fire attacks into Israel, targeting Tel Aviv and Israeli military forces stationed in southern Israel.^[37]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 14, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

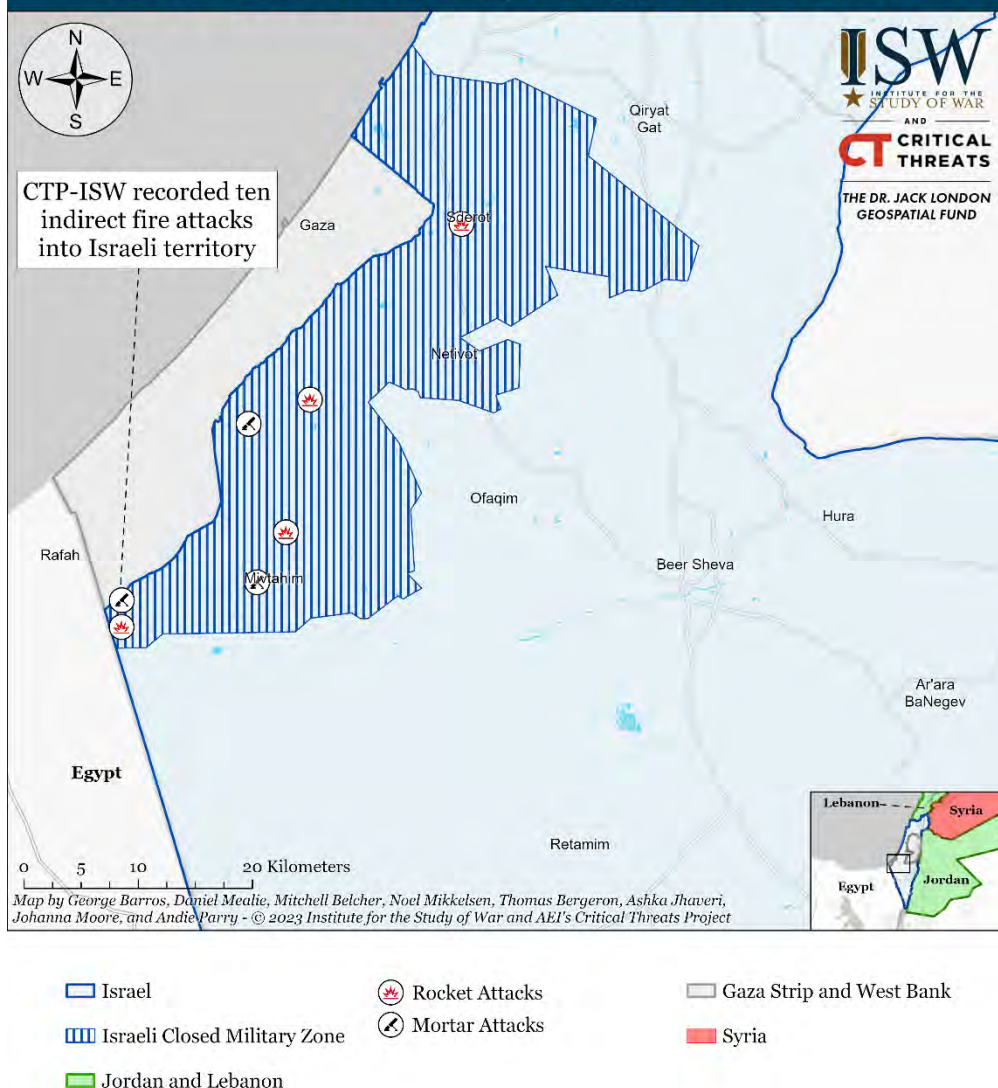


Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 14, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 14, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

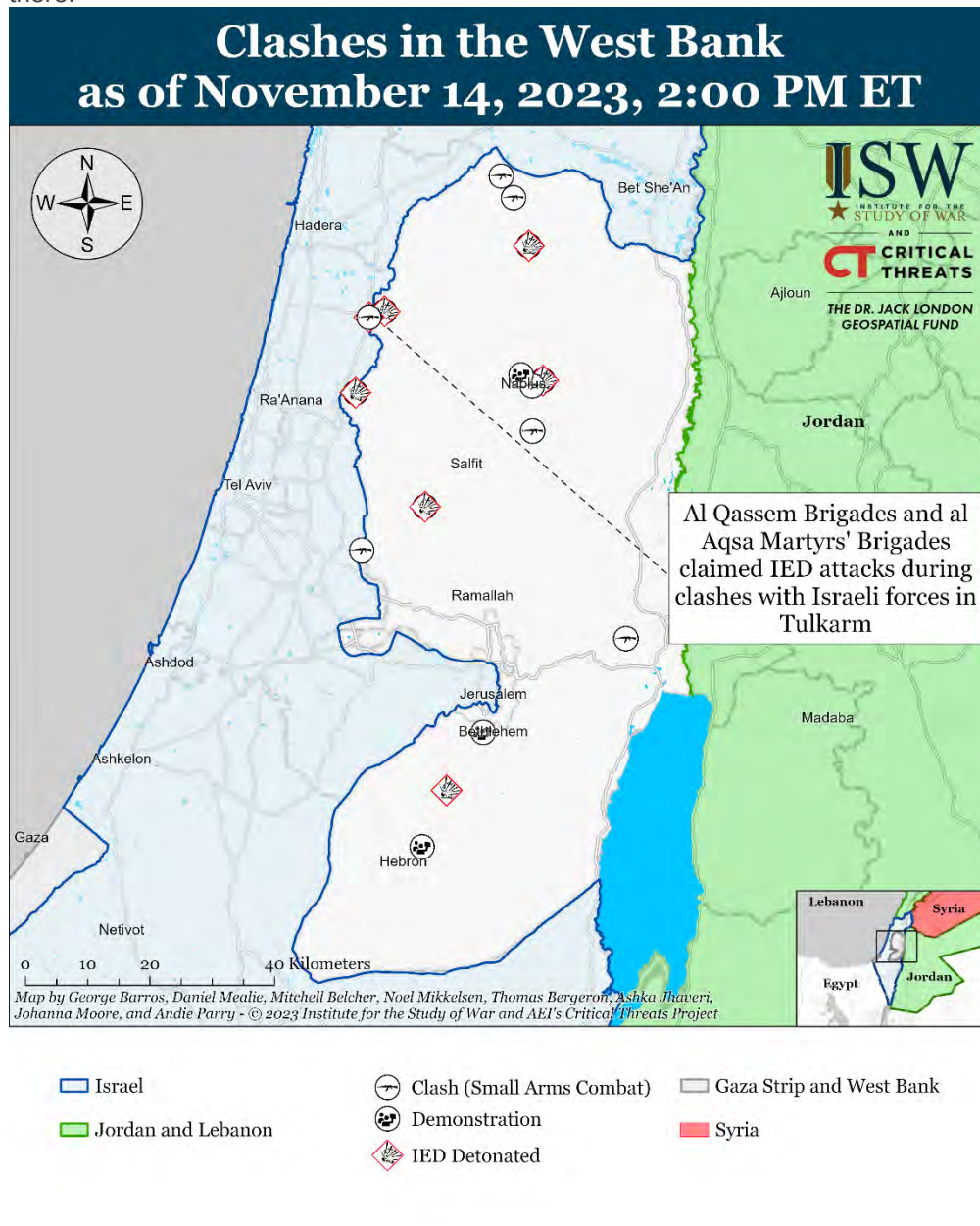
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
Palestinian fighters clashed with and conducted IED attacks against Israeli forces in Tulkarm on November 14. The IDF said that Israeli forces captured dozens of IEDs and raided a workshop that produced them.^[38] The IDF stated that Shin Bet arrested an unspecified senior Palestinian militia commander who tried to escape the city in an ambulance.^[39] Several Palestinian militias operate in Tulkarm through affiliated battalions, including the al Quds Brigades and the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades.^[40] The al Qassem Brigades and the Tulkarm Rapid Response Battalion of the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade each claimed at least one IED attack while fighting Israeli forces in Tulkarm. The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade Tulkarm Battalion acknowledged seven of its fighters died on November 14.^[41]

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) called for Palestinians to attack Israeli soldiers and civilians in the West Bank on November 14.^[42] The PFLP explicitly framed this violence as meant to reduce Israeli military pressure on Hamas in the Gaza Strip by exhausting Israeli forces in the West

Bank. The PFLP previously praised shooting attacks on Israeli settlements in the West Bank and called for additional attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians on November 9.[43] These statements indicate that the PFLP seeks to support Hamas' efforts to draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there.



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

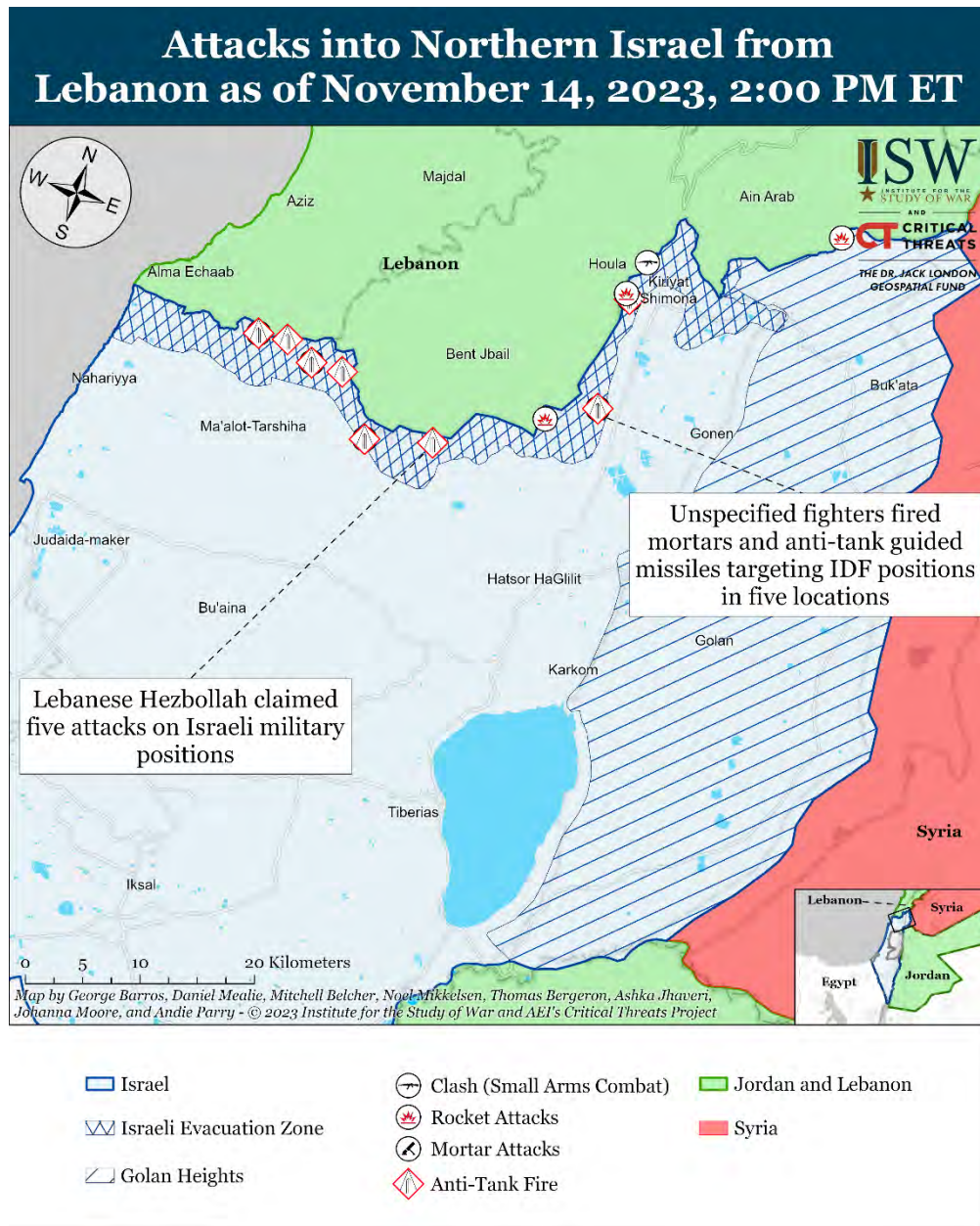
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), conducted 18 cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 14.[44] The IDF said that unspecified fighters fired mortars and anti-tank guided missiles targeting IDF positions in five locations.[45] LH claimed to target three IDF military sites.[46] LH specified that it conducted a rocket attack and used other unspecified means to conduct the attacks without providing further details.[47] LH also claimed that it fired rockets targeting an “Israeli logistical force” in Har Dov in northern Israel.[48] IDF air defenses separately intercepted a “suspicious target” near

the coast of Acre but did not provide details on the origin or nature of the threat.[49] The al Qassem Brigades previously claimed to have fired rockets targeting an area near Acre on November 6.[50]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi proxies—claimed three attacks on US bases in Syria. The coalition targeted US forces along the Euphrates River in Deir ez Zor Province, where US forces operate under Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR). US forces are deployed with CJTF-OIR to fight ISIS.[51] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq and its affiliated groups have claimed 77 attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East since the Israel-Hamas war began.

- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed two separate one-way drone attacks targeting US forces at Green Village and the nearby al Omar oil field in northeastern Syria on November 13.[52]

- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed to launch a rocket salvo at the US base Conoco Mission Support Site in northeastern Syria on November 14.^[53]

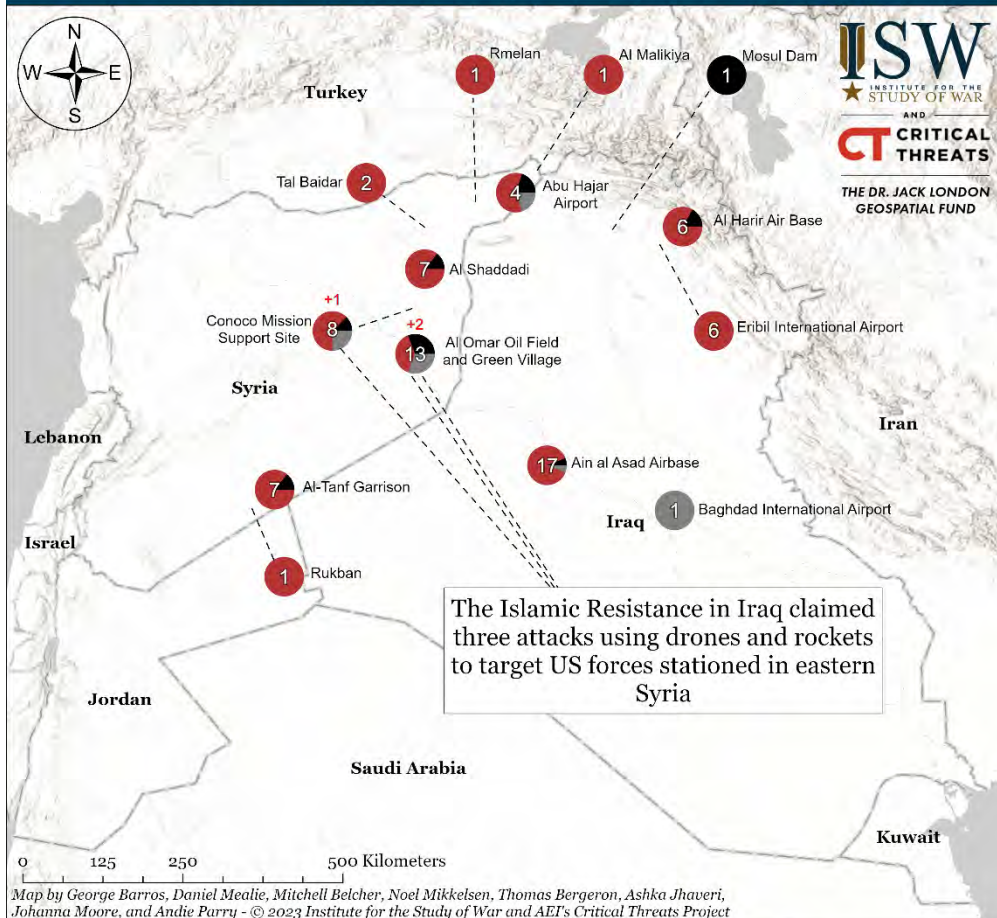
The Islamic Resistance in Iraq unveiled a surface-to-surface missile on November 14, which bares visual similarities to the Iranian-made Fateh-110 short-range ballistic missile.^[54] The Fateh-110 is a "short-range, road-mobile, solid-propellant ballistic missile" with a range of 200-300 kilometers and a payload of 500 kilograms.^[55] Iran has used the Fateh-110 missile on several occasions to attack US and Iraqi Kurdish militant positions in Iraq in recent years.^[56] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claims to currently use the al Aqsa-1 missile, which bears visual similarities to the Iranian-made Fateh-313 which the Iranians used to target US positions in Iraq in January 2020.^[57]

The al Dhaferin Group of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq threatened on November 14 to escalate attacks against the United States in the region. The group promised in a message posted to its Telegram that the coming weeks "will be hotter."^[58] The group has claimed two attacks on US bases in Iraq since the Israel-Hamas war began. The group claimed mortar attacks targeting US forces at the Ain Asad Airbase in Anbar, Iraq, on November 6 and the al Harir Air Base in Erbil, Iraq, on November 8.^[59] Mortars have significantly shorter ranges than most other munitions that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq uses, suggesting that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq cell that conducted the attack was operating in the general vicinity of al Harir airbase.

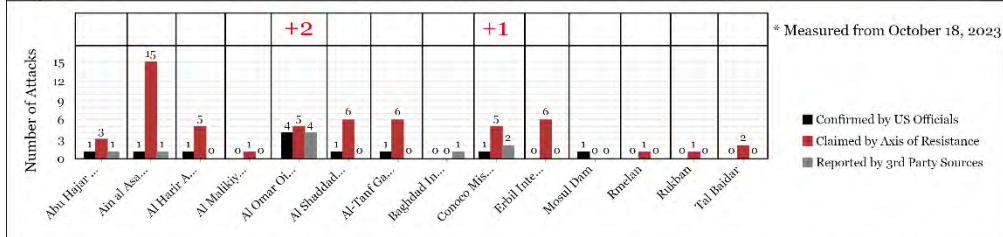
Israel intercepted a missile over the Red Sea targeting Eilat in southern Israel on November 14.^[60] The IDF confirmed that its Arrow long-range air defense system intercepted the missile before it entered Israeli airspace.^[61] The Houthi movement has launched missiles and drones over the Red Sea targeting Israel several times during the Israel-Hamas war. The Houthi movement leader said on November 14 that the Houthis will continue attacks on Israel and in the region.^[62]

The Houthi movement Leader Abdul Malik al Houthi threatened to target Israeli ships in the Red Sea, specifically around the Bab al Mandeb, echoing a long-repeated threat.^[63] The Houthis have repeatedly threatened maritime traffic around the Red Sea in recent years but do not always act on these threats. The Houthis do have the capability to conduct such attacks, however, as the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force has provided the means to do so.^[64] The Houthis have conducted several attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea with waterborne IEDs and have deployed naval mines off Yemen's Red Sea coast.^[65]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 14, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AET's Critical Threats Project



Note: The numbers placed inside the pie charts denote the total number of attacks. Locations that include an addition to its total number of attacks have red numbers above the bar graph and pie chart to represent new attacks against that location within the past 24 hours.

Iranian-sponsored Attacks in the Middle East as of November 14, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



 Surface-to-Surface Missile

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held a telephone call with his Qatari counterpart Mohammad bin Abdulrahman al Thani on November 14.[66] Iranian state media reported that the two discussed efforts to halt Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip and the provision of humanitarian aid. The two officials could have also discussed a range of other topics, including Iranian access to its frozen financial assets inside Qatari banks.

Iranian state media recirculated Western reports on November 14 that the Joe Biden administration could approve a sanctions waiver that would enable Iran to access \$10 billion worth of frozen Iranian financial assets in Iraq.[67] The Washington Free Beacon speculated on November 13 that the Biden administration could do so, noting that the sanctions waiver would be an extension of the 120-day waiver US Secretary of State Antony Blinken signed in July 2023 to allow Iraq to pay Iran for electricity via non-Iraqi banks.[68] Ebrahim Raisi administration-affiliated outlet IRNA and Iranian Supreme National Security Council-affiliated outlet Nour News Agency recirculated the claim. These outlets additionally argued that the Biden administration should not prevent Iran from accessing its frozen assets in Iraq since Iran played no role in Hamas' October 7 attack into Israel.

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- [1] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-4-2023>
 - [2] <https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/fm3-90-1.pdf>
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 - [4] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-4-2023>
 - [5] https://twitter.com/gaza_report/status/1723045249868582975
 - [6] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/how-hamas-aims-trap-israel-gaz...>
 - [7] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/11/12/hamas-planni...>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/world/middleeast/hamas-israel-gaza-wa...>
 - [8] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/irans-raisi-says-israeli-norma...>
 - [9] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/how-hamas-aims-trap-israel-gaz...>
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 - [12] https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp
 - [13] <https://t.me/hamasps/17434>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hamas-leader-haniyeh-says-isra...> <https://timesofindia dot indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/hamas-leader-warns-arab-nations-against-ties-with-israel/articleshow/104247272.cms?from=mdr>
 - [14] <https://www.timesofisrael dot com/gallant-hamas-has-lost-control-in-gaza-troops-kill-gunmen-who-fired-from-hospital/amp/>
 - [15] https://twitter.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1724457033125011478
 - [16] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-warns-of-wider-war-as-it-pr...>
 - [17] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-warns-of-wider-war-as-it-pr...>
 - [18] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-warns-of-wider-war-as-it-pr...>
 - [19] <https://x.com/NemoAnno/status/1724200362582725062?s=20>
 - [20] <https://x.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1724457606633169049?s=20>
 - [21] <https://twitter.com/loIGhostAgain/status/1724286487385235574>;
 - [22] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16660>
 - [23] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16670>
 - [24] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/426>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/449>
 - [25] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16669> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/441> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16668> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16668>
 - [26] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16669>
 - [27] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16669>
 - [28] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/441>
 - [29] https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1724326961336434934?ref_src=tw...
 - [30] https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1724326961336434934?ref_src=tw...
 - [31] https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1724326961336434934?ref_src=tw...
 - [32] https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1724326961336434934?ref_src=tw...
 - [33] https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1724326961336434934?ref_src=tw...
 - [34] https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1724326961336434934?ref_src=tw...
 - [35] https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1724326961336434934?ref_src=tw...
 - [36] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16658> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16658> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16659> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16659> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16661> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16662> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16664> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16666> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/438> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/445>
 - [37] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16659> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16659> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16661> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16662> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16666> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16658> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16658> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16658> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16664>
 - [38] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/438> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/445>
 - [39] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1724426140666728614> ; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1724426600224088223>
 - [40] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1724426153736229293>
 - [41] <https://t.me/sarayatulkarm/400>
 - [42] <https://t.me/alredalsrey/460>
 - [43] <https://t.me/pflpgaza1/13468>
 - [44] <https://t.me/pflpgaza1/13422>

[44] https://t.me/C_Military1/39346; https://t.me/C_Military1/39400; <https://t.me/QudsN/329054>; <https://t.me/almanarnews/136360>; <https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1724399071538925805>; https://t.me/C_Military1/39430; https://t.me/C_Military1/39434; <https://twitter.com/JoeTruzman/status/1724465196134256775>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1724195283532157223>

[45] <https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1724399071538925805>

[46] https://t.me/C_Military1/39400; https://t.me/C_Military1/39430; https://t.me/C_Military1/39434; https://t.me/C_Military1/39422

[47] https://t.me/C_Military1/39400; https://t.me/C_Military1/39430; https://t.me/C_Military1/39434; https://t.me/C_Military1/39422

[48] <https://twitter.com/JoeTruzman/status/1724465196134256775>; https://t.me/C_Military1/39346

[49] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1724339769956536499>

[50] <https://t.me/qassambrigades/29007>

[51] <https://www.inherentresolve.mil/WHO-WE-ARE/>

[52] <https://t.me/elamharbi/100>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/99>

[53] <https://t.me/elamharbi/101>

[54] <https://t.me/elamharbi/97>

[55] <https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/fateh-110/>

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[59] <https://t.me/alzafren/9>

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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 15, 2023

Iran Update, November 15, 2023

Brian Carter, Amin Soltani, Peter Mills, Kathryn Tyson, Andie Parry and Johanna Moore

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

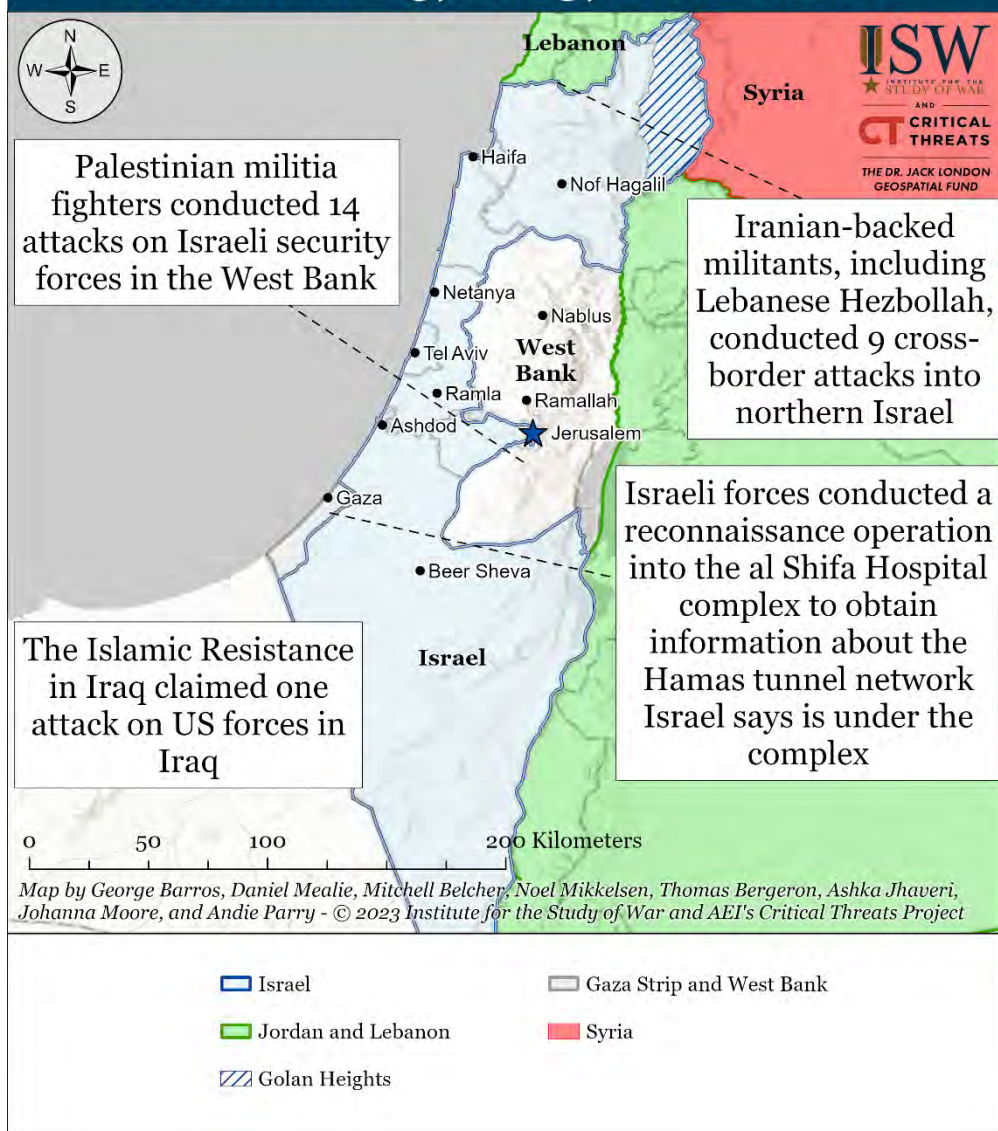
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli forces conducted a reconnaissance operation into the al Shifa Hospital complex on November 14-15 to obtain information about the Hamas tunnel network Israel says is under the complex.
2. Qatari mediators continued efforts to facilitate an agreement between Hamas and Israel to release 50 civilian hostages in return for a three-day ceasefire.
3. Palestinian militia fighters conducted 14 attacks on Israeli security forces in the West Bank on November 15.
4. Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), conducted 9 cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 15.
5. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi proxies—claimed one attack on a US base in Iraq.
6. Western media reported that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei complained that Hamas did not warn Iran about its October 7 attack during his meeting with Hamas Political Bureau Head Esmail Haniyeh in Tehran on November 5, citing Iranian and Hamas officials.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 15, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israeli forces conducted a reconnaissance operation into the al Shifa Hospital complex on November 14-15 to obtain information about the Hamas tunnel network Israel says is under the complex. US military doctrine defines a reconnaissance operation as “a mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary or to secure data concerning the...geographic characteristics of a particular area.”[1] Israeli officials said that IDF units entered the hospital grounds to “locate a Hamas tunnel hub that connects the hospital” with other areas.”[2] Israeli forces approaching from the east killed four Hamas fighters who engaged them with small arms fire, presumably on the eastern side of the hospital.[3] Israeli forces searched buildings throughout the complex and questioned Palestinians in the facility.[4] Israeli efforts to search facilities, question individuals, and locate tunnel hubs are consistent with a reconnaissance operation. Israeli

forces also released images, video, and statements saying that they discovered an "operational headquarters." [5] The images and video show a limited amount of equipment labeled with Hamas insignia and iconography. [6] This refutes the Hamas claims that it was not using the hospital for any military purposes. [7]

Israeli forces also provided humanitarian aid to the al Shifa Hospital. A senior Israeli official told the *Wall Street Journal* that Israeli forces left portable incubators, baby food, and medical supplies at the hospital's front gate and the staff was informed they could take the supplies. [8] The same official added that the incubators could be used in ambulances to transport babies to safer areas in southern Gaza or to Egypt or Israel. The official presumably meant via the evacuation corridor Israel established east of the hospital that most likely connects to Salah al Din Road. Salah al Din Road is the primary north-south humanitarian corridor that Israel established early in the war. [9] The senior Israeli official said that the final decision on where to take the babies would be up to doctors in the hospital. [10]

Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) have attacked Israeli forces east of the hospital—where Israel is attempting to establish an evacuation corridor—on several occasions since November 10. [11] Israeli officials reported on November 14 that Hamas fired on the humanitarian corridor. [12] This is consistent with reporting from official media arms of Palestinian militias, local reporters, independent news aggregators, and Western media highlighting Hamas and PIJ attacks targeting Israeli forces east of the hospital. A Gaza-focused account on X (Twitter) said that Hamas fighters attacked Israeli forces northeast of the hospital on November 10, and PIJ reported on November 11 and November 13 that it was engaged in "fierce clashes" near the al Shifa Hospital. [13] A Palestinian journalist reported that Hamas fighters attacked an Israeli unit east of al Shifa on November 11. [14] Satellite imagery from November 14 also showed large smoke plumes caused by fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters east of the hospital and along the area that presumably connects al Shifa to Salah al Din Road. [15] Palestinian fighters also fired at Israeli forces approaching the hospital compound from the east on November 14. [16]

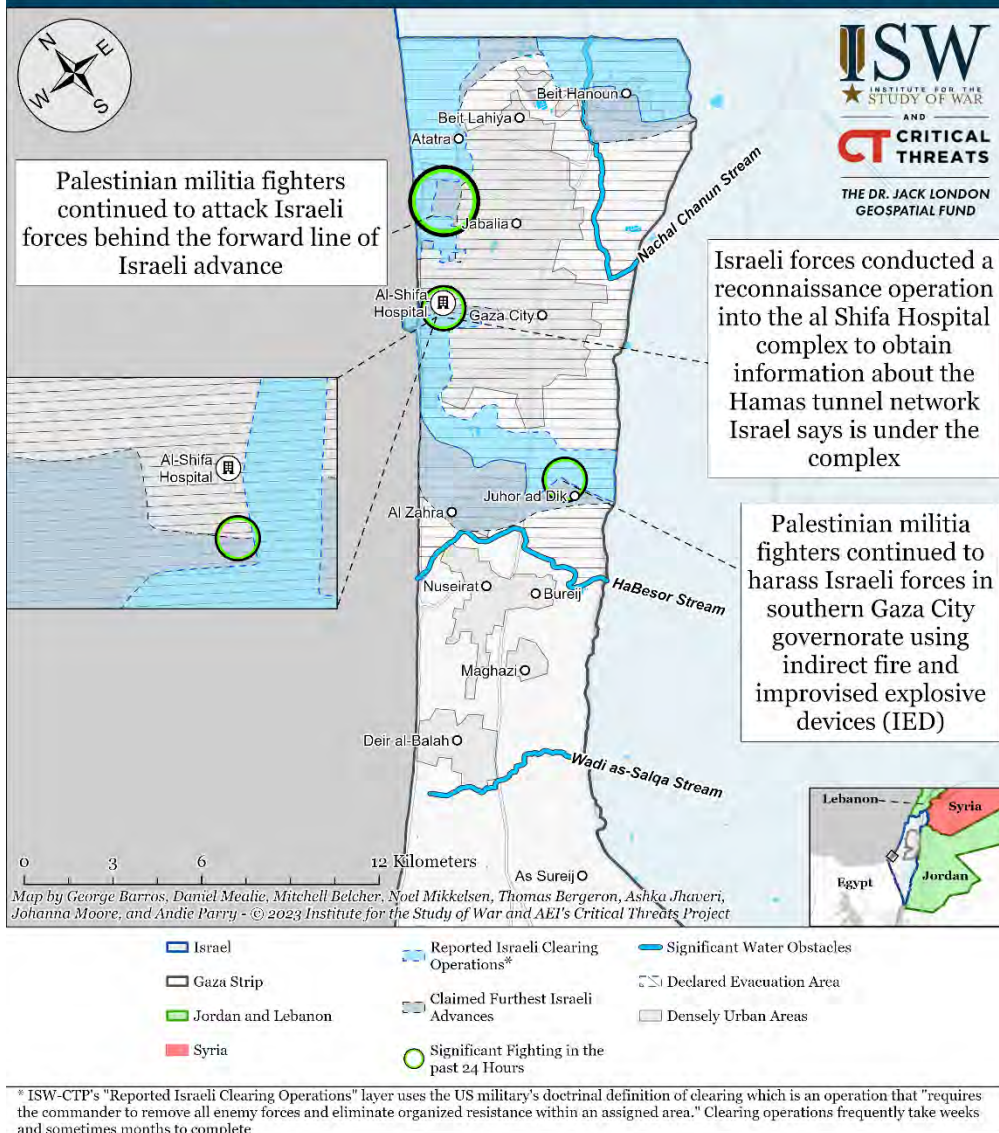
Palestinian militia fighters continued to harass Israeli forces in southern Gaza City governorate on November 15 using indirect fire and improvised explosive devices (IED). The al Quds Brigades mortared Israeli forces entering Juhor ad Dik, presumably from Israel. [17] The group also fired unspecified rockets targeting IDF units near al Azhar University and al Nour Resort, west of Juhor ad Dik. [18] The al Qassem brigades fired short-range 114mm rockets targeting Israeli forces in the same general vicinity, south of Gaza City. [19] Al Qassem Brigades infantry separately ambushed IDF infantry and a bulldozer using anti-armor and anti-personnel IEDs east of Juhor ad Dik. [20] It is notable that no Palestinian militant organization has released footage demonstrating their ability to destroy Israeli armor since the ground operation began.

Israeli forces continued their clearing operations in northwestern Gaza City on November 14-15. Palestinian fighters continued attacks targeting Israeli forces in northwestern Gaza City, which is consistent with the doctrinal definition of clearing operations. [21] Palestinian fighters engaged IDF forces with small arms near al Mukhabarat Street, western Gaza City, on November 14. [22] The Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade fired 60mm mortars at IDF armor and infantry near the al Maqousi area, west of Sheikh Radwan on November 15. [23] Qatari mediators continued efforts to facilitate an agreement between Hamas and Israel to release 50 civilian hostages in return for a three-day ceasefire. [24] Israel would also release some Palestinian women and children and increase the amount of aid to Gaza. [25] Officials familiar with the negotiations said that Hamas agreed to the deal's "general outlines" but Israel is continuing to negotiate on some details. [26] Israeli War Cabinet member Benny Gantz said that even if Israel needs to "pause" fighting, it will not stop the war until Israel "achieves its goals." [27]

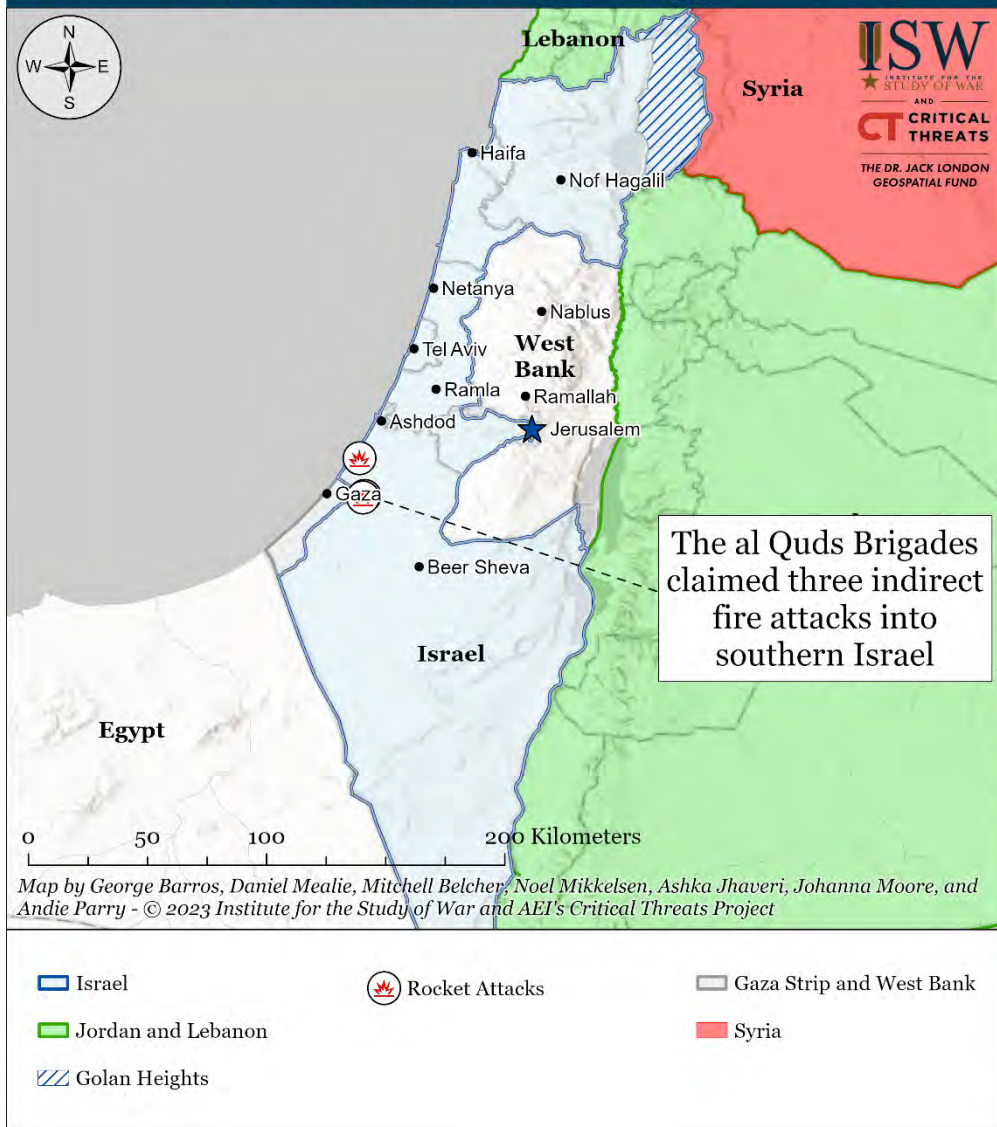
The Palestinian Islamic Jihad said on November 14 that it will hold its hostages until it obtains a "better" deal from Israel to exchange Palestinian prisoners for hostages. [28]

Palestinian militias conducted four attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel on November 15. The al Quds Brigades claimed three indirect fire attacks. [29] Unspecified Palestinian fighters launched one anti-tank guided missile targeting Israeli forces near Kissufim. [30]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 15, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

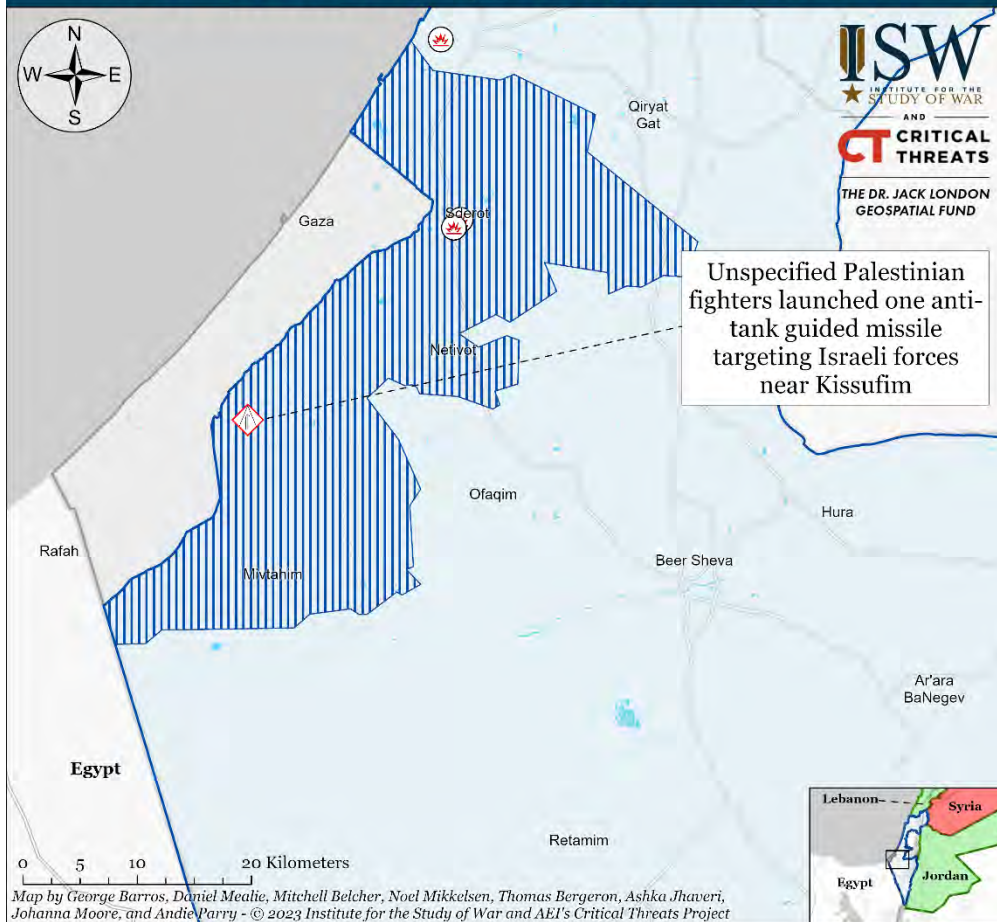


Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 15, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 15, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Israel | Rocket Attacks | Gaza Strip and West Bank |
| Israeli Closed Military Zone | Anti-Tank Fire | Syria |
| Jordan and Lebanon | | |

Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

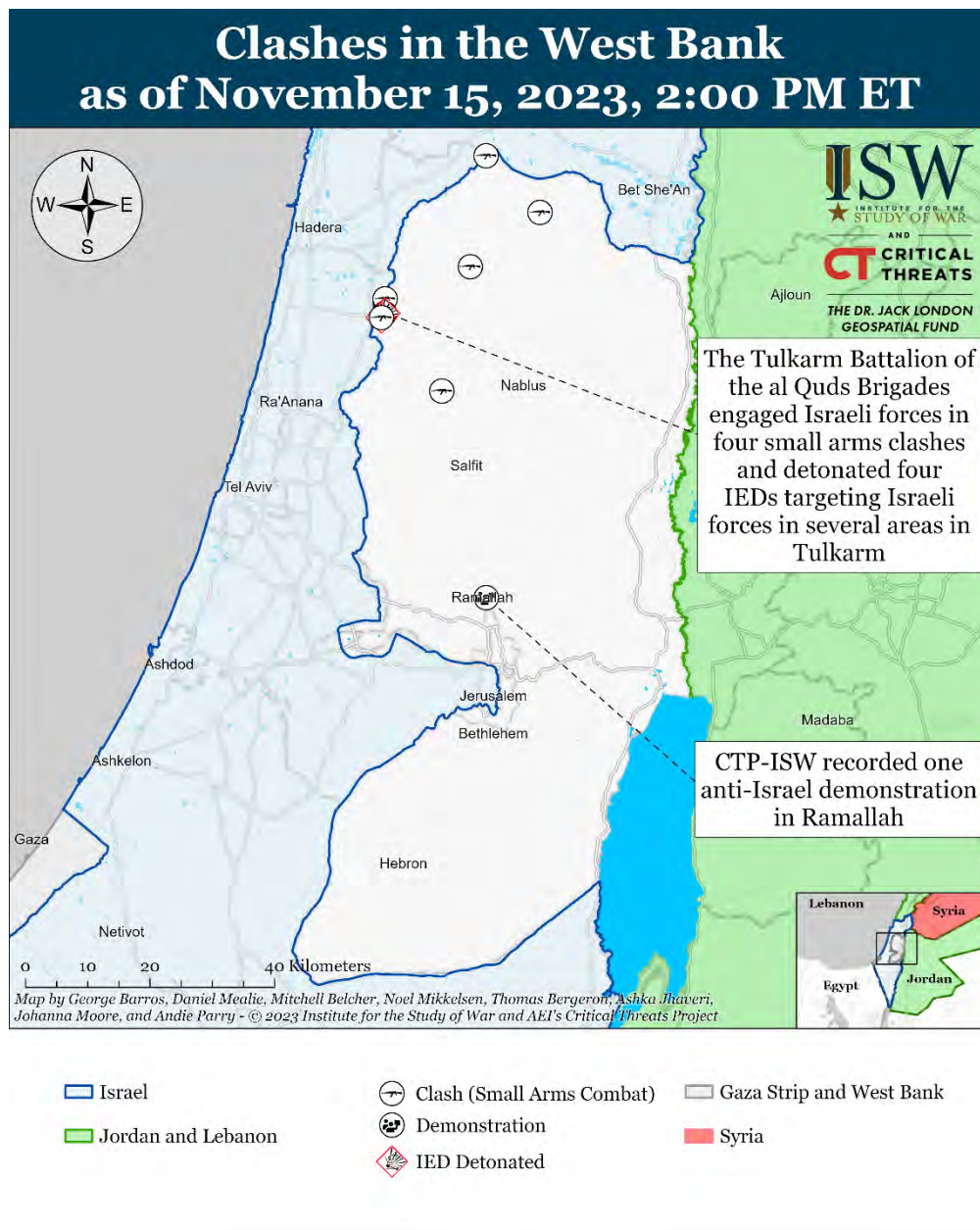
Palestinian militia fighters conducted 14 attacks on Israeli security forces in the West Bank on November 15.[31]

The Tulkarm Battalion of the al Quds Brigades engaged Israeli forces in four small arms clashes and detonated four IEDs targeting Israeli forces in several areas in Tulkarm on November 14.[32] The Tulkarm Battalion of the al Quds Brigades announced that seven of its members died during the clashes.[33] The Tulkarm Rapid Response Battalion of the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade separately engaged Israeli security forces with small arms fire in Tulkarm on November 15.[34] The Hornets' Nest of the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, which operates in the Jenin camp, announced on November 14 that Israeli forces had arrested two of its members.[35] CTP-ISW recorded one anti-Israel demonstration in Ramallah.[36]

Hamas said on November 15 that Israeli forces detained dozens of students at Hebron

University.[37] The IDF said on November 15 it had arrested 28 "wanted persons" in the West Bank, including Hamas fighters, in an ongoing arrest campaign.[38] The IDF said that it had arrested Hamas

operatives in a “student dormitory,” likely referring to Hebron University.[39] Hamas also called for an escalation in attacks against Israeli forces in the West Bank by “all available means.” Hamas has repeatedly called for attacks and demonstrations in the West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war began, but the calls have so far failed to generate widespread attacks or protests.[40]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

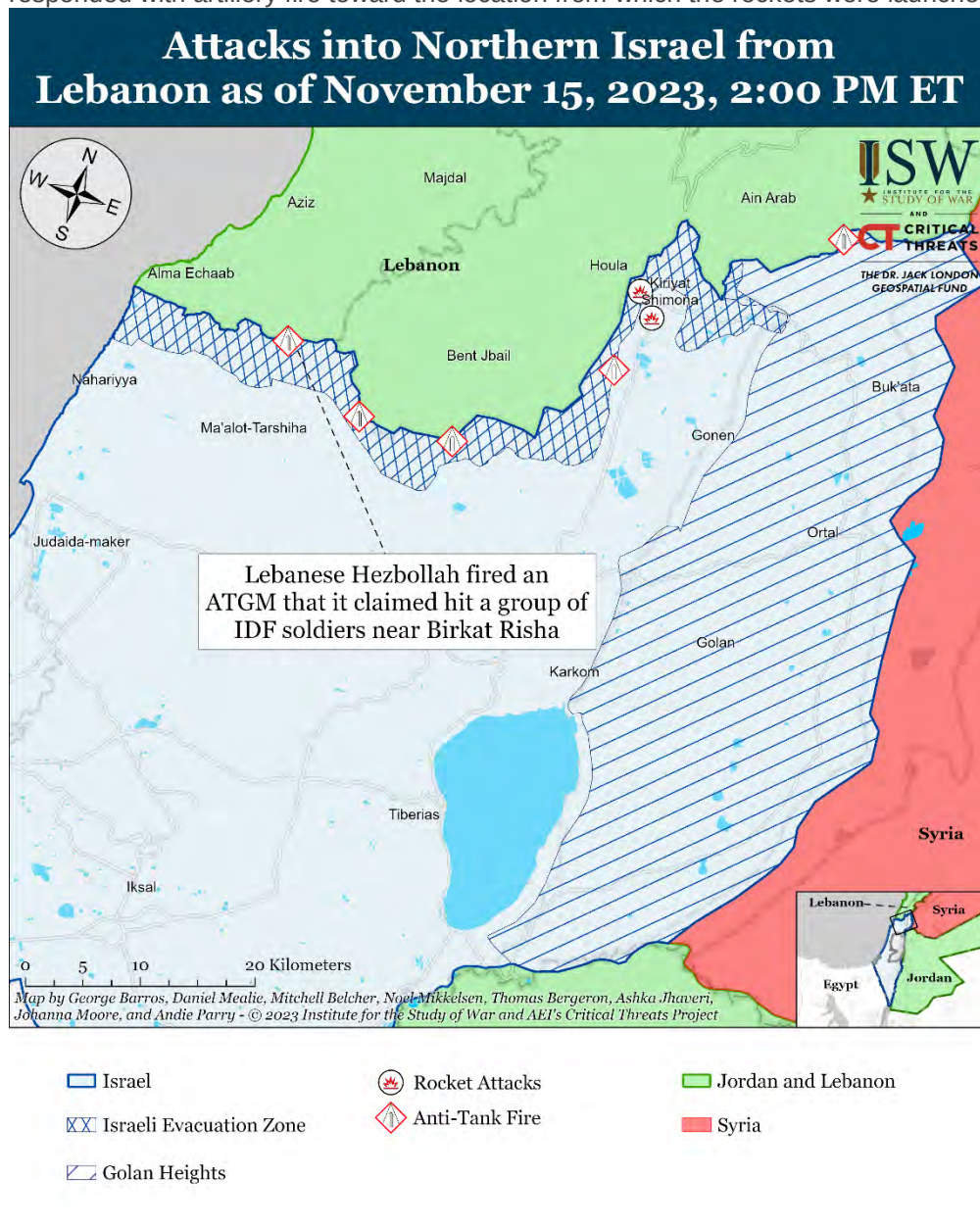
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), conducted 9 cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 15. LH claimed five rocket and ATGM attacks on IDF soldiers and military bases and one ATGM attack on an unspecified Israeli vehicle near the border.[41] Unidentified fighters launched rockets and anti-tank missiles towards Kiryat Shmona and Baranit, respectively.[42] IDF Army

Radio stated the rocket attacks on Kiryat Shmona caused no casualties or damage and that the IDF responded with artillery fire toward the location from which the rockets were launched.[43]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi proxies—claimed one attack on a US base in Iraq. The group claimed to have fired rockets at Ain al Assad Base in Anbar Province on November 15.[44] Iranian-backed militias have targeted US forces at Ain al Assad Base 18 times since mid-October, making it the most frequently targeted US base in the region.

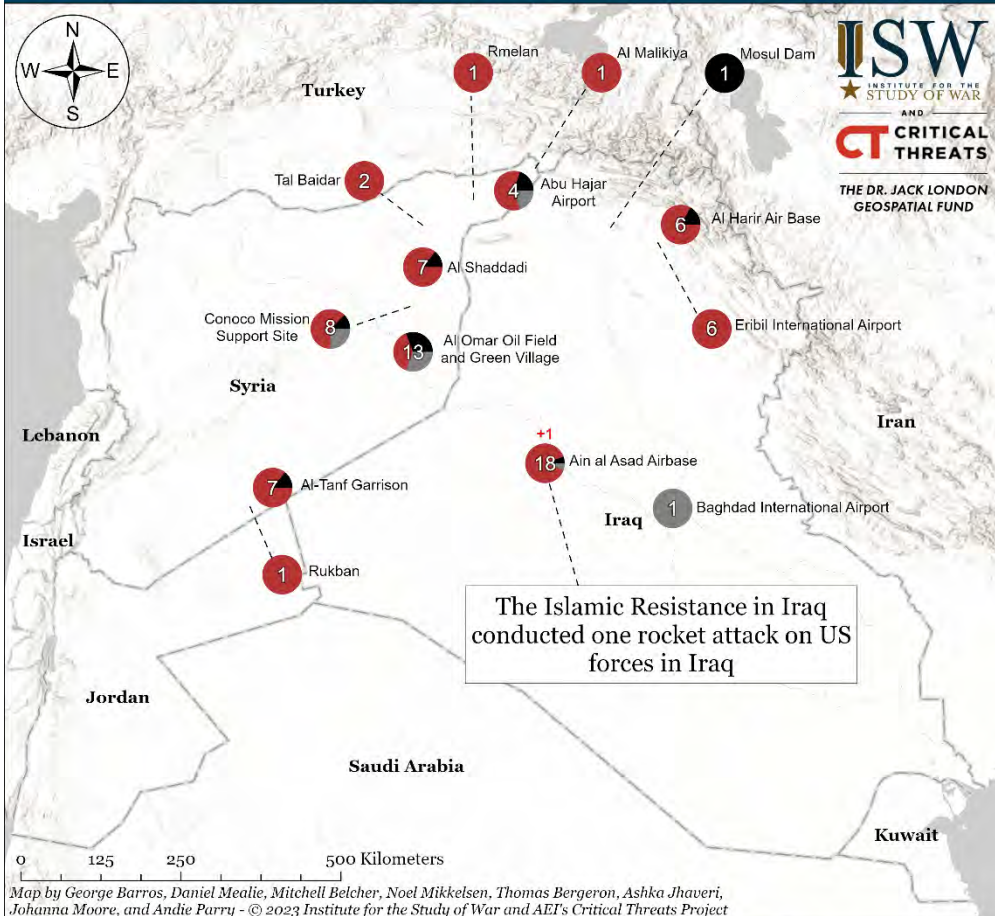
A US Navy warship shot down a Houthi drone headed toward it over the Red Sea on November 15.[45] The *USS Thomas Hudner*, an *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer, is a different US warship than the one that intercepted the several Houthi drones and cruise missiles fired toward Israel on October

19.[46] Unidentified US officials speaking to Reuters did not specify if the drone was an attack or surveillance model. The drone interception came hours after Houthi military spokesperson Brig. Gen Yahya Sarea claimed responsibility for the November 14 ballistic missile attack on Eilat in southern Israel.[47] Sarea stated that the Houthi army plans to continue attacks on Israel and that will target Israeli ships in the Red Sea. Sarea's statement parallels Houthi movement Leader Abdul Malik al Houthi's threat to target Israeli ships in the Red Sea and the Bab al Mandeb Strait on November 14.[48] The Houthis have the capability to conduct such attacks because the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force has provided the Houthis the means to do so.[49]

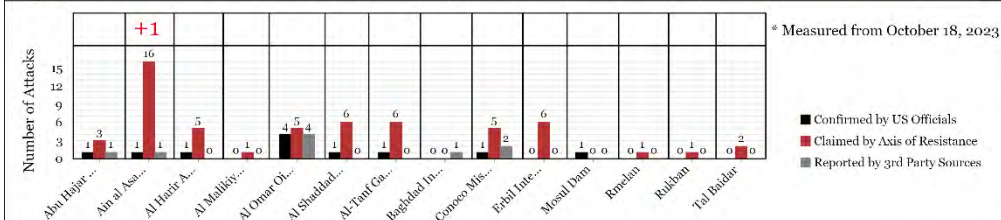
Likely Iranian-backed militants launched two rockets into the Golan Heights from Syria on November 14.[50] Local Syrian media reported militants fired rockets from Tell Jumou in Daraa Province at unspecified targets in the Golan Heights and Israeli forces returned mortar fire.[51] This brief exchange of fire in Syria does not mark an escalation of the conflict. Iranian-backed militants or Syrian Arab Army forces have fired projectiles into the Golan Heights from Syria at least 11 times since the start of the Israel-Hamas war.[52]

Russian forces are trying to distance themselves from Iranian escalation against US forces and Israel in Syria. Local media Deir ez Zor 24 reported that the Russian general for Deir ez Zor Province ordered local mayors and sheikhs to report all Iranian-backed militia members attempting to attack US forces at Conoco Gas Field.[53] The general extended the surveillance demand to seven towns on the east bank of the Euphrates near US positions. Iranian-backed militants fired at least 15 rockets at Conoco on November 14, likely from sites near the seven towns.[54] The United States has conducted three retaliatory attacks on Iranian-backed militant positions in Deir ez Zor since the start of the Israel-Hamas war.[55] Russia instructed the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) to not co-locate with Iranian-backed militants in southern Syria and not participate in the Israel-Hamas war to avoid Israeli airstrikes, according to UK based anti-regime Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.[56] An Israeli airstrike that targeted an SAA ammunition position in late October was located less than a kilometer away from a Russian military camp in Daraa Province.[57] Israel also conducted airstrikes on the SAA 112th Mechanized Brigade in Daraa Province on November 12 after militants fired projectiles into the Golan Heights the day before.[58]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 15, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

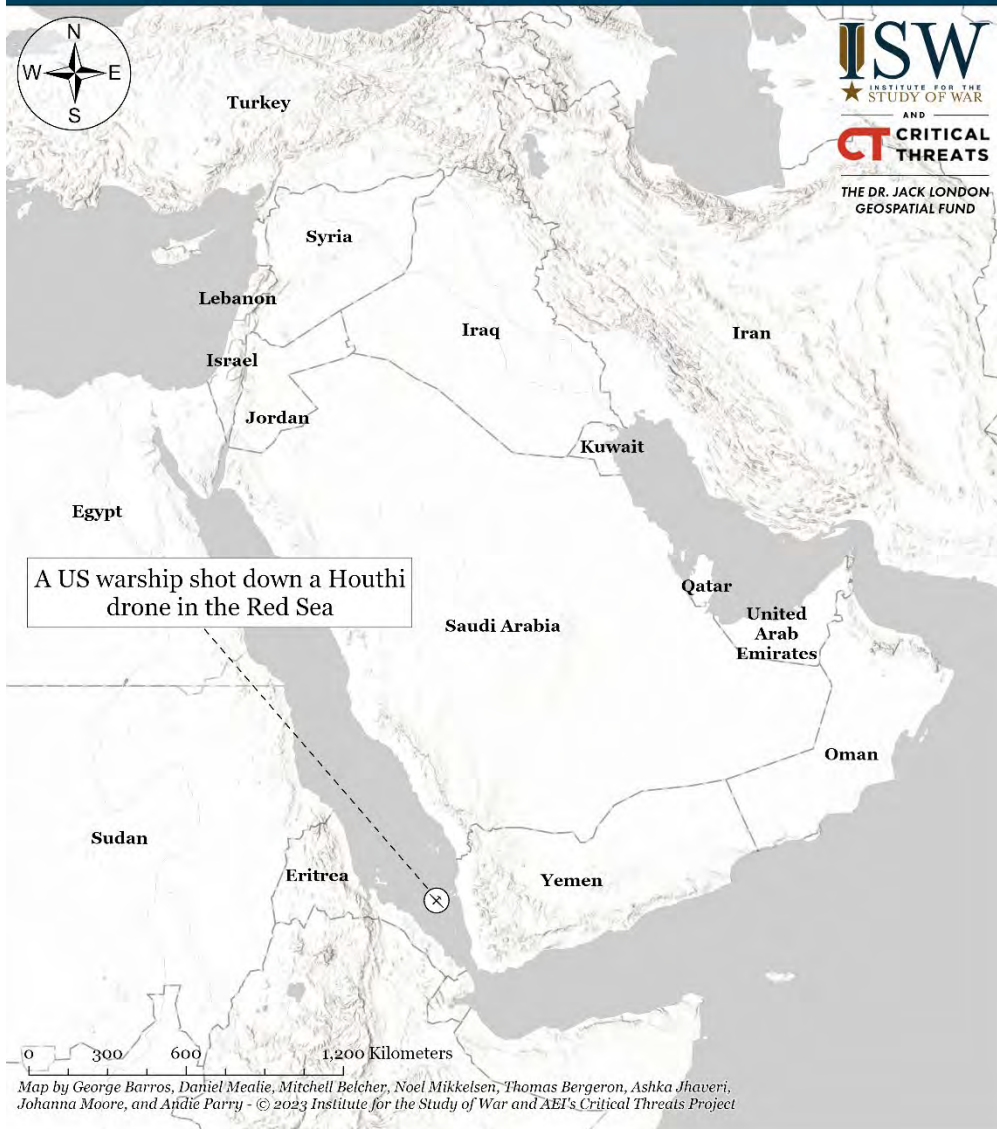


Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AET's Critical Threats Project



Note: The numbers placed inside the pie charts denote the total number of attacks. Locations that include an addition to its total number of attacks have red numbers above the bar graph and pie chart to represent new attacks against that location within the past 24 hours.

Iranian-sponsored Attacks in the Middle East as of November 15, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Western media reported that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei complained that Hamas did not warn Iran about its October 7 attack during his meeting with Hamas Political Bureau Head Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on November 5, citing Iranian and Hamas officials.[59] Reuters also reported that Khamenei warned Haniyeh that Iran would not “enter the war on your behalf” and pressured the Hamas leader to silence his group members calling for Iran and LH to fully join the war against Israel.

- Western media previously reported that American intelligence officials have obtained information suggesting that Iranian officials were surprised by Hamas' October 7 attack.[60] Western media reported that while Iranian officials were aware that Hamas was planning the attack, they were not aware of the timing or scale.[61] Some Western media has also reported that Iranian officials were directly involved in planning and preparation for the attack, including training Hamas militants inside Iran in the weeks before October 7.[62]
- It is noteworthy that Iranian officials and media have been conducting two separate information operations, denying any Iranian involvement in or foreknowledge of the attack on the one hand and emphasizing Iranian support for Hamas and the Palestinian resistance on the other, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[63]

The United States extended its original July sanctions waiver permitting Iraqi payments for Iranian electricity on November 14.[64]

The sanctions waiver permits the transfer of Iraqi payments for Iranian electricity to restricted bank accounts in third countries for the purchase of non-sanctioned goods. The United States previously issued a similar sanctions waiver in July 2023, permitting Iranian access to roughly 2.7 billion dollars of Iraqi payments, as CTP-ISW reported.[65] Western media reports did not specify whether Iran would now have access to the same or a greater portion of the roughly 10 billion dollars in Iraqi payments being held in escrow accounts inside Iraq.

- IRGC-affiliated media separately recirculated US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller's statement that Iran would be capable of purchasing only non-sanctioned goods on November 15.[66] The Ebrahim Raisi administration-affiliated outlet IRNA and Iranian Supreme National Security Council-affiliated outlet Nour News Agency recirculated reports about the sanctions waiver on November 14. These outlets additionally argued that the Biden administration should not prevent Iran from accessing its frozen assets in Iraq since Iran played no role in Hamas' October 7 attack into Israel, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[67]

The Iraqi Federal Supreme Court issued a ruling to remove Iraqi Parliamentary Speaker Mohammed al Halbousi and Representative Laith al Dulaimi from parliament on November 14.[68]

The Federal Supreme Court has not published an opinion at the time of publication. Halbousi, an important Sunni politician and the leader of the Taqqadum Movement, claimed that the Federal Supreme Court's ruling was unconstitutional and was a move by unspecified parties to create political divisions within society.[69] He also announced that the Deputy Prime Minister of Planning Muhammad Ali Tamim, Minister of Industry and Minerals Khaled Battan al Najm, and Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities Ahmed Fakak al Badrani, all members of the Taqqadum party, would resign in protest and boycott Parliament sessions and State Administration Coalition meetings. All 43 members of the Taqqadum party boycotted the extraordinary parliamentary session held on November 15.[70] Halbousi adjourned parliament "until further notice" after being informed of his removal.[71] Dulaimi's lawyer claimed that the Federal Supreme Court ruled to remove Halbousi as speaker after reviewing forgery accusations brought against Halbousi by his client Laith al Dulaimi and Representative Basem Khashan.[72] The Coordination Framework expressed its full support for the Iraqi Supreme Court's decision to remove Halbousi during a meeting held on November 15.[73]

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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 16, 2023

Iran Update, November 16, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Andie Parry, Annika Ganzeveld, Peter Mills, Kathryn Tyson, Brian Carter, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

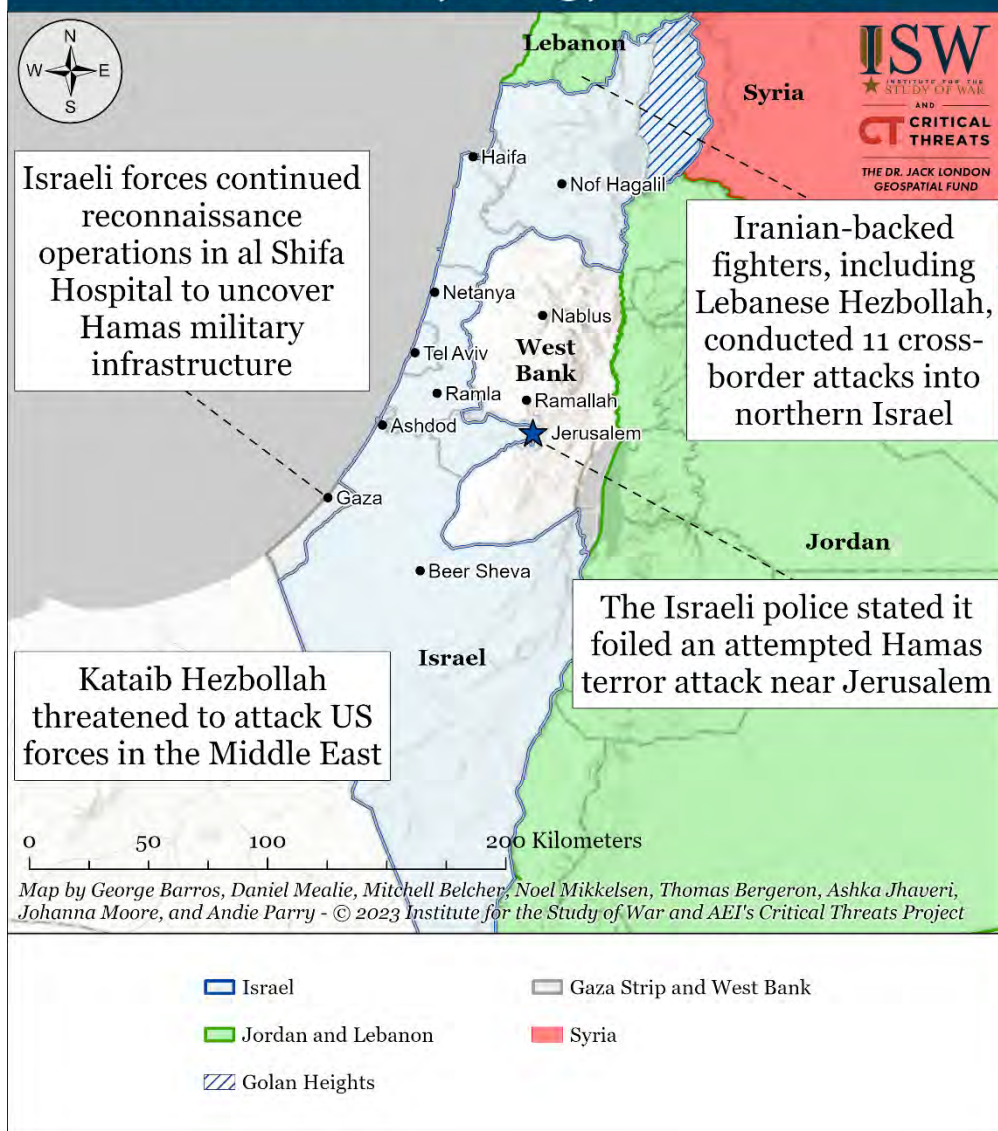
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli forces continued reconnaissance operations in al Shifa Hospital to uncover Hamas military infrastructure, according to the IDF. Israel uncovered a tunnel shaft and weapons during operations there, which is consistent with Israel's repeated assertions that Hamas uses humanitarian infrastructure for military activities. The United States reemphasized that Hamas used al Shifa Hospital as a command node, citing its own intelligence.
2. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said the IDF has completed the capture and clearing of western Gaza City and that the "next phase has begun," which is consistent with Israeli advances toward eastern Gaza City. Israel dropped leaflets on four communities east of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip asking civilians to evacuate.
3. Palestinian fighters attacked Israeli forces 16 times in the West Bank. The Israeli police said that it foiled an attempted Hamas terror attack near Jerusalem.
4. Iranian-backed fighters, including Lebanese Hezbollah, conducted 11 cross-border attacks into northern Israel.
5. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—did not claim any attacks on US forces in the Middle East on November 16. Unspecified Iranian-backed militants conducted two rocket attacks on a US base in eastern Syria, according to Axis of Resistance-affiliated and local media. Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah (KH) issued a statement threatening the United States.
6. Iranian officials and state media refuted Western reports that Iran will not "directly" enter the Israel-Hamas war, likely to reassure other Axis of Resistance members of Iran's continued support for them. Iran is exploiting the Western media framing that Iran is not already involved in the war, which is unintentionally obfuscating the role Iran is already playing.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 16, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israeli forces continued reconnaissance operations in al Shifa Hospital on November 16 to uncover Hamas military infrastructure, according to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). US military doctrine defines reconnaissance as “a mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary or to secure data concerning the . . . geographic characteristics of a particular area.”^[1] Reconnaissance operations can occur before, during, or after an operation. The IDF will probably not release the intelligence that the reconnaissance generates immediately because the intelligence is meant to enable further military operations to clear, destroy, or otherwise degrade the tunnel system that the IDF claims Hamas maintains under al Shifa Hospital.^[2] An IDF spokesperson said that Israeli special forces are conducting unidentified targeted operations against Hamas infrastructure around the complex, which this intelligence could enable.^[3]

An IDF spokesperson told CNN that troops remain active both inside and in the vicinity of the hospital complex.^[4] Doctors from the hospital, including its director, said Israeli forces are operating inside the complex's various buildings.^[5] A Fox News journalist embedded with Israeli special forces in al Shifa Hospital said that Israeli operations are ongoing and that hundreds of Palestinians are still inside.^[6] The journalist posted images showing Palestinian militia fighters' weapons stashed inside the radiology building.^[7] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed that its fighters remain engaged in fierce clashes with Israeli forces in the vicinity of al Shifa Hospital.^[8] **Israel uncovered a tunnel shaft and weapons during operations in al Shifa Hospital, which is consistent with Israel's repeated assertions that Hamas uses humanitarian infrastructure for military activities.**^[9] Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said that the IDF found "significant" items inside al Shifa Hospital.^[10] The IDF published evidence of an operational tunnel shaft within the hospital grounds.^[11] The IDF also seized small arms, grenades, tandem rockets, and explosively formed penetrators (EFPs).^[12] Hamas has manufactured and used EFPs in the Gaza Strip since 2007.^[13] EFPs require specially manufactured concave copper disks, suggesting that Hamas militants either imported the disks or received the specific instruction and capacity to produce them. Iran previously manufactured and distributed copper disks for EFPs to Iraqi militants for use against US forces in Iraq.^[14] Hamas and PIJ leaders rejected Israel's accusations of Hamas' military use of al Shifa Hospital.^[15]

The United States reemphasized that Hamas used al Shifa Hospital as a command node, citing its own intelligence. The US National Security Council spokesperson told reporters on November 16 that the United States has its own intelligence that "Hamas was using al Shifa [Hospital] as a command-and-control node—and most likely, as well, as a storage facility."^[16] The *Wall Street Journal* reported on November 15 that "people familiar with the matter" stated that the US assessment that Hamas used al Shifa Hospital for military activities is based on signals intercepts.^[17] The sources added that Hamas and PIJ fighters used the hospital to conceal and support military operations. The sources stated that this information is from multiple streams of data and collected without Israeli involvement.^[18] The US Department of Defense defines signals intelligence (SIGINT) as a category of intelligence comprising all communications intelligence, electronic intelligence, and foreign instrumentation signals intelligence, however transmitted.^[19] The US intelligence community infrequently releases SIGINT to avoid compromising the methods by which it obtained the sensitive information.

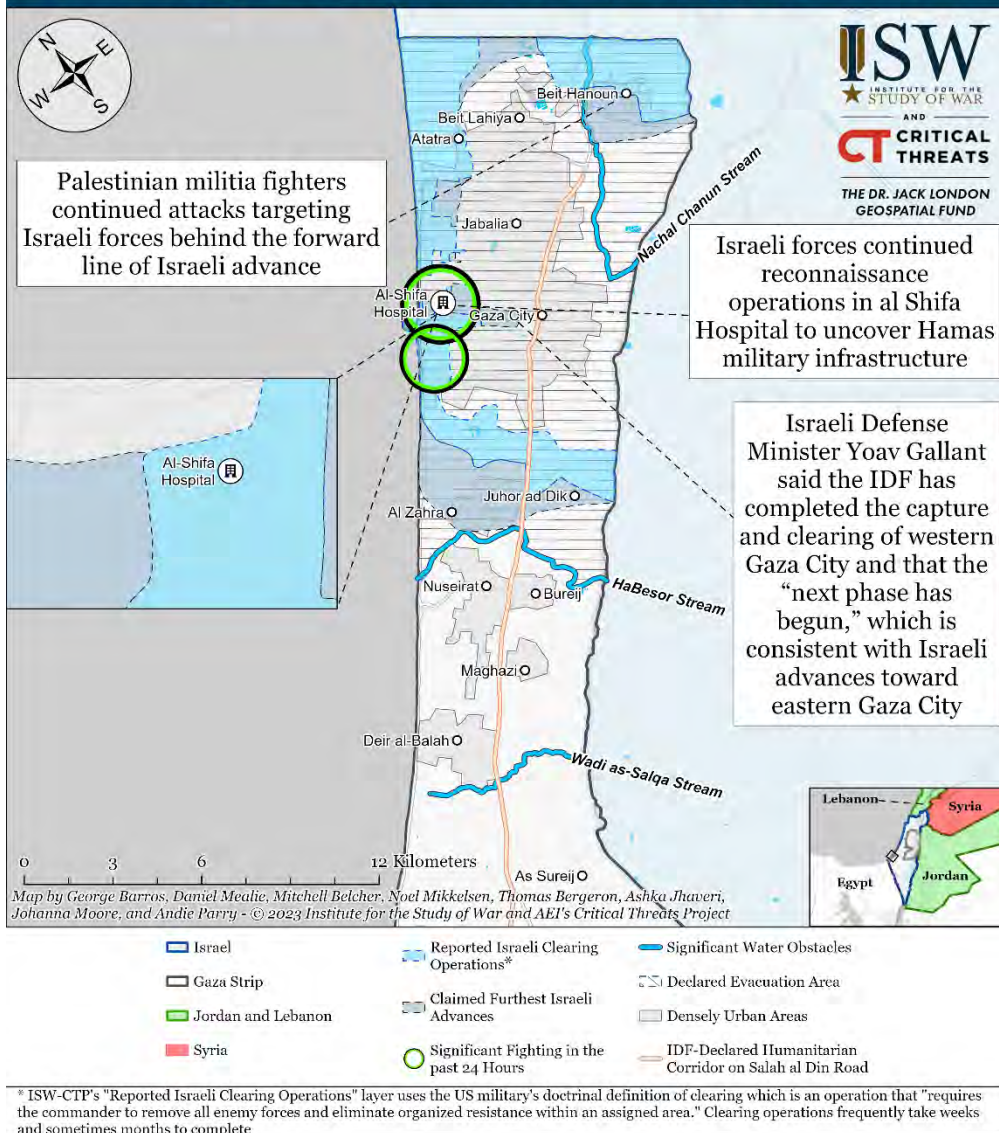
The IDF found the body of an Israeli civilian near al Shifa Hospital, whom Hamas kidnapped from Beeri in southern Israel during its attack on October 7.^[20] Israel did not comment on how the hostage died. Hamas kidnapped hundreds of Israelis during its attack on October 7.^[21]

Israeli forces continued to uncover Palestinian militia equipment during clearing operations in al Shati refugee camp. Israeli forces located and destroyed a cache of weapons in al Shati camp that belonged to Hamas' naval force.^[22] A *Times of Israel* military correspondent posted photos of cleared areas within al Shati camp on November 16.^[23]

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said the IDF has completed the capture and clearing of western Gaza City and that the "next phase has begun," which is consistent with Israeli advances toward eastern Gaza City on November 16.^[24] Gallant said that the IDF has taken "operational control" of the western part of the city.^[25] Local Palestinian media reported clashes between Palestinian fighters and Israeli forces on Omar al Mukhtar Road.^[26] The Palestinian Red Crescent reported on November 16 that Israeli military tanks have besieged the al Ahli Baptist Hospital in the Zaitoun neighborhood of Gaza City.^[27] **Israel dropped leaflets on four communities east of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip asking civilians to evacuate.**^[28] The leaflets said Hamas' activity in Khan Younis will force the IDF to target Hamas fighters and facilities in residential areas.^[29] Gallant said at a news conference that Israel's ground operation will last for many months "and will include both the north and the south [of the Gaza Strip]."^[30] Humanitarian aid organizations have warned that Israeli advances into the south could cause the humanitarian situation to deteriorate.^[31]

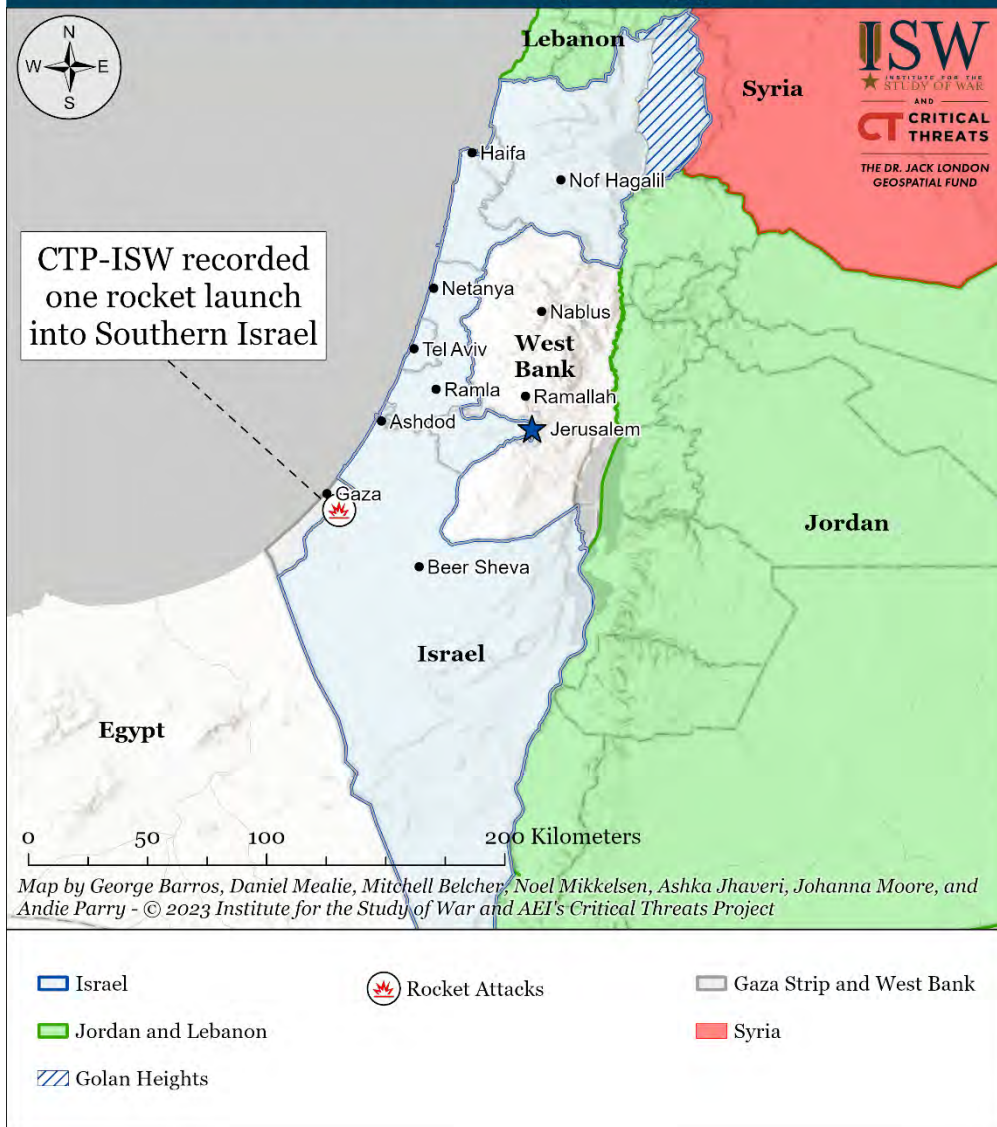
Palestinian militia fighters continued attacks targeting Israeli forces behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations. The al Qassem Brigades—the military wing of Hamas—claimed to fire a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) at Israeli jeeps west of Beit Lahia on November 16.^[32] The al Qassem Brigades also claimed to fire 12 tandem-charge warheads at Israeli ground forces in Beit Hanoun.^[33]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 16, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



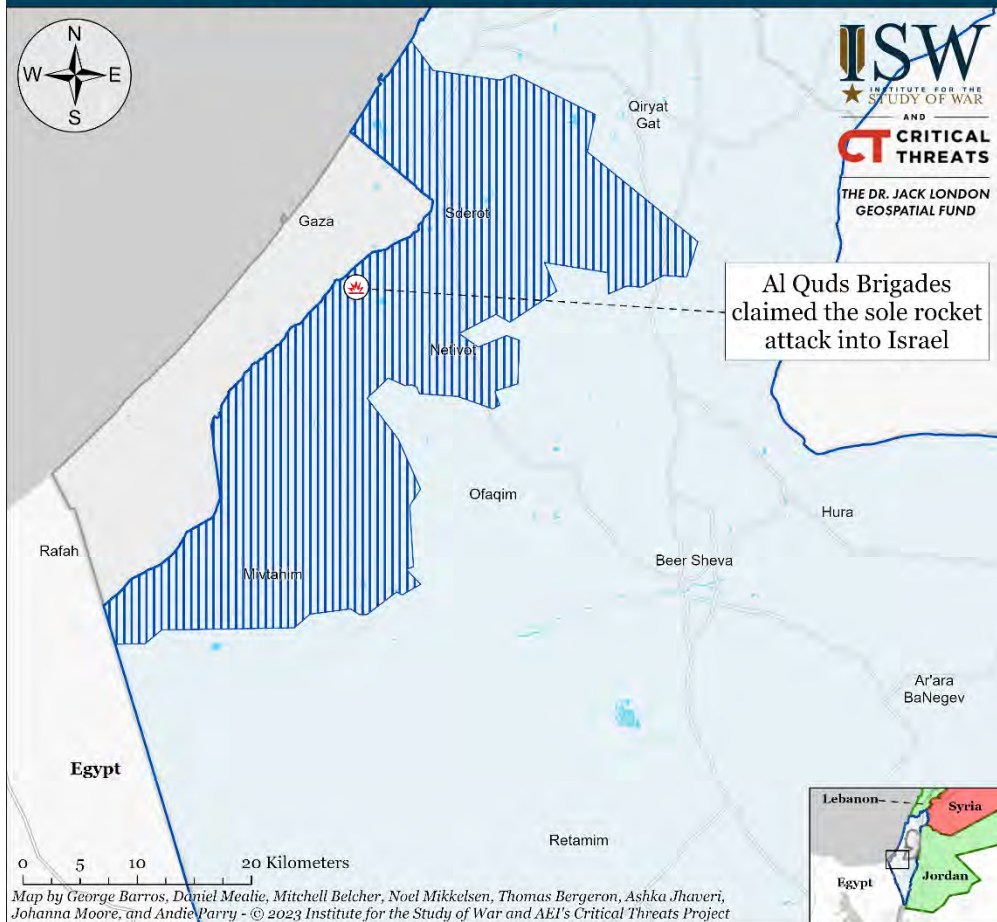
The al Quds Brigades conducted one indirect fire attack from the Gaza Strip into Israel on November 16. The al Quds Brigades fired rockets at Nir Oz in southern Israel.[34]

Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 16, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 16, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- Israel
- Israeli Closed Military Zone
- Jordan and Lebanon
- ★ Rocket Attacks
- Gaza Strip and West Bank
- Syria

Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

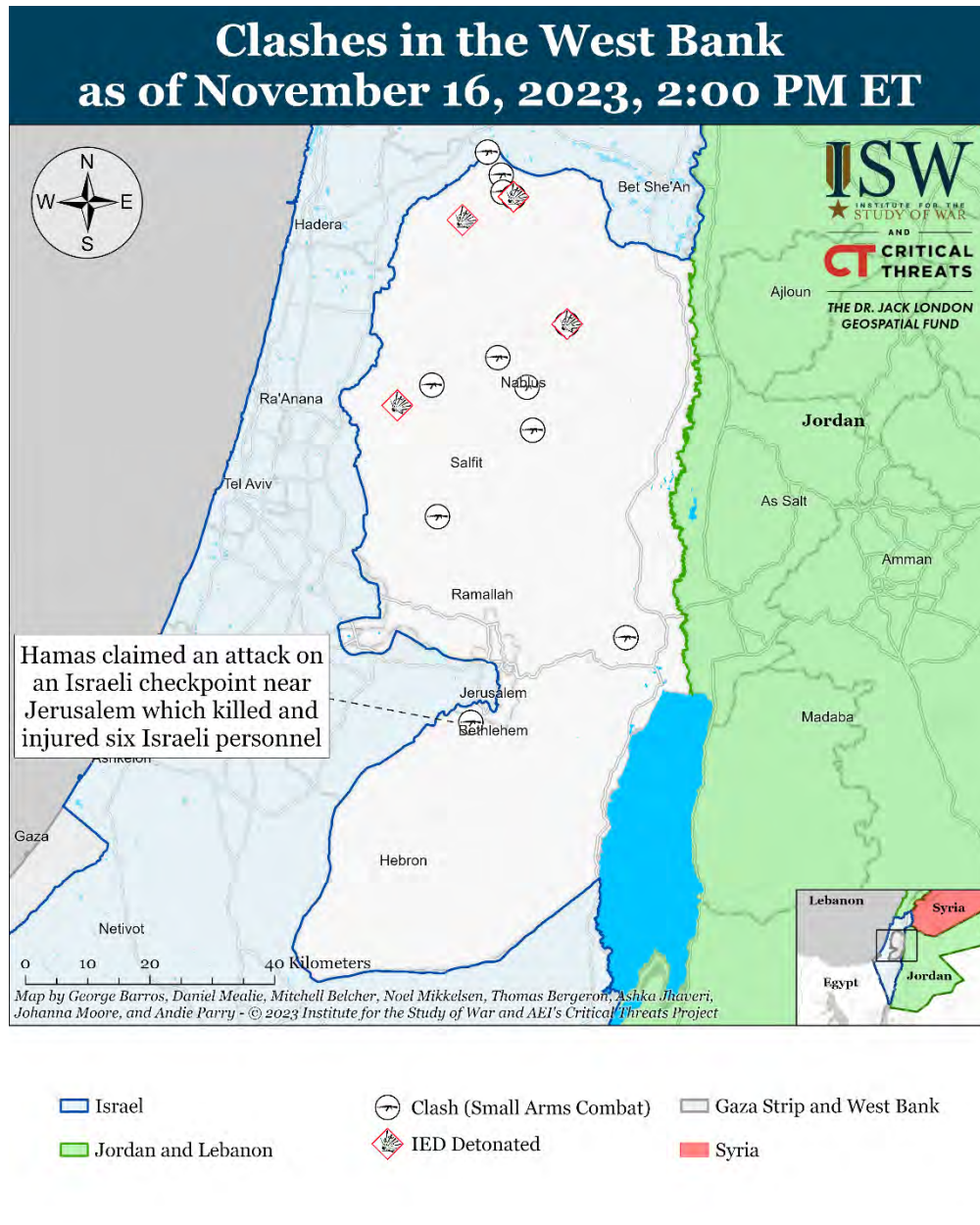
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
Palestinian fighters attacked Israeli forces 16 times in the West Bank. Unspecified Palestinian fighters engaged Israeli forces in 12 small arms clashes in the West Bank, primarily near Nablus and Jenin.^[35] Unspecified Palestinian fighters also conducted IED attacks on Israeli forces in three incidents across the West Bank.^[36] The al Qassem Brigades claimed responsibility for small arms clashes and an IED attack near Jenin on November 16.^[37]
 CTP-ISW separately recorded two demonstrations in Ramallah and Nablus against Israel.^[38] The IDF said on November 16 that it arrested 33 “wanted persons” across the West Bank and that 20 of them were associated with Hamas.^[39]

The Israeli police said that it foiled an attempted Hamas terror attack near Jerusalem on November 15. The al Qassem Brigades claimed responsibility for an attack at an Israeli checkpoint south of Jerusalem that injured five and killed one Israeli officer on November 15.^[40] The Israeli police commissioner said that

the al Qassem Brigades fighters intended to conduct a “terror massacre” inside Jerusalem.[41] The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) praised the Hamas attack and framed it as a response to Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip.[42] Hamas called for an escalation in attacks against Israeli forces in the West Bank by “all available means” on November 15.[43] Hamas and the PFLP have repeatedly called for attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians in the West Bank as part of an effort to draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there.[44]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

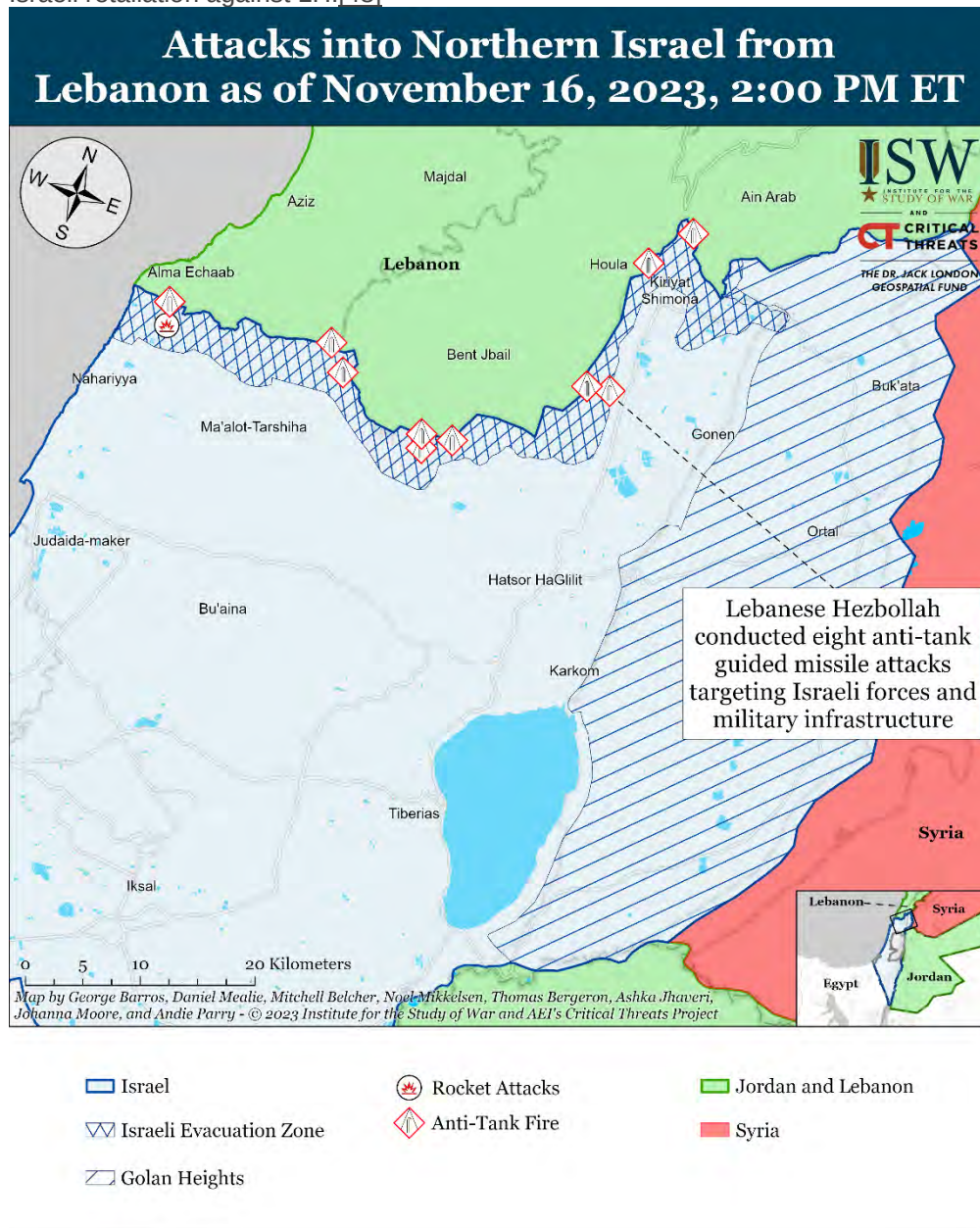
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed fighters, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), conducted 11 cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 16. LH conducted eight anti-tank guided missile attacks targeting Israeli forces and military infrastructure.[45] Unspecified fighters separately conducted two anti-tank guided missile

attacks and one rocket attack targeting Israeli forces and military infrastructure.[46] The IDF fired artillery targeting LH and “terrorist” infrastructure in southern Lebanon in response to the attacks into northern Israel that day.[47] LH said on November 16 that two more of its fighters had been killed in action, presumably in Israeli retaliation against LH.[48]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

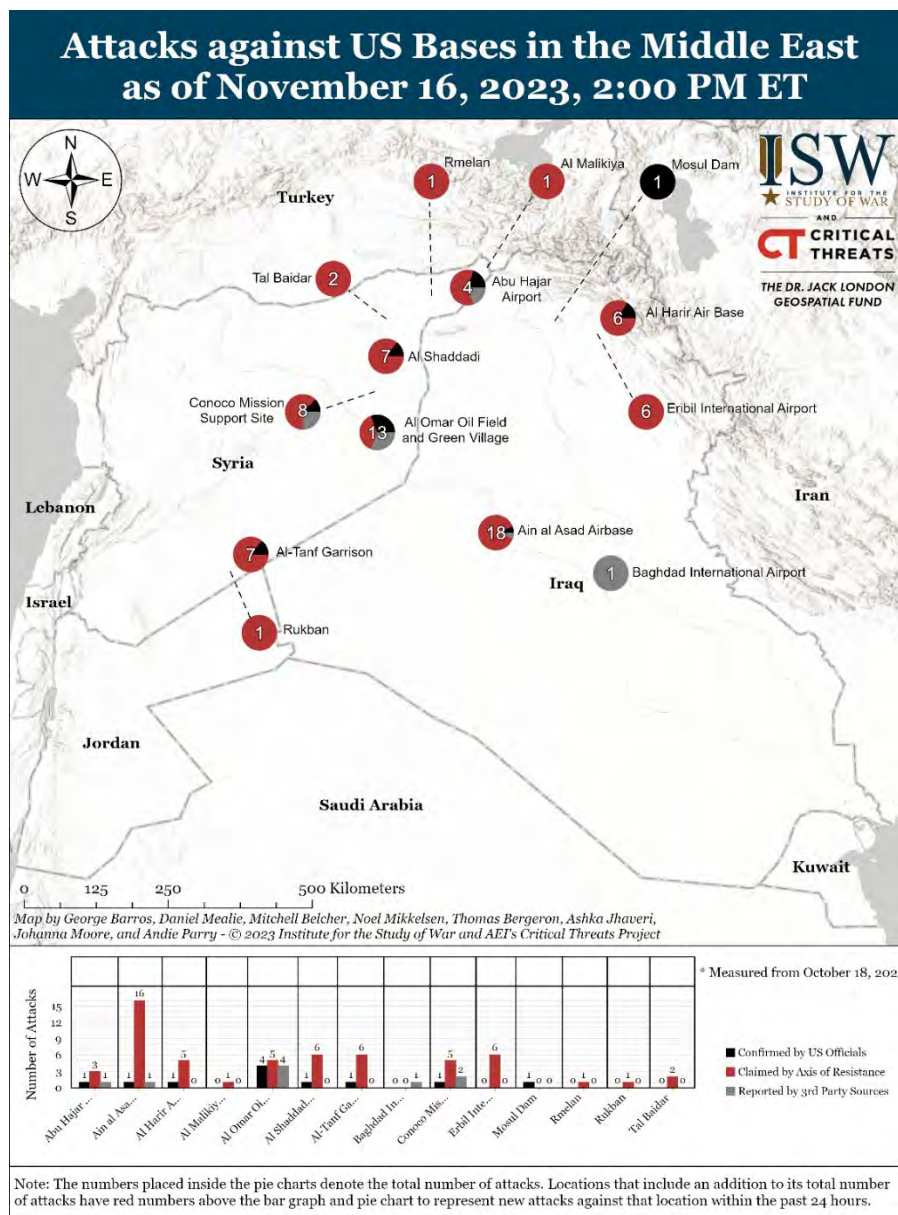
- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—did not claim any attacks on US forces in the Middle East on November 16. The group has attacked US forces in Iraq and Syria almost every day since October 18.

Unspecified Iranian-backed militants conducted two rocket attacks on a US base in eastern Syria on November 16, according to Axis of Resistance-affiliated and local media.[49] Social media sources

reported two separate attacks on US forces stationed at al Omar Oil Field. CTP-ISW cannot verify these reports at this time. Iranian-backed militants have claimed attacks targeting al Omar Oil Field five times since October 18.[50] The United States said Iranian-backed militants attacked US forces at al Omar Oil Field twice on November 8.[51]

Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah (KH) issued a statement threatening the United States on November 16. KH said the United States' actions require deterrence and punishment and that the United States will receive the "harshest blows and slaps wherever Kataib Hezbollah's hands reach." [52] The statement also praised the "steadfastness" of the Palestinian people and blamed the United States and other Western countries for Israeli military actions in the Gaza Strip. KH spokesperson Jafar al Hussein issued a similar threat to the United States on October 20 saying that attacks on US forces will continue and that the pace of attacks will increase.[53] KH has consistently threatened attacks on US forces in the Middle East since the Israel-Hamas war began on October 7.[54] KH is a member of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which has attacked US forces in Iraq and Syria almost daily since October 18.



Iranian officials and state media refuted Western reports that Iran will not “directly” enter the Israel-Hamas war, likely to reassure other Axis of Resistance members of Iran’s continued support for them. Reuters reported on November 15 that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei told Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh that Iran will not “intervene directly” in the war during their meeting in Tehran on November 5.[55] Khamenei also pressured Haniyeh to silence Hamas members calling for Iran and LH to fully join the war against Israel.

- Iranian state media, including outlets affiliated with the IRGC, denied the Reuters claim. Ebrahim Raisi administration-run outlet IRNA conducted an interview with Hamas senior representative to Lebanon Osama Hamdan, who described Reuters’ claims as “pure lies and slander.”[56] IRGC-affiliated Tasnim News Agency similarly called the Reuters report “fake news.”[57]
- IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani sent a public letter to Hamas military leader Mohammed Deif, emphasizing Iranian support for Hamas and that Iran would do “whatever it must do in this historical battle.”[58] Iranian state media widely circulated the letter.[59] Iran has extensively coordinated with its proxies and partner militias in the Axis of Resistance since the Israel-Hamas war began. Iran has additionally facilitated the expansion of the war to Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria by directing and encouraging its proxy and partner militias in these countries to attack US and Israeli targets throughout the region. Khamenei’s statement that Iran will not “directly” enter the war and Ghaani’s vow to provide continued support to the Axis of Resistance are therefore not contradictory since Iran is *already* directly involved in the war through the Axis of Resistance.

Iran is exploiting the Western media framing that Iran is not already involved in the war, which is unintentionally obfuscating the role Iran is already playing. This framing ignores the fact that Iran has extensively armed, financed, and coordinated with the various members of the Axis of Resistance that are now attacking US and Israeli targets across the Middle East. Iran considers itself to be both part of the Axis of Resistance and its leader. Ghaani committing the continued support of the Axis of Resistance to Hamas implies continued Iranian support. CTP-ISW has furthermore recorded extensively how Iran has led and cooperated with the Axis of Resistance in recent weeks to threaten the United States and Israel and preserve Hamas.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Ali Bagheri Kani met with his Russian and Kazakh counterparts, Sergei Ryabkov and Alibek Bakayev, respectively, in Tehran on November 16.[60] Bagheri Kani discussed “regional and international developments” and nuclear negotiations with Ryabkov and economic, scientific, and cultural cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan with Bakayev. Bagheri Kani also covered the Israel-Hamas war in his meeting with Bakayev, stating that all Muslim countries must pressure Israel to stop the war. Ryabkov and Bakayev separately met with Iranian Foreign Affairs Ministry Economic Diplomacy Deputy Mehdi Safari.[61] Bagheri Kani recently met with Ryabkov in Moscow on October 26.[62] Bagheri Kani was in Moscow at the same time as a senior Hamas delegation and met with Hamas’ International Relations Office head and Political Bureau member Musa Abu Marzouk on October 27.[63]

[1] https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp1_02.pdf

[2] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1717902393776484789/video/1>

[3] <https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-11-1...>

[4] <https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-11-1...>

[5] <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1724921506650632268>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1725143499429781568>

[6] <https://twitter.com/TreyYingst/status/1724932849931805070>

[7] <https://twitter.com/TreyYingst/status/1724932849931805070>

[8] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16682>

[9] <https://www.idf.il/152065>

[10] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1725171817185149008>

[11] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1717902393776484789/video/1>

[12] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725236355020587498>; <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2023/10/15/idf-seizes-efps-rpgs-and-other-w...>

[13] https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/Data/pdf/PDF1/hamas_080408_501786899.pdf

- [14] <https://publications.armywarcollege.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/3667.pdf>
- [15] <https://www.farsnews.ir/news/14020825000446/%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%BA-%D8%AA%D9%84%E2%80%8C%D8%A2%D9%88%DB%8C%D9%88-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%87-%D8%A8%DB%8C%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%81%D8%A7%E2%80%8C%D8%A1-%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B4-%D8%B4%D8%AF>; <https://t.me/hamasps/17783>
- [16] <https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-11-1...>
- [17] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-relied-on-intercepts-in-assess...>
- [18] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-relied-on-intercepts-in-assess...>
- [19] https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN35425-FM_1-02.2-000-WEB-...
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- [21] https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-infantry-troops-tanks-entered-gaza-for-localized-raids-to-clear-area-of-terrorists-locate-hostages/
- [22] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725035983140188618>
- [23] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1725182073617469822>
- [24] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1725171817185149008>
- [25] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1725171817185149008>; <https://abcnews.go.com/International/liv>
[e-updates/israel-gaza-hamas-war/...](https://abcnews.go.com/International/live-updates/israel-gaza-hamas-war/)
- [26] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/7192>; <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/7190>
- [27] <https://twitter.com/PalestineRCS/status/1725164334769197466>
- [28] <https://twitter.com/YousefHammash/status/1724802339301970250>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-tells-people-east-gazas...>
- [29] <https://twitter.com/YousefHammash/status/1724802339301970250>
- [30] <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/israel-drops-leaflets-on-parts-of-s...>
- [31] <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/israel-drops-leaflets-on-parts-of-s...>
- [32] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/472>
- [33] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/473>
- [34] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16683>
- [35] https://twitter.com/no_itsmyturn/status/1724912239176519800 ; <https://t.me/QudsN/329643> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/329640> ; <https://t.me/almanarnews/136611> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/329683> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/329679> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725119614667948428> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/329727> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/330009> ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/39728
- [36] <https://t.me/QudsN/329676> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/329690> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725119614667948428>
- [37] https://t.me/C_Military1/39549
- [38] <https://t.me/QudsN/329922> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/330031>
- [39] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725119610523987979>
- [40] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/39715 ; <https://t.me/QudsN/329890> ; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/6-injured-1-critically-in-attack-by-3-gunmen-at-west-bank-checkpoint-near-jerusalem/>
- [41] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/6-injured-1-critically-in-attack-by-3-gunmen-at-west-bank-checkpoint-near-jerusalem/>
- [42] <https://t.me/pflpgaza1/13479>
- [43] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-november-15-2023> ; <https://t.me/hamasps/17752>
- [44] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-november-14-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-27-2023>
- [45] https://t.me/C_Military1/39581; https://twitter.com/i24NEWS_EN/status/1725148773632938293; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725120148602773908>; <https://twitter.com/alishoeib1970/status/1725118355449741648>; https://t.me/C_Military1/39564; https://t.me/C_Military1/39579; https://t.me/C_Military1/39577; https://t.me/C_Military1/39563; <https://twitter.com/alishoeib1970/status/1725121808590930219>; <https://twitter.com/alishoeib1970/status/1725080549130178736>; <https://twitter.com/aliimortada/status/1725205934232801746>
- [46] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725146706596049305>; https://t.me/C_Military1/39584; https://twitter.com/dw_persian/status/1725046242151907502

[47] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725146706596049305>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725088854200262880>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1724952167902015813>; <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1725136053651063257>

[48] <https://x.com/QalaatM/status/1725216262358274075?s=20>

[49] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/39650 ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/39671 ; <https://t.me/AbomoSaabSharkea/105453> ; <https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/rocket-attack-targets-us-ba...>

[50] <https://t.me/elamharbi/99> ; <https://t.me/elamharbi/98> ; <https://t.me/elamharbi/96> ; <https://t.me/elamharbi/81> ; ; <https://t.me/elamharbi/32>

[51] <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/09/politics/us-forces-attacks-syria-iraq/ind...>

[52] <https://www.kataibhezbollah.me/news/3324>

[53] <https://www.almanar.com.lb/11095053>

[54] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/36820 ; <https://www.almanar.com.lb/11095053>; https://twitter.com/Tammuz_Intel/status/1720912742553440404; <https://www.shafaqdot.com/ar/سياسة-ابو-فدك-يوجه-الحشد-الشعبى-الى-حالة-برفع-الشعبى-الحشد-يوجه-فدك-ابو-سياسة>

[55] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38097; <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/الحشد-الشعبى-فى-طائر-ي-ل-استعدادا-القصى-نذار-الى-حالة-برفع-الشعبى-الحشد-يوجه-فدك-ابو-سياسة>

[56] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/irans-axis-resistance-against-...>

[57] <https://www.irna.ir/news/85293000>

[58] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/08/25/2989315>

[59] <https://www.irna.ir/news/85293570>

[60] <https://www.isna.ir/news/1402082518711> ; <https://www.hamshahrionline.ir/news/808003>

[61] <https://mfportal.ir/NewsView/734030>

[62] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/08/25/2989420>

[63] <https://www.irna.ir/news/85271712>

[64] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-27-2023>

IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 17, 2023

Iran Update, November 17, 2023

Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Annika Ganzeveld, Kathryn Tyson, Andie Parry, and Peter Mills

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

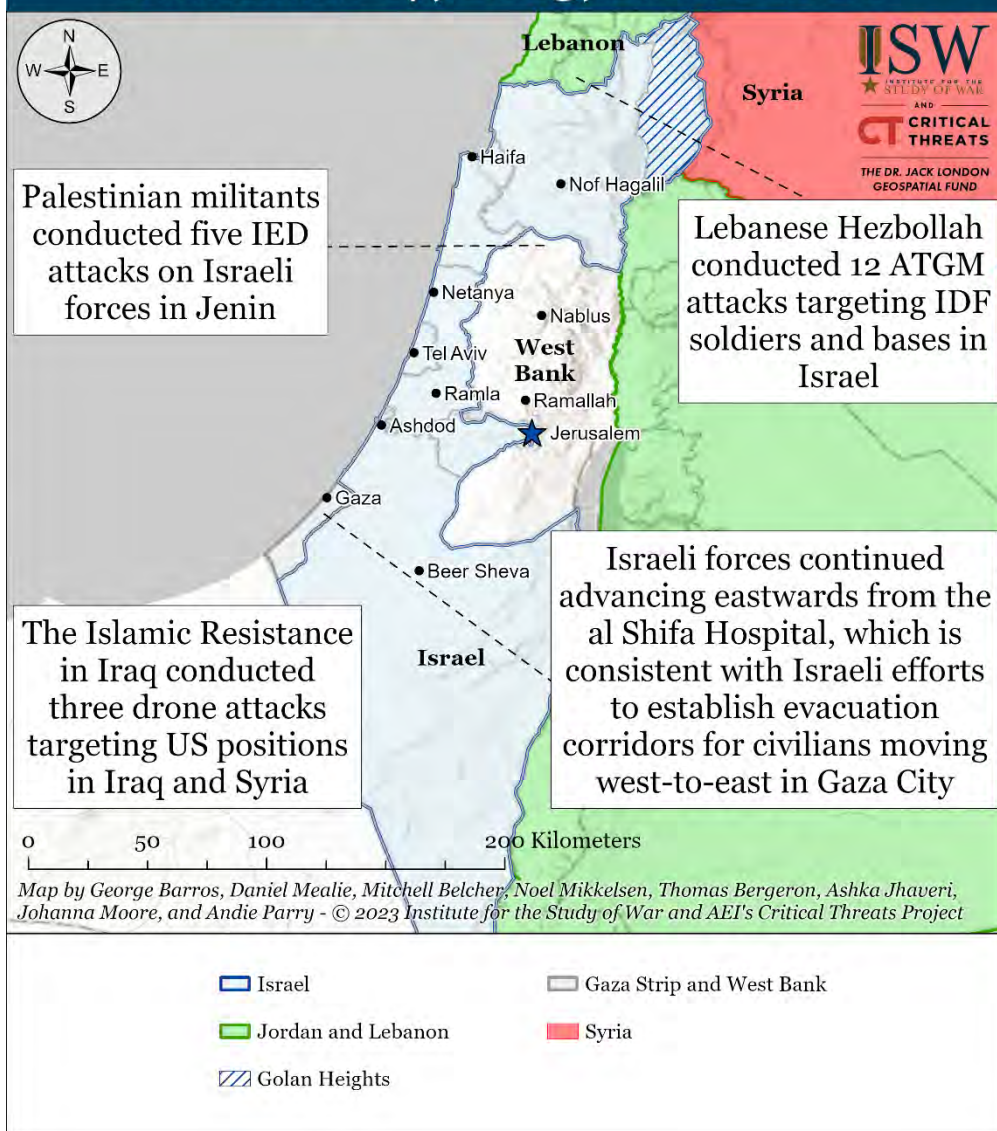
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli forces continued advancing eastwards from the al Shifa Hospital, which is consistent with Israeli efforts to establish evacuation corridors for civilians moving west-to-east in Gaza City. The IDF told the New York Times that it had captured a Hamas fighter at al Shifa Hospital and it had not "fully secured" the hospital as of November 17.
2. Hamas highlighted the proximity of one of its tunnels to a mosque, which is notable given Hamas' repeated claims that it does not use civilian infrastructure for military purposes.
3. Palestinian militants clashed with and conducted IED attacks against Israeli forces in Jenin. Iranian-backed fighters, including Lebanese Hezbollah, conducted 17 cross-border attacks into northern Israel.
4. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—conducted three attacks targeting US positions in Iraq and Syria.
5. The United States Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated Iranian-backed persons and entities as Specially Designated Nationals. OFAC reported that the persons and entities were involved in recent attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria.
6. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's official website refuted Western reports that Iran will not "directly" enter the Israel-Hamas war, likely to reassure Axis of Resistance members of Khamenei's continued support for them.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 17, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

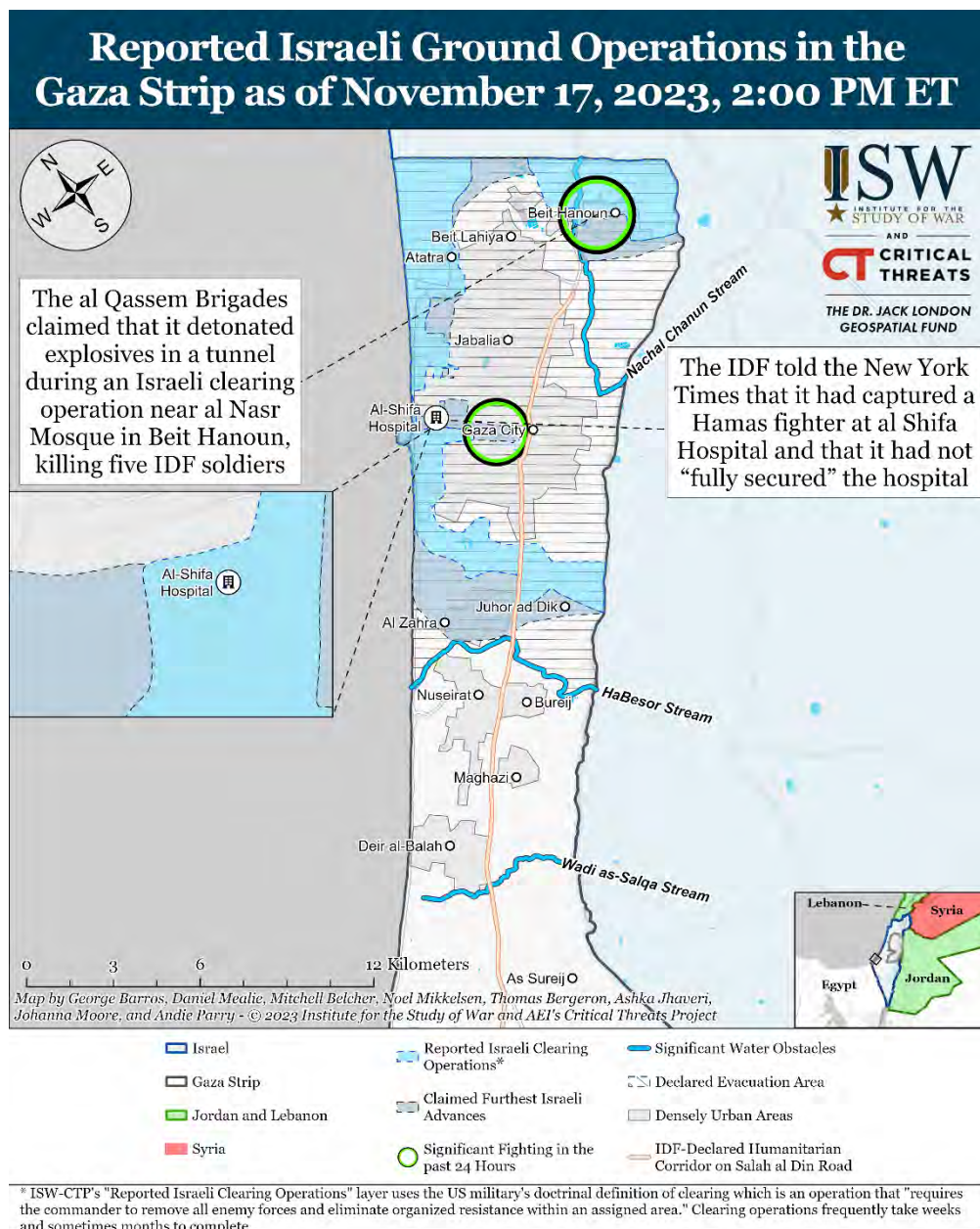
- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israeli forces continued advancing eastwards from the al Shifa Hospital, which is consistent with Israeli efforts to establish evacuation corridors for civilians moving west-to-east in Gaza City. Local Palestinian sources reported that Israeli forces fought Palestinian militia fighters near the al Samer roundabout on November 17, just west of the al Ahli Hospital.[1] The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said that Israeli forces “surrounded” the hospital on November 17.[2] Israeli forces have repeatedly established safe corridors and evacuation routes to facilitate the departure of civilians.[3] The IDF announced an evacuation route east from al Shati Camp to Salah al Din Road on November 14 and declared a unilateral tactical pause between 1000 and 1600 local time to facilitate evacuations.[4] The IDF also declared an

evacuation route east from al Shifa Hospital on November 13. Hamas fighters fired upon this evacuation route from al Shifa Hospital, according to Israeli officers.[5]

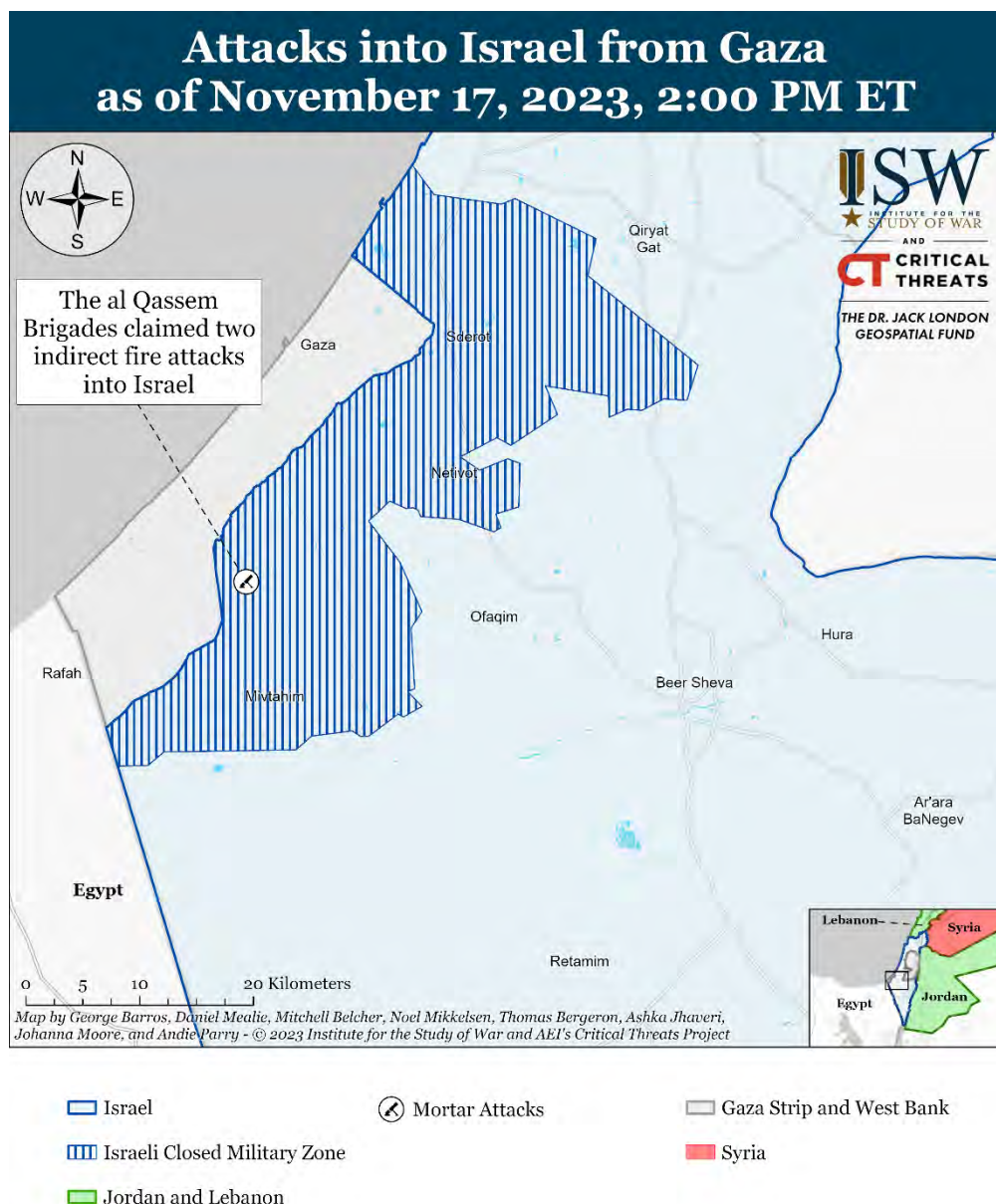
The IDF told the *New York Times* that it had captured a Hamas fighter at al Shifa Hospital and it had not “fully secured” the hospital as of November 17.[6] Israeli forces also recovered the body of a second Israeli hostage at al Shifa on November 17.[7] The IDF also said that it found information related to hostages on computers inside al Shifa Hospital.[8] Hamas claimed on November 17 that it had moved hostages to “care centers” to “preserve their lives.”[9] Hamas took 242 hostages on October 7 and killed another 1,200 Israelis.[10]

The IDF released footage on November 17 showing an Israeli foot patrol on al Rashid St, western Gaza City, which suggests that the northern and central Israeli advances have linked up.[11]



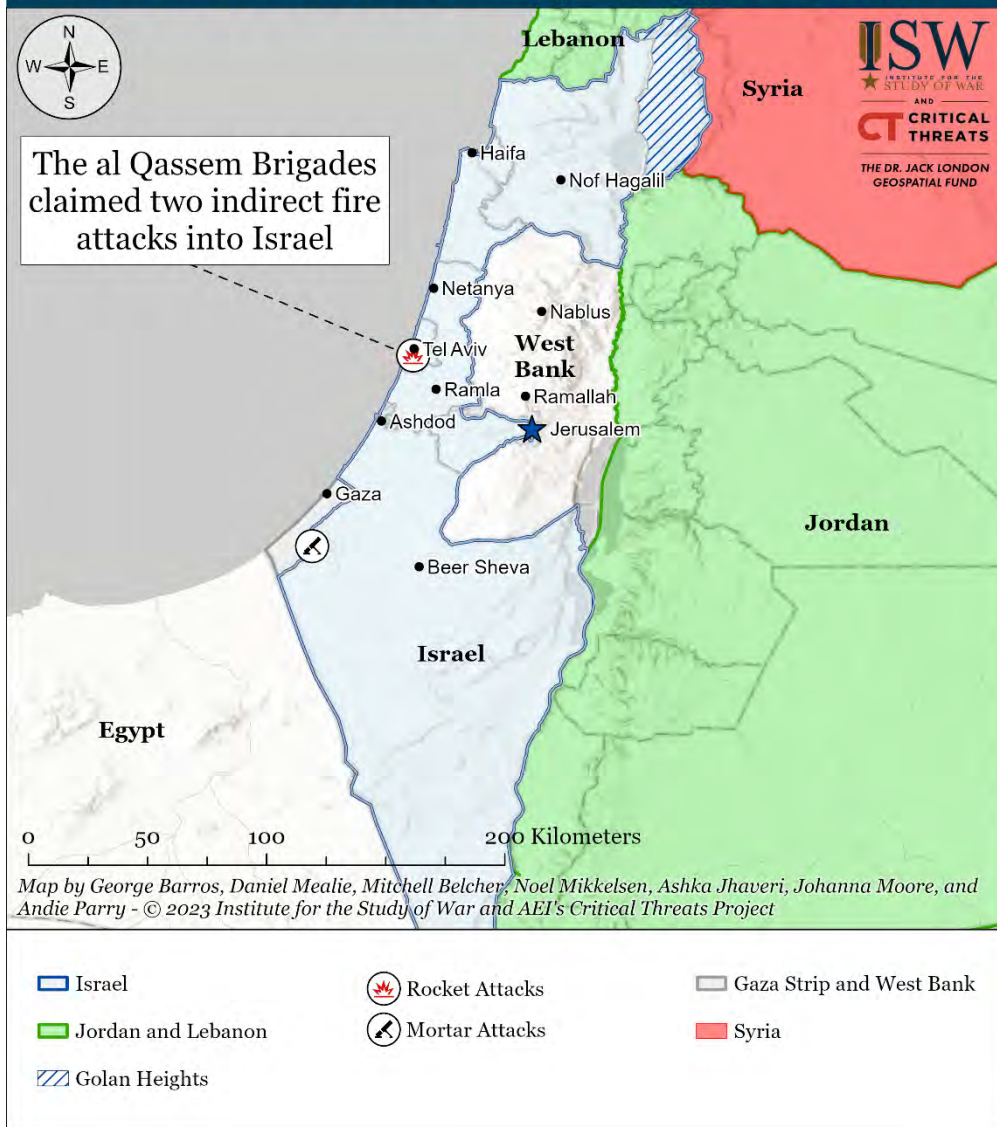
Hamas highlighted the proximity of one of its tunnels to a mosque, which is notable given Hamas' repeated claims that it does not use civilian infrastructure for military purposes.[12] The al Qassem Brigades claimed that it detonated explosives in a tunnel during an Israeli clearing operation near al Nasr Mosque in Beit Hanoun, killing five IDF soldiers.[13] This attack targeting Israeli forces behind the Israeli forward line of troops is consistent with the doctrinal definition of a clearing operation.

The al Qassem Brigades claimed two indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory on November 17.[14] The al Qassem Brigades claimed one rocket attack targeting Tel Aviv in retaliation for civilian deaths.[15] Official Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) media claimed that five Israelis were injured in the attack.[16] An Israeli news outlet reported that Israel's Red Alert system was activated by a Hamas rocket attack but did not report any injuries or deaths following the attack.[17] The al Qassem Brigades also claimed a mortar attack on Nirim Kibbutz, in southern Israel.[18]



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 17, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



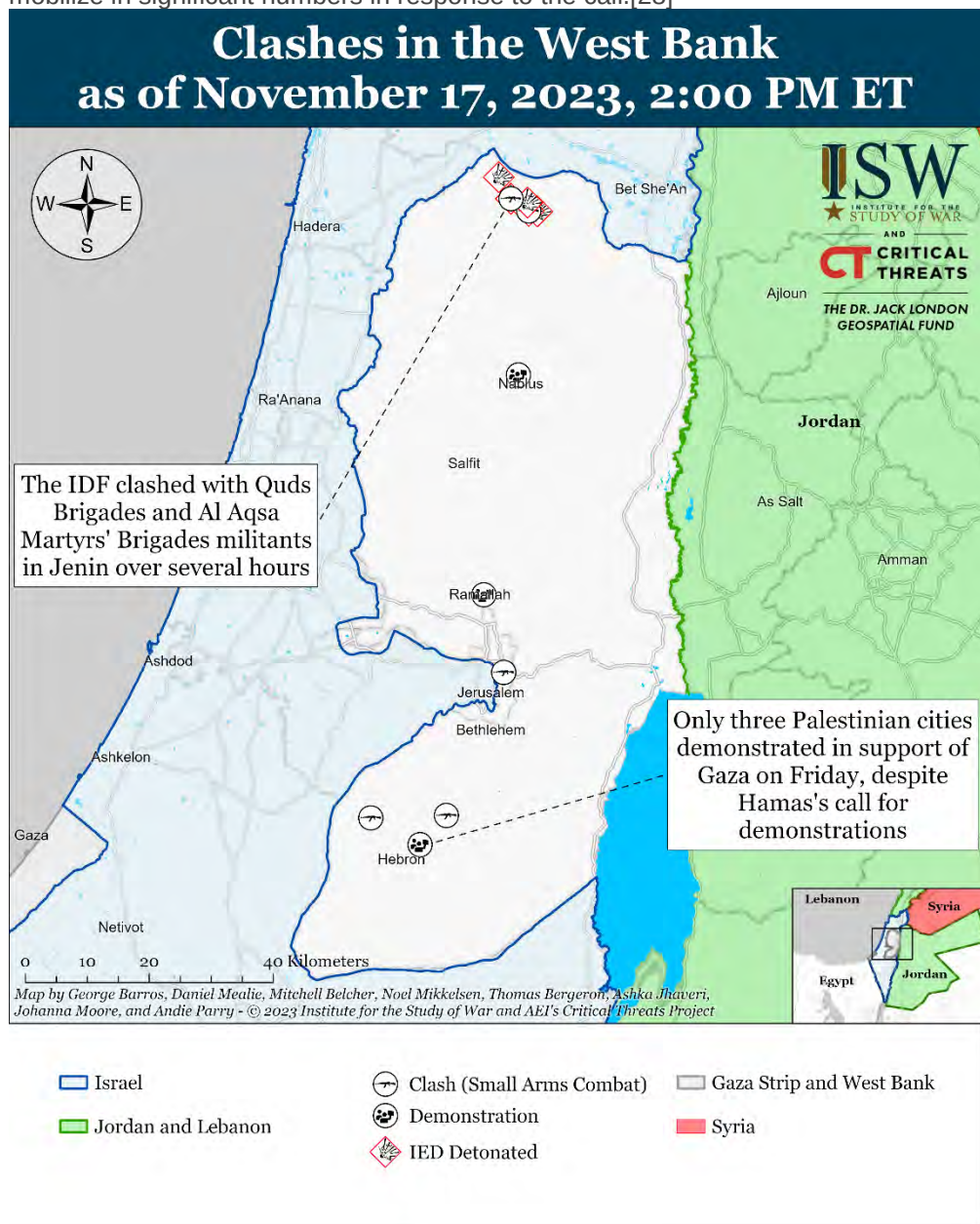
Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
- Palestinian militants clashed with and conducted IED attacks against Israeli forces in Jenin on November 17.** The Jenin Brigade of the al Quds Brigades claimed that it detonated and fired small arms at IDF forces in Jenin Camp during several ambushes.[19] The Hornets' Nest of the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, which operates in the Jenin camp, claimed that it detonated an IED targeting an Israeli military bulldozer in Jenin.[20] CTP-ISW recorded five IED detonations in Jenin and the IDF announced that it uncovered more roadside IEDs in the camp that Palestinian fighters were using to target Israeli security forces.[21] Israeli forces killed three fighters in the al Quds Brigades' Jenin Brigade in a raid in Jenin, including the co-founder of the al Quds Brigades' Jenin Brigade in the raid along with two other militants from the group.[22] Israeli forces conducted a drone strike in the Jenin camp during the raid.[23] Unspecified Palestinian fighters clashed with Israeli forces three times in West Bank areas outside of Jenin.[24] Israeli forces arrested at least 47 Palestinians in the West Bank according to the Palestinian Prisoners' and Ex-Prisoners' Affairs Authority.[25] The IDF announced it had arrested 21 Palestinians overnight, however.[26]

Palestinians demonstrated in support of Gaza in three West Bank cities on November 17, which is fewer than normal for a Friday protest turnout.[27] Hamas had called for global Friday protests on November 16 under the slogan “Save Gaza's hospitals...Save Gaza's children” but Palestinians in the West Bank did not mobilize in significant numbers in response to the call.[28]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

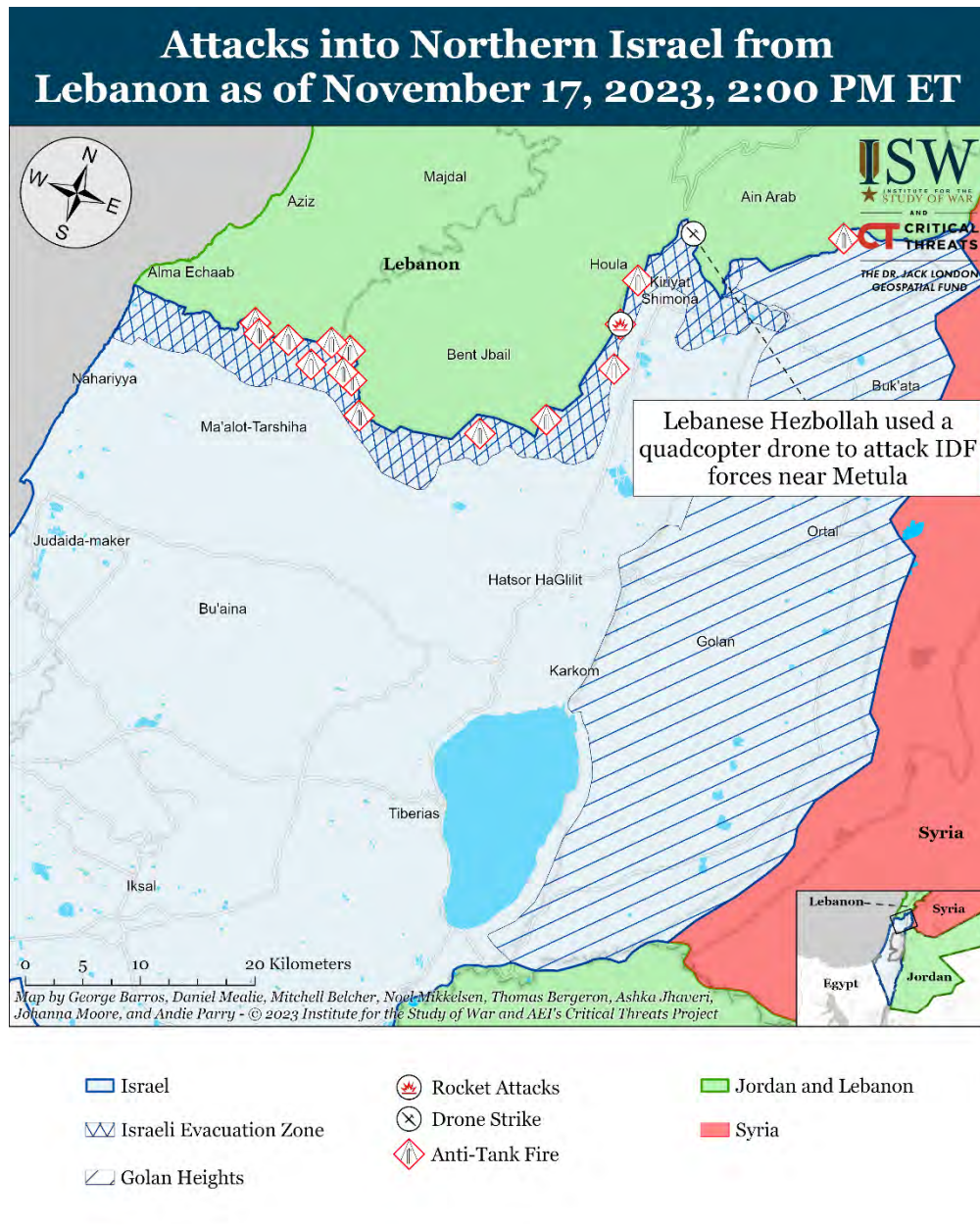
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed fighters, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), conducted 17 cross-border attacks into northern Israel on November 17. LH conducted 12 anti-tank guided missile attacks and one quadcopter drone attack targeting Israeli forces and military infrastructure.[29] Unspecified fighters separately conducted three anti-tank guided missile attacks and one rocket attack targeting Israeli forces and military infrastructure.[30] The IDF shot down an LH quadcopter drone near Metula, Israel.[31] The IDF conducted

airstrikes targeting “terrorist infrastructure” in southern Lebanon in response to the attacks into northern Israel.[32]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

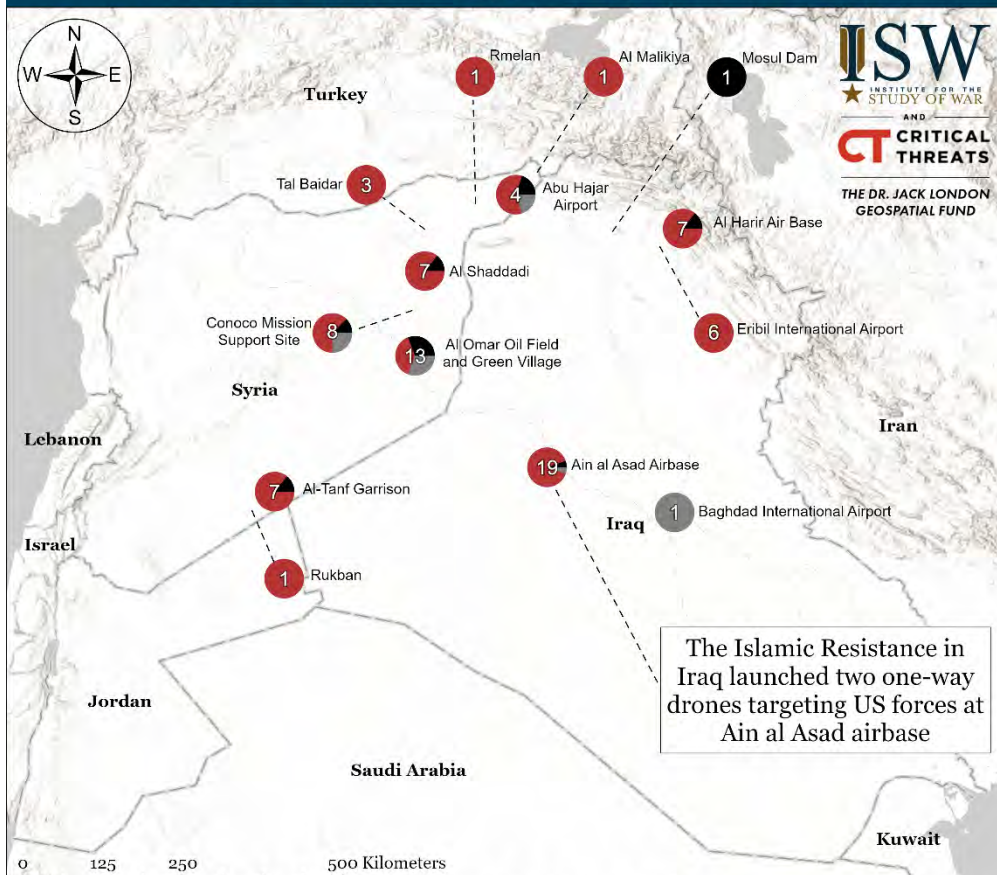
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

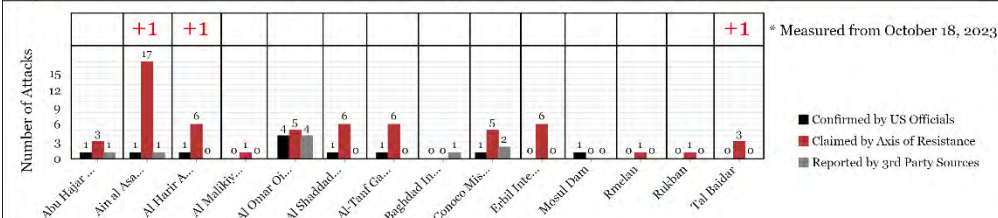
The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—conducted three attacks targeting US positions in Iraq and Syria on November 17. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq and its affiliated groups have claimed 81 attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East since the Israel-Hamas war began.

- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed a one-way drone attack targeting US forces at the al Harir airbase in Erbil Province in northern Iraq.[33] The group separately claimed two one-way drone attacks on US forces at the Ain al Assad airbase, Anbar Province, western Iraq.[34]
- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed two one-way drone attacks targeting US forces at Tal Baydar, Hasakah Province, northeastern Syria.[35]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 17, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AET's Critical Threats Project



Note: The numbers placed inside the pie charts denote the total number of attacks. Locations that include an addition to its total number of attacks have red numbers above the bar graph and pie chart to represent new attacks against that location within the past 24 hours.

Syrian state media said that Israel conducted airstrikes on southern Damascus on November 17. SANA said that Syrian air defense systems shot down most of the munitions but that there were "material losses." [36] The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said that the strikes targeted Lebanese Hezbollah weapons depots and Iranian-backed militia sites near the Damascus International Airport, al Bahdalia, and Sayyida Zeinab. [37] SOHR said the strikes killed two militia members. The IDF has not confirmed the strikes. Israel previously conducted airstrikes on Damascus on October 22. [38]

Senior Houthi official Mohammad Ali al Houthi denied that the United States has intercepted Houthi drones and missiles targeting Israel. [39] Mohammad Ali al Houthi serves as the head of the Houthi supreme revolutionary committee and is close to the Houthi supreme leader. [40] Mohammad Ali al Houthi said that Houthi drone and missile strikes are in support of Palestinians in Gaza and that the United States must release videos to prove it shot down the attacks. The Houthis have launched multiple attacks using drones and missiles targeting Israel since October 7 and the US has shot down some of these

attacks.[41] The group also threatened attacks on Israeli ships operating in the Red Sea and Bab al Mandeb Strait on November 14.[42]

The United States Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated Iranian-backed persons and entities as Specially Designated Nationals on November 17.

OFAC reported that the persons and entities were involved in recent attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria.[43]

OFAC designated Kataib Sayyeda al Shuhada (KSS) and senior KSS leader Hashim Finyan Rahim al Saraji.[44] OFAC designated six individuals belonging to Iranian-backed Kataib Hezbollah, a US-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO):

- **Imad Naji al Bahadli:** According to OFAC, Imad al Bahadli is currently a member of KH's governing Shura Council. Al Bahadli was previously responsible for militia recruitment and training at the direction of the IRGC. In this role, al Bahadli also identified US military and civilian targets in Iraq for future IRGC-QF directed attacks by KH. He was also behind efforts to intimidate Iraqi politicians to support efforts to remove US forces from Iraq. Al Bahadli is sanctioned under E.O. 13224 for acting for or on behalf of KH.
- **Habib Hasan Mughamis Darraji:** Habib Darraji currently serves as KH's Foreign Affairs Chief and has previously coordinated KH militia training in Iran with the IRGC. Darraji is designated under E.O. 13224 for acting for or on behalf of KH.
- **Ja'afar al Husayni:** Al Husayni is a KH media spokesperson and has supported planning for attacks on US forces in Iraq. Husayni is designated under E.O. 13224 for acting for or on behalf of KH.
- **Khalid Kadhim Jasim al Skeni:** Khalid Al Skeni is a senior KH military commander for KH and has coordinated KH training with the IRGC. Al Skeni is designated under E.O. 13224 for acting for or on behalf of KH.
- **Basim Mohammad Hasab al Majidi:** Basim al Majidi is currently KH's chief of commercial development. He is also the head of KH's TV station al Ittijah and has KH propaganda production with Iranian support. Al Majidi is designated under E.O. 13224 for acting for or on behalf of KH.
- **Mojtaba Jahandust:** Mojtaba Jahandust is an IRGC-QF member responsible for facilitating KH member travel to Iran for training. Jahandust is designated under E.O. 13224 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial support to KH.

Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council President Faiq Zaidan met with US Ambassador Alina Romanowski on November 17 to discuss the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court's decision to remove Iraqi Parliamentary Speaker Mohammed Halbousi from office and the necessity of an independent judiciary.[45] The Iraqi Federal Supreme Court announced on November 14 that it had decided to remove Halbousi from his role as parliamentary speaker and from office. Halbousi had repeated statements that the Federal Supreme Court's ruling was unconstitutional and was motivated by unspecified parties to create political divisions within society.[46]

The Iraqi Federal Supreme Court's decision to remove Halbousi appears to be unconstitutional. The Federal Supreme Court cited Article 94 of the Iraqi Constitution which stipulates that "decisions of the Federal Supreme Court are final and binding for all authorities." The Iraqi constitution does not explicitly give the court the authority to remove the parliamentary speaker from office.[47] Members of Parliament could have called for a vote of no-confidence to remove Halbousi from office; it is unclear why members chose not to. The Shia Coordination Framework - a loosely aligned coalition of pro-Iranian political parties - the al Azm party, and the al Hasm coalition have begun discussions to identify a new Speaker.[48] The Parliamentary Speaker holds a key position in shaping Iraqi relations with the United States.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's official website refuted Western reports that Iran will not "directly" enter the Israel-Hamas war, likely to reassure Axis of Resistance members of Khamenei's continued support for them. Reuters reported on November 15 that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei told Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh that Iran will not "intervene directly" in the war during their meeting in Tehran on November 5.[49] Khamenei also pressured Haniyeh to silence Hamas members calling for Iran and LH to fully join the war against Israel.

- The Line of Hezbollah—a newsletter published by Khamenei's website—described the Reuters report as "completely false" in its November 17 publication.[50] The newsletter recirculated Khamenei's October 10 statements that Iran defends Palestine and "kisses the foreheads and arms of the resourceful and intelligent designers [of the Al Aqsa Flood Operation]."[51]
- Khamenei's website also published on November 17 an interview with former Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini's daughter Zahra Mostafavi, who praised Khamenei for "seriously and strongly" pursuing the

Palestinian cause.[52] Khamenei's website likely published this interview to emphasize Khamenei's commitment to supporting Hamas and the Axis of Resistance. Khamenei's website may additionally have specifically interviewed Mostafavi given that her father, who was the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, institutionalized the regime's staunch pro-Palestine, anti-Israel stance.

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian met with his French counterpart Catherine Colonna in Geneva, Switzerland on November 16.[53] Abdollahian wrote on X (Twitter) that he and Colonna had a "frank and important conversation" during which they discussed the Israel-Hamas war and "consular and bilateral issues." [54] Colonna warned Iran not to further expand the war, especially to Lebanon.[55] Colonna additionally called for the immediate release of four French nationals being held in Iran. Abdollahian and Colonna's meeting notably comes days before the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Board of Governors meeting on November 23.[56] The Iranian regime has sought to prevent these three European powers from joining calls for a hardline stance on Iran's nuclear program since the 2002 revelation of Iran's undeclared facilities and the formation of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany (E3) diplomatic process in 2003.[57] Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister and chief nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani recently discussed nuclear negotiations, among other issues, with his Russian counterpart Sergei Ryabkov in Tehran on November 16, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[58]

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- [1] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/7224>
 - [2] <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-middle-east-67446662>
 - [3] <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1724326961336434934?s=20>; <https://www...>
 - [4] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1724326961336434934>
 - [5] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-warns-of-wider-war-as-it-pr...>
 - [6] <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/11/17/world/israel-hamas-gaza-war-news>
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 - [11] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1725402918897996264?s=20>
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 - [22] <https://t.me/sarayajneen/1149>
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 - [26] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725410905712697473>
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 - [28] <https://t.me/hamasps/17777>
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<https://farsi.khamenei dot ir/news-content?id=54049>
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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 18, 2023

Iran Update, November 18, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Amin Soltani, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

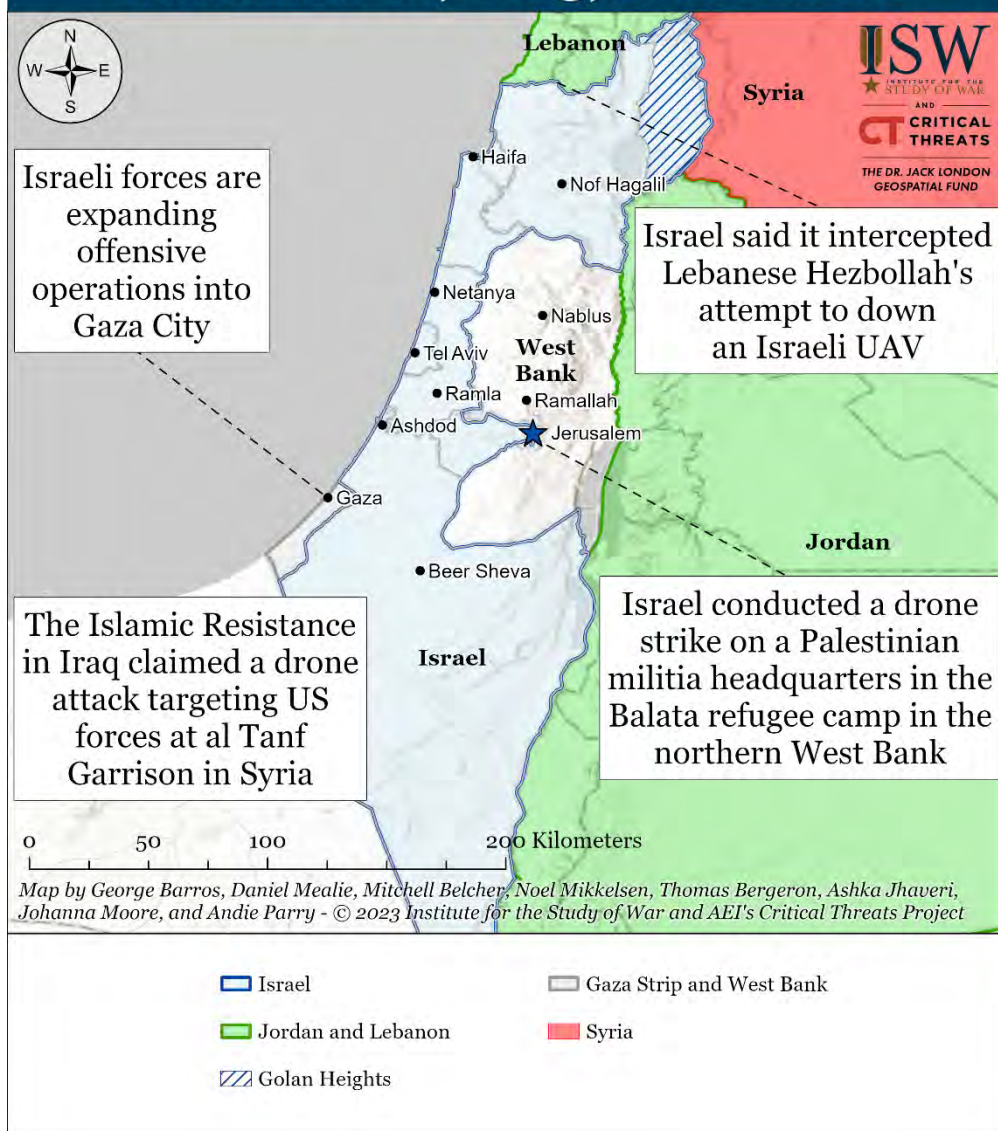
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli forces are expanding offensive operations into Gaza City. Israeli forces provided humanitarian aid to al Shifa Hospital as civilians evacuated the medical complex.
2. Al Qassem Brigades military spokesperson said Hamas is preparing for a flexible and protracted defense in the Gaza Strip, which is consistent with the delaying operation that CTP-ISW assessed that Hamas is conducting against advancing Israeli forces.
3. Israel conducted a drone strike on a Palestinian militia headquarters in the Balata refugee camp in the northern West Bank.
4. Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah, conducted 13 cross-border attacks into northern Israel.
5. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—conducted one attack targeting US positions in Syria.
6. Iranian Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Gharai Ashtiani argued that the Axis of Resistance has successfully destabilized and isolated Israel since Hamas' October 7 attack.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 18, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israeli forces are expanding offensive operations into Gaza City. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said on November 18 Israeli forces have expanded clearing operations to additional neighborhoods in Gaza City.[1] The IDF 36th Division clashed with Hamas forces around the Zaitoun neighborhood in southern Gaza City, and the IDF 162nd Division began operating on the outskirts of Jabalia in northern Gaza City.[2] An IDF spokesperson said Hamas' northern brigade maintains a command-and-control center and critical strongholds in Jabalia.[3] The Israeli Army Radio reported that two of the four Hamas battalions operating in Jabalia are combat capable, implying that the other two are currently combat ineffective.[4] Additionally, Hagari said Israeli forces are working to clear Hamas personnel and infrastructure from the Sheikh Ijleen and Rimal neighborhoods.[5]

Palestinian militias conducted attacks on Israeli forces in the areas of advance into Gaza City. The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—targeted Israeli forces and military vehicles in four neighborhoods in Gaza City.^[6] The al Quds Brigades used rockets, including tandem charge anti-tank rockets and rocket propelled grenades (RPG). The IDF said infantry, armored, and engineering forces supported by the Israeli Air Force are engaged in heavy fighting.^[7]

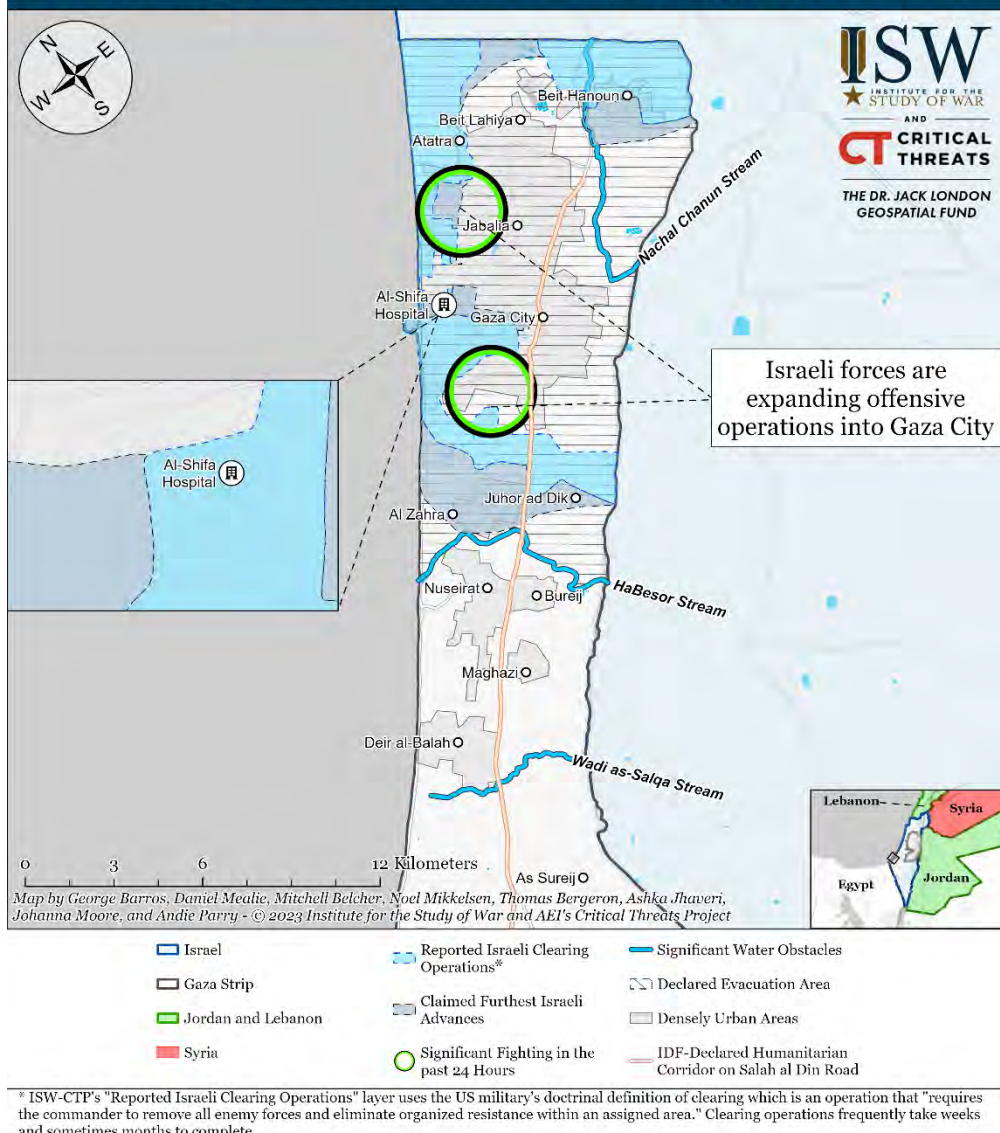
Israel informed residents in neighborhoods of Gaza City to evacuate, which is consistent with Israeli efforts to establish evacuation corridors for civilians moving to the southern Gaza Strip. The IDF told residents to evacuate from Jabalia, al Daraj, al Tuffah, and Shujaia neighborhoods on November 18.^[8] Israel also dropped pamphlets over the Indonesian Hospital.^[9]

Hamas and Israeli forces clashed near al Shifa Hospital. A local media outlet reported that there are “significant” battles in the vicinity of the medical complex between al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—militia fighters and Israeli forces.^[10] CTP-ISW previously reported that Hamas and PIJ have attacked Israeli forces east of the hospital, where Israel is attempting to establish an evacuation corridor, several times since November 10.

Israeli forces provided humanitarian aid to al Shifa Hospital as civilians evacuated the medical complex. Most patients, doctors, and displaced people evacuated the hospital.^[11] The IDF emphasized on November 18 that at no stage has it asked patients or medical teams to evacuate the hospital and said it has suggested allowing the transfer of patients to other hospitals.^[12] The IDF via the Gaza Liaison Administration delivered more than 6,000 liters of water and more than 2,300 kg of food to the hospital.^[13]

Hamas and other Palestinian militia fighters conducted attacks against the IDF behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations. The al Qassem Brigades published footage of militia fighters operating in Beit Hanoun, where Israeli forces have been operating since the start of the ground operation into the Gaza Strip.^[14] The militia fighters used anti-tank munitions and small arms to target Israeli forces stationed in buildings. The al Quds Brigades claimed to destroy two Israeli tanks with tandem charge anti-tank rockets and RPGs in Beit Hanoun and west of Beit Lahiya.^[15]

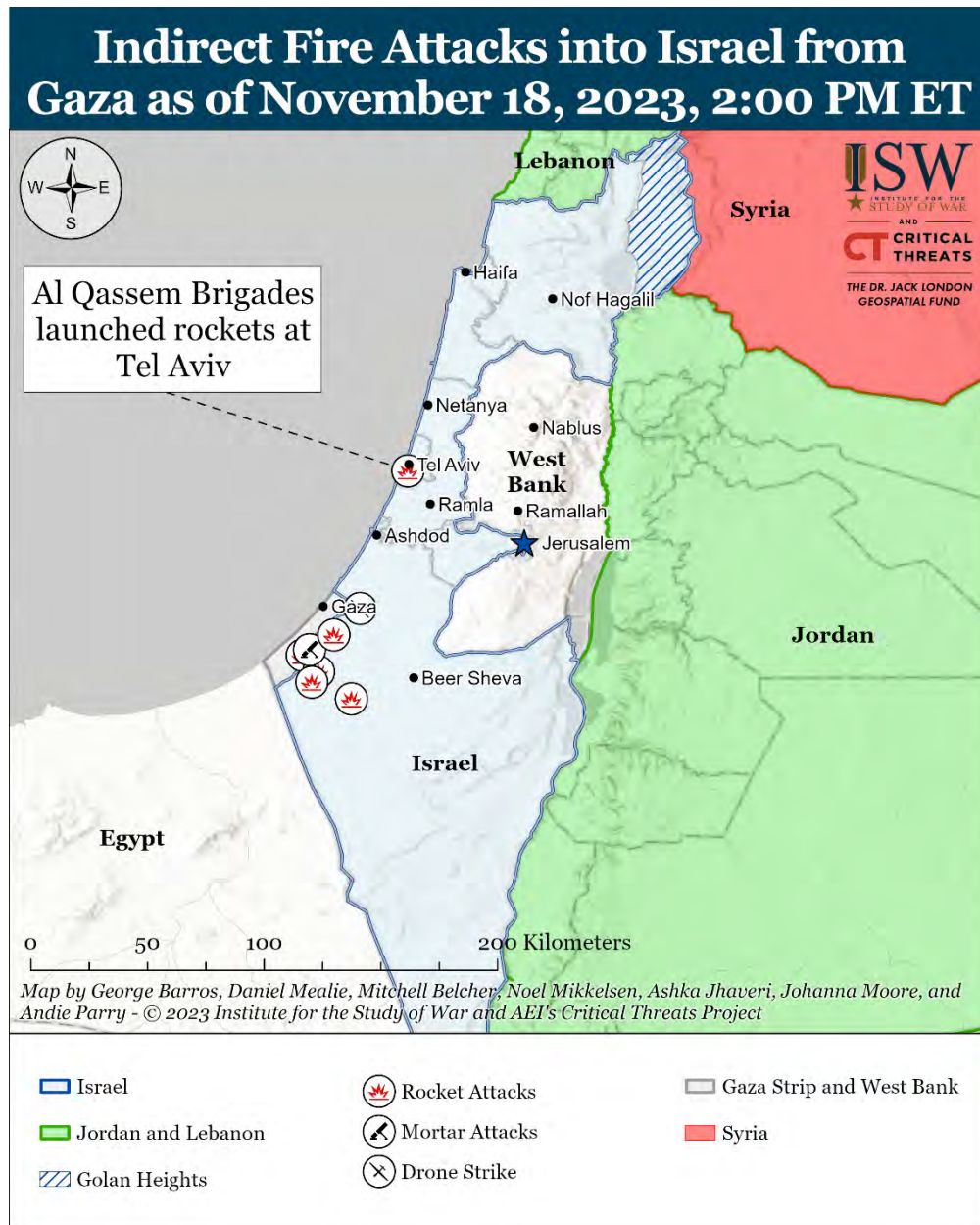
Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 18, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Al Qassem Brigades military spokesperson said Hamas is preparing for a flexible and protracted defense in the Gaza Strip, which is consistent with the delaying operation that CTP-ISW assessed that Hamas is conducting against advancing Israeli forces.[16] Hamas' delay mission generates strategic effects by helping it rally support for Hamas among its partners, within the region, and internationally. CTP-ISW has observed instances of Hamas methodically preparing for a drawn-out conflict with Israel. Israeli reports suggesting that Hamas fighters have fled south along with the fact that Hamas has not reportedly used some of the higher-end capabilities it is assessed to have suggest that its leaders seek to preserve combat power rather than become decisively engaged.[17] Hamas' delay effort also supports Hamas' operational objectives within the Gaza Strip, which include preserving essential capabilities and key leaders. A local media outlet assessed that Hamas leaders have relocated to Khan Younis and are likely sheltering beneath one of the area medical centers or in an underground position.[18] CTP-ISW cannot independently corroborate the assessment, although it is consistent with previous claims that CTP-ISW has reported.

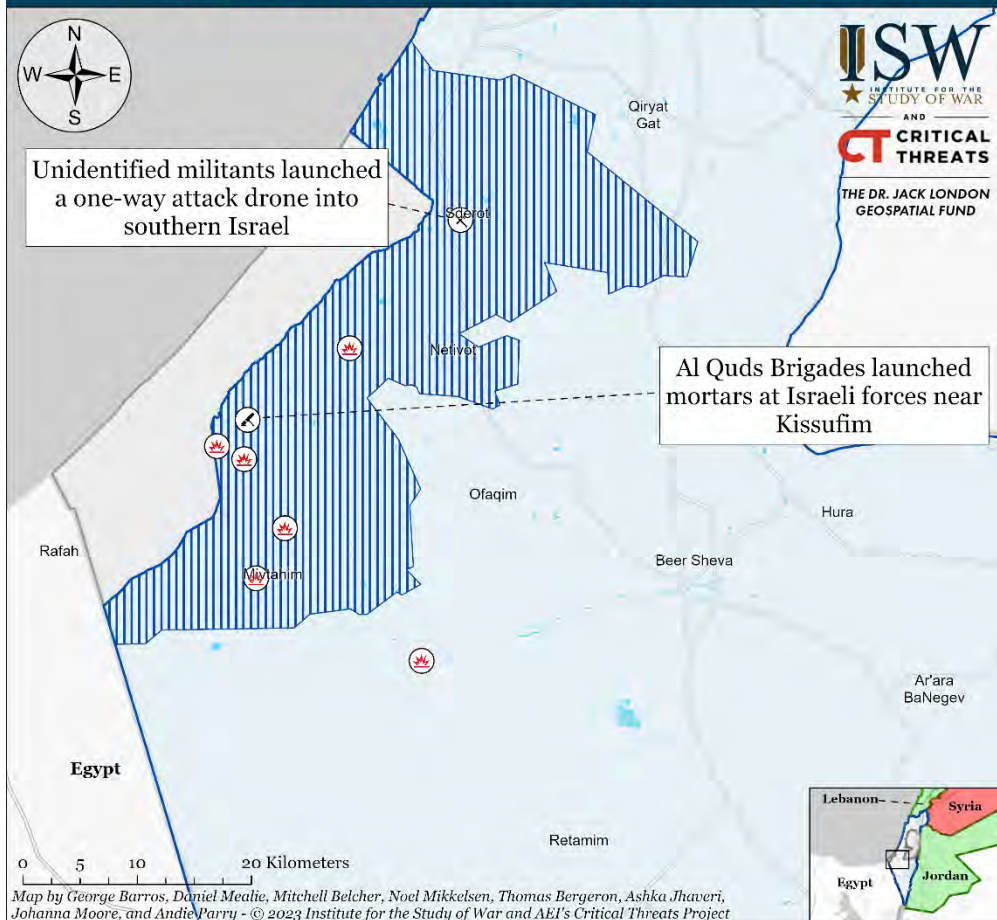
Palestinian militias conducted 11 attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel on November 18. The al Qassem Brigades claimed four attacks, one of which involved militia fighters firing RPGs at Israeli forces at a

military site along the border with the Gaza Strip.[19] The al Quds Brigades claimed five indirect fire attacks, all of which targeted positions in southern Israel.[20]



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 18, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Israel | Rocket Attacks | Gaza Strip and West Bank |
| Israeli Closed Military Zone | Mortar Attacks | Syria |
| Jordan and Lebanon | Drone Strike | |

Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

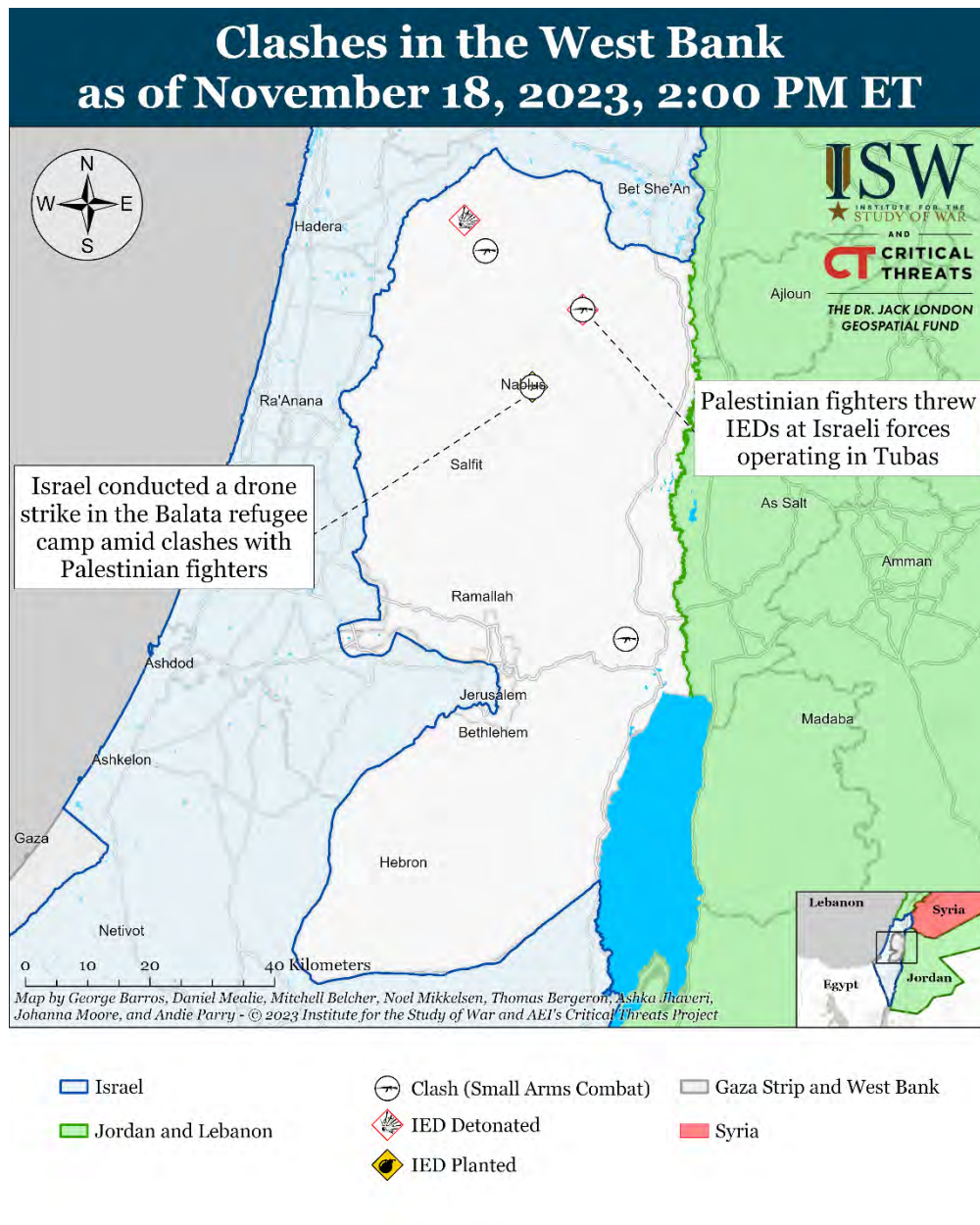
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Israel conducted a drone strike on a Palestinian militia headquarters in the Balata refugee camp in the northern West Bank. The IDF coordinated with Shin Bet to attack a safe house that Palestinian militia fighters were using to plan attacks against Israeli civilians and military targets.^[21] The strike killed a militant involved in recruiting for a militia squad in the Balata refugee camp, shooting attacks against IDF forces, and manufacturing explosive devices.^[22] The Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades—the self-proclaimed militant wing of Fatah—posted a martyr communique honoring the five militia fighters, who died in the drone strike.^[23] The IDF said its forces were able to locate and destroy a laboratory for IEDs during the operation.^[24] Unspecified Palestinian fighters used small arms and IEDs to attack Israeli forces operating in the camp.^[25]

Palestinian fighters engaged Israeli forces in five small arms clashes across the northern West Bank on November 18. CTP-ISW recorded two instances of Palestinian fighters using IEDs against Israeli forces and an armored vehicle. Palestinian militia groups have not claimed the attacks, which occurred primarily near major cities, including Nablus, Jenin, Tubas, and Jericho.

Hamas praised Palestinian resistance in the West Bank and called for further escalation. The al Qassem Brigades spokesperson celebrated Palestinian fighters in the West Bank and encouraged them to continue attacks and clashes against Israeli forces.^[26] Speakers at a Hamas press conference encouraged those in the West bank to continue their attacks in support of the al Aqsa Flood operation.^[27] The appeal is consistent with repeated Hamas calls for further resistance in the West Bank. The audio of the spokesperson's speech was broadcast from minarets and speakers in Beita, south of Nablus.^[28]



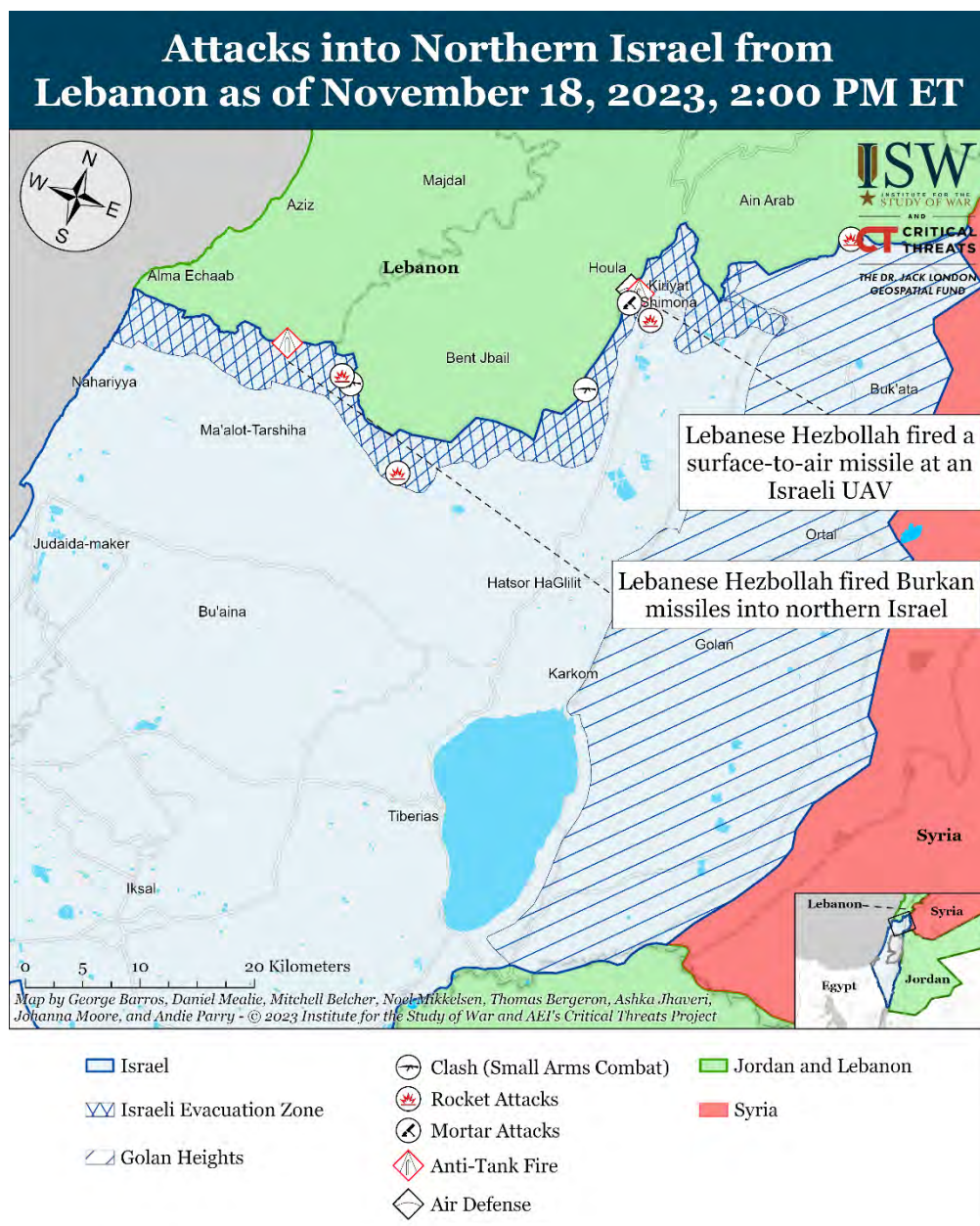
This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), conducted 13 cross-border attacks into northern Israel as of November 18. LH claimed seven attacks using anti-tank munitions, rockets, and small arms targeting Israeli forces and military infrastructure.

The IDF said its air defense fighters successfully intercepted a surface-to-air missile launched from Lebanese territory at an Israeli drone.[29] LH said it downed an Israeli Hermes 450 UAV, a multi-mission combat drone, with a surface-to-air missile on November 18 and published alleged footage of the interception.[30] None of the material that LH published provides actual evidence that it downed the drone. Israel responded to the attempted downing by destroying an advanced surface-to-surface missile system in Lebanon.[31]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

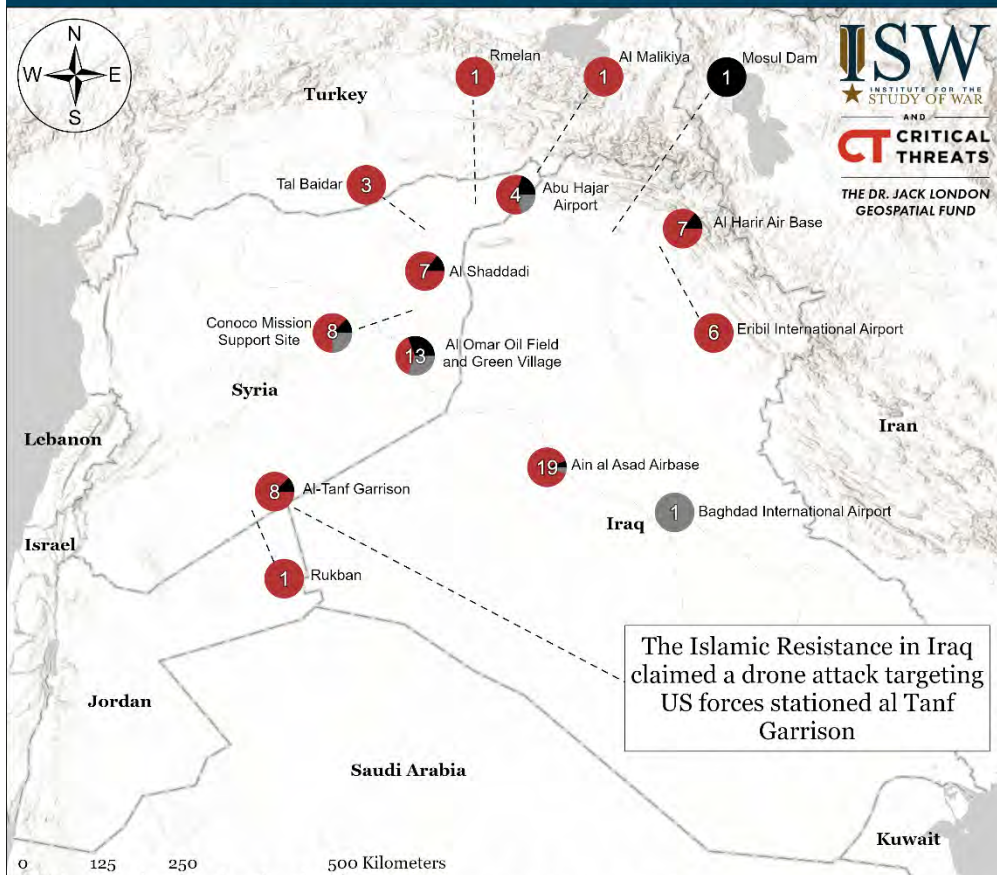
- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed on November 18 to conduct a one-way drone attack on US forces at al Tanf garrison in southeastern Syria.[32] This attack marks the eighth Iranian-backed attack on al Tanf garrison that CTP-ISW has recorded since the Israel-Hamas war began.

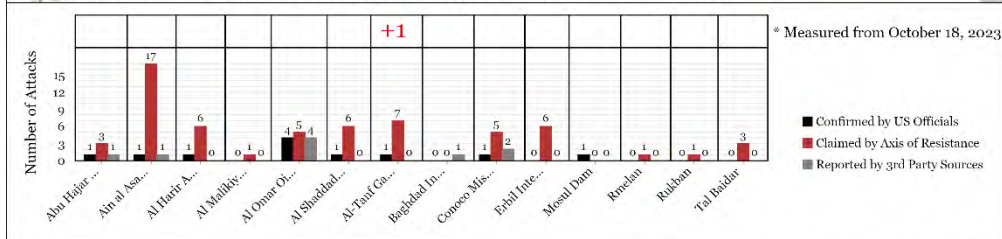
The Dhaferin Group of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq published a statement on November 17 threatening further attacks on US military positions in the Middle East.[33] The group has repeatedly threatened the United States in recent weeks and conducted mortar attacks on US bases in Iraq on November 5 and 8.[34]

The Dhaferin Group separately in its statement praised Iranian-backed Iraqi militias Kataib Hezbollah (KH) and Kataib Seyyed al Shohada (KSS) for their attacks on US bases in the Middle East. The Dhaferin Group was responding to the United States sanctioning KSS and individuals affiliated with KH and KSS on November 17 for their involvement in recent Iranian-backed attacks against US bases.[35]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 18, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AET's Critical Threats Project



Note: The numbers placed inside the pie charts denote the total number of attacks. Locations that include an addition to its total number of attacks have red numbers above the bar graph and pie chart to represent new attacks against that location within the past 24 hours.

Iranian Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Gharaei Ashtiani argued on November 18 that the Axis of Resistance has successfully destabilized and isolated Israel since Hamas' October 7 attack.[36] Ashtiani asserted that the al Aqsa Flood attack has reduced Jewish migration to and within Israel by creating economic, political, and security crises for Israel. Ashtiani also claimed that the war has driven anti-Israel sentiment throughout the world and undermined the credibility of the Israeli government. Ashtiani lastly noted that Israel's military and intelligence failures since October 7 provide lessons for future action against it. Iranian state media widely circulated Ashtiani's message. This statement is consistent with CTP-ISW's assessment that Hamas is trying to prolong its war against Israel to create time for Hamas to rally support from its foreign partners and international actors.[37] Ashtiani's statement is also consistent with the Iranian grand strategic objective of internationally isolating and ultimately destroying the Israeli state. IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami previously advocated for Lebanese Hezbollah and Palestinian militias to conduct activities that would destabilize Israel and generate internal displacement to this end.[38]

Ashtiani's statement is especially noteworthy given his position in the Iranian regime. Ashtiani previously served as deputy chief of the Armed Forces General Staff from 2019 to 2021 before becoming defense minister.[39] The position of defense minister is often a stepping stone into increasingly influential positions in Iran. Numerous Iranian defense ministers have later served as personal advisors to the supreme leader, for instance.

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- [1] <https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1725887321046667299>
 - [2] <https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1725887408934154628>; <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1725890537520091244>
 - [3] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1725890537520091244>
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 - [5] <https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1725887408934154628>
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 - [7] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1725890537520091244>
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 - [15] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16692>
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 - [21] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725765490604154958>
 - [22] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725765493212975591>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725765494794334218>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725765496329400401>
 - [23] <https://t.me/kataipshohdaaalqsa/829>
 - [24] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725810733508641017>
 - [25] <https://t.me/QudsN/330719>; <https://t.me/QudsN/330730>
 - [26] https://t.me/C_Military1/39695
 - [27] <https://t.me/hamasps/17838>
 - [28] <https://t.me/QudsN/330598>
 - [29] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725675350170939723>
 - [30] <https://twitter.com/alishoeib1970/status/1725741357166186906>; https://t.me/C_Military1/39750
 - [31] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1725880277212262641>
 - [32] <https://t.me/elamharbi/107>
 - [33] <https://t.me/alzafren/18>
 - [34] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-14-2023>
 - [35] <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1921>
 - [36] <https://defapress.ir/fa/news/631278>; <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/08/27/2991235>
 - [37] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-14-2023>
 - [38] <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/others-dialog?id=50786>
 - [39] <https://www.hamshahrionline.ir/news/632370>

IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 19, 2023

Iran Update, November 19, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Brian Carter, Andie Parry, Amin Soltani, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

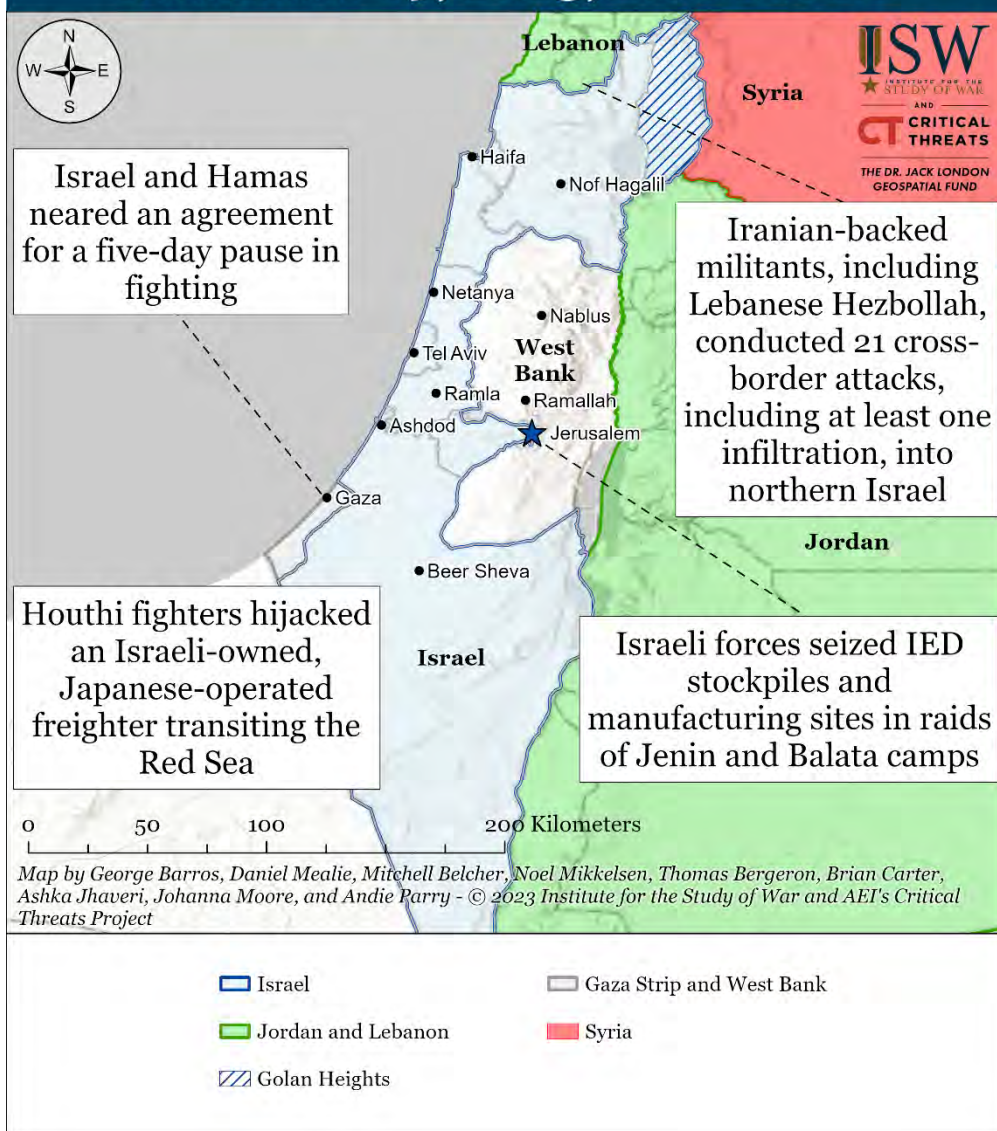
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel– Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. *The Washington Post* reported that Israel and Hamas are nearing an agreement for a five-day pause in fighting.
2. Israel published CCTV footage showing Hamas militia fighters taking hostages to al Shifa Hospital during the October 7 attack. The IDF uncovered a tunnel system underneath al Shifa Hospital, which is consistent with Israel's repeated assertions that Hamas uses humanitarian infrastructure for military activities.
3. Israeli forces continued their advance from the coast eastward into Gaza City.
4. The al Qassem Brigades conducted a complex attack on an Israeli combat outpost in the Nasr neighborhood of Gaza City.
5. Palestinian militia fighters engaged Israeli forces in six small-arms clashes across the West Bank.
6. Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah, conducted 21 cross-border attacks, including at least one infiltration, into northern Israel.
7. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed that it launched a one-way attack drone targeting US forces at al Harir airbase, Erbil province, Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
8. Houthi fighters hijacked an Israeli-owned, Japanese-operated freighter transiting the Red Sea.
9. Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei visited the IRGC Aerospace Force permanent exhibition at the Ashura Aerospace Science and Technology University in Tehran.
10. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held a phone call with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, to discuss the Israel– Hamas war.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 19, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

The Washington Post reported on November 18 that Israel and Hamas are nearing an agreement for a five-day pause in fighting. Sources familiar with the emerging terms said that the US-brokered deal would free dozens of women and children held hostage in the Gaza Strip, according to the *Washington Post* report.[1] The five-day pause would be the first sustained pause in conflict since the Israel-Hamas war began.[2] The six-page set of written terms would require all parties to the conflict to freeze combat operations for at least five days while Palestinian militias release 50 or more hostages in small batches every 24 hours.[3] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) estimated on November 17 that there are 237 hostages in the Gaza Strip.[4] US Deputy National Security Adviser Jon Finer said on November 19 that negotiations to secure the release of hostages are closer than at any point since negotiations began.[5] Qatar's prime minister said there is "good progress" on the issue of releasing hostages.[6]

Israel published CCTV footage showing Hamas militia fighters taking hostages to al Shifa Hospital during the October 7 attack. The footage shows Palestinian fighters transferring hostages to the hospital on October 7 after hundreds of Hamas fighters attacked civilian targets and took hundreds of hostages in southern Israel.^[7] The IDF said there are Israeli military vehicles that Hamas took from Israel parked around al Shifa Hospital.^[8] The IDF has repeatedly said that Hamas uses al Shifa Hospital and other civilian infrastructure for military activities.

The IDF uncovered a tunnel system underneath al Shifa Hospital, which is consistent with Israel's repeated assertions that Hamas uses humanitarian infrastructure for military activities. The IDF and Israeli Security Agency published drone footage on November 19 of a 55-meter-long tunnel 10 meters underneath the hospital.^[9] Israeli forces located the tunnel underneath a shed near a vehicle full of weapons, including rocket propelled grenades (RPG), other explosives, and small arms.^[10]

Israeli forces continued their advance from the coast eastward into Gaza City. Israeli forces engaged Palestinian fighters in the Sheikh Ijlin and Rimal neighborhoods as part of an Israeli effort to locate and destroy militia infrastructure and assets.^[11] The forces located and raided a Hamas military intelligence site and located weapons caches and seven rocket launchers.^[12] The IDF said the forces have interrogated over a hundred fighters, including three members of Hamas' Nukhba special force, which took part in the October 7 attacks.^[13] The IDF Nahal Brigade moved from al Shati refugee camp toward Jabalia city to support offensive operations in the area.^[14]

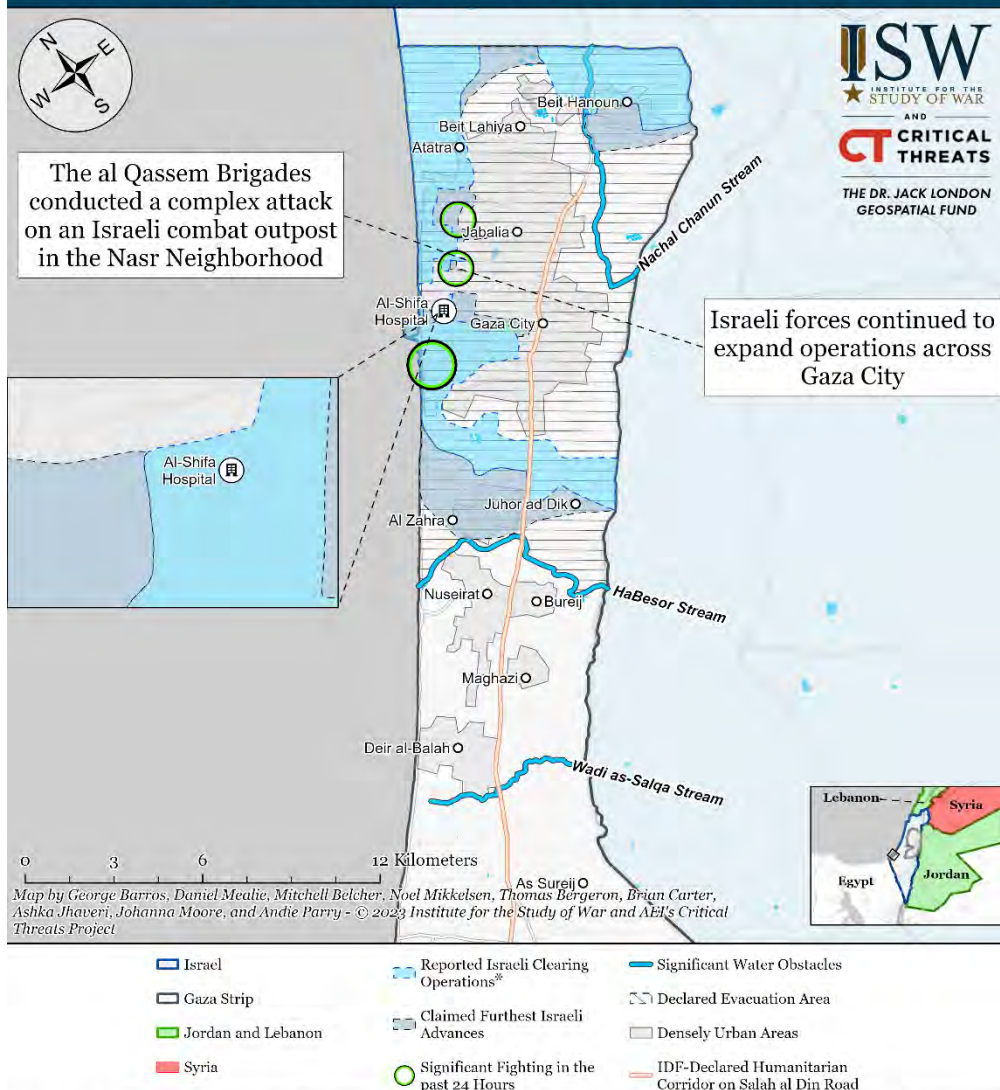
Palestinian militias targeted Israeli forces advancing into Gaza City. Local media reported that Palestinian militia fighters are fighting with Israeli forces in the streets of Jabalia.^[15] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—and the al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—claimed several hit-and-run attacks on Israeli forces and military vehicles, including one combined operation.^[16] These attacks primarily use small arms, RPGs, and tandem rockets against Israeli forces as they clear areas.^[17] The al Qassem Brigades published footage of a cache of IDF military equipment including uniforms, helmets, an identification tag, and various weapons.^[18] There is no indication of where or when the militia fighters obtained the items.

Israel urged civilians in several neighborhoods to evacuate the northern Gaza Strip using an evacuation corridor on the Salah al Din Highway.^[19] The IDF said Hamas has lost control over the northern Gaza Strip and is trying to prevent civilians from moving southward.^[20] The Israeli Army Radio said only 25 percent of residents in Jabalia have evacuated.^[21]

The al Qassem Brigades conducted a complex attack on an Israeli combat outpost in the Nasr neighborhood of Gaza City. The group published a video of three militia fighters conducting a “martyrdom operation” at the Rantisi Specialist Hospital in the al Nasr neighborhood, where Israeli forces have established a combat outpost since November 13.^[22] The militia fighters were armed with small arms and fired an RPG at the hospital.^[23] A local media outlet said the fighters are part of “suicide squads.”^[24]

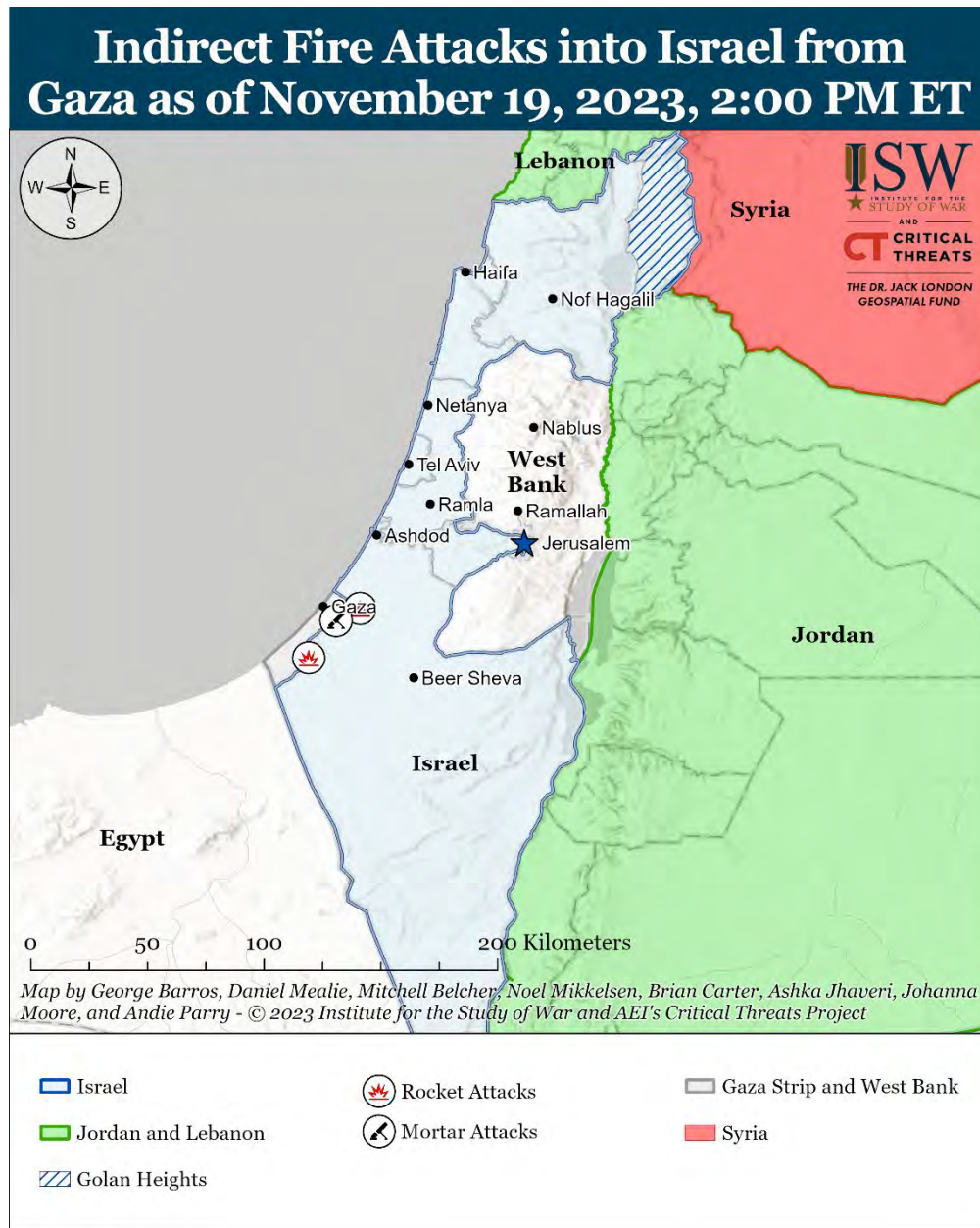
Palestinian militia fighters continued attacks targeting Israeli forces behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations. The al Qassem Brigades claimed to ambush and fire tandem charge, anti-tank rockets and small arms at Israeli forces near Juhor ad Dik.^[25] The al Quds Brigades mortared Israeli positions at the al Nour resort near Juhor ad Dik.^[26] The al Quds Brigades also clashed with Israeli forces in Beit Hanoun and mortared Israeli positions in Beit Lahia.^[27]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 19, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

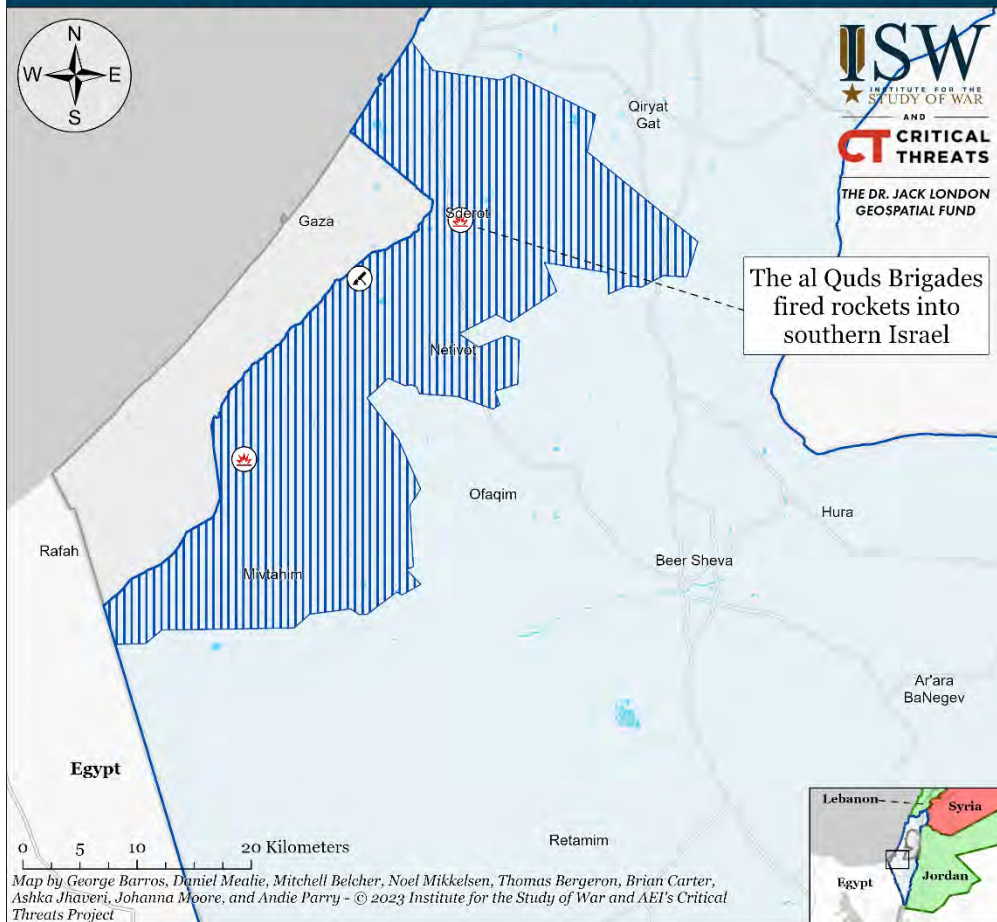


* ISW-CTP's "Reported Israeli Clearing Operations" layer uses the US military's doctrinal definition of clearing which is an operation that "requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area." Clearing operations frequently take weeks and sometimes months to complete

Palestinian militias continued their usual rate of indirect fire from the Gaza Strip into Israel. The al Quds Brigades claimed to launch two rocket attacks into southern Israel. The al Qassem Brigades claimed to launch one rocket attack at an Israeli military base in southern Israel.[28]



Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 19, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Israel | Rocket Attacks | Gaza Strip and West Bank |
| Israeli Closed Military Zone | Mortar Attacks | Syria |
| Jordan and Lebanon | | |

Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

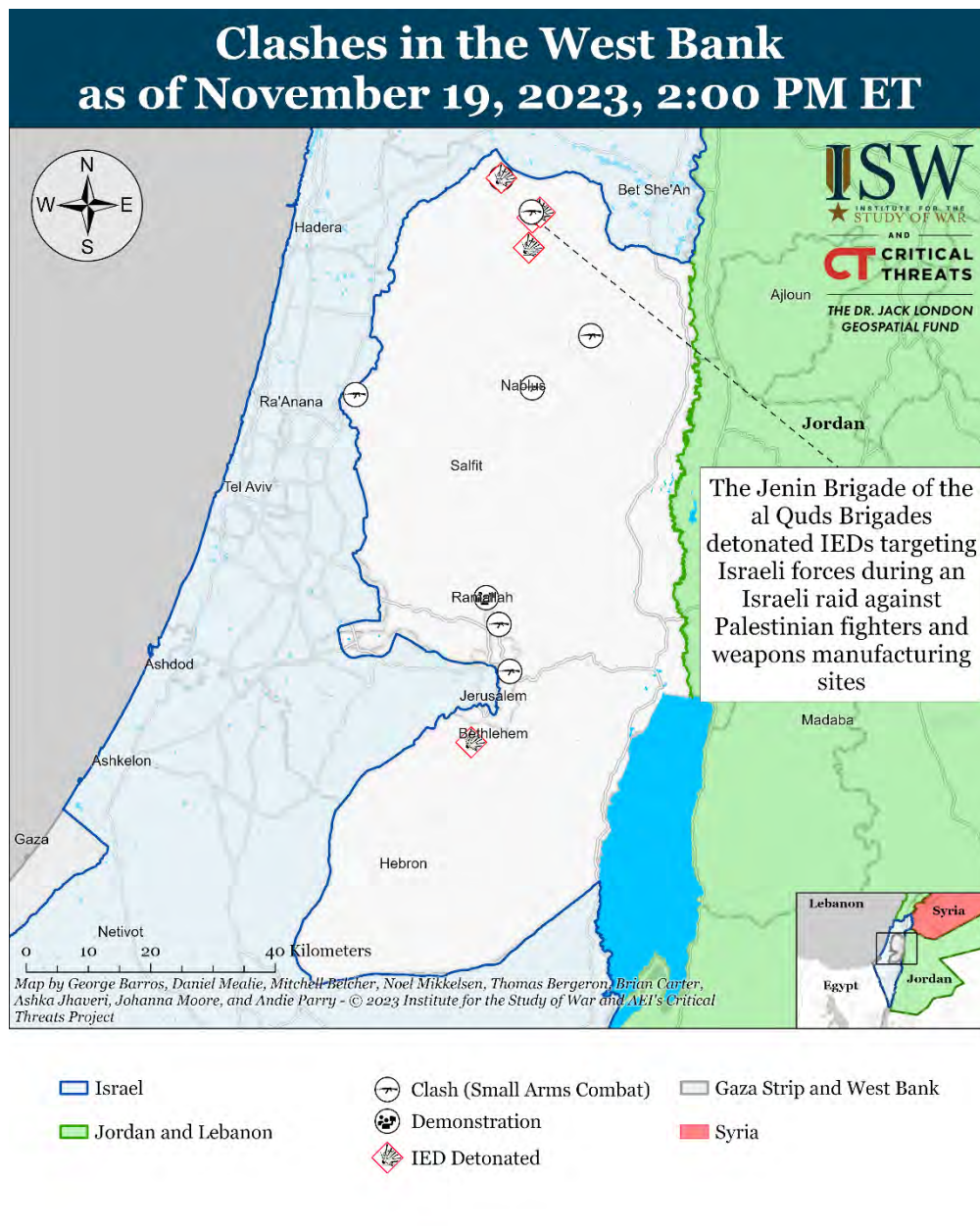
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Palestinian militia fighters engaged Israeli forces in six small-arms clashes across the West Bank on November 19.^[29] Palestinian militia fighters detonated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) four times targeting Israeli forces and an Israeli armored vehicle during an IDF raid in Jenin.^[30] The Jenin Brigade of the al Quds Brigades said that its fighters clashed with Israeli forces in multiple areas in Jenin and detonated several IEDs.^[31] The same group also claimed that the IEDs damaged several Israeli military vehicles. The Jenin Brigade of the al Qassem Brigades claimed that its members clashed with Israeli forces during the IDF raid.^[32] The IDF confiscated over 10 small arms, located several IED warehouses, uncovered buried IEDs, an IED manufacturing site, and detained 20 people in its raids of Jenin and Balata camps.^[33] Palestinian militia fighters also detonated one IED targeting Israeli forces in Dheisheh refugee camp.^[34]

CTP-ISW separately recorded one demonstration against Israel in Ramallah.[35] The Palestinian Prisoners' and Ex-Prisoners' Affairs Authority stated Israeli forces arrested at least 70 Palestinians from the West Bank on November 19.[36] The IDF said that it arrested 38 "wanted persons" across the West Bank.[37]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

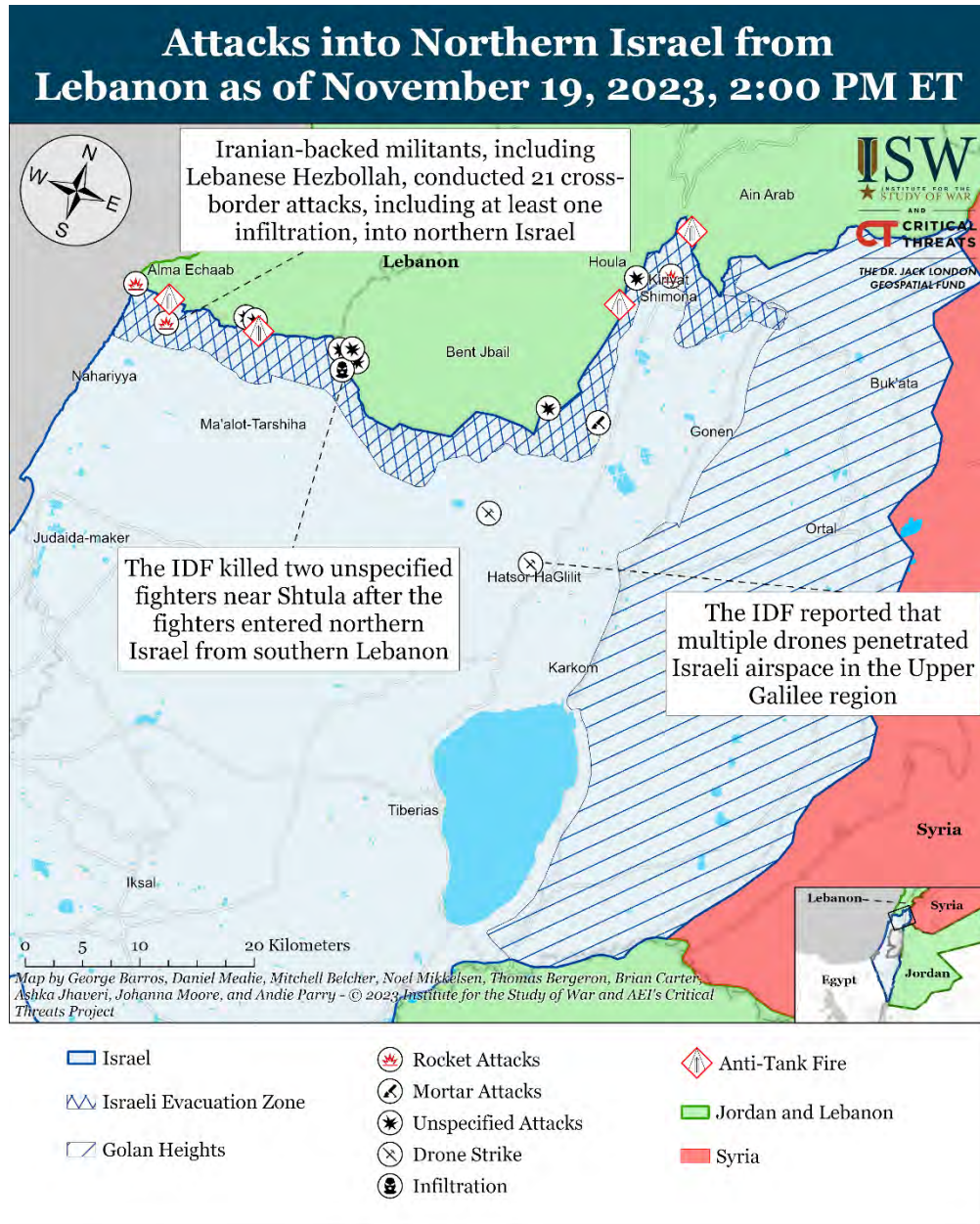
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed militants, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), conducted 21 cross-border attacks, including at least one infiltration, into northern Israel on November 19.[38] LH claimed 14 attacks using anti-tank munitions, rockets, and mortars targeting Israeli forces and military infrastructure.[39] The IDF killed two unspecified fighters near Shtula on November 19 after the fighters entered northern Israel from southern Lebanon.[40]

The IDF reported that multiple drones penetrated Israeli airspace in the Upper Galilee region on November 19.[41] The IDF intercepted two drones.[42] Israeli media reported that “it was suspected” the drones carried explosives.[43] IDF- and LH-affiliated media reported drone intercepts near Dalton and Hatzor Haglilit on November 19.[44]



Note: CTP-ISW refined its data layer in northern Israel to account for unspecified attack types. Lebanese Hezbollah regularly claims attacks with “appropriate weapons.” This data is insufficient to determine the method of attack. Attack claims citing “appropriate weapons” will be tracked as “unspecified” until CTP-ISW can verify the type of attack.

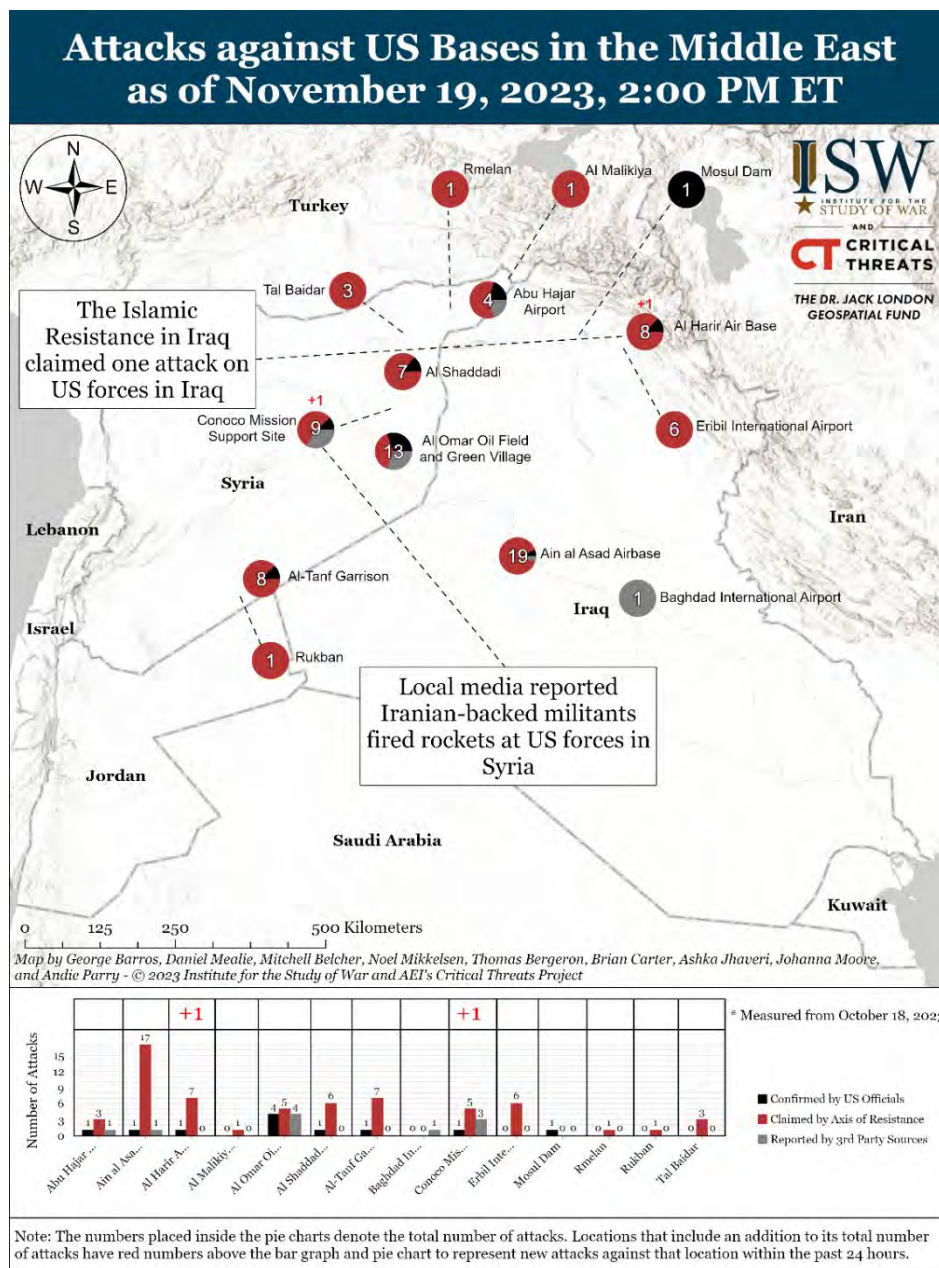
Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed that it launched one-way attack drone targeting US forces at al Harir airbase, Erbil province, Kurdistan Region of Iraq on November 19.[45] This attack marks the eighth Iranian-backed attack on al Harir airbase that CTP-ISW has recorded since the Israel–Hamas war began.

Houthi fighters hijacked an Israeli-owned, Japanese-operated freighter transiting the Red Sea on November 19.[46] Houthi fighters fast roped onto the deck of the *Galaxy Leader* from a helicopter.[47] The Houthi fighters took 25 crew members hostage.[48] The IDF spokesperson confirmed that there were no Israelis aboard.[49] Israeli billionaire Rami Ungar owns the ship.[50] Senior Houthi officials have repeatedly threatened to target Israeli shipping in the Red Sea in recent weeks.[51] This attack marks the first instance in which the Houthis have acted on these recent threats. The Israeli government said that the Houthis hijacked the ship under Iranian "guidance." [52] The IRGC Quds Force maintains a minor naval presence off Yemen's coast in the Red Sea that it uses to surveil maritime traffic in support of Houthi attacks on commercial tankers and "to facilitate smuggling of personnel and materials into Yemen." [53]



Iranian-sponsored Attacks in the Middle East as of November 19, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei visited the IRGC Aerospace Force permanent exhibition at the Ashura Aerospace Science and Technology University in Tehran on November 19.^[54] Khamenei condemned Western support for Israel's "racial discrimination" of Palestinians and called on Muslim states to cut ties with Israel.^[55] Iran has been attempting to rally Arab and Muslim states against Israel since the Israel– Hamas War began, as CTP-ISW previously reported.^[56] Khamenei also inspected newly unveiled military equipment at the facility, including the Shahed-149 combat drone and the Fattah-2 hypersonic cruise missile. The Shahed-149, labeled "Gaza" in published photos, resembles the American MQ-9 Reaper drone, according to observers.^[57] Iranian state media separately emphasized the Fattah-2's purported ability to penetrate and target high-altitude ballistic missile defense systems.^[58] Israel used its Arrow-3 ballistic missile defense system to intercept incoming Houthi missiles on November 9.^[59] Western media reported on October 24 that the United States will deploy Terminal High Altitude Area Defense systems to Iraq, Syria, and the Gulf Arab states.^[60] CTP-ISW cannot verify the veracity of Iranian claims about the Fattah-2. Iran has previously made false or exaggerated claims about its military capabilities.

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held a phone call with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov to discuss the Israel–Hamas war on November 19.^[61] The two officials emphasized the need for an immediate ceasefire and the importance of delivering humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. Iranian and Russian officials have engaged in political coordination vis-a-vis the Israel–Hamas war since at least October 26, as CTP-ISW previously reported.^[62]

- [1] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/11/18/us-israel-ha...>
- [2] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/11/18/us-israel-ha...>
- [3] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/11/18/us-israel-ha...>
- [4] <https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-11-1...>
- [5] <https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-11-1...>
- [6] <https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-11-1...>
- [7] <https://www.idf dot il/153391>
- [8] <https://www.idf dot il/153391>
- [9] <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1726284807351472556>
- [10] <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1726284807351472556>; <https://www.idf dot il/153299>
- [11] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726171162672267537>
- [12] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726171162672267537>
- [13] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726292937867452543>
- [14] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726135945530097810>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726216373922046372>
- [15] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/7484>
- [16] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16707>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16709>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16706>
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- [18] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/499>
- [19] <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1726214785027448945>
- [20] <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1726214785027448945>
- [21] <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1726168655271182359>
- [22] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/498>
- [23] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/498>
- [24] https://twitter.com/gaza_report/status/1726233434060882164
- [25] <https://t.me/hamasps/17857>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/497>
- [26] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16710>
- [27] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16704>,%20<https://t.me/sarayaps/16703>
- [28] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16708>; <https://t.me/hamasps/17859>
- [29] <https://wafa dot ps/Pages/Details84734>
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- [30] <https://t.me/QudsN/331231> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/331238> ; <https://t.me/sarayajneen/1151> ; <https://t.me/Qu dsN/331516>
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- [33] <https://www.idf dot il/153177>
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- [36] <https://t.me/QudsN/331503>
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- [38] <https://t.me/QudsN/331381>; <https://t.me/QudsN/331345>;
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<https://t.me/QudsN/331622>; <https://t.me/QudsN/331624>; <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/7544>; <https://twitter.com/>

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[39] https://t.me/C_Military1/39785; https://t.me/C_Military1/39789; https://t.me/C_Military1/39805; https://t.me/C_Military1/39813; https://t.me/C_Military1/39815; https://t.me/C_Military1/39812; https://t.me/C_Military1/39825; https://t.me/C_Military1/39827; https://t.me/C_Military1/39833; https://t.me/C_Military1/39843; https://t.me/C_Military1/39845; https://t.me/C_Military1/39847

[40] <https://hidabroot.org/article/1188559>; <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/7544>; https://twitter.com/gaza_report/status/1726247288711082128

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[42] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726196292626366597>; <https://hidabroot.org/article/1188559>

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[56] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-11-2023-65...>

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[58] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/08/28/2992033>; <https://defapress.ir/fa/news/631709>; <https://defapress.ir/fa/news/631696>; <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2023/11/19/714881>; <https://www.irna.ir/news/85296306>; <https://www.iribnews.ir/fa/news/4060552>; <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/08/28/2991966>

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[62] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-16-2023>; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-3-2023>; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-2-2023>; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-30-2023>

IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 20, 2023

Iran Update, November 20, 2023

Andie Parry, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, Peter Mills, Annika Ganzeveld, Amin Soltani, and Brian Carter

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Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli forces advanced to the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahiya bordering northern Jabalia refugee camp on November 20. They clashed with Palestinian militia fighters along the western border of Jabalia refugee camp and neighborhood.
2. Hamas and other Palestinian militia fighters attacked the IDF behind the Israeli forward line of advance in the Zaytoun area in the middle of the Gaza Strip, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations.
3. Palestinian militia fighters engaged Israeli forces in eight small arms clashes across the West Bank on November 20. Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine continue to call for attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians in the West Bank.
4. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed a one-way drone attack targeting US forces at Ain al Assad Airbase in Iraq on November 20.
5. Unspecified Iranian-backed militia leaders in Syria met to discuss plans for responding to US airstrikes in the region.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 20, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israeli forces advanced to the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahiya bordering northern Jabalia refugee camp on November 20.[1] Israeli forces advanced southward from cleared positions in Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya.[2] Local journalists posted videos of Israeli tanks surrounding the hospital and explosions in the vicinity.[3] The Gaza Health Ministry director, Dr. Munir al Bursh, stated that Israeli tanks remained at the hospital's northern gate.[4] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed mortar attacks on Israeli forces as they advanced to the Indonesian Hospital near Sheikh Zayed Towers.[5] A local source reported heavy fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters on the al Awda road heading southward to the Indonesian Hospital.[6] An IDF spokesperson said Hamas' northern brigade maintains a command-and-control center and critical strongholds in Jabalia on November 18.[7] Israeli forces instructed a hospital inside the Jabalia refugee camp to evacuate on November

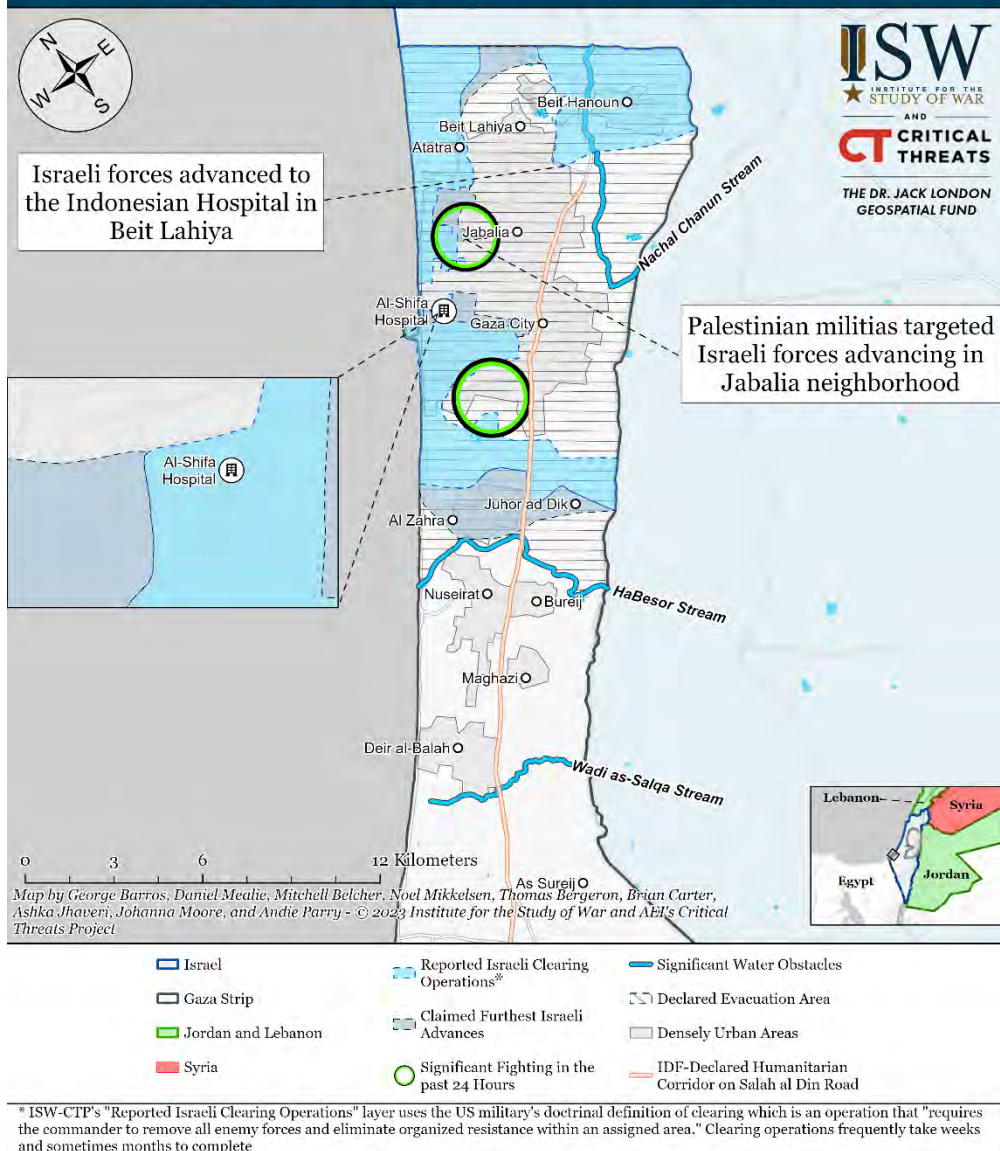
20.[8] The Israeli Army Radio said that only 25 percent of residents in Jabalia had evacuated on November 19.[9]

Israeli forces clashed with Palestinian militia fighters along the western border of Jabalia refugee camp and neighborhood on November 20. The al Quds Brigades claimed to fire tandem shells and bombs at Israeli military vehicles to the west side of Jabalia refugee camp.[10] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades—the self-proclaimed militant wing of Fatah—and al Quds Brigades conducted a combined operation attacking three Israeli armored vehicles and soldiers in the Sheikh Radwan area southwest of Jabalia refugee camp.[11] Hamas' military spokesperson Abu Obeida stated that fighters from the al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—clashed with Israeli troops west of the Jabalia refugee camp and in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood.[12]

Hamas and other Palestinian militia fighters attacked the IDF behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations. The IDF said that its forces engaged in hand-to-hand battles against militants to defeat the Hamas Zaytoun Battalion, operating in the Zaytoun area on November 20.[13] The al Quds Brigades fired rocket-propelled grenades and clashed with Israeli soldiers in the Zaytoun area in the middle of the Gaza Strip near the Gaza Wadi.[14] Obeida stated that al Qassem Brigades fighters fired mortars and detonated IEDs targeting Israeli forces advancing south of the Zaytoun area.[15] The al Quds Brigades claimed its fighters killed and wounded six Israeli soldiers in clashes as Israeli forces attempted to advance from west of Beit Lahia.[16]

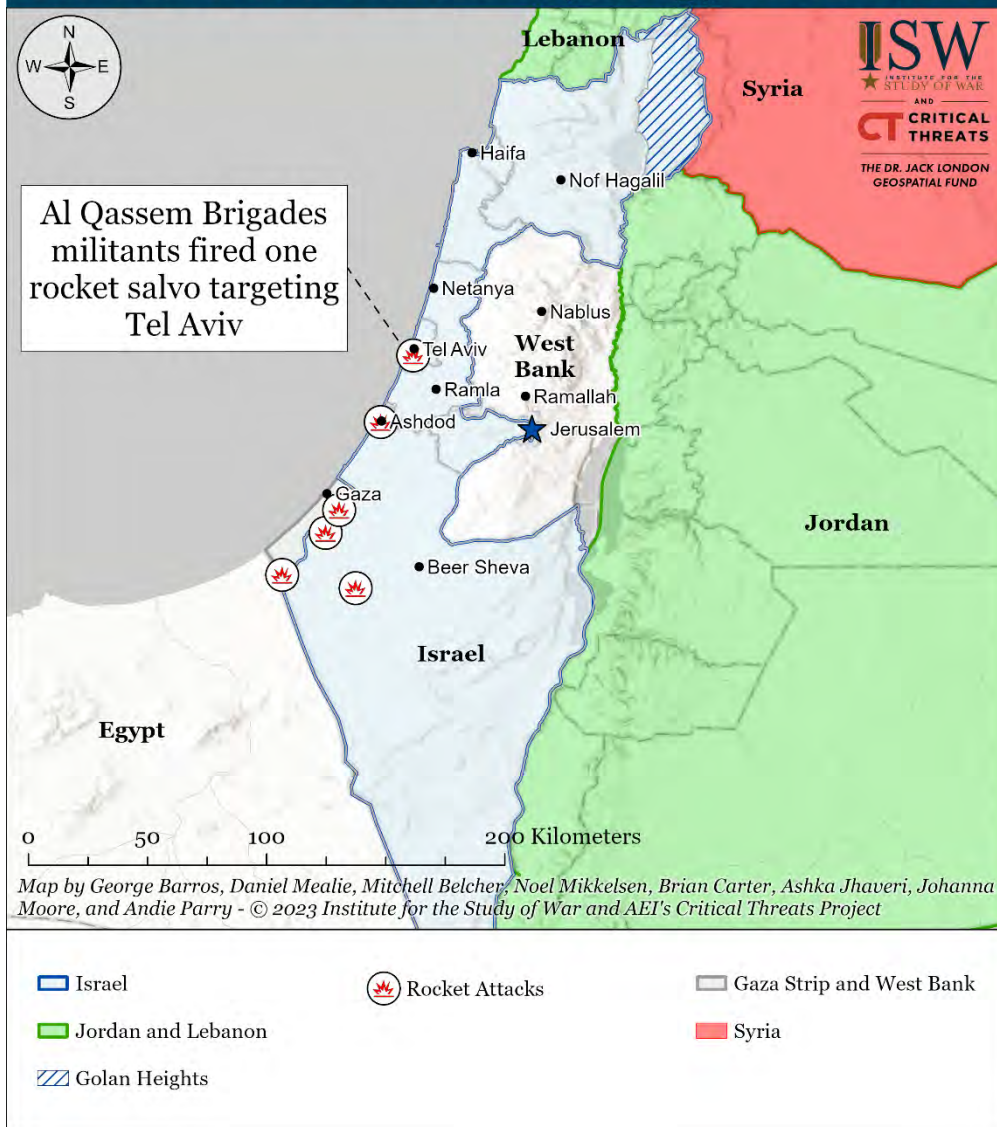
Israeli forces have arrested over 300 militant fighters in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war.[17] The Israeli forces received information on the locations of underground tunnels, warehouses, weapons, and methods and that Hamas camouflaged civilian facilities through interviews with the detained militia fighters.[18] IDF forces conducted an airstrike to kill three al Qassem Brigades company commanders in the Gaza Strip on November 20.[19]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 20, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



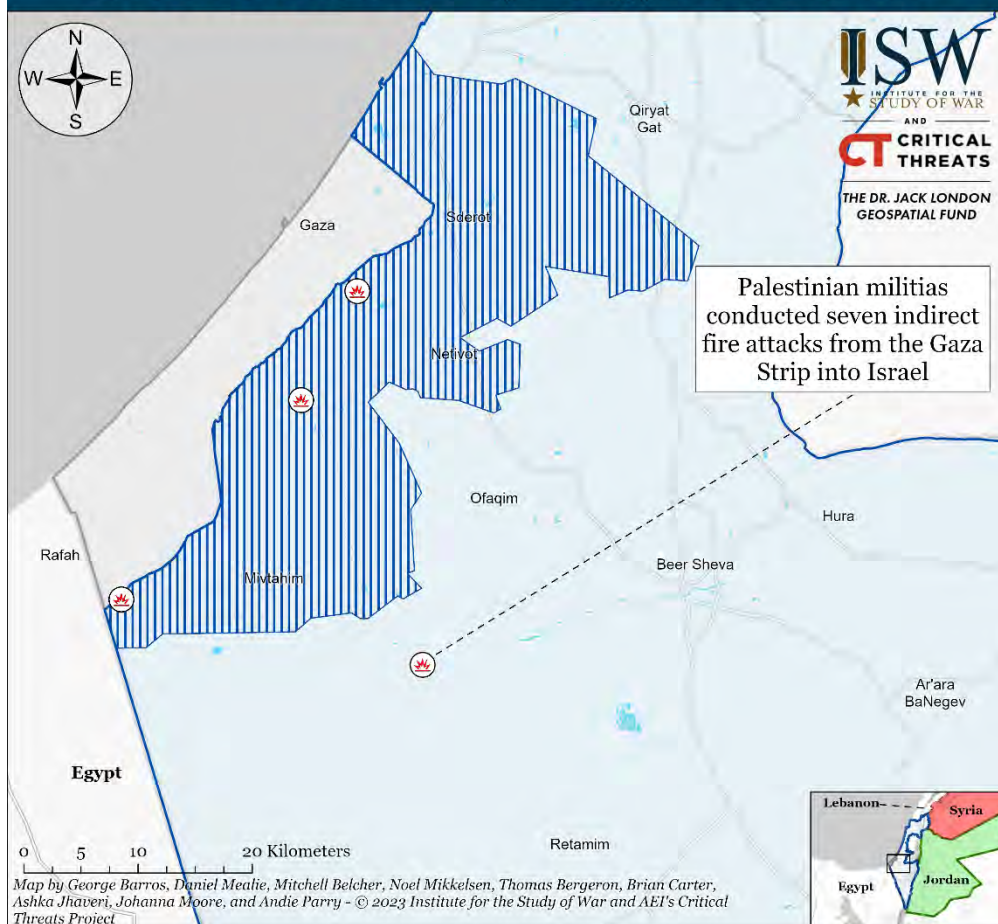
Palestinian militias conducted seven indirect fire attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel on November 20. The al Quds Brigades claimed that it launched three mortar attacks and one rocket attack targeting southern Israel.^[20] The al Qassem Brigades said that it launched two rocket attacks targeting Israel, including one salvo targeting Tel Aviv.^[21] Unspecified Palestinian militia fighters fired one rocket salvo targeting Ashdod.^[22]

Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 20, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 20, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- Israel
- Israeli Closed Military Zone
- Jordan and Lebanon
- ✶ Rocket Attacks
- Gaza Strip and West Bank
- Syria

Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

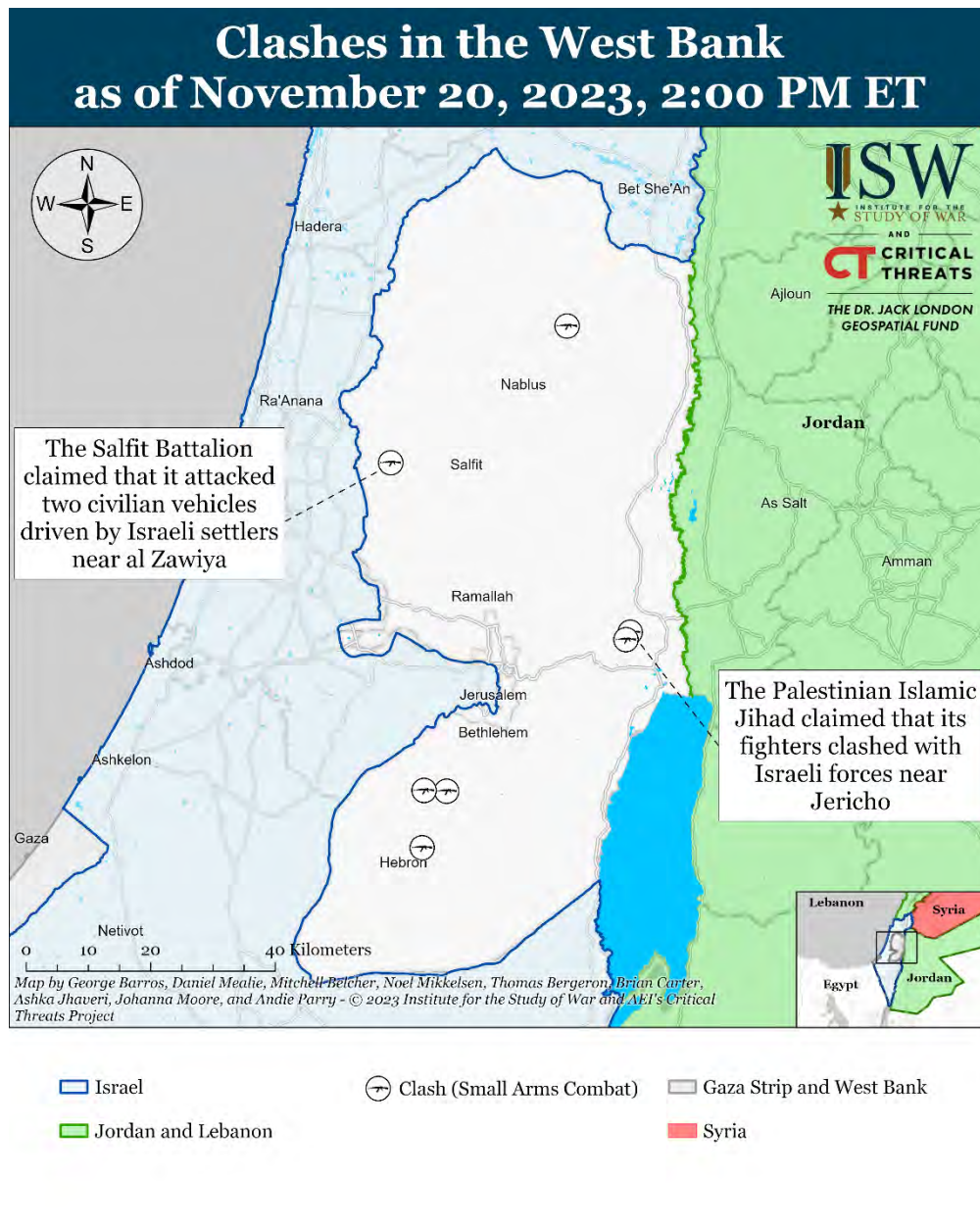
- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Palestinian militia fighters engaged Israeli forces in eight small arms clashes across the West Bank on November 20. The Jericho Battalion of the al Quds Brigades said that its fighters clashed with Israeli forces near Jericho.^[23] The Salfit Battalion (the Martyr Omar Abu Laila Battalion) claimed that it attacked two civilian vehicles driven by Israeli settlers near al Zawiya, West Bank.^[24] The Salfit Battalion announced its establishment in March 2023.^[25] It does not publicly acknowledge any affiliation with other Palestinian militia groups. Unspecified Palestinian militia fighters engaged in six small arms clashes with Israeli forces, primarily near Hebron, on November 20. CTP-ISW did not record any IED attacks in the West Bank for the first time since November 11.

Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) continue to call for attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians in the West Bank. West Bank-focused Hamas leader Abdul Rahman

Shadid called on the West Bank to mobilize in support of Gaza and the al Aqsa Flood operation.[26] Shadid has previously called on West Bank Palestinians to “escalate” against Israel since October 7.[27] The PFLP issued statements on November 19-20 calling for the Palestinian Authority’s security services to join the PFLP in conducting attacks on Israeli forces.[28] The PFLP previously called for violence against Israeli civilians on November 9 and November 14.[29]

CTP-ISW recorded one demonstration against Israel in Hebron following IDF raids there.[30] Local media in the West Bank reported that Israeli forces arrested 47 people on November 20.[31] The IDF said that it arrested 16 “wanted persons,” including two Hamas members, in the West Bank.[32]



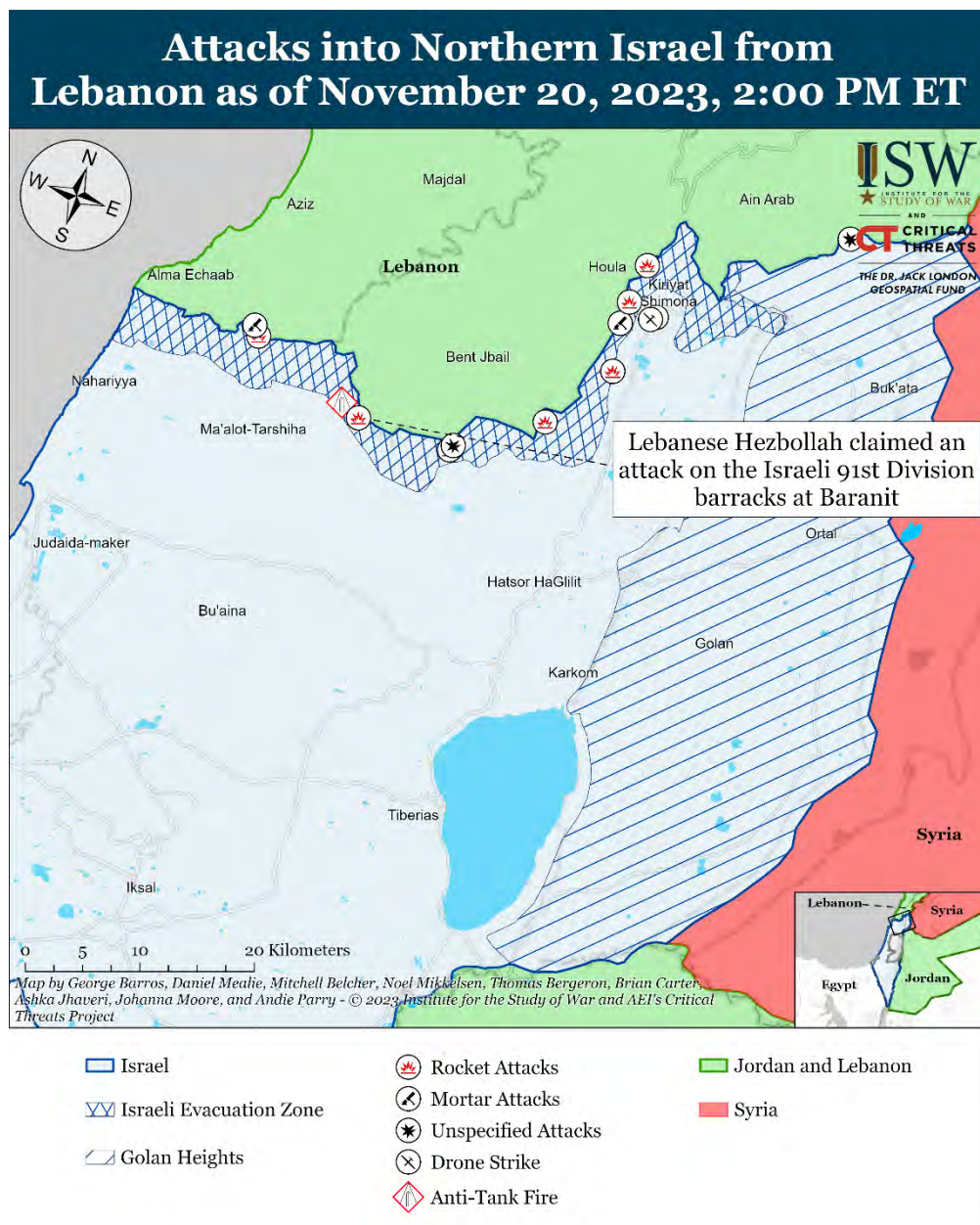
This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

CTP-ISW recorded 18 attacks on November 20 into Israeli territory from Lebanon.[33] This rate is slightly above the weekly average of 15 attacks per day. Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other unidentified militants targeted Israeli military sites along the border in 10 of the 17 attacks.[34] LH claimed a rocket attack targeting the 91st Division barracks at Barranit.[35] LH claimed that its fighters fired multiple Burkan rockets at the barracks.[36] Footage released by LH showed two rockets fired at the base, both of which landed in the vicinity of the military facility.[37] Israeli and Palestinian media circulated footage of damage to the military facility at Barranit caused by the rocket strike.[38]

Note: CTP-ISW refined its data layer in northern Israel to account for unspecified attack types. Lebanese Hezbollah regularly claims attacks with “appropriate weapons.” This data is insufficient to determine the method of attack. Attack claims citing “appropriate weapons” will be tracked as “unspecified” until CTP-ISW can verify the type of attack.



Iran and Axis of Resistance

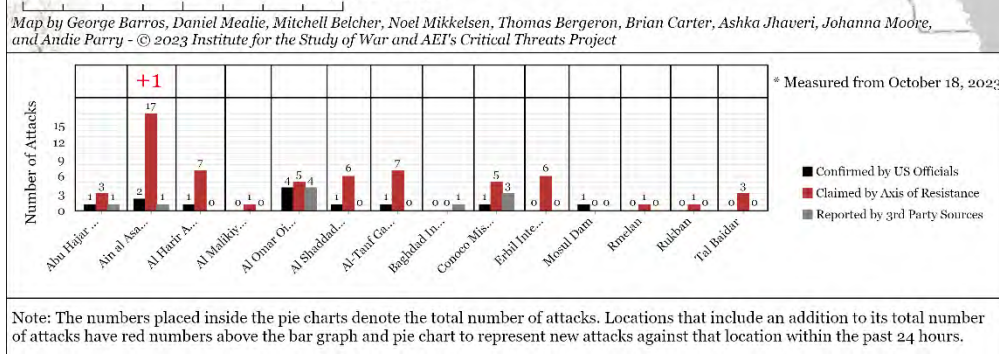
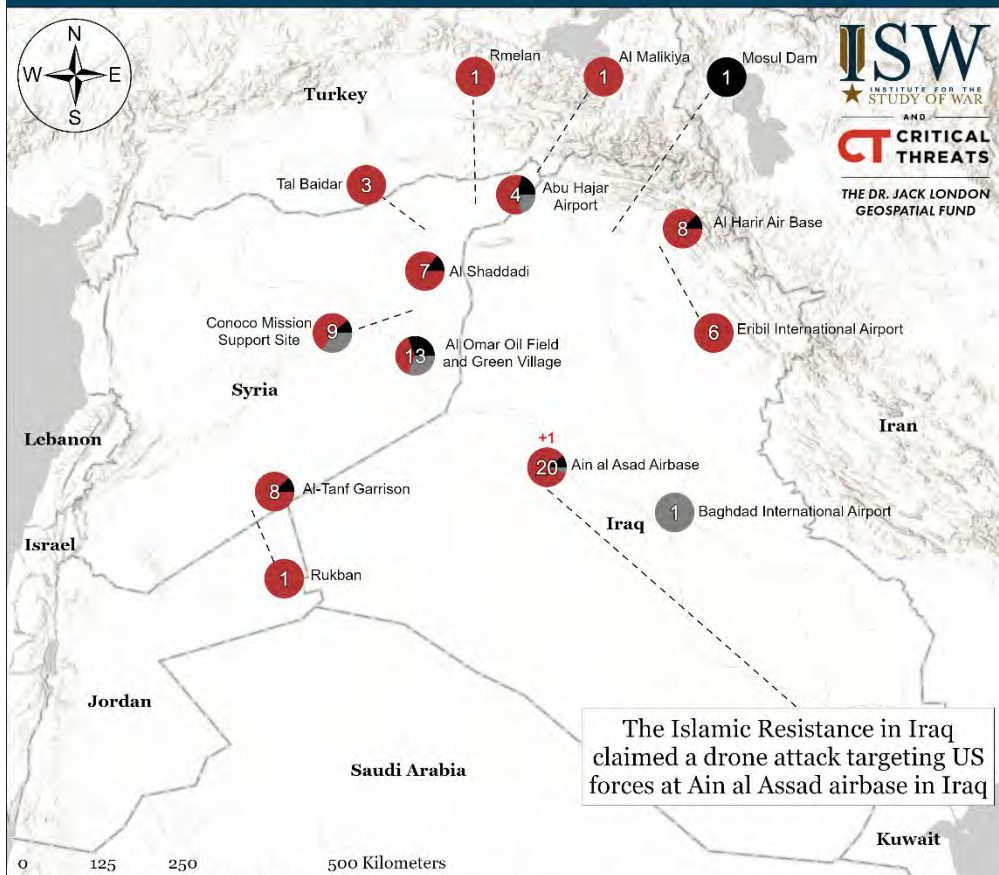
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed a one-way drone attack targeting US forces at Ain al Assad airbase in Iraq on November 20.[39] The group has claimed 64 attacks on US forces stationed in Iraq and Syria since October 18. The group most recently attacked Ain al Assad airbase on November 17, and it published footage on November 19 of the two one-way attack drones it used in the November 17 attack.[\[40\]](#)

Unspecified Iranian-backed militia leaders in Syria met to discuss plans for responding to US airstrikes in the region. The unspecified leaders discussed “escalatory steps” and how they would respond to US airstrikes, according to a local anti-Iranian media outlet.[\[41\]](#) The United States has conducted three strikes in Syria targeting Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-affiliated groups and infrastructure to retaliate for the rocket and drone attacks against US bases in Iraq and Syria. Iranian-backed militia attacks have caused dozens of minor injuries among US personnel since October 18.[\[42\]](#)

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 20, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Former IRGC Commander and current Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohsen Rezaei warned on November 19 that new fronts will open against Israel “in the coming days.”^[43] Rezaei issued the warning in an interview with the LH-affiliated outlet al Mayadeen.^[44] Rezaei is a prominent figure in the Iranian regime, having served as IRGC commander between 1980 and 1997.^[45] Rezaei also warned that the Axis of Resistance “will play a bigger role in the future” and that Israel will not be able to “prevent the reaction of Muslim youths” if it continues its operations in the Gaza Strip. Rezaei’s comments mirror similar warnings from other Iranian officials about the potential expansion of the conflict since October 7. Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian warned on October 16, for example, that resistance groups would take “preemptive action” against Israel “in the coming hours.”^[46] The Axis of Resistance notably did not follow through on Abdollahian’s threat in the hours after he issued it.

IRGC-affiliated media are conducting an information operation claiming that the Hamas attack on the Nova music festival near Kibbutz Reim on October 7 was an Israeli false flag operation.^[47] Fars and

Tasnim news agencies are advancing this information line based on debunked claims.[48] Confirmed footage demonstrates that IDF Apache helicopters engaged Hamas fighters and not Israeli civilians on October 7.

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held a phone call with his Qatari counterpart Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani on November 20.[49] The two officials discussed the need for the international community to exert pressure on Israel to discontinue its operations in the Gaza Strip. The two officials could have also discussed a range of other topics, including Iranian access to its frozen financial assets inside Qatari banks.[50] Iranian and Qatari officials have engaged in political coordination vis-a-vis the Israel-Hamas war since at least October 14, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[51]

- [1] https://twitter.com/gaza_report/status/1726508669020536832
- [2] https://twitter.com/gaza_report/status/1726501369115500997
- [3] <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1726472728914571570> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1726529973987725743>
- [4] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/40147; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1726502725817389185> ; <https://twitter.com/qudsn/status/1726493380971057253>
- [5] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16713>
- [6] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/7666>
- [7] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1725890537520091244>
- [8] <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1726406408483004609>
- [9] <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1726168655271182359>
- [10] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16712>
- [11] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/7658>
- [12] <https://t.me/hamasps/17880>
- [13] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726661834999234971>
- [14] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16720>
- [15] <https://t.me/hamasps/17880>
- [16] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16714>
- [17] <https://www.idf.il/153744>
- [18] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1726605624140603732/video/2>
- [19] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726493470884311140/video/2> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726493481319665931>
- [20] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16711>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16716>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16716>; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1726608612414603622>
- [21] <https://t.me/hamasps/17879>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/508>
- [22] <https://t.me/almanarnews/137239>
- [23] <https://t.me/QudsN/331900>
- [24] <https://t.me/omarabulila/228> ; <https://t.me/HebronNewss/30428> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/331740>
- [25] <https://jpost.com/middle-east/article-735437>
- [26] <https://t.me/jeninnews1/76013>; <https://digitalprojects.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/uploads/files/05-09-2020-05c.pdf>; <https://felesteen.com/news/hashtag/40611/%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF>
- [27] <https://fimeddernegi.com/2023/10/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88-%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B6%D9%81%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A3%D8%A8%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D8%A7>; <https://www.almanar.com.lb/11140439>
- [28] <https://t.me/pflpgaza1/13491>
- [29] <https://t.me/pflpgaza1/13468> ; <https://t.me/pflpgaza1/13422>
- [30] <https://t.me/QudsN/332044>
- [31] <https://t.me/HebronNewss/30477>
- [32] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726554459038502990>

[33] <https://t.me/QudsN/331851> ; <https://t.me/HebronNewss/30451> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39878 ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726525212240601462> ; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1726479411409719615> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39901 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39893 ; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1726582393946144826> ; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1726515662179483665> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39890 ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726525212240601462> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726525212240601462> ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/40104 ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/507> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/331944> ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/40108 ; <https://t.me/QudsN/331962> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39903 ; <https://t.me/QudsN/332003> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39908 ; <https://t.me/QudsN/332010> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39922 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39909 ; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1726567023667503535> ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/40136 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39921 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39915 ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726582881752076764> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/332037> ; <https://t.me/HebronNewss/30491> ; <https://t.me/HebronNewss/30496> ; <https://t.me/jeninnews1/76045> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726651304100171796>

[34] https://t.me/C_Military1/39878 ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726525212240601462> ; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1726479411409719615> ; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1726628898786656747> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39901 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39893 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39890 ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/507> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/331944> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39903 ; <https://t.me/QudsN/332003> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39908 ; <https://t.me/QudsN/332010> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39922 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39919 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39909 ; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1726567023667503535> ; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/40136 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39921 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39915 ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726582881752076764> ; <https://t.me/jeninnews1/76045>

[35] <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1726628898786656747> ; <https://www.iribnews dot ir/fa/news/4062179/>

[36] https://t.me/C_Military1/39893 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39878

[37] <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1726628898786656747>

[38] https://t.me/C_Military1/39901 ; https://twitter.com/kann_news/status/1726555775349276936 ; <https://twitter.com/IntelliTimes/status/1726591081847099714> ; <https://t.me/jeninnews1/76008> ; <https://t.me/jeninnews1/76023> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39928

[39] <https://t.me/elamharbi/113>

[40] <https://t.me/elamharbi/112>

[41] [https://eyeofeufrates\[dot\]com/index.php/ar/news/2023/11/19/10179](https://eyeofeufrates[dot]com/index.php/ar/news/2023/11/19/10179)

[42] <https://apnews.com/article/us-syria-airstrikes-iran-irgc-a84ed69e5b0ef6c...>

[43] <https://www.farsnews dot ir/news/14020828000989>

[44] <https://www.almayadeen dot net/news/politics>

[45] <https://www.mei.edu/publications/harsh-irgc-attack-turkey-midst-syria-talks>

[46] <https://twitter.com/abasaaslani/status/1714005468761161841?s=46&t=TMbDQrR...>

[47] <https://www.farsnews dot ir/news/14020828000588> ; <https://www.tasnimnews com/fa/news/1402/08/28/2992073>

[48] <https://x.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1726670408005632422?s=20>

[49] <https://mfa dot ir/portal/NewsView/734258> ; <https://www.presstv dot ir/Detail/2023/11/20/714943/Iran-Qatar-FMs-urge-world-stop-Israeli-violations-international-law>

[50] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-14-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-14-2023>

[51] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-14-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-15-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-31-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-14-2023>

IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 21, 2023

Iran Update, November 21, 2023

Johanna Moore, Ashka Jhaveri, Annika Ganzeveld, Peter Mills, Amin Soltani, Brian Carter, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

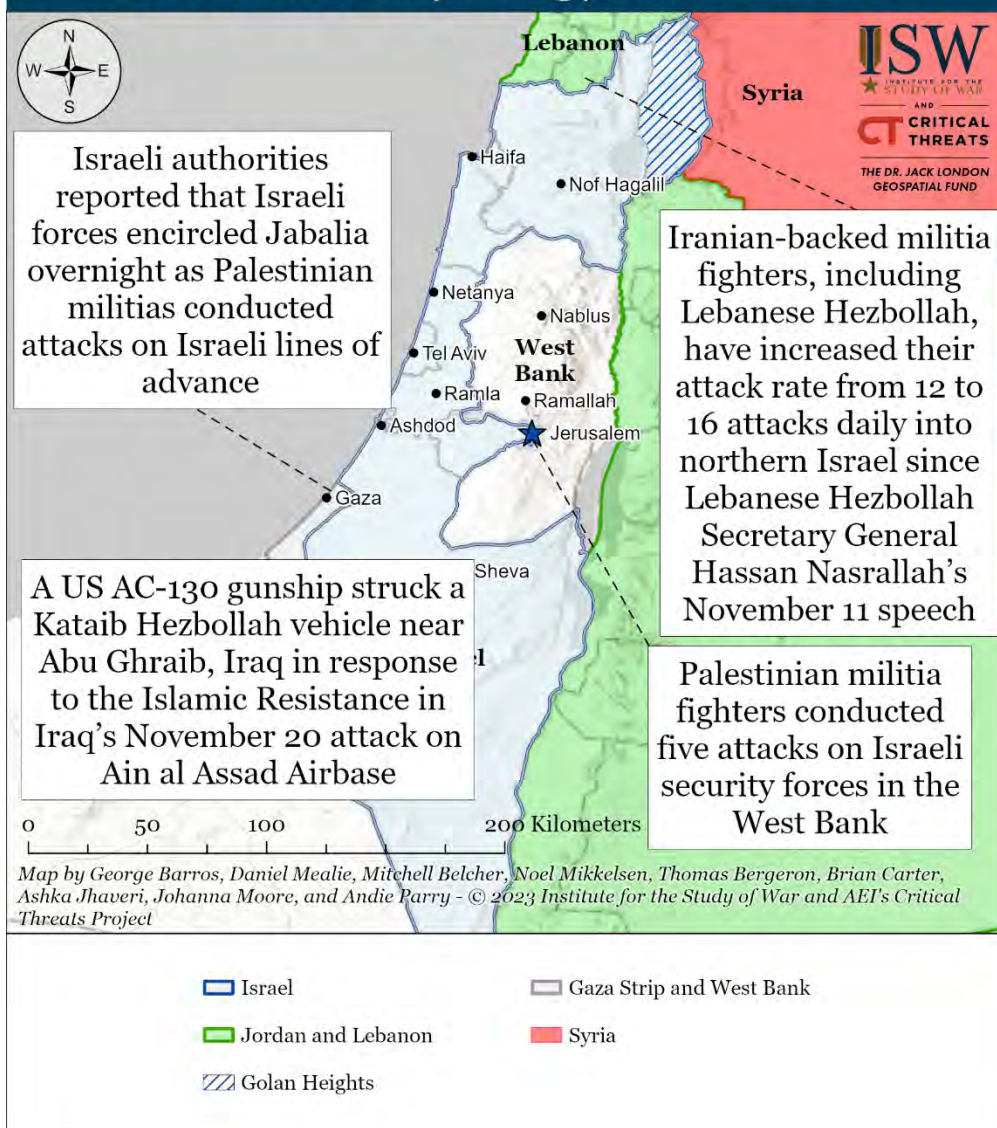
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israel said its forces encircled Jabalia as Palestinian militias conducted attacks on the Israeli lines of advance. Israeli forces continued to expand offensive operations into Zaytoun neighborhood south of Gaza city. Israeli forces continued clearing operations in al Shati refugee camp.
2. Israel and Hamas negotiated the terms of a draft agreement for limited pauses in fighting and to exchange 50 Israeli prisoners for approximately 150 Palestinian prisoners.
3. Palestinian militias conducted five indirect fire attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory.
4. Palestinian militia fighters conducted five attacks on Israeli forces in the West Bank. CTP-ISW recorded four demonstrations in the West Bank.
5. Iranian-backed militia fighters, including Lebanese Hezbollah, have increased their attack rate from 12 to 16 attacks daily into northern Israel since Lebanese Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah's November 11 speech.
6. A US military AC-130 gunship struck a Kataib Hezbollah vehicle near Abu Ghraib, Iraq, in response to the Islamic Resistance in Iraq's November 20 attack on Ain al Assad Airbase. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—conducted four attacks targeting US positions in Iraq and Syria.
7. US officials warned that Iran may be preparing to supply advanced short-range ballistic missiles to Russia. Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber discussed the Israel-Hamas war with Russian presidential aide Igor Levitin in Tehran.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 21, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israel said its forces encircled Jabalia on the night of November 20-21 as Palestinian militias conducted attacks on the Israeli lines of advance. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reported on November 21 that the Israeli Air Force and artillery forces bombarded the Jabalia area north of Gaza city to "prepare" the battlefield.[1] Israeli forces continued to engage Palestinian fighters on the northern outskirts of Jabalia near the Indonesian Hospital. Palestinian militias also resisted the IDF advance southwest of Jabalia near al Saftawi roundabout.[2] The IDF said Hamas' northern brigade maintains a command-and-control center and critical strongholds in Jabalia.[3] The IDF released a map on November 13 showing elements of four Hamas battalions in Jabalia.[4] The Israeli Army Radio reported that only two of the four Hamas battalions operating in Jabalia are "still functioning," implying that the other two are combat ineffective.[5] The

IDF told residents to evacuate from Jabalia, al Daraj, al Tuffah, and Shujaia neighborhoods on November 21.[6]

The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—said its forces targeted Israeli forces against Israeli lines of advance in Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahiya, and Jabalia.[7] The al Quds Brigade also targeted three military vehicles in the Sheikh Radwan and al Nasr neighborhoods southwest of Jabalia.[8] The militia fighters used tandem charge anti-tank rockets and rocket propelled grenades (RPG) to attack Israeli tanks and personnel carriers. An IDF tank division commander said on November 21 that more than 70 percent of damaged IDF vehicles have returned to the battlefield.[9]

Israeli forces continued to expand offensive operations into Zaytoun neighborhood south of Gaza city. Israeli forces have taken over several key targets of Hamas' Zaytoun battalion, including a command center and central headquarters.[10] The al Quds Brigades and the al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—conducted a combined operation that they claimed destroyed an Israeli armored personnel carrier west of Zaytoun on November 20.[11]

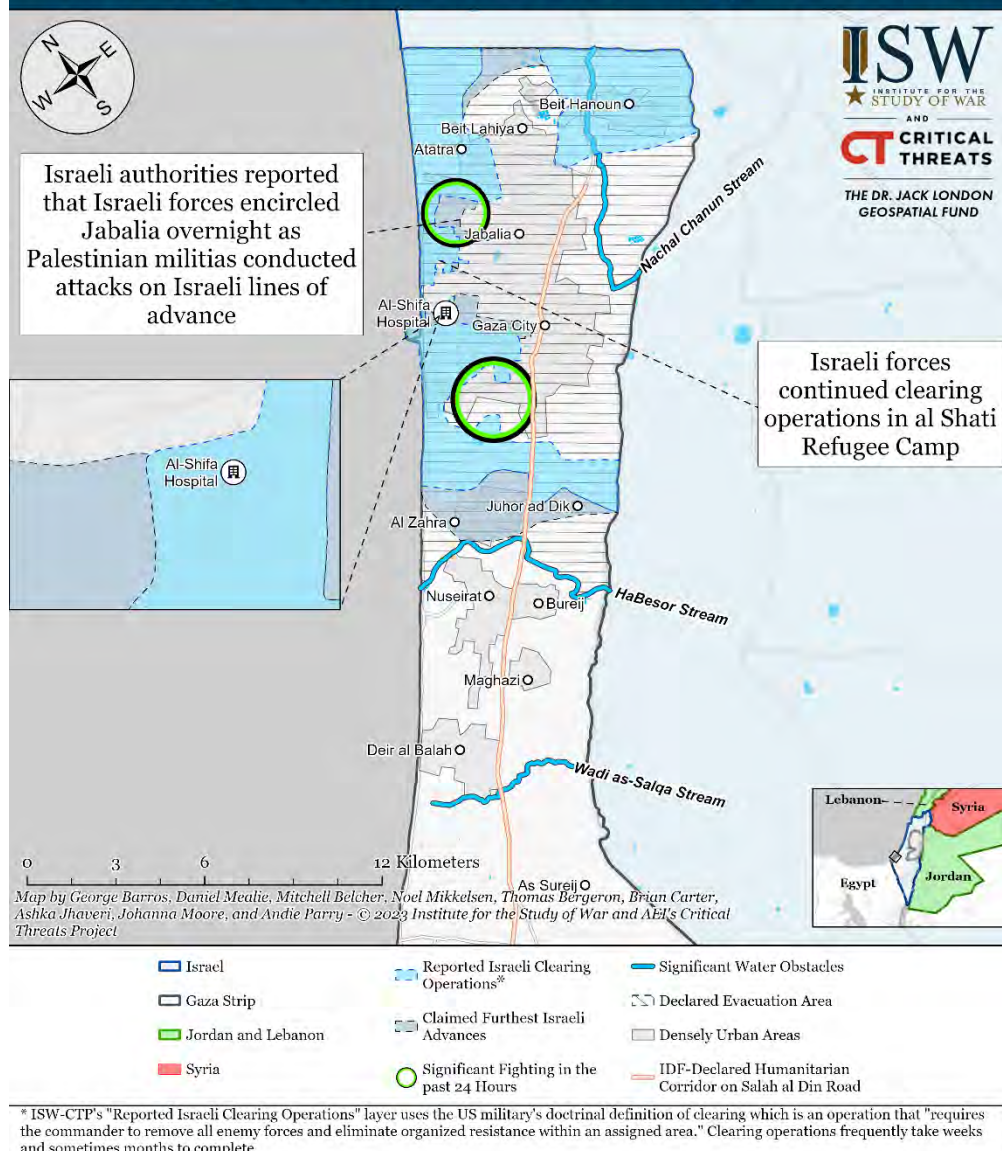
Israeli forces continued clearing operations in al Shati refugee camp. Israeli special operations forces located and destroyed over 70 militant targets in al Shati refugee camp in cooperation with Israeli air, naval, and ground forces.[12] The forces destroyed anti-tank launchers and anti-tank squads and discovered underground tunnel shafts.[13]

Palestinian militia fighters continued attacks targeting Israeli forces behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations. PIJ- and Hamas-affiliated media reported violent clashes in the Rimal neighborhood on November 21.[14] The IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi told Israeli forces operating in Beit Hanoun that IDF operations there caused very serious damage to Hamas' Beit Hanoun battalion.[15]

The al Qassem Brigades published footage on November 21 of forces using small arms, RPGs, and IEDs to target Israeli forces operating in the Juhor ad Dik area. Israeli forces crossed into the central Gaza Strip from near Juhor ad Dik at the beginning of the ground operation.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak said Israel has known for many years that Hamas uses al Shifa Hospital as a junction for several tunnel systems.[16] Barak told CNN on November 20 that Israel helped create bunkers underneath hospitals in the Gaza Strip “decades ago” to increase the capacity of the hospitals and that Hamas has since used these bunkers as a command post.[17] Israel said it breached a blast door in a tunnel system underneath al Shifa Hospital on November 21, which is consistent with Israel's repeated assertions that Hamas uses humanitarian infrastructure for military activities.[18]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 21, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



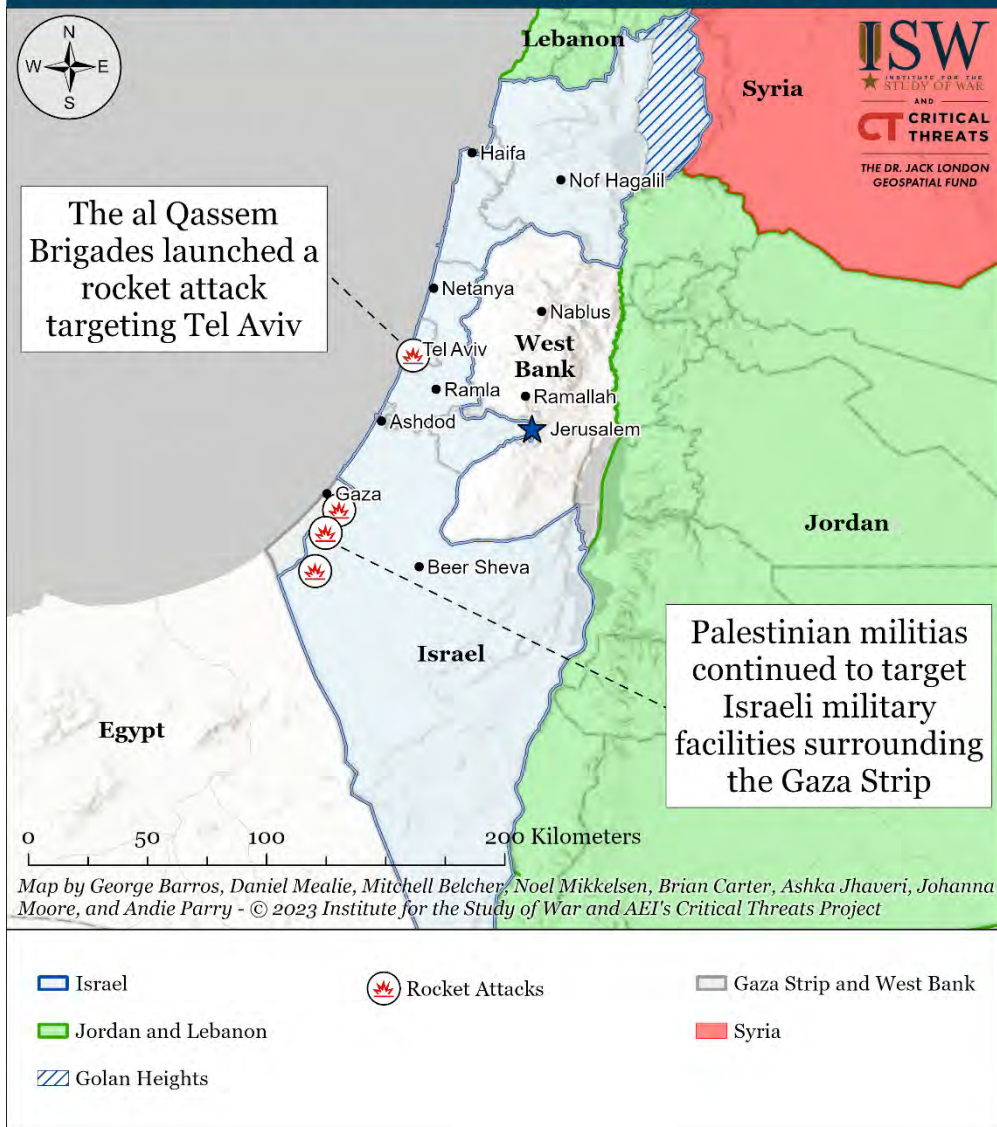
Israel and Hamas negotiated the terms of a draft agreement for limited pauses in fighting and to exchange 50 Israeli prisoners for approximately 150 Palestinian prisoners.[19] The draft agreement stipulates a pause in fighting for six hours per day for four days to allow for Hamas to transfer prisoners and for humanitarian aid to enter the Gaza Strip, including fuel.[20] Israeli officials have previously accused Hamas of utilizing fuel meant for humanitarian purposes to support militant activity, including operating its underground tunnel networks.[21] Israel will also suspend unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) surveillance over the Gaza Strip during the pauses in fighting following a demand from Yahya Sinwar, who is the leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip.[22] An unidentified Israeli official stated that Israel will have intelligence capabilities to monitor developments in the Gaza Strip during the pauses in fighting even without the UAV surveillance flights.[23] Hamas may release additional hostages in a second phase of negotiations, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. [24]

Hamas' military and political leadership in the Gaza Strip—including Hamas hardliners Yahya Sinwar and Mohammed Deif—will have the deciding vote on whether Hamas will accept the draft agreement, given that they keep control over Hamas' hostages. Sinwar leads Hamas in the Gaza Strip and Deif is Hamas' military commander.[25] Sinwar is also close to Hamas' military wing, having served as a liaison between the military and political wings after being released from prison in 2011.[26] Israeli officials have identified both men as

key figures in the planning and execution of the October 7 attacks, and Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip retains control over some of the hostages.[27] The *Wall Street Journal* reported that, as of afternoon local time on November 21, Sinwar had not yet approved the agreement.[28] However, Israeli media reported on the evening of November 21 that Sinwar had insisted upon suspending UAV surveillance over the Gaza Strip during the pauses in fighting.[29]

Senior Hamas official Moussa Abu Marzouk claimed that Hamas cannot account for the location and condition of Israeli hostages in the Gaza Strip in public comments on the potential prisoner swap agreement.[30] Marzouk claimed that Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip killed “maybe around 60” Israeli hostages. Marzouk also said that other hostages may be held by other Palestinian militias or that the hostages may be in unspecified Palestinian homes.[31] Al Qassem Brigades military spokesperson Abu Ubaida claimed on November 5 that 60 Israeli hostages had died in Israeli airstrikes, which CTP-ISW reported was consistent with a Hamas information campaign that seeks to shape the information environment to blame Israel for the possible deaths of hostages.[32] Marzouk’s statements concerning Israeli hostages may also be a possible negotiation tactic to gain additional concessions from Israel. **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s media office reported that Netanyahu will convene three separate cabinet meetings on November 21 to discuss and approve the terms of the draft prisoner exchange agreement.[33]** Netanyahu will first convene a War Council meeting, which will be followed by a Security Cabinet meeting and finally a full cabinet meeting.[34] Israeli and Hamas officials have not approved the prisoner exchange draft agreement at the time of publication.

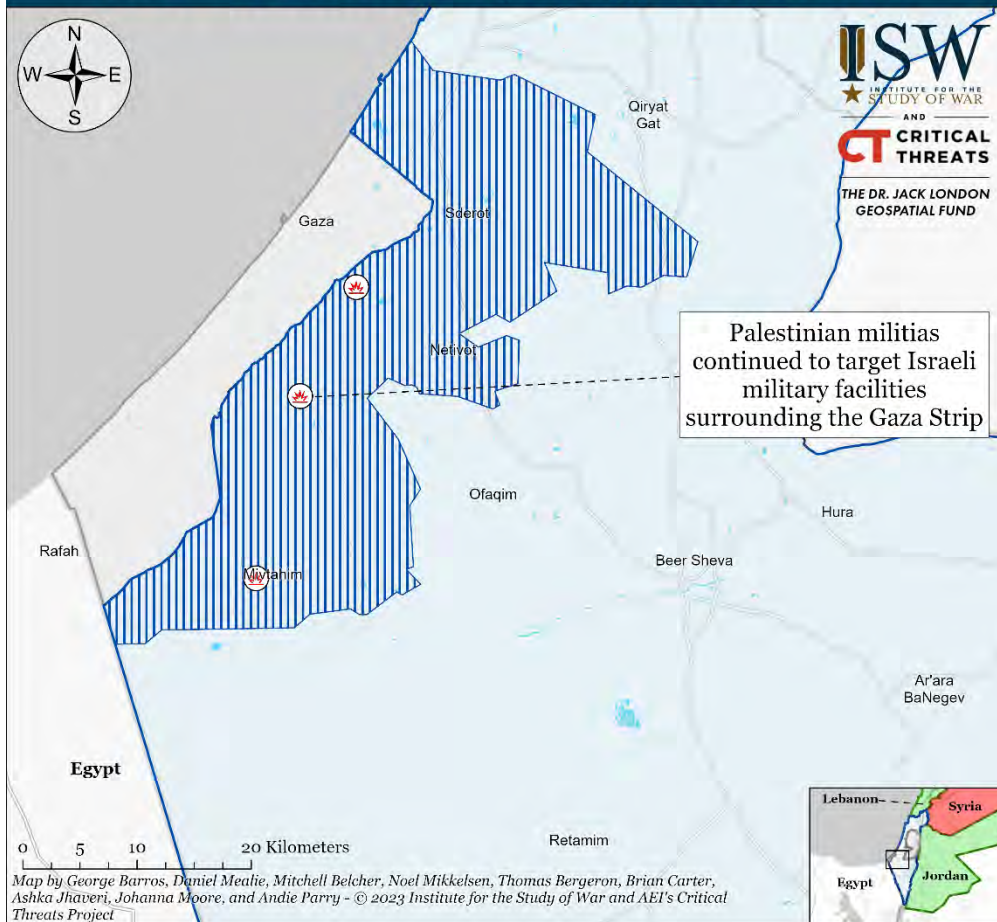
Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 21, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Palestinian militias conducted five indirect fire attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory on November 21. This rate of attacks is consistent with the weekly average of five attacks per day.[35] The al Quds Brigades claimed three attacks on Israeli military facilities surrounding the Gaza Strip.[36] The al Qassem Brigades claimed two attacks targeting an Israeli military facility and Tel Aviv.[37] Israeli forces are targeting rocket launchers during clearing operations in the Gaza Strip, which Palestinian militias are using to target areas in southern Israel and areas further north, including Tel Aviv.[38]

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 21, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Israel | Rocket Attacks | Gaza Strip and West Bank |
| Israeli Closed Military Zone | | Syria |
| Jordan and Lebanon | | |

Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

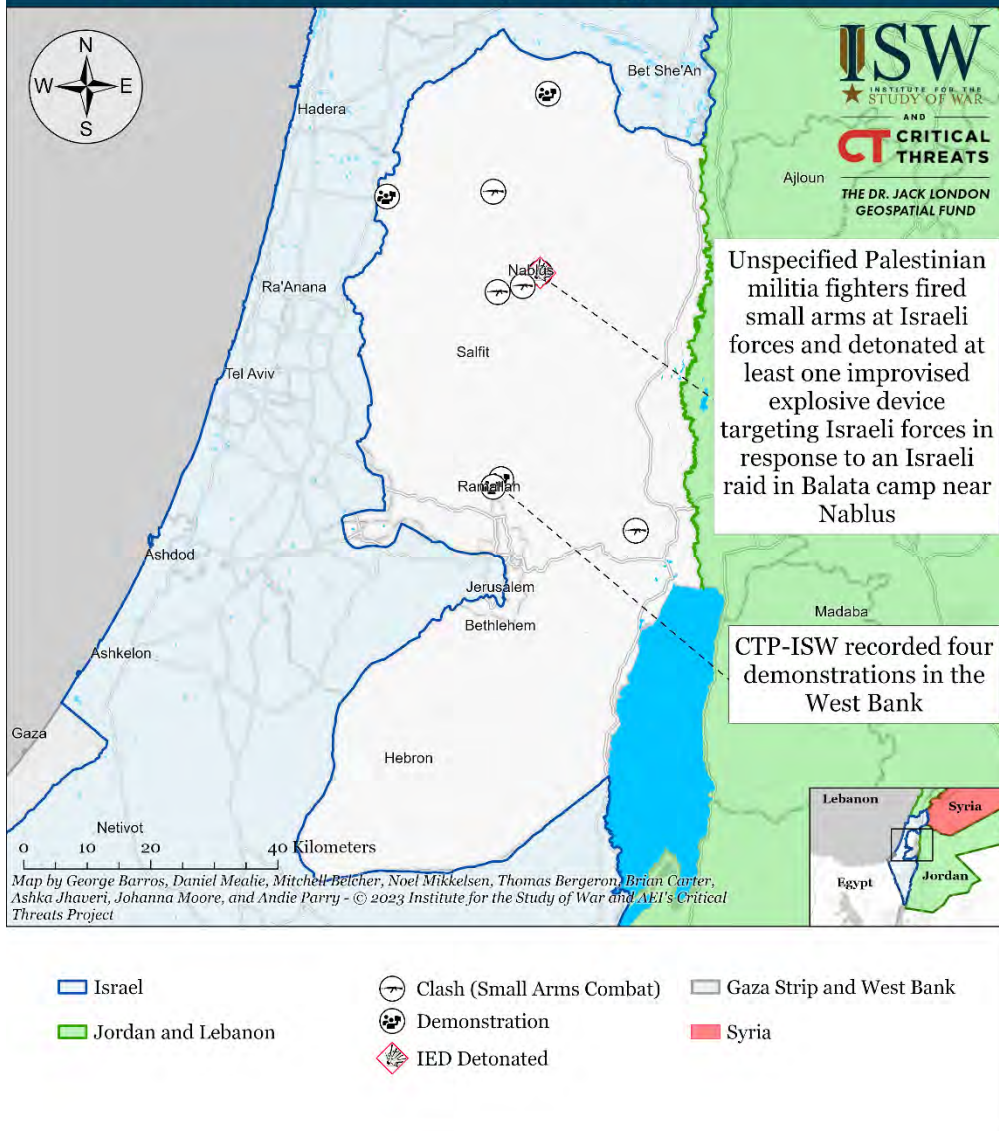
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Palestinian militia fighters conducted five attacks on Israeli forces in the West Bank on November 21.[39] Unspecified Palestinian militia fighters fired small arms at Israeli forces and detonated at least one improvised explosive device (IED) targeting them on November 21 in response to an Israeli raid in the Balata refugee camp near Nablus.[40]

CTP-ISW recorded four demonstrations in the West Bank on November 21. Three demonstrations—around Jenin, Tulkarm, and Ramallah—occurred in support of imprisoned Palestinians.[41] Civilians at the fourth demonstration, which also occurred in Ramallah, protested in support of the Gaza Strip.[42]

Clashes in the West Bank as of November 21, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



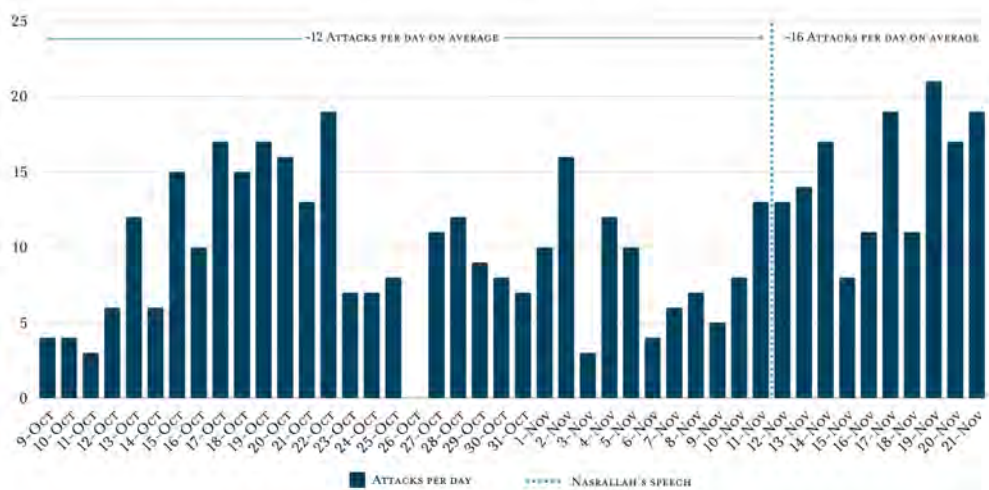
This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

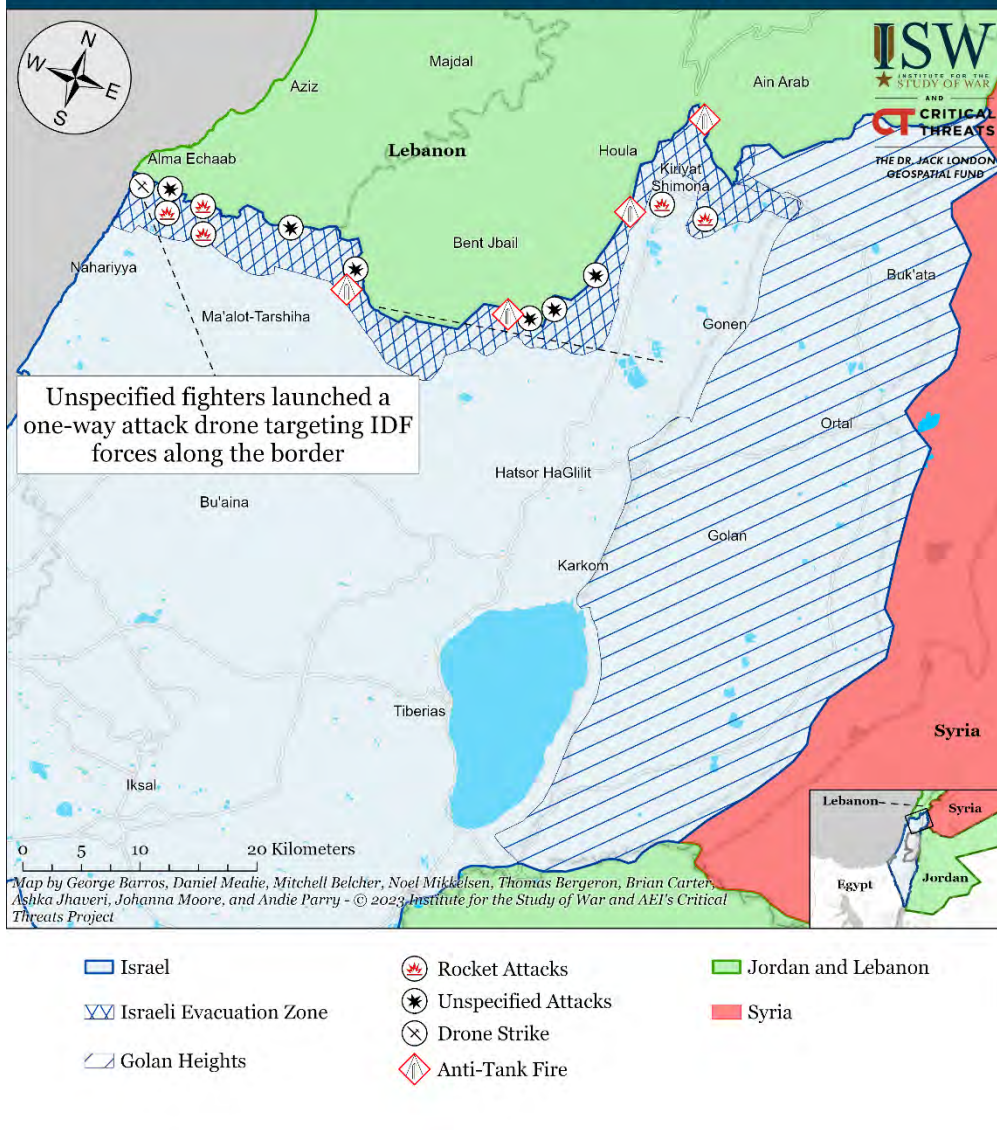
- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

ATTACKS INTO ISRAEL FROM LEBANON, 9 OCTOBER - 21 NOVEMBER



Iranian-backed militia fighters, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), have increased their attack rate from 12 to 16 attacks daily into northern Israel since LH Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah's November 11 speech. CTP-ISW recorded 17 attacks on November 21 into Israeli territory from Lebanon. LH specifically claimed 12 of those attacks on Israeli border positions.[43] Unspecified fighters separately launched three rocket salvos, one ATGM, and a one-way attack drone into northern Israel.[44] CTP-ISW recorded a daily average of 12 attacks from October 10 to November 10 and an average of 16 attacks daily from November 11 to 21.[45] The first time period saw 12 days of an above average rate of attacks and the second time period saw four days above the daily average of 17 attacks. This increase is consistent with Nasrallah saying on November 11 that LH had increased the rate of its cross-border operations and begun using more lethal weapons systems, such as the "Burkan" rocket, which carries a 300-500kg warhead.[46] LH fired Burkan rockets at IDF bases on November 20 and November 21.[47] IDF airstrikes targeted LH ATGM units and command and control centers in southern Lebanon in response to the LH cross-border attacks.[48] The IDF separately carried out two airstrikes on November 21 that killed the al Qassam Brigades deputy commander in Lebanon, Khalil Kharaz, and two al Mayadeen journalists. Al Mayadeen is a media outlet affiliated with LH.[49] LH condemned the killing of the journalists and claimed that three of its attacks on November 21 were in revenge for their deaths.[50]

Attacks into Northern Israel from Lebanon as of November 21, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Note: CTP-ISW refined its data layer in northern Israel to account for unspecified attack types. Lebanese Hezbollah regularly claims attacks with “appropriate weapons.” This data is insufficient to determine the method of attack. Attack claims citing “appropriate weapons” will be tracked as “unspecified” until CTP-ISW can verify the type of attack.

Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

A US military AC-130 gunship struck a Kataib Hezbollah (KH) vehicle near Abu Ghraib, Iraq, on November 21 in response to the Islamic Resistance in Iraq’s November 20 attack on Ain al Assad Airbase.[51] Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh confirmed on November 21 that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq attacked Ain al Assad Airbase using a close-range ballistic missile on November 20.[52] The attack resulted in “several non-serious injuries and some minor damage to infrastructure.” The US self-defense strike on November 21 marked the first US retaliatory airstrike in Iraq since the start of the

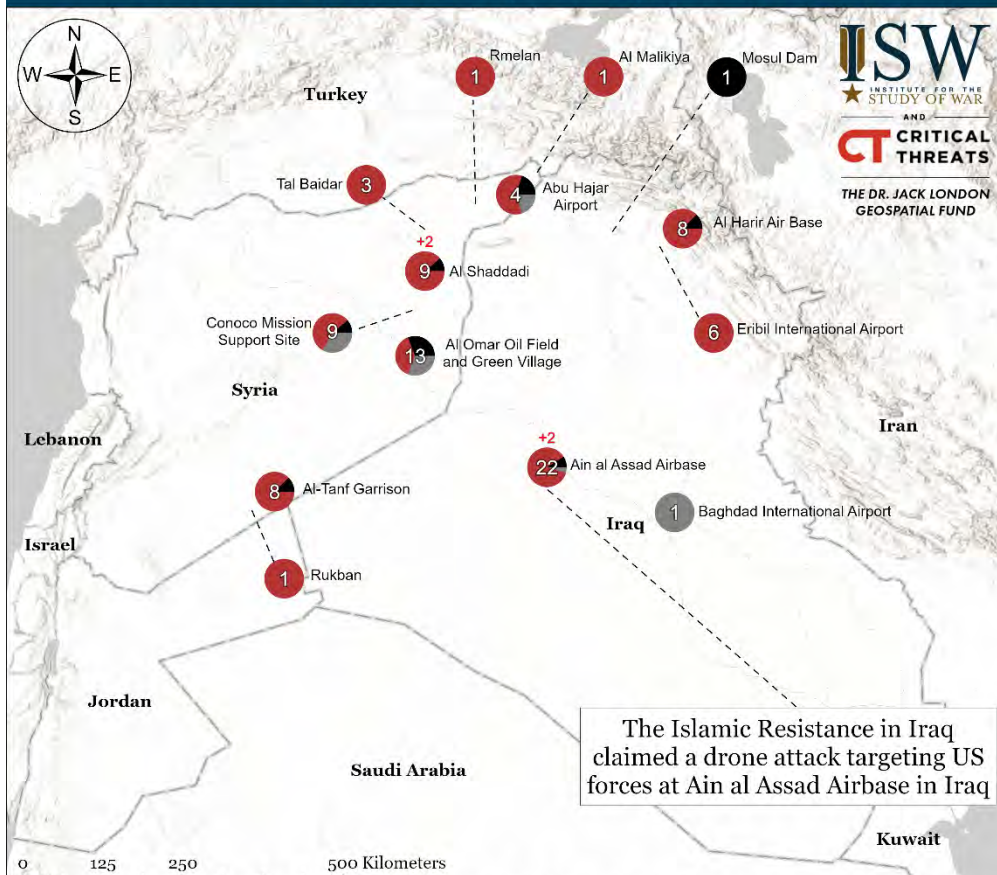
Israel-Hamas war on October 7. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq additionally released a statement on November 21 announcing the death of KH fighter Fadel al Maksousi in the airstrike.[53] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed that Maksousi died “in the battle of truth against falsehood embodied by the American occupation forces in Iraq.” Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba confirmed that Maksousi was a member of KH in an announcement on November 21.[54]

KH is a member of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which has attacked US forces in Iraq and Syria almost daily since October 18.[55] KH has repeatedly threatened attacks on US forces in the Middle East since October 7. It most recently warned on November 16, for example, that the United States will receive the “harshest blows and slaps wherever Kataib Hezbollah’s hands reach.”[56] The United States Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated six individuals belonging to KH as Specially Designated Nationals on November 17.[57] KH is already a US-designated foreign terrorist organization. OFAC reported that KH has been involved in recent attacks against the United States and its partners in Iraq and Syria since October 7.

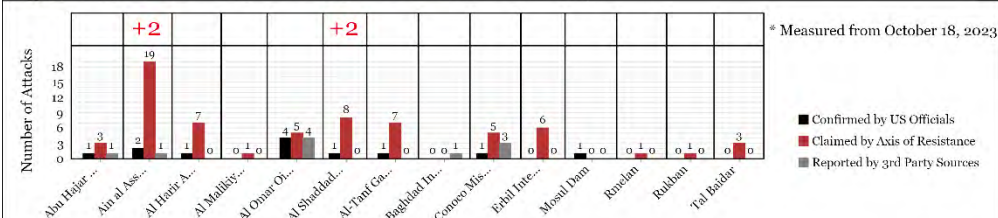
The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—conducted four attacks targeting US positions in Iraq and Syria on November 21. This group has claimed 68 attacks on US forces stationed in Iraq and Syria since October 18.

- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed a drone attack targeting US forces at Ain al Assad Airbase in Iraq.[58]
- The al Dhaferin Group of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed a mortar attack targeting US forces at Ain al Assad Airbase in Iraq in response to the United States’ killing of KH fighter Fadel al Maksousi on November 21.[59] The al Dhaferin group claimed to have fired two 120 mm and one 81 mm mortar rounds at the US forces stationed at the base. The al Dhaferin group vowed “more operations and gradual escalation” against the United States until the last US soldier left Iraq.[60] The al Dhaferin group last attacked US forces in Iraq on November 8.[61]
- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed two rocket attacks targeting a US position in al Shadaddi, Hasakah Province, Syria on November 21.[62]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 21, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEF's Critical Threats Project



Note: The numbers placed inside the pie charts denote the total number of attacks. Locations that include an addition to its total number of attacks have red numbers above the bar graph and pie chart to represent new attacks against that location within the past 24 hours.

US officials warned on November 21 that Iran may be preparing to supply advanced short-range ballistic missiles to Russia.[63] An unnamed US National Security Council spokesperson said that American officials became concerned about potential Iranian missile sales to Russia after Iran showcased the *Ababil* and *Fateh-110* missiles for Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu during his visit to Tehran in September 2023. The IRGC Aerospace Force commander gave Shoigu a tour of Iran's drone, missile, and air defense arsenal at the IRGC Aerospace Force headquarters in Tehran on September 20.[64] CTP-ISW previously assessed that Iran and Russia may conclude a drone and missile sale agreement following the expiration of UN missile restrictions on October 18.[65] The expiration of UNSCR 2231's missile restrictions in October has empowered Iran to export missiles and missile-related technology without international oversight, providing an opportunity for Iran to sell missiles to Moscow. American, British, and Ukrainian officials have previously warned that Iran would transfer ballistic missiles to Russia due to the latter's depleted stockpiles.[66]

The table below shows specifications for some of the short-range ballistic missile systems Iranian officials have discussed with or showcased to Russian officials since fall 2022:[67]

Name	Type	Maximum Range	Payload	Accuracy
<i>Ababil</i>	CRBM	86 km	45 kg	Optical seeker guidance system; CEP unknown ⁶⁸
<i>Zolfaghar*</i>	SRBM	700 km	350-500 kg	GNSS guidance system; 10-100 m CEP ⁶⁹
<i>Raad-500 (aka Zuhair or Zohair)*</i>	SRBM	500 km	350 kg	GNSS and INS guidance; 30-100 m CEP ⁷⁰
<i>Fateh-110*</i>	SRBM	200-350 km	450-650 kg	GPS and INS guidance; 100 m CEP ⁷¹

*Russia would violate its Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) obligations were it to acquire these missile systems. Iran would violate UNSCR 2231 were it to export these systems prior to the October 18 expiration. Iran is not an MTCR member-state even though UNSCR 2231 references the MTCR's banned Category I "complete delivery systems," systems with a 300 or more-kilometer range and a 500 or more-kilogram payload.[72]

Key: CEP: Circular error probable; SRBM: Short-range ballistic missile; CRBM: Close-range ballistic missile; MaRV: Maneuverable re-entry vehicle; INS: Inertial Navigation System; GNSS: Global Navigation Satellite System; GPS: Global Positioning System

Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber discussed the Israel-Hamas war with Russian presidential aide Igor Levitin in Tehran on November 21.[73] The two officials called for an immediate end to Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian previously discussed a ceasefire in the war during a phone call with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on November 19.[74] Iranian and Russian officials have engaged in political coordination vis-a-vis the Israel-Hamas war since at least October 26, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[75]

The IRGC Ground Forces conducted its second "routine" military exercise of 2023 in Kerman Province on November 21.[76] The IRGC Ground Forces previously conducted a military exercise on July 19.[77] Iranian Armed Forces General Staff Chief Major General Mohammad Bagheri presided over the more recent exercise alongside other senior Iranian military officials. Bagheri condemned Israeli actions in the Gaza Strip and emphasized the need for maintaining military readiness.[78] The IRGC's 41st Sarallah Division, 2nd Saheb ol Zaman Independent Infantry Brigade, and 38th Zolfaghar Independent Armored Brigade participated in the exercise. All of these units are headquartered in Kerman Province. The 38th Brigade previously deployed to Syria at the height of the Syrian civil war and incurred casualties fighting to preserve the Bashar al Assad regime.[79]

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[8] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16721>
[9] [https://www.idf\[dot\]il/%D7%90%D7%AA%D7%A8%D7%99-%D7%99%D7%97%D7%99%D7%93...](https://www.idf[dot]il/%D7%90%D7%AA%D7%A8%D7%99-%D7%99%D7%97%D7%99%D7%93...)
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[11] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16724>; <https://t.me/almanarnews/137409>
[12] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726933604532715830>
[13] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726933604532715830>
[14] <https://t.me/QudsN/332672>
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[35] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/511> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/39994 ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16723> <https://t.me/sarayaps/16723> ; https://t.me/C_Military1/40012 ; https://t.me/C_Military1/40028 ; <https://t.me/qassambri gades/29209>
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- [75] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-19-2023-65...> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-16-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-3-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-2-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-30-2023>
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- [77] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-july-19-2023>
- [78] <https://www.iribnews.ir/fa/news/4063387> ; <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2023/11/21/715004>
- [79] <https://defapress.ir/fa/news/632219>

IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 22, 2023

Iran Update, November 22, 2023

Andie Parry, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, Peter Mills, and Annika Ganzeveld

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

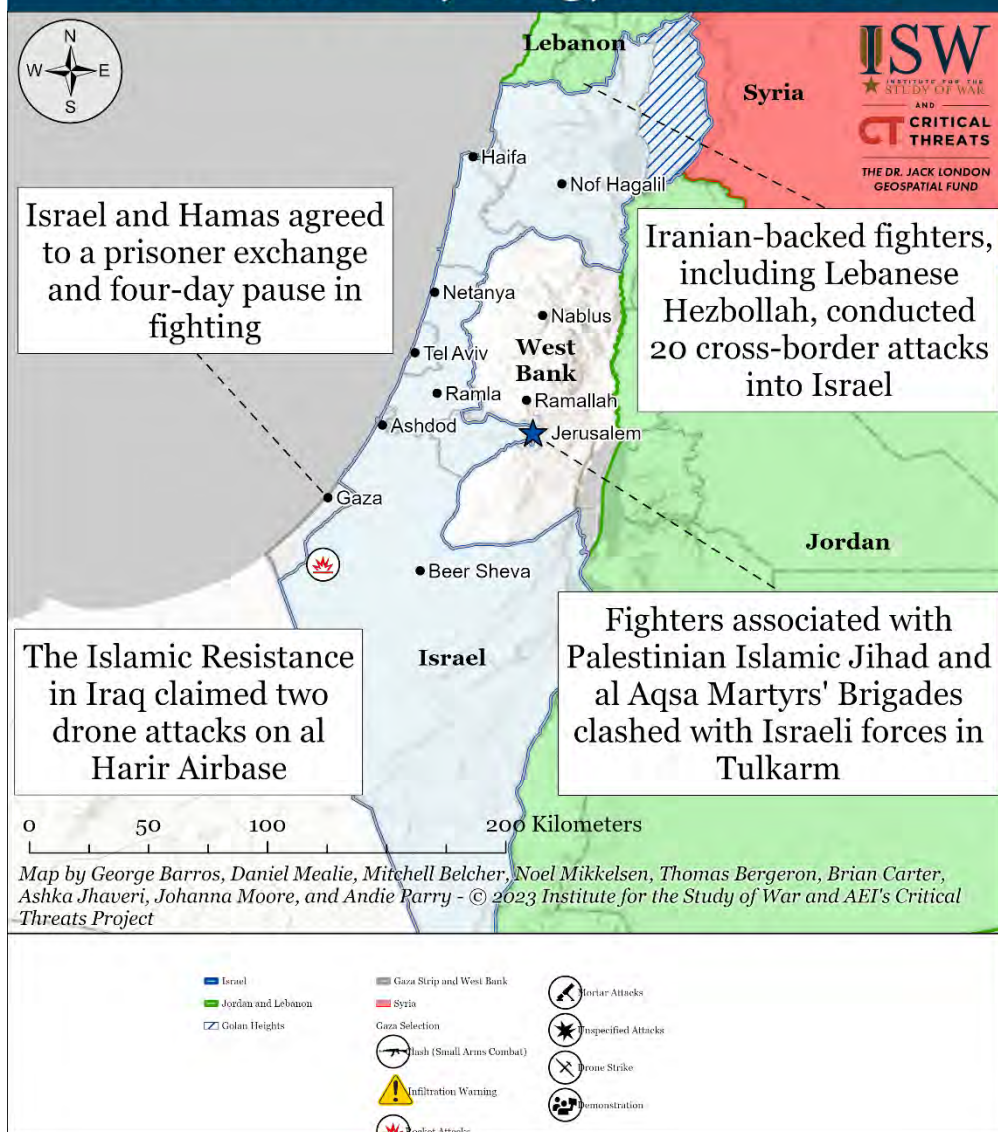
Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

CTP-ISW will not publish an update on Thursday, November 23, for the Thanksgiving holiday. CTP-ISW will resume publishing daily updates on Friday, November 24.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israel and Hamas have agreed to a four-day humanitarian pause in fighting. Hamas is the only militant group explicitly mentioned in the humanitarian pause agreement.
2. The entire Axis of Resistance has been involved in the escalation against the United States and Israel since October 7 and it is unclear how its non-Hamas members will react to the pause. Senior Iranian, Hamas, Lebanese, LH, and PIJ officials met in Beirut on November 22 to discuss the four-day humanitarian pause between Israel and Hamas.
3. Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)—an umbrella security organization that ostensibly reports to the Iraqi Prime Minister—held a funeral for five Kataib Hezbollah members who were killed in two US drone strikes on KH facilities on November 22. Iranian-backed militias attempted to portray the US airstrike as having targeted a state-affiliated security organization and not members of the US-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, Kataib Hezbollah.
4. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed two drone attacks on al Harir Airbase in retaliation for Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip. The IDF intercepted a Houthi cruise missile that targeted Eilat, Israel on November 22.
5. Israel published more evidence for how Hamas uses al Shifa Hospital as a command node.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 22, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Israel and Hamas have agreed to a four-day humanitarian pause in fighting. Hamas official Mousa Abu Marzouk said the pause will begin at 0300 EST on Thursday, November 23. ^[1] The Israeli National Security Director said that hostages will not be released before Friday, however. ^[2] It is therefore unclear when the pause will begin. Statements from Israel and Hamas acknowledged a prisoner/hostage swap in return for a four-day pause in the fighting in the Gaza Strip with different levels of detail. ^[3] The Israeli government's official statement said that 50 women and children would be released by Hamas over four days at a rate of at least 10 per day. ^[4] Hamas' political wing issued a more detailed statement and said that it would release 50

Israeli women and children under the age of 19 in exchange for Israel releasing 150 Palestinian women and children under the age of 19. Israel's statement presents the opportunity for the extension of the pause, stipulating that for each additional 10 hostages Hamas released, a day would be added to the pause. Hamas' statement did not mention this aspect of the agreement.

Hamas's statement also included details about a no-fly zone in the southern Gaza Strip, a partial no-fly zone in the northern Gaza Strip, and humanitarian, fuel, and medical aid deliveries. The official statement from Israel did not include details about these features of the deal. An anonymous senior Israeli security official speaking to the press said that Israel has alternatives to gathering intelligence via drone and that stormy days in the forecast would limit Israeli aerial intelligence gathering anyway.^[5] This statement indicates that the no-fly zone is part of Israel's understanding of the deal. Hamas also said that the parties agreed to "a ceasefire. . . and a cessation of all military actions by Israel in all areas of the Gaza Strip." The Israeli statement did not specify where the fighting would stop or use the term "ceasefire." The official Israeli statement mentioned only a "pause in the fighting."

Hamas and Israel negotiated the pause with the mediation of Qatar, which released a separate statement affirming the agreement.^[6] The Qatari statement included details about the release of 150 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails and humanitarian convoys carrying fuel entering the Gaza Strip.

Hamas said that it remains committed to the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital despite the truce and will remain the protective shield and defender of the Palestinian people until Israel is defeated. The Israeli government's statement included the declaration that it will continue the war to eliminate Hamas.^[7] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the Knesset as it voted on the deal that Israeli security agencies assess that the war effort will not be harmed and that the deal will enable the IDF to prepare for the continuation of fighting.^[8]

Hamas is the only militant group explicitly mentioned in the humanitarian pause agreement. Hamas is also the only Palestinian militant group that has acknowledged the pause agreement, despite the fact that Hamas is only one of several groups fighting Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip. Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) has unofficially indicated that it would adhere to a pause in fighting if Israel did, according to an unspecified LH official speaking to al Jazeera.^[9] There are no indications that other Palestinian or Axis of Resistance groups regard themselves as bound by the Israel-Hamas agreement. Other Palestinian militant groups are actively fighting Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip and conducting indirect fire attacks into Israel. Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) attacked Israeli forces and launched rockets at Israel at least 15 times on November 21.^[10] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade—a self-affiliated militant wing of Fatah—has conducted attacks on Israeli ground forces in the Gaza Strip and fired rockets into Israel.^[11] The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's militant wing in the Gaza Strip—the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades—has conducted at least 14 indirect fire attacks into Israel since the start of the war. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine's militant wing has also conducted attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel.^[12] PIJ's and Hamas' militant wings have acknowledged that they coordinate ground operations targeting Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip over the past several weeks of fighting.^[13] PIJ and Hamas have also coordinated operations with other smaller militias in the Gaza Strip such as the al Nasser Salah al-Deen Brigades—the militant wing of Popular Resistance Committees.^[14] Israel has repeatedly held Hamas responsible for all anti-Israel militant activity emanating from the Gaza Strip even as Hamas claims that it has no control over other militias operating in Gaza.^[15] PIJ and possibly other militant groups are holding Israeli hostages, complicating hostage exchange according to Hamas, which has claimed that it does not control hostages held by other militias even though Hamas fighters were the ones who seized the hostages on October 7.^[16] PIJ's spokesperson Abu Hamza announced the death of one of its hostages, Hanna Katzir, on November 21.^[17] These factors increase the risk that a non-Hamas militia that has nevertheless been coordinating military operations with Hamas could attack Israeli forces drawing an Israeli response that Hamas would attempt to frame as an Israeli violation of the agreement.

The entire Axis of Resistance has been involved in the escalation against the United States and Israel since October 7, and it is unclear how its non-Hamas members will react to the pause. Axis of Resistance groups, including the Houthis and the Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, have continued to attack Israel while Israel and Hamas discuss the terms of the pause agreement. Houthi fighters hijacked an Israeli-owned, Japanese-operated freighter transiting the Red Sea on November 19 and launched a cruise missile at Eilat on November 22.^[18] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq also began using close-range ballistic missiles against US forces in November, including on November 21.^[19] It is unclear how this pattern will progress during the pause, as Hamas and Israel are the only combatant parties explicitly bound by the agreement.

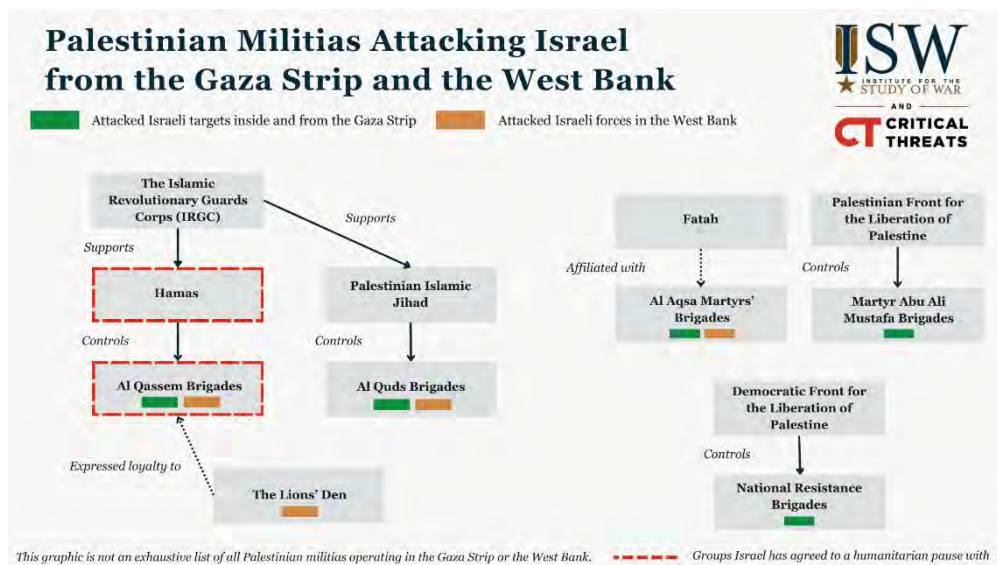
Israel destroyed the headquarters of Hamas' Northern Brigade in the Sheikh Zayed neighborhood during clearing operations. Israeli media reported that the IDF is expected to intensify combat operations in the Gaza Strip with a focus on clearing militant strongholds in the eastern Gaza Strip before there is a pause in fighting.[20] The IDF said on November 18 that it is expanding offensive operations toward Jabalia city in the northern Gaza Strip.[21] Israeli forces conducted targeted raids northwest of Jabalia in the Sheikh Zayed neighborhood on November 22, where Israel says several senior members of Hamas live.[22] The force located large tunnel shafts and large complexes and destroyed the headquarters of Hamas' Northern Brigade.[23] The IDF said in a publication on November 13 that Hamas maintains five regional brigades, two of which operate in the northern Gaza Strip.[24] Israeli forces also discovered a model of an IDF vehicle.[25] Palestinian militias have made several claims to destroy Israeli vehicles and frequently target them with rocket-propelled grenades (RPG).

Israel said its forces are on the offensive in the Tal al Hawa neighborhood in southern Gaza city.[26] The IDF said its forces raided the Hamas Gaza City Brigades outpost and a military intelligence office where they discovered unspecified information about the underground infrastructure Hamas uses across the Gaza Strip.[27] Israeli forces also located a workshop for manufacturing drones and a laboratory for one-way attack drones, IEDs, mortars, and other weapons.[28]

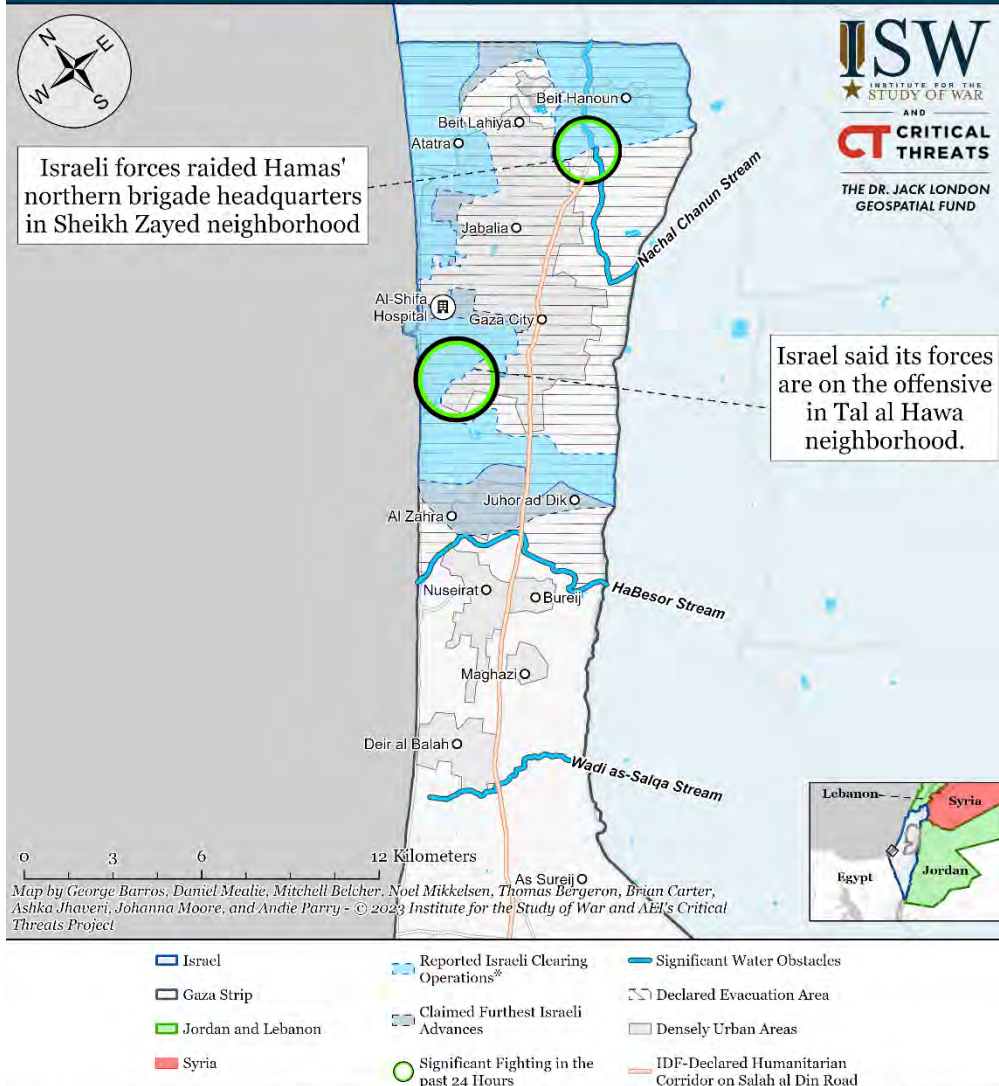
The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—said that its forces targeted Israeli forces against Israeli lines of advance. The al Quds Brigades claimed to attack Israeli forces advancing south of Gaza city and in neighborhoods surrounding Jabalia city with various munitions including RPGs, tandem-charge anti-tank weapons, small arms, and mortars.[29] The IDF has targeted PIJ operational headquarters since the Israel-Hamas war began.[30]

Israel published more evidence for how Hamas uses al Shifa Hospital as a command node. Israel posted footage of Hamas' "underground city" and tunnel network underneath al Shifa Hospital on November 22.[31] Israeli forces discovered military equipment during clearing operations in the al Shifa Hospital area including various weapons and electronic devices, as well as patches of the al Quds Brigades.[32] CTP-ISW has reported that the IDF faces a loose coalition of Palestinian militant groups in the Gaza Strip—rather than just Hamas.

Palestinian militia fighters continued attacks targeting Israeli forces behind the Israeli forward line of advance, which is consistent with the nature of clearing operations. The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—published several video compilations of various attacks it has conducted on Israeli forces across the northern Gaza Strip using RPGs, small arms, and IEDs.[33] The al Quds Brigades claimed to attack Israeli infantry forces in Beit Hanoun.[34]

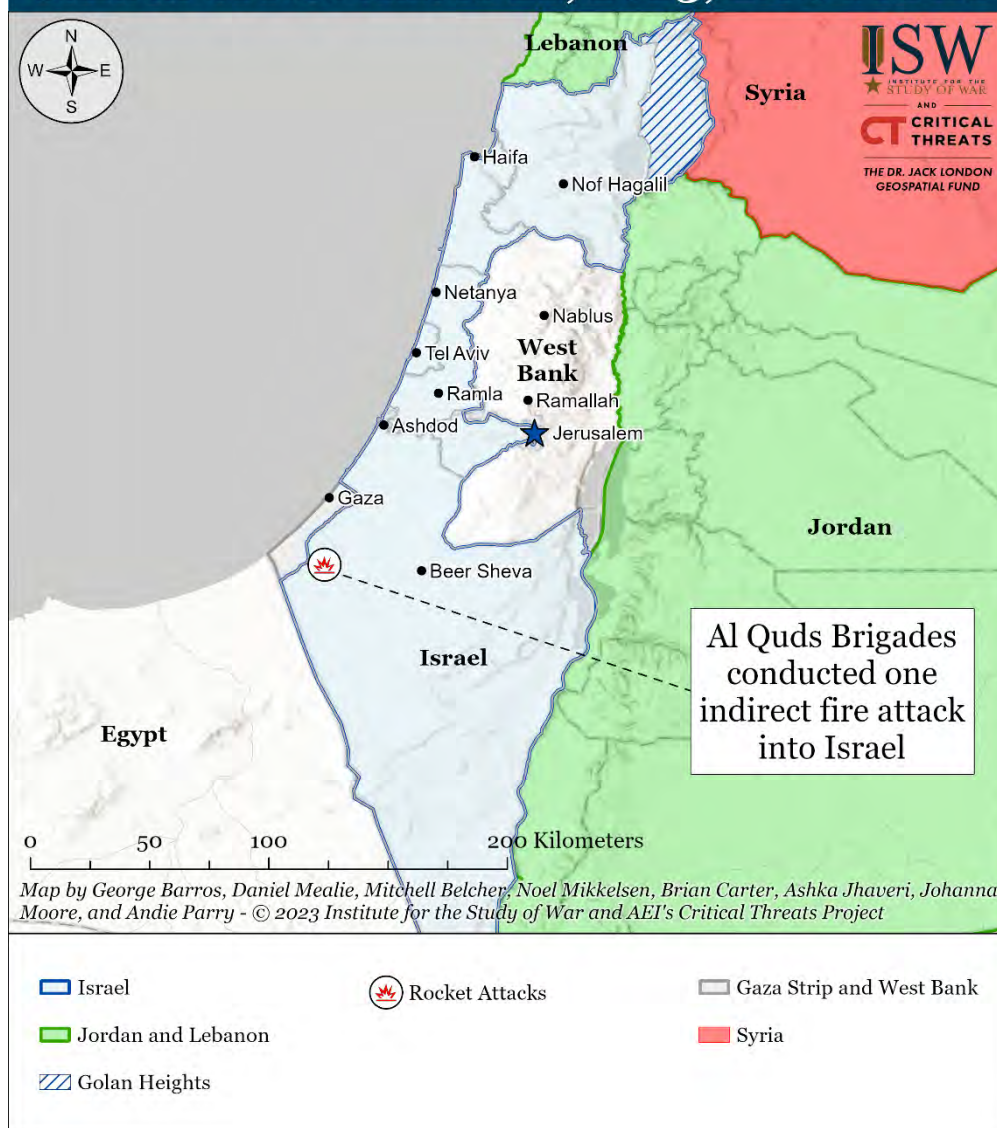


Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 22, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



* ISW-CTP's "Reported Israeli Clearing Operations" layer uses the US military's doctrinal definition of clearing which is an operation that "requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area." Clearing operations frequently take weeks and sometimes months to complete

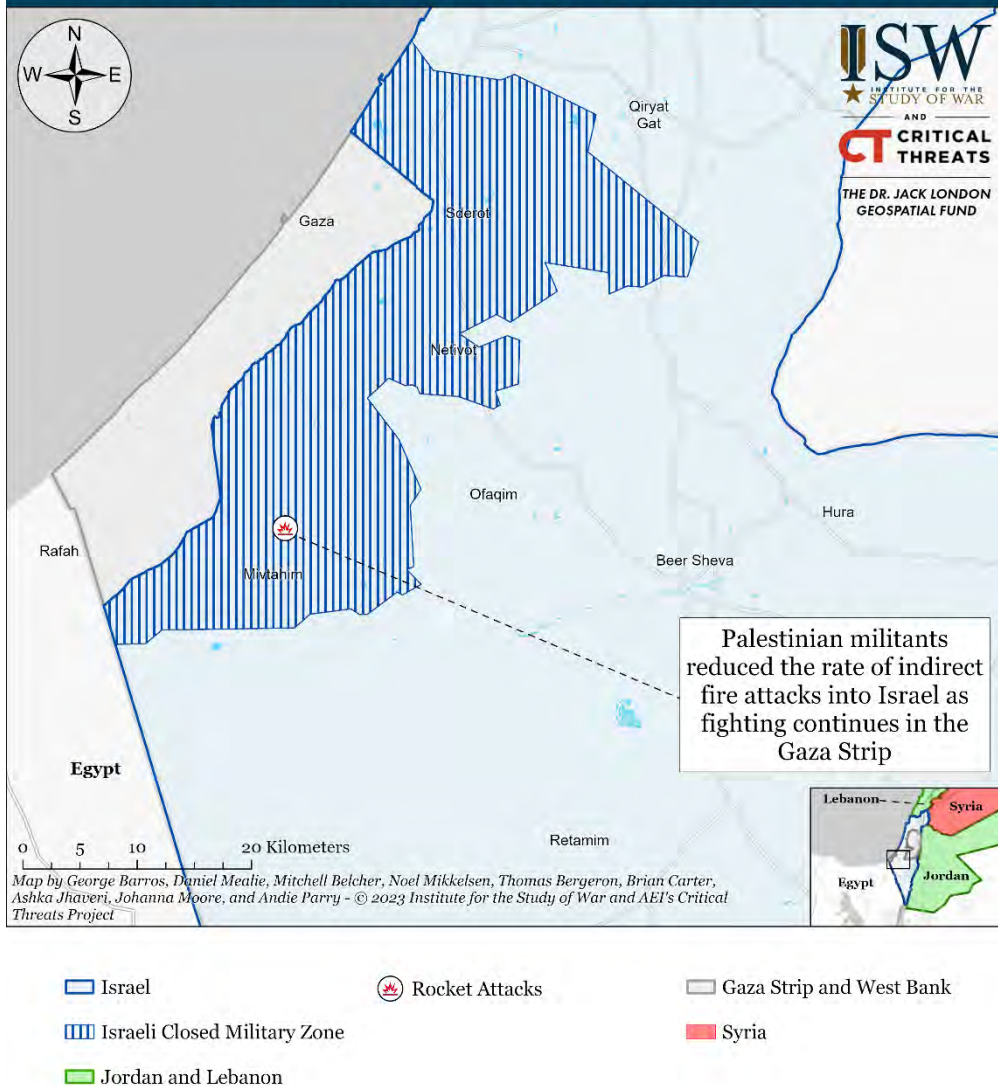
Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 22, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

The al Quds Brigades conducted one indirect fire attack into Israel on November 22. The al Quds Brigades fired rockets at the Third Eye military site in southern Israel.[36] The al Qassem Brigades did not claim indirect fire attacks into Israel on November 22.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 22, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

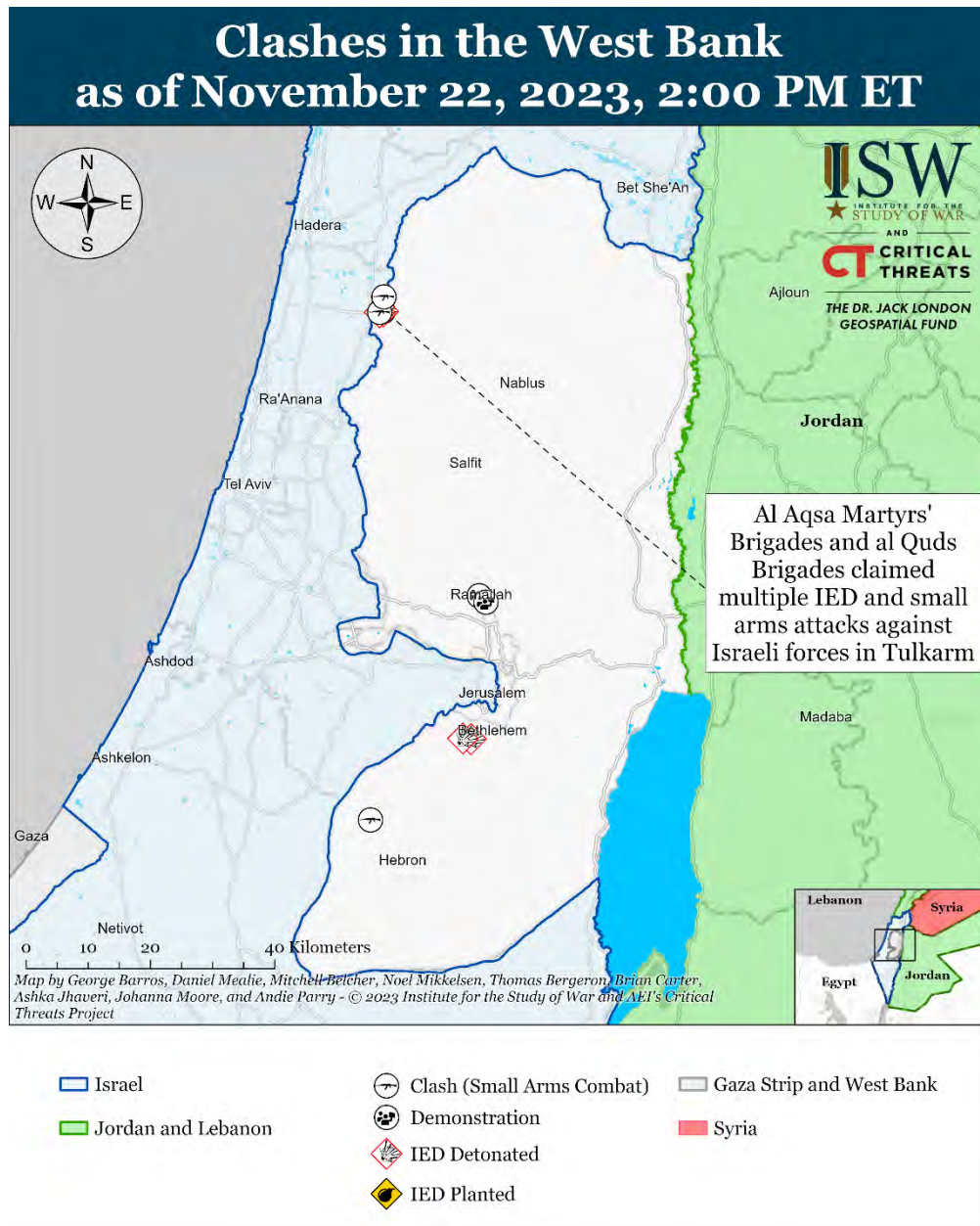
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Palestinian militia fighters conducted 18 attacks on Israeli forces, primarily in Tulkarm, in the West Bank on November 22. Unspecified Palestinian militia fighters fired small arms at Israeli forces and detonated at least five IEDs targeting them on November 22 in response to an Israeli raid in Tulkarm.[37] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade' Tulkarm Rapid Response Battalion acknowledged six of its fighters, including four commanders, died during the Israeli operation in Tulkarm.[38] The al Quds Brigades stated that it participated in the fighting against Israeli forces in Tulkarm, but did not acknowledge any casualties.[39] Unspecified fighters engaged in five small arms clashes and detonated at least two IEDs targeting Israeli forces across the West Bank on November 22.[40] The IDF reported Israel arrested 29 people, of whom 3 were associated with Hamas, across the West Bank.[41]

CTP-ISW recorded two demonstrations in Ramallah in the West Bank on November 22.[42] One of the demonstrations took place outside the German consulate to protest Germany's support for Israel's campaign in the Gaza Strip.[43]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

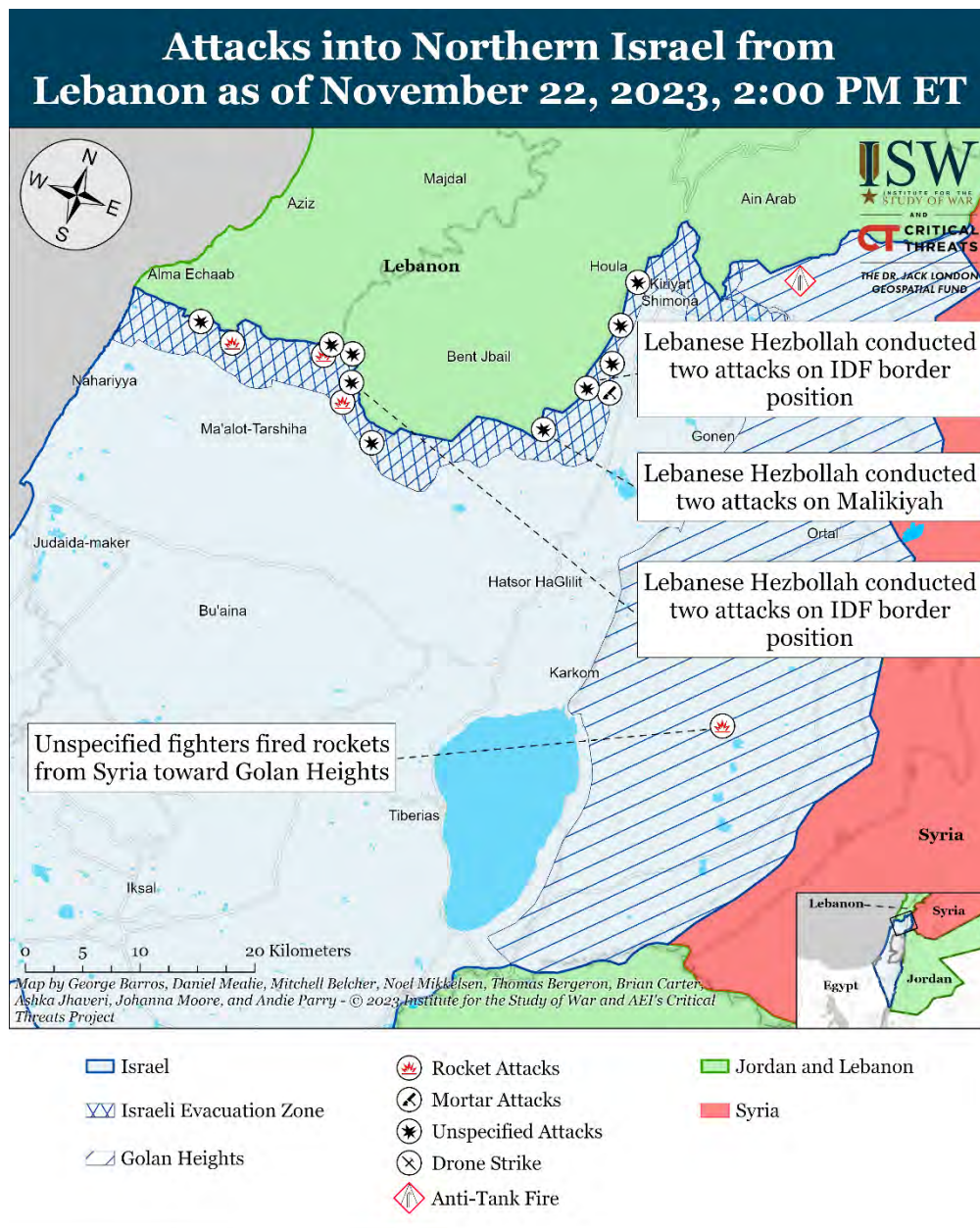
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed fighters, including LH, conducted 20 attacks on November 22 into Israeli territory from Lebanon. LH specifically claimed 16 attacks on Israeli border positions.[44] Unspecified fighters separately launched three rocket salvos and sent one unspecified drone into northern Israel.[45] The IDF conducted multiple airstrikes targeting LH units conducting cross-border attacks and LH military infrastructure in southern Lebanon.[46]

Unspecified fighters in Syria fired rockets toward the Golan Heights on November 22 after the IDF carried out an airstrike targeting possible Iranian-backed fighters in Sayyida Zainab, Damascus.[47] Iranian-backed militia groups have long maintained bases in Sayyida Zainab and used it to facilitate Iranian lines of effort elsewhere in Syria.[48]



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)—an umbrella security organization that ostensibly reports to the Iraqi prime minister—held a funeral for five Kataib Hezbollah (KH) members, who were killed in two US drone strikes on KH facilities on November 22.[49] Iranian-backed militias Ashab al Kahf and

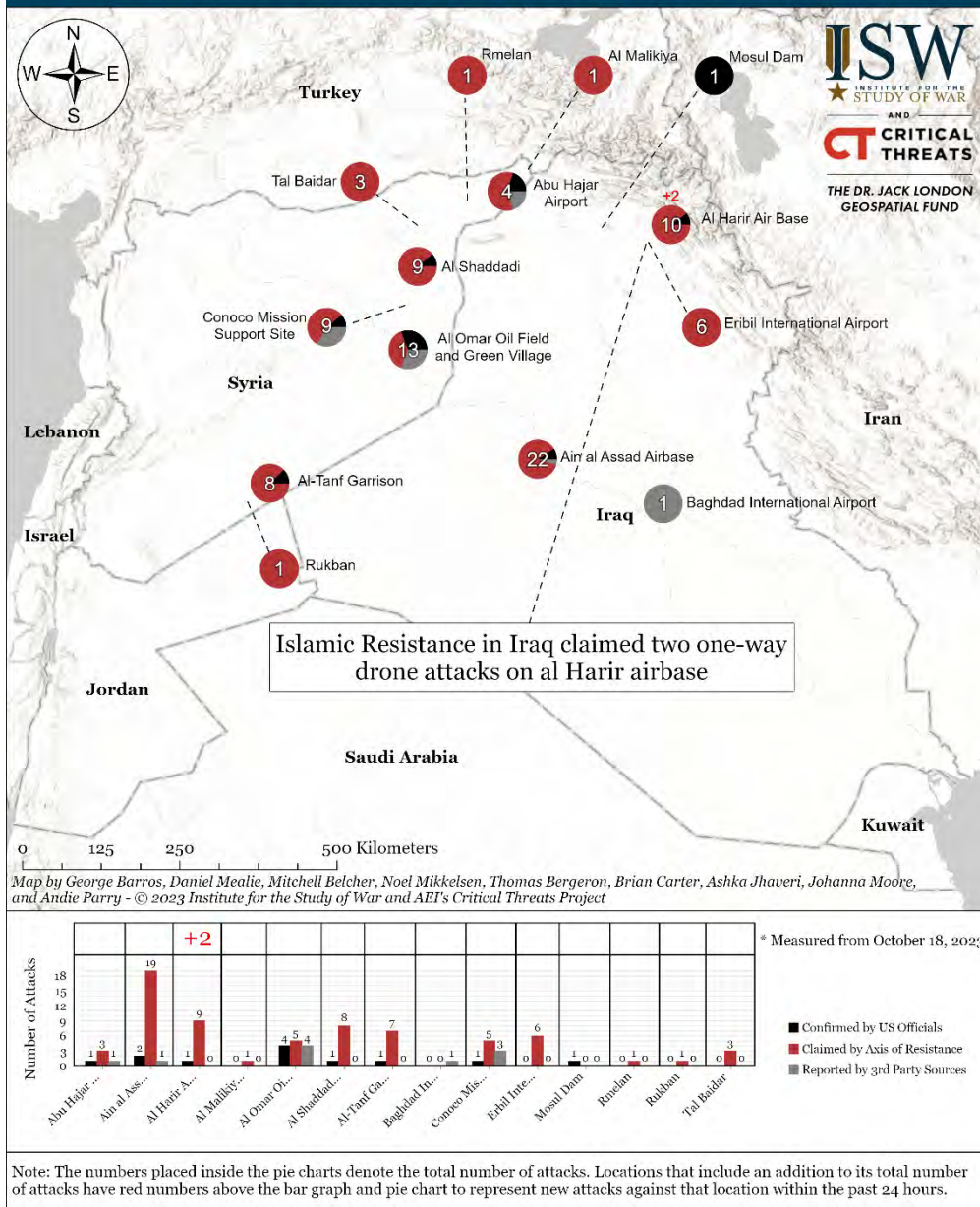
Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba offered condolences and congratulations to KH for the death and martyrdom of their militants.[50] The PMF-sponsored funeral, however, highlighted the militants' affiliation with the PMF and referred to them as martyrs of the PMF.[51] The PMF funeral procession showed portraits of the killed KH militants alongside PMF insignia.[52] In doing so, Iranian-backed militias attempted to portray the US airstrike as having targeted a state-affiliated security organization and not members of the US-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), KH.

Two unidentified defense officials reported that US fighter jets struck a KH operations center and KH command and control center in Jurf al Saqr, Babil Province, Iraq, on November 22 and confirmed that KH personnel were located at both facilities.[53] KH has retained control of Jurf al Saqr since 2021 following their forces' relocation of local Sunnis from the area from late 2020 to early 2021.[54] Iranian-backed militias expanded their presence within the Baghdad Belts in 2020 under the pretext of counter-ISIS operations following the US force drawdown.[55] However, during that time, ISIS was conducting targeted attacks in Jurf al Saqr to stoke ethnic conflict. Iranian-backed militias, namely KH, fed into the ISIS objective by forcibly displacing Sunnis from the area.[56] KH has prevented Sunnis from returning and has effectively blocked Iraqi security forces from operating in the area to mask their activities from the Iraqi government as ISW previously reported.[57]

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed two drone attacks on al Harir Airbase in retaliation for Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip.[58] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed 11 attacks on US forces stationed at al Harir Airbase since October 18.[59]

The IDF intercepted a Houthi cruise missile that targeted Eilat, Israel on November 22.[60] The IDF reported that one of its F-35 fighter jets intercepted a cruise missile over the Red Sea.[61] The Houthi Movement claimed the attack on Eilat in support of Palestinian militias fighting in the Gaza Strip.[62] The Houthis have claimed five drone and surface-to-surface missile attacks targeting Eilat since October 18.[63] The Houthi movement threatened on October 31 to "continue its strikes with rockets and drones until the Israeli aggression [in the Gaza Strip] stops." [64]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 22, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Senior Iranian, Hamas, Lebanese, LH, and PIJ officials met in Beirut on November 22 to discuss the four-day humanitarian pause between Israel and Hamas. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian met with the Deputy Chairman of Hamas' Political Bureau in the Gaza Strip, Khalil al Haya, PIJ Secretary General Ziyad al Nakhalah, and Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.[65] Abdollahian discussed the four-day humanitarian pause in his meetings with these officials and Iranian Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanani told Iranian state media on November 22 that Abdollahian had traveled to Beirut to "help stabilize the ceasefire." [66] LH-affiliated media reported that Abdollahian will also meet with LH Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah. [67] Abdollahian's visit to Beirut notably coincides with Nasrallah's meeting with Haya and Hamas senior representative to Lebanon Osama Hamdan on November 22. [68] Abdollahian's November 22 visit to Beirut marks his second trip to Lebanon since the start of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7. Abdollahian last traveled to Beirut on October 12 as part of his regional diplomatic tour to Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Qatar, as CTP-ISW previously reported. [69]

Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei discussed the Israel-Hamas war with a group of Iranian athletes in Tehran on November 22.^[70] Khamenei warned that Israel's "atrocities" will not go "unanswered" and that Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip will "shorten [Israel's] lifespan." Khamenei has used similarly threatening language in his speeches since October 7. He warned on October 17, for example, that the continuation of Israeli "crimes" against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip will make resistance groups "impatient" and that "no one will be able to stop [these groups]." ^[71]

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi conducted an interview with five Axis of Resistance media outlets on November 22.^[72] Raisi's interview is noteworthy given that Iranian officials typically do not conduct interviews with numerous outlets simultaneously. Raisi conducted the interview with LH-affiliated al Manar, Kataib Hezbollah-operated al Etejah, PIJ-affiliated Filastin al Yawm, Hamas-controlled Al Aqsa TV, and Houthi-controlled al Masirah. Raisi claimed that Israel's "insults" to the Al Aqsa Mosque and "killing" of Palestinians before October 7 precipitated the Al Aqsa Flood Operation. Raisi further claimed that the IDF has thus far failed to eliminate Hamas in the Gaza Strip and that the United States opposes a ceasefire because it fears a ceasefire "will make Israel's defeat certain" ^[73]

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- [1] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1727276905672638863>
 - [2] <https://www.axios.com/2023/11/22/israel-hamas-hostage-deal-timeline-pale...> <https://twitter.com/JoeTruzman/status/1727447622389215236>
 - [3] <https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/spoke-kidnapped221123> ; <https://t.me/hamasps/17906>
 - [4] <https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/spoke-kidnapped221123>
 - [5] https://twitter.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1727209726067544215
 - [6] <https://twitter.com/majedalansari/status/1727235402770059534>
 - [7] <https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/spoke-kidnapped221123>
 - [8] <https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/spoke-joint211123>
 - [9] <https://www.newarab.com/news/hezbollah-says-it-will-abide-israel-hamas-c...>
 - [10] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16736> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16732> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16731> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16730> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16728> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16727> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16726> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16725> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16724> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16723> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16722> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16721>
 - [11] <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5801> ; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5841> ; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5795>
 - [12] <https://t.me/QudsN/312785> ; <https://twitter.com/AlMayadeenNews/status/1714983570710687932> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/316038>
 - [13] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16707>
 - [14] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16679>
 - [15] <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1082140811041665024> ; <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2022/08/10/unlike-hamas-...>
 - [16] <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/negotiators-near-hamas-deal-to-release-host...>
 - [17] <https://t.me/abuhamzasaraya/84>
 - [18] <https://www.reuters.com/video/watch/idslZC?now=true> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727333155273932995>
 - [19] <https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/1727124401056092540>
 - [20] https://twitter.com/IsraelRadar_com/status/1727372027064139830
 - [21] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1725890537520091244>
 - [22] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727225022715245029>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727334436390223921>; <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1727341141874405571>
 - [23] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727225022715245029>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727334436390223921>; <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1727341141874405571>
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 - [28] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727367699590738003>
 - [29] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16740>
 - [30] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1711304715223384446>

[31] <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1727409278636478519>

[32] <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1727387582378688562>

[33] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/517>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/516>; <https://twitter.com/MayadeenEngish/status/1727381447005126950>

[34] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16732>

[35] <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-iran-fuels-hamas...> <https://jiss.org.il/en/mansharof-the-relationship-between-iran-and-pales...> <https://t.me/qassambrigades/29209>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16716>; <https://t.me/QudsN/322059>; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1719698310913462778>; <https://t.me/QudsN/322081>; <https://t.me/kataebabuali/10458>; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/38089; <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-aqsa-martyrs-brigade>; <https://t.me/areennabluss/291>

[36] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16738>

[37] <https://t.me/alredalsrey/468>; <https://t.me/alredalsrey/470>; <https://t.me/sarayatulkarm/417>; <https://t.me/sarayatulkarm/418>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727294953959956769>

[38] <https://t.me/s/alredalsrey>; <https://t.me/s/kataipshohdaaalaqsa>

[39] <https://t.me/s/sarayatulkarm>

[40] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727294953959956769>; <https://t.me/QudsN/333139>; <https://t.me/QudsN/333177>; <https://t.me/QudsN/333222>; <https://t.me/QudsN/333209>; <https://t.me/QudsN/333208>

[41] <https://www.idf.il/154824>

[42] <https://t.me/QudsN/333262>; <https://t.me/QudsN/333276>

[43] <https://t.me/QudsN/333262>

[44] https://t.me/C_Military1/40059; https://t.me/C_Military1/40077; <https://t.me/QudsN/333141>; https://t.me/C_Military1/40081; https://t.me/C_Military1/40090; https://t.me/C_Military1/40093; https://t.me/C_Military1/40088; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1727326370068377665>; https://t.me/C_Military1/40108; https://t.me/C_Military1/40109; https://t.me/C_Military1/40111; https://t.me/C_Military1/40114; https://t.me/C_Military1/40118; <https://t.me/QudsN/333256>

[45] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727089505923186776>; https://t.me/C_Military1/40075; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1727326792178864150>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727089507705741671>

[46] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1727250593100804509>; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1727376032465145874>

[47] <https://twitter.com/QalaatAlMudiq/status/1727391193099620700>; <https://twitter.com/Archer83Able/status/1727310051860230426>; <https://twitter.com/QalaatAlMudiq/status/1727394090827018692>

[48] <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/factbox-iranian-influen...>; <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/from-karbala-to-sayyida-zaynab-iraqi-fighters-...>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/13/irans-syria-project-pushin...>; <https://www.mei.edu/publications/israels-response-iran-syria-choosing-be...>

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[50] https://t.me/aishab_alkahf/109; <https://t.me/Tura313/46465>

[51] https://t.me/teamsmediawar_1/94596; https://t.me/teamsmediawar_1/94597

[52] <https://t.me/QudsN/333180>; https://t.me/teamsmediawar_1/94586; https://t.me/teamsmediawar_1/94596; https://t.me/teamsmediawar_1/94597

[53] <https://apnews.com/article/israel-iraq-airstrike-military-iran-d93d861fe...>; https://t.me/teamsmediawar_1/94597; https://t.me/teamsmediawar_1/94596

[54] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/isis-and-iranian-backed-mi...>

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[57] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/isis-and-iranian-backed-mi...>

[58] <https://t.me/elamharbi/126>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/125>

[59] <https://t.me/elamharbi/3>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/10>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/14>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/70>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/79>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/87>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/87>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/90>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/103>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/109>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/125>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/126>

[60] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-it-shot-down-cruise-missile-apparently-fired-by-houthis-over-red-sea/>

[61] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-it-shot-down-cruise-missile-apparently-fired-by-houthis-over-red-sea/>

[62] <https://www.ansarollah.com/archives/644391>

[63] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-arrow-system-used-to-down-missile-from-red-sea-houthis-claim-uav-attack/> ; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hamas-war-yemen-houthis-i...> ; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-arrow-system-used-to-down-missile-from-red-sea-houthis-claim-uav-attack/> ; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hamas-war-yemen-houthis-i...> ; <https://twitter.com/army21ye/status/1719808498416927049> ; <https://twitter.com/army21ye/status/1721592644944494911> ; <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1722672932776710281>

[64] <https://twitter.com/army21ye/status/1719340968812425410> ; <https://twitter.com/army21ye/status/1719345629208412584>

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[66] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/09/01/2993909>

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[68] https://t.me/C_Military1/40064

[69] <https://mfa.ir/portal/newsview/731370> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-13-2023>

[70] <https://www.leader.ir/fa/content/26790>

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[72] <https://www.irna.ir/news/85300354>

[73] <https://donya-e-eqtesad.com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%B3%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86-62/4022831-%D8%B1%D8%A6%DB%8C%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%DB%8C%D9%84-%D8%AA%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2-%D9%85%D9%88%D9%81%D9%82%DB%8C%D8%AA%DB%8C-%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%DA%A9%D9%88%D8%AF%DA%A9%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%BE%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2%DB%8C-%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%B3%D8%AA>

IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 24, 2023

Iran Update, November 24, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Andie Parry, Peter Mills, and Annika Ganzeveld

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#)

Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel– Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran’s Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

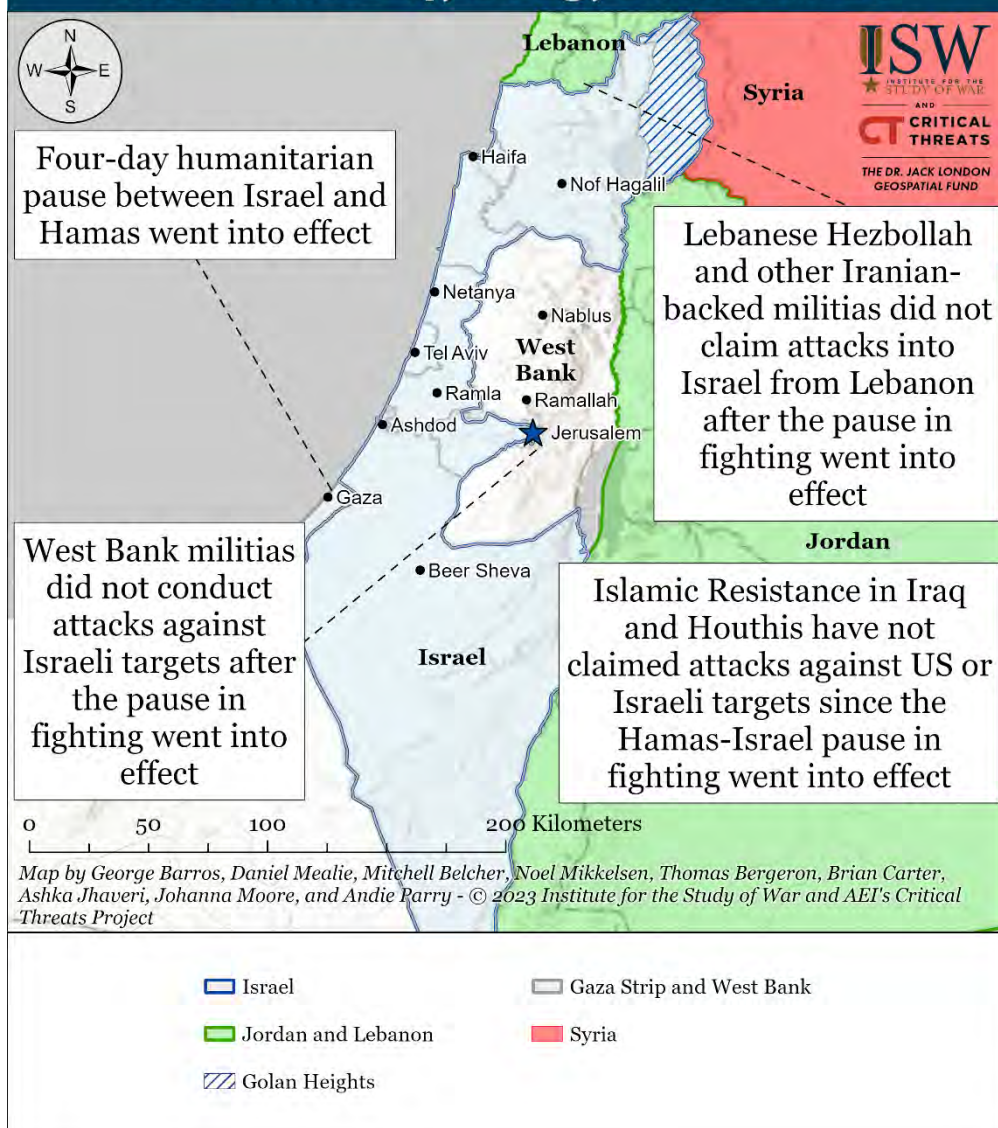
Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW’s interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Note: This update covers the 48 hours of activity from 2:00pm EST November 22 to 2:00pm EST November 24. CTP-ISW did not publish an update on Thursday, November 23, for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Key Takeaways:

1. The Israel– Hamas four-day humanitarian pause went into effect on November 24. Israeli forces and Hamas have not claimed attacks in the Gaza Strip in accordance with the pause.
2. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad said it would adhere to the cessation of military activity in the Gaza Strip.
3. CTP-ISW has not verified reports of clashes or militia attacks in the West Bank since the Gaza Israel– Hamas pause in fighting went into effect.
4. Iranian-backed militias, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), have not conducted attacks into northern Israel since the pause in fighting went into effect. LH did not claim any attacks on November 24, nor did the IDF announce any launches from southern Lebanon into Israel.
5. The secretary general of Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Seyyed ol Shohada released statements that suggest the Islamic Resistance in Iraq will refrain from attacks on US forces during the Hamas-Israel pause in fighting. He also called upon the group to monitor the implementation of the pause in fighting and to act accordingly to support the Palestinian resistance.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 24, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

The Israel-Hamas four-day humanitarian pause went into effect on November 24. Israeli forces and Hamas have not claimed attacks in the Gaza Strip in accordance with the pause. Israel and Hamas agreed to a prisoner/hostage swap but characterized it with different levels of detail on November 22.^[1] The Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed on November 24 that 24 hostages were freed from the Gaza Strip, including 13 Israeli citizens, 10 Thai citizens, and one Filipino citizen.^[2] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on November 22 that the deal allows Red Cross representatives to visit hostages in the Gaza Strip and deliver medicine.^[3] Qatar confirmed that Israel freed 39 Palestinians from prison in return during the first stage of the swap.^[4]

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesperson for Arab media said that Israeli forces will relocate during the temporary suspension of fire to sparsely populated areas inside the Gaza Strip.^[5] The Israeli Southern

Command commander approved plans for operational preparations at the ceasefire lines.^[6] Israeli forces will continue administrative and logistical movements on the Netzarim axis and coastal road in the northern Gaza Strip.^[7] The IDF spokesperson emphasized that “the war is not over yet” and warned civilians against returning to the northern Gaza Strip.^[8] The Israeli Army Radio said Israel intercepted a rocket shortly after the ceasefire went into effect on November 24.^[9] A *Times of Israel* military correspondent commented that a rocket launch after a truce begins is “tradition.”^[10] Neither Hamas nor Israel has commented on any violations of the agreement since then.

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) said it would adhere to the cessation of military activity in the Gaza Strip. The military spokesperson of the al Quds Brigades—the military wing of PIJ—said on November 23 that the militia is committed to the pause during the period of humanitarian truce.^[11] The spokesperson said that the militia would release an unspecified number of its hostages.^[12] The al Quds Brigades claimed that an Israeli hostage died due to Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip while in the militia’s custody on November 21.^[13] The same Israeli hostage was part of the first 24 hostages Hamas released to Israel on November 24, however.^[14] CTP-ISW has previously reported that Hamas and its allies attempted to prepare the information environment to blame Israel for the possible deaths of hostages in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas and PIJ thanked several Iranian-backed militias operating in the region for their support and attacks during the Israel–Hamas War. PIJ Secretary General Ziyad al Nakhleh thanked Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) for its attacks on the northern Israeli border.^[15] Nakhleh also commended militias in Iraq for attacks on US bases in the region and the Houthis in Yemen for attacks into Israel.^[16] Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh similarly thanked LH, Iraqi militias, and the Houthis for their solidarity with Palestine.^[17]

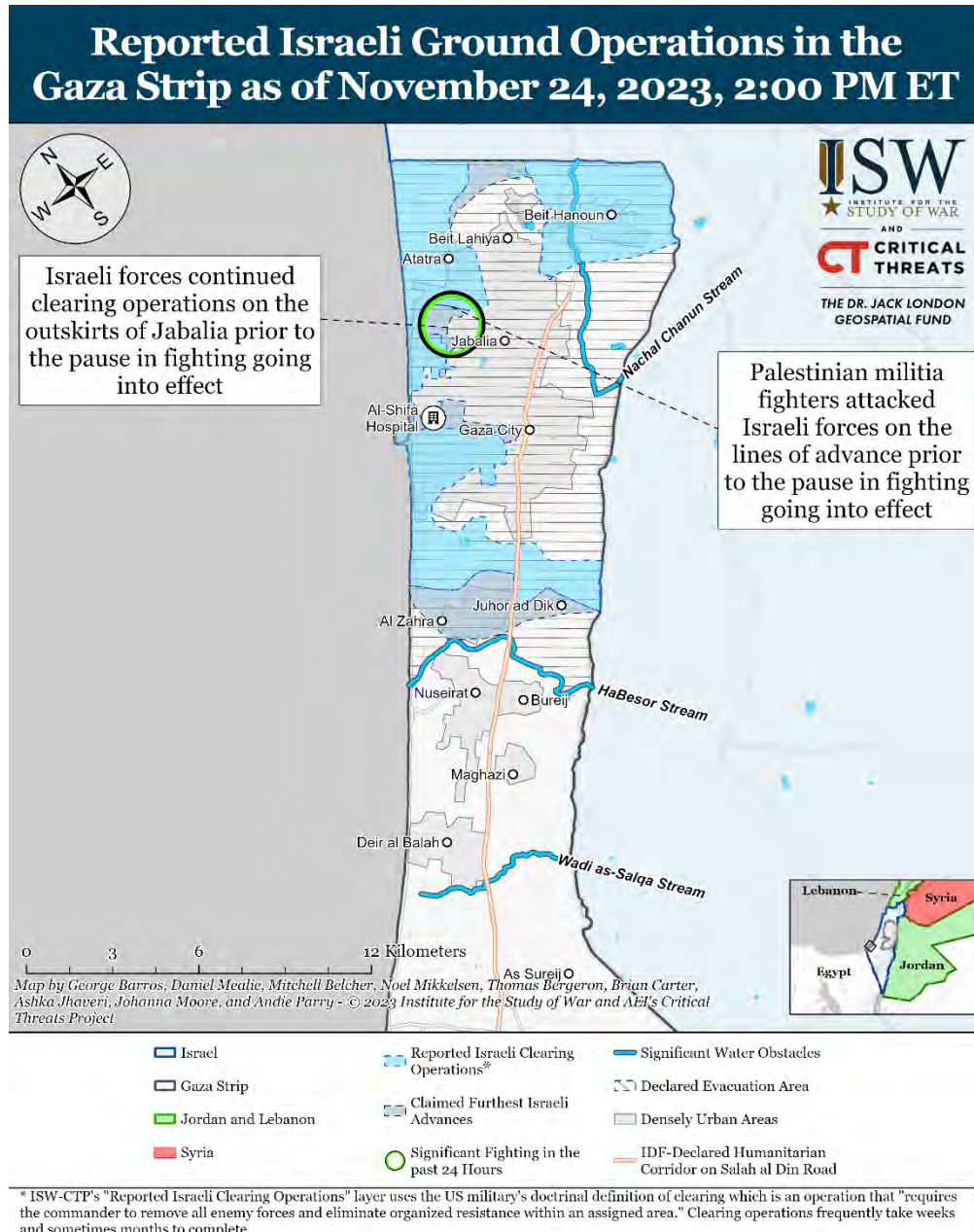
Israeli forces conducted clearing operations in the northern Gaza Strip before the pause in fighting began on November 24. The IDF said on November 23 that its forces operated on the outskirts of Jabalia and uncovered underground infrastructure.^[18] Palestinian journalists and local media reported that Israeli forces cleared the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahiya on the night of November 23 after surrounding it.^[19] Israel has repeatedly claimed that Hamas uses hospitals and civilian infrastructure for military activity such as hiding, including the Indonesian Hospital.^[20] Israeli forces arrested the director of the al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City on the grounds of allowing Hamas to use the hospital as a command headquarters.^[21] Israel said that the director allowed Hamas to use the hospital’s electricity to strengthen the underground tunnel network.^[22] The IDF destroyed a tunnel at al Shifa Hospital and shafts in the area of the medical complex.^[23]

Palestinian militias attacked Israeli forces on the Israeli lines of advance across the northern Gaza Strip prior to the pause in fighting. The military spokesperson for al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—claimed on November 23 that its forces operated in Jabalia, Beit Hanoun, Sheikh Radwan, and Zaytoun neighborhoods, where Israeli forces have begun their stated advance into Gaza City.^[24] The al Quds Brigades claimed it destroyed Israeli military vehicles in an unspecified location.^[25] The militia fighters used tandem charge anti-tank rockets, rocket-propelled grenades (RPG), and anti-personnel weapons to attack Israeli forces and vehicles.^[26] The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades—the militant wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)—claimed to fire mortars and rockets at Israeli forces on November 23.^[27] CTP-ISW previously reported that the IDF faces a loose coalition of Palestinian militant groups in the Gaza Strip—not just Hamas.

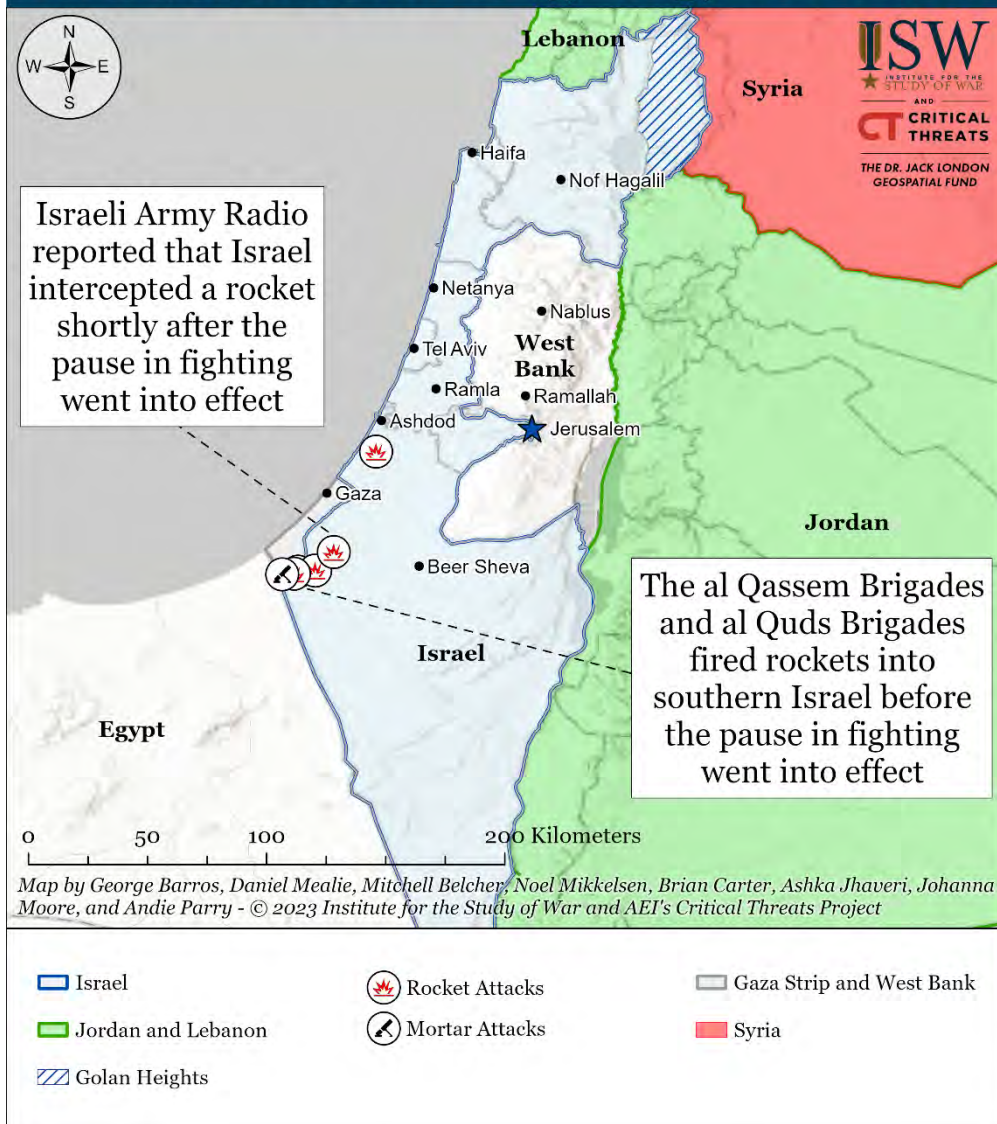
Israeli forces conducted an airstrike on a Hamas naval force commander in Khan Younis on November 23. The IDF said that it conducted the airstrike with military and naval intelligence as well as Shin Bet guidance.^[28] The IDF also destroyed the naval arm’s weapons depot, tunneling sites on the coast, and other military infrastructure.^[29] The IDF has targeted Hamas’ naval capabilities throughout the Israel–Hamas war, which Hamas could use to target Israeli gas rigs and other infrastructure, according to an Israeli journalist.^[30]

Palestinian militias continued indirect fire from the Gaza Strip into Israel prior to the pause in fighting. The al Qassem Brigades claimed it fired mortars and rockets at three Israeli military sites in southern Israel on November 23.^[31] The al Quds Brigades claimed a mortar attack in southern Israel on November 23.^[32]

NOTE: The IDF said that its forces are stationed along ceasefire lines across the Gaza Strip during the pause in fighting. CTP-ISW's map of Israeli clearing operations shows reported Israeli clearing operations and the claimed furthest Israeli advances. CTP-ISW will not map the shift in Israeli operating areas during the humanitarian pause.

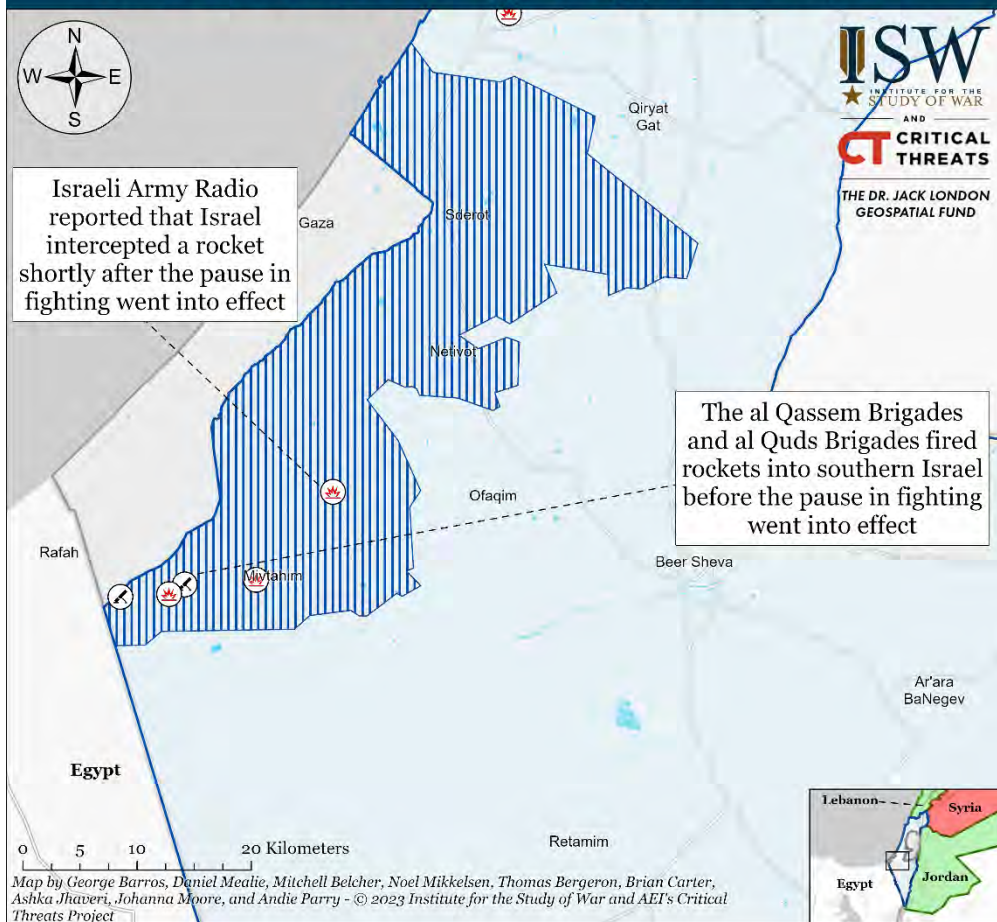


Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 24, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 24, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Israel | Rocket Attacks | Gaza Strip and West Bank |
| Israeli Closed Military Zone | Mortar Attacks | Syria |
| Jordan and Lebanon | | |

Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

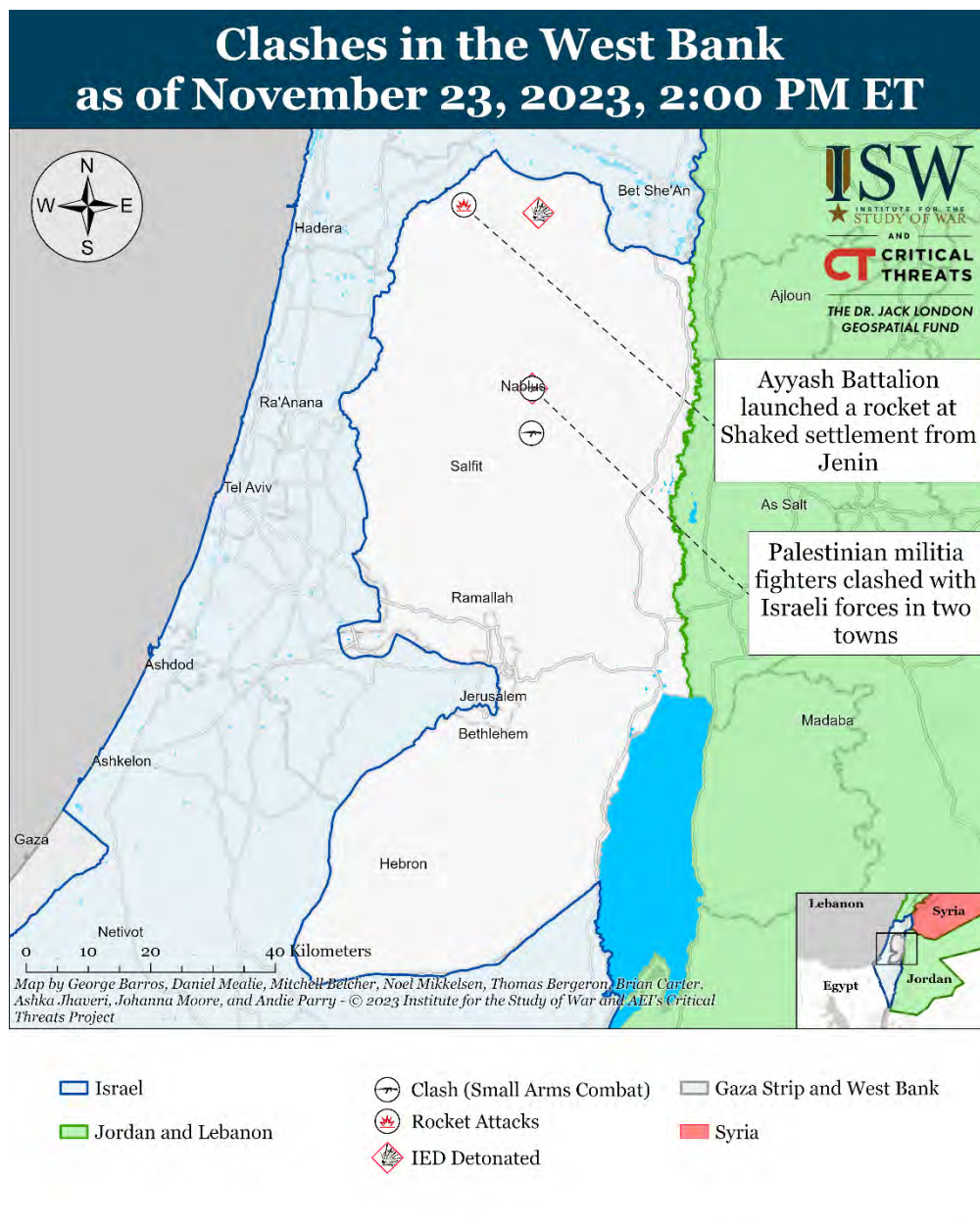
- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

CTP-ISW has not verified reports of clashes or militia attacks in the West Bank since the Gaza Israel– Hamas pause in fighting went into effect at 00:00 ET on November 24. Palestinian militia fighters engaged in six distinct clashes and conducted two IED attacks on Israeli forces on November 23 prior to the pause in fighting in the Gaza Strip.[33] Israeli forces arrested 10 Palestinians, including two Hamas associates, in overnight raids in West Bank towns. [34]

Palestinian militia fighters clashed with Israeli forces in two areas and detonated two IEDs during the November 22-23.[35] Israeli forces conducted raids into West Bank towns and arrested 40 Palestinians, three of whom were associated with Hamas.[36] The Ayyash Battalion conducted an indirect fire attack with a Qassem-1 rocket from Jenin at the Shaked settlement on November 23 before the temporary ceasefire.[37] The Ayyash Battalion conducted a similar rocket attack on August 15.[38]

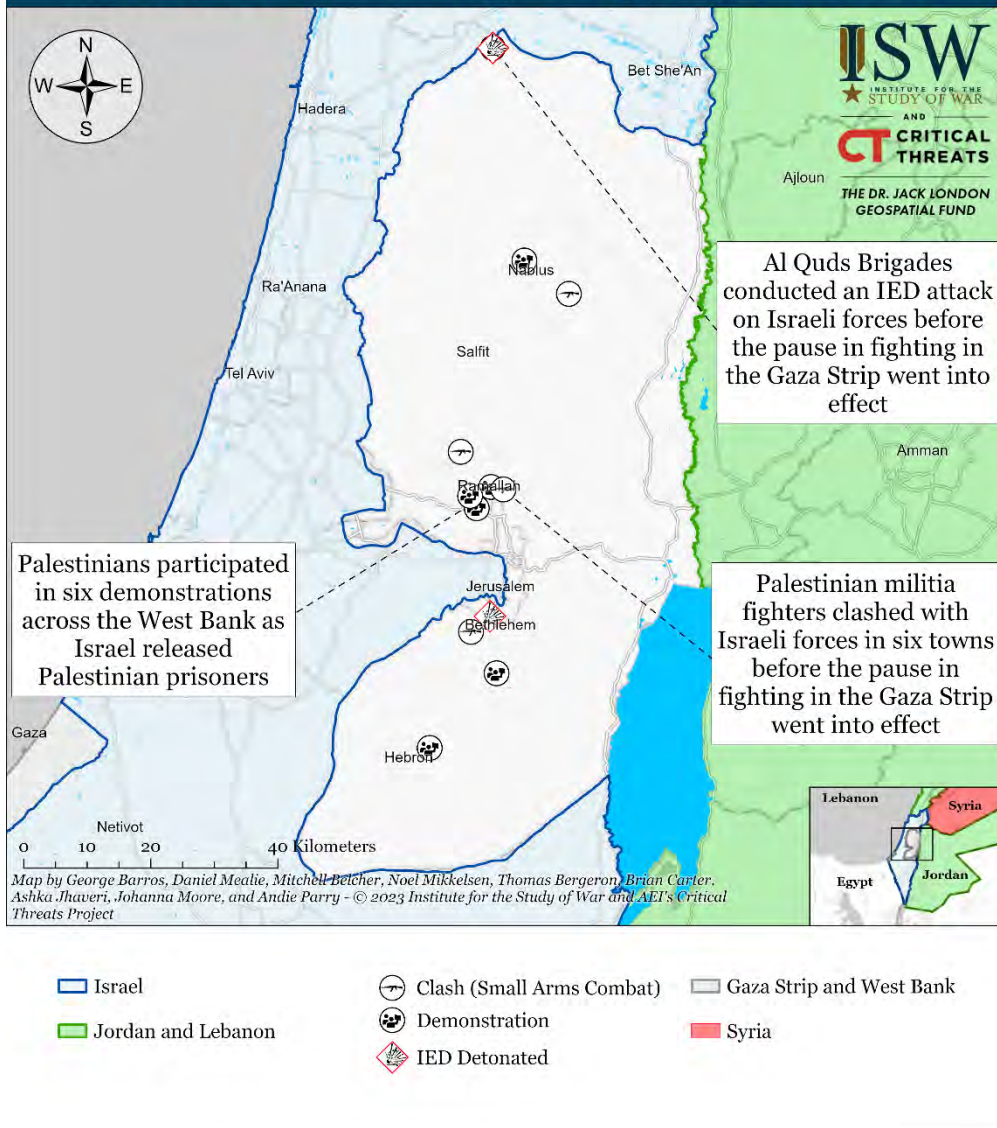
Palestinians organized at least six demonstrations in response to the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails on November 24.[39] One of the demonstrations took place outside the Ofer Prison, from which the prisoners were released.[40] Palestinian media reported that Israeli forces opened fire into the crowd demonstrating in front of the prison, injuring several individuals.[41]

Some Palestinian militias reiterated calls for violence in the West Bank on November 23. The al Quds Brigades' Tulkarm Battalion issued a military statement on November 23 that its soldiers are still engaged in the Battle of the Al-Aqsa Flood with full force on the front line.[42] It also claimed that the group's weapons are deployed in all areas.[43] The Tulkarm Battalion took heavy casualties, including two commanders, in clashes with Israeli forces during a raid on November 22.[44] Al Qassem Brigades Spokesperson Abu Obaida called for confrontation with Israeli forces to escalate in the West Bank in a speech on November 23.[45] The al Qassem Brigades has repeatedly called for the mobilization of the West Bank to no great effect.[46]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Clashes in the West Bank as of November 24, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



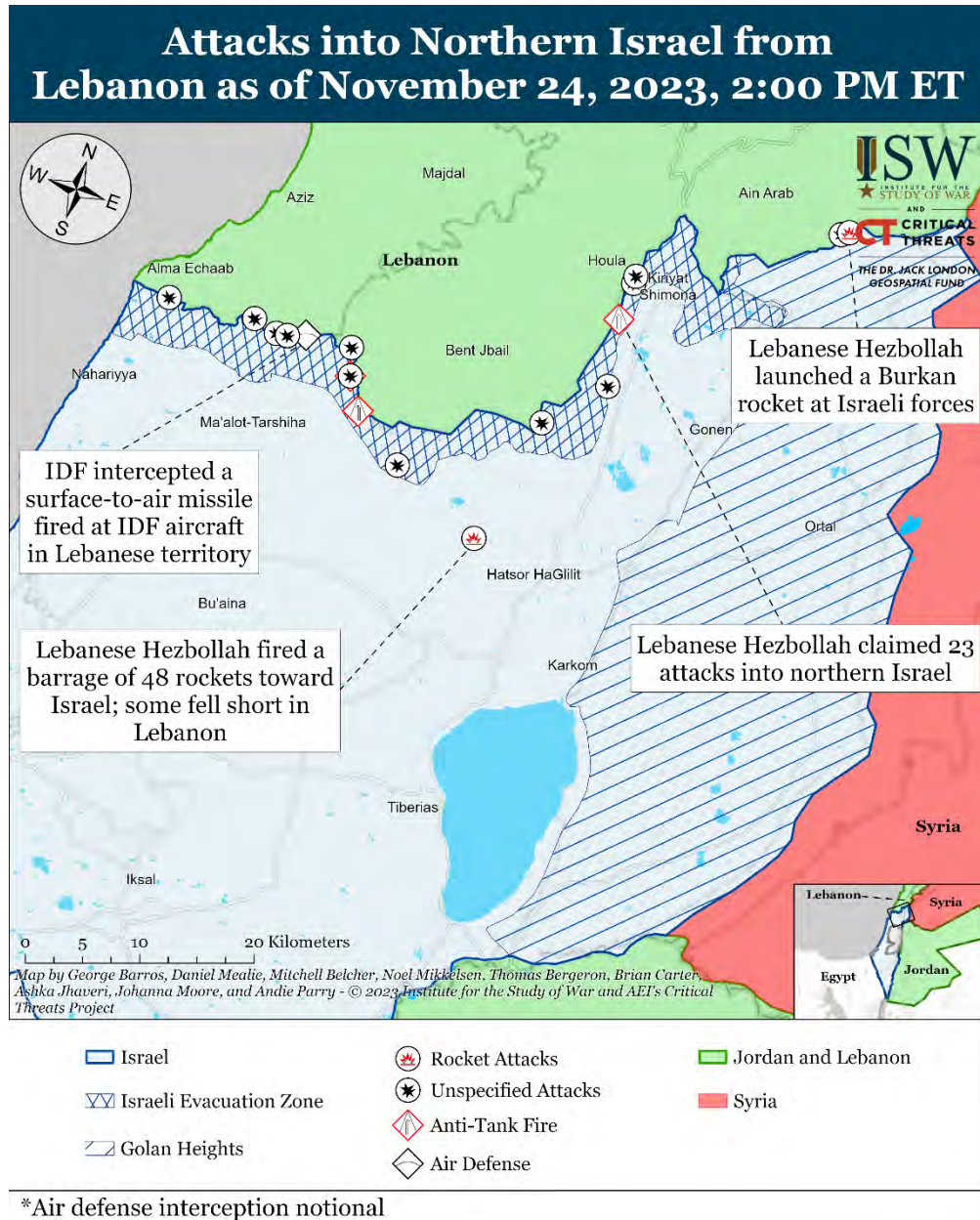
This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed militias, including Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), have not conducted attacks into northern Israel since the pause in fighting went into effect on November 24. LH did not claim any attacks on November 24, nor did the IDF announce any launches from southern Lebanon into Israel.^[47] Iranian-backed militias, including LH, conducted 24 attacks into Israel on November 23, the day before the pause in fighting began.^[48] LH claimed 23 of the 24 attacks.^[49] This is the largest number of attacks from Lebanon into Israel since November 2.^[50] LH launched 48 rockets into northern Israel from southern Lebanon.^[51] An IDF spokesperson said that some of those rockets failed and fell on civilian houses in southern Lebanon.^[52] LH also fired a “Burkan” rocket, which carries a 300–500kg warhead, at an Israeli barracks on November 23.^[53] Unspecified militants fired a surface-to-air missile at an Israeli aircraft over southern Lebanon on November 23, in a rare use of air defense in Lebanon.^[54]

An Israeli airstrike killed the son of Muhammad Raad, the head of the LH political bloc, in southern Lebanon on November 22.[55] The IDF conducted multiple airstrikes targeting LH units conducting cross-border attacks, LH military infrastructure in southern Lebanon, and the LH Radwan Unit headquarters on November 23.[56] The IDF has not announced strikes into southern Lebanon since the pause in fighting began, however.



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

Abu Alaa al Walai—the secretary general of Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Seyyed ol Shohada—released statements that suggest the Islamic Resistance in Iraq will refrain from attacks on US forces during the Hamas-Israeli pause in fighting. Walai framed the pause in fighting as a victory for Iran's so-called Axis of Resistance and stated that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias “forced the enemy to submit to the

conditions of the resistance.”^[57] Walai also called upon the Islamic Resistance in Iraq to monitor the implementation of the pause in fighting and to act accordingly to support the Palestinian resistance. ^[58]

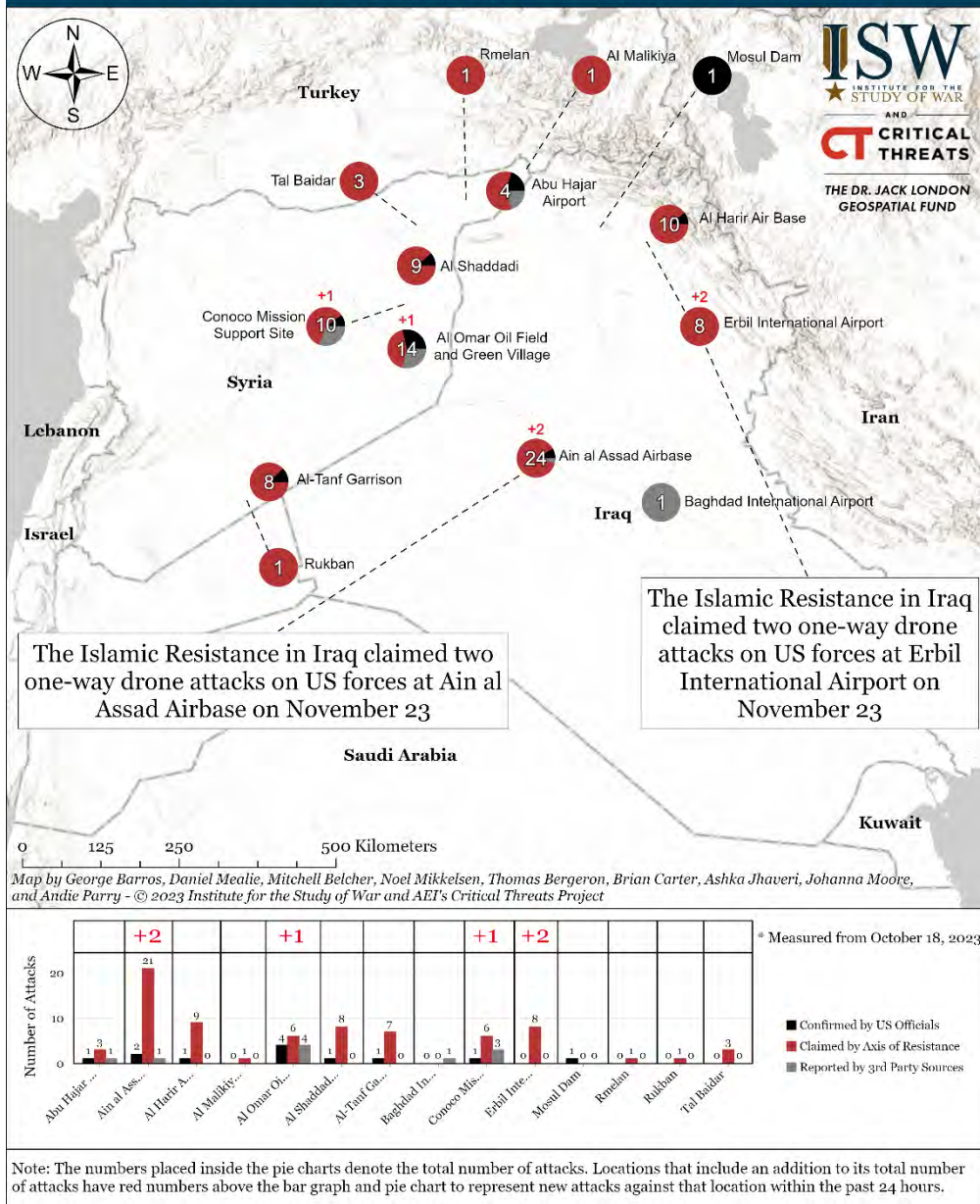
The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for six attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria on November 23. The group has not claimed any attacks since the Hamas-Israeli pause in fighting went into effect. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq and its affiliated groups have claimed 74 attacks against US forces in the Middle East since October 18.

- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed two attacks on US forces in Syria on November 23. The group claimed it launched a rocket salvo at the US base Conoco Mission Support Site and launched a one-way attack drone targeting US forces near al Omar, in northeastern Syria.^[59] The group has claimed six attacks on Conoco and three attacks on al Omar since October 18.
- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed that it launched two waves of one-way attack drones targeting US forces at Ain Asad Airbase on November 23.^[60] The group has claimed 21 attacks on Ain Asad Airbase since October 18.
- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed that it launched two waves of one-way attack drones targeting US forces near Erbil airport on November 23.^[61] The group has claimed seven attacks on Erbil airport since October 18.

The US destroyer *Thomas Hudner* shot down multiple one-way attack drones that the Houthis launched from Yemen on November 23.^[62] The IDF intercepted a Houthi-fired cruise missile south of Eilat on November 22.^[63] The Houthi military spokesmen stated on November 22 that the movement would continue carrying out military operations targeting Israel until there was a ceasefire in both Gaza and the West Bank.^[64] The Houthis have not launched any missiles or drones towards Israel since the Israel–Hamas ceasefire went into effect on November 24.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq al Dhaferin Group disavowed its claimed attacks against US bases in Iraq and stated that the group was a disinformation operation.^[65] CTP-ISW will remove the Dhaferin Group’s three claimed attacks from our data layer. CTP-ISW cannot assess the purpose of the Dhaferin group’s disinformation operation.

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 24, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian discussed the four-day humanitarian pause in fighting between Israel and Hamas with senior Lebanese, LH, Hamas, and Qatari officials on November 22–23. Abdollahian met with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati and LH Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut on November 22 and 23, respectively.^[66] Abdollahian emphasized the need for a “complete ceasefire” during his meeting with Mikati. Abdollahian additionally framed the agreement between Israel and Hamas to pause fighting as a sign of Israel’s “helplessness” during his meeting with Nasrallah. Abdollahian met with Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh and Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdul Rahman bin Jassim al Thani in Doha on November 23.^[67] Abdollahian’s November 23 visit to Doha marks his third trip to Qatar since the start of the Israel–Hamas war on October 7.^[68] Abdollahian and Haniyeh claimed that the United States and Israel were “forced” to accept a pause in fighting due to their failure to achieve military successes in the Gaza Strip. Haniyeh thanked Iran for its “special efforts and support” for a pause in fighting and described the pause as a “political victory” for the Axis of Resistance.

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian is attempting to pressure Israel to extend the four-day pause in fighting by warning that Israel's failure to do so will precipitate an expansion and intensification of the war. Abdollahian warned during his November 23 meeting with al Thani that "the conditions in the region will intensify" if Israel continues its attacks on the Gaza Strip after the end of the four-day pause.[69] Abdollahian made similar warnings in an interview with LH-affiliated al Mayadeen and in a post on X (Twitter) on November 23.[70] Abdollahian has repeatedly warned about the potential expansion of the conflict since October 7. Abdollahian warned on October 16, for example, that resistance groups would take "preemptive action" against Israel "in the coming hours." [71] The Axis of Resistance notably did not follow through on Abdollahian's threat in the hours after he issued it.

Iranian state media claimed on November 24 that Israel violated its agreement with Hamas to pause fighting. Raisi administration-affiliated IRNA claimed that the IDF violated the agreement by "attacking" Gazan civilians attempting to return to the northern Gaza Strip.[72] Hamas did not accuse Israel of violating the agreement on November 24.

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- [1] <https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/spoke-kidnapped221123> ; <https://t.me/hamasps/17906>
 - [2] https://twitter.com/MofaQatar_EN/status/1727770445334692259; <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/11/24/world/israel-hamas-hostage-relea...>; <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/24/middleeast/who-are-the-hostages-released-...>
 - [3] <https://twitter.com/IsraeliPM/status/1727473284143263851>
 - [4] <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-news-11-24-2023-172256dd5931...>
 - [5] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1727795936523440622>
 - [6] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1728028323547074976>
 - [7] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1727795936523440622>
 - [8] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1727908761602298182>
 - [9] <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1727921406942298337>
 - [10] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1727919092001112140>
 - [11] https://t.me/C_Military1/40256
 - [12] https://t.me/C_Military1/40255
 - [13] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16734>
 - [14] <https://m.jpost dot com/arab-israeli-conflict/gaza-news/article-774986>
 - [15] https://t.me/C_Military1/40250
 - [16] https://t.me/C_Military1/40250
 - [17] https://t.me/C_Military1/40257
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 - [20] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1726963701541200103>
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 - [23] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727926252038738172>
 - [24] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/527>
 - [25] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16744>
 - [26] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/528>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16744>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/523>
 - [27] <http://The Martyr Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades destroy enemy crowds and settlements with heavy-caliber mortar shells and rocket barrages in response to the occupation's crimes against our people>
 - [28] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727780795694162018>
 - [29] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1727780795694162018>
 - [30] https://twitter.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1714925804302340292; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1717872157726822542>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1715104398244778136>
 - [31] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/524>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/522>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/521>
 - [32] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16748>

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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 25, 2023

Iran Update, November 25, 2023

Andie Parry, Johanna Moore, Annika Ganzeveld, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Hamas released a second round of hostages after Hamas accused Israel of violating the humanitarian pause agreement and threatened to delay the hostages' release.
2. CTP-ISW did not record verifiable reports of kinetic activity inside the Gaza Strip or reports of attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel.
3. CTP-ISW recorded nine small arms clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters in the West Bank.
4. Palestinian militias are trying to exert greater control over the Palestinian population in the West Bank to facilitate further militia operations against Israeli targets.
5. Israeli and Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) media suggested that LH conducted 2-3 attacks into northern Israel.
6. Iranian-backed Iraqi factions are trying to exploit the Israel-Hamas war to erode US military and political influence in Iraq.
7. Iran and its Axis of Resistance appear to be continuing to threaten Israeli-affiliated commercial shipping.
8. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—did not claim any attacks against US forces in Iraq or Syria.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 25, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

NOTE: The IDF has said that its forces are stationed along ceasefire lines across the Gaza Strip during the pause in fighting. CTP-ISW's map of Israeli clearing operations shows reported Israeli clearing operations and the claimed furthest Israeli advances. CTP-ISW will not be mapping the shift in Israeli operating areas during the humanitarian pause.

Hamas released a second round of hostages on November 25 after Hamas accused Israel of violating the humanitarian pause agreement and threatened to delay the hostages' release. Hamas and the IDF confirmed that 13 Israeli hostages and four foreign nationals left the Gaza Strip at around 1600 EST on November 25.[1] Their releases come after Hamas media adviser Taher al Nunu accused Israel of violating the pause agreement by failing to supply sufficient aid to the northern Gaza Strip, operating surveillance drones in the closed airspace above the Gaza Strip, shooting and killing Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and

releasing Palestinian prisoners in the wrong order from Israeli prisons.[2] Osama Hamdan— Hamas' senior representative to Lebanon—echoed al Nunu's complaints of alleged Israeli violations during a press conference in Beirut.[3] Nunu and Hamdan did not threaten to withdraw from the pause agreement, however. The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—announced earlier in the day that it would delay the release of the second batch of hostages until Israel adhered to the terms of the deal.[4] Iranian state media separately claimed that the IDF violated the agreement by “attacking” Gazan civilians on November 24.[5] Israeli officials have not responded to these allegations, nor have they accused Hamas of violating the deal at the time of this writing.

Hamas remains the only party that has publicly released what it claims are the details of its agreement with Israel.[6] Israel and Qatar both reported that they reached an agreement with Hamas but did not provide the same level of detail on the terms. CTP-ISW cannot therefore assess whether the parties involved have properly executed the terms of the agreement or whether any changes were made to the agreement during engagements with US, Egyptian, and Qatari mediators on November 25.[7] The official spokesperson for the Qatari Foreign Affairs Ministry stated that 39 Palestinian prisoners, 13 Israeli hostages, and seven other unspecified foreign nationals would be exchanged in accordance with the agreement on the evening of November 25 after talks with both parties.[8] The al Qassem Brigades similarly said that it released seven foreign nationals but later revised its statement to say that it only released four.[9]

Hamas claimed that the agreement stipulates that 200 aid trucks will enter all areas of the Gaza Strip daily.[10] The IDF Arabic-language spokesperson detailed the quantity, destination, and contents of aid trucks that entered the Gaza Strip from Egypt on November 24 and 25.[11] He stated that 50 of the 200 trucks transported food, water, humanitarian shelter supplies, and medical equipment aid to the northern Gaza Strip on November 25.[12] The IDF said another 200 trucks arrived at unspecified locations in the Gaza Strip on November 24.[13] The Palestinian Red Crescent contrastingly said that it only received 196 trucks and transported 61 to the northern Gaza Strip on November 24.[14] The northern Gaza Strip is the focus of Israeli clearing operations against Hamas at this time. The US Special Envoy for Middle East Humanitarian Issues said on November 4 that between 350,000 to 400,000 people remained in the northern Gaza Strip.[15]

CTP-ISW did not record verifiable reports of kinetic activity inside the Gaza Strip or reports of attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel on November 25.

West Bank

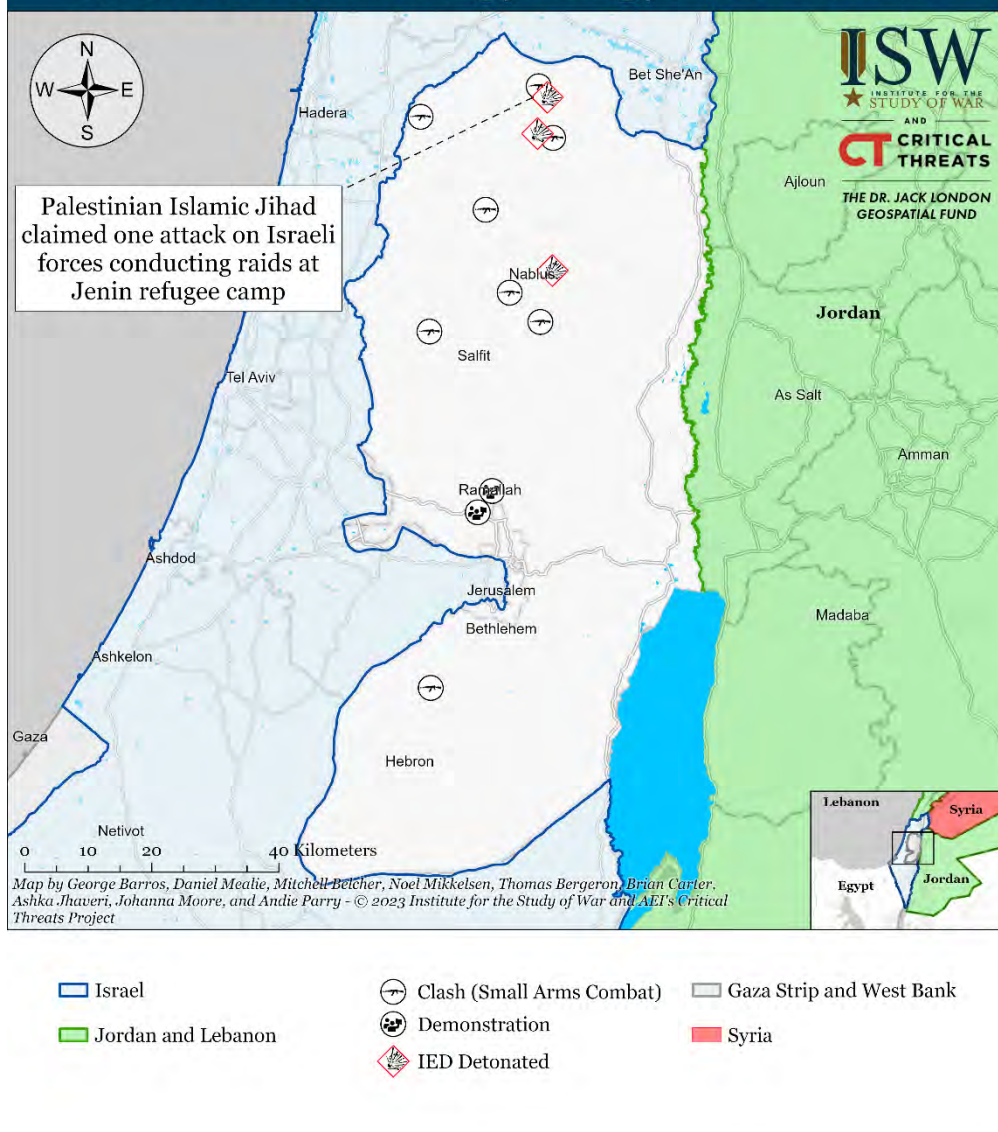
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

CTP-ISW recorded nine small arms clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters in the West Bank on November 25. Palestinian media reported that Israeli forces conducted several raids across the West Bank. The Jenin Battalion of the al Quds Brigade claimed an attack on Israeli forces conducting a raid on the outskirts of the Jenin refugee camp.[16] The group claimed that its fighters fired on the Israeli forces and threw IEDs at them.[17] Local West Bank media warned locals prior to the raid of an imminent Israeli operation and instructed civilians to avoid cellphone use and open areas.[18] Unspecified Palestinian fighters separately shot down an Israeli drone over Qabatiya during clashes with Israeli forces.[19] Palestinian fighters in Qabatiya fired on and threw IEDs at Israeli forces.[20] Israel did not report on any Israeli raids in the West Bank on November 25, which is contrary to its normal practice.

Palestinian militias are trying to exert greater control over the Palestinian population in the West Bank to facilitate further militia operations against Israeli targets. The Hornets' Nest—a subordinate unit of the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades—issued a statement on November 25 warning West Bank residents that Israel is trying to recruit local informants.[21] The statement added that Israel offered money to locals for information on the militia.[22] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades also released videos purportedly showing two men confessing to providing Israel with information in exchange for money.[23] Both men were publicly executed in Tulkarm on November 24.[24] The fact that the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades felt that it needed to release these statements and videos suggests that the group is concerned about the extent to which it controls the population.

Clashes in the West Bank as of November 25, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

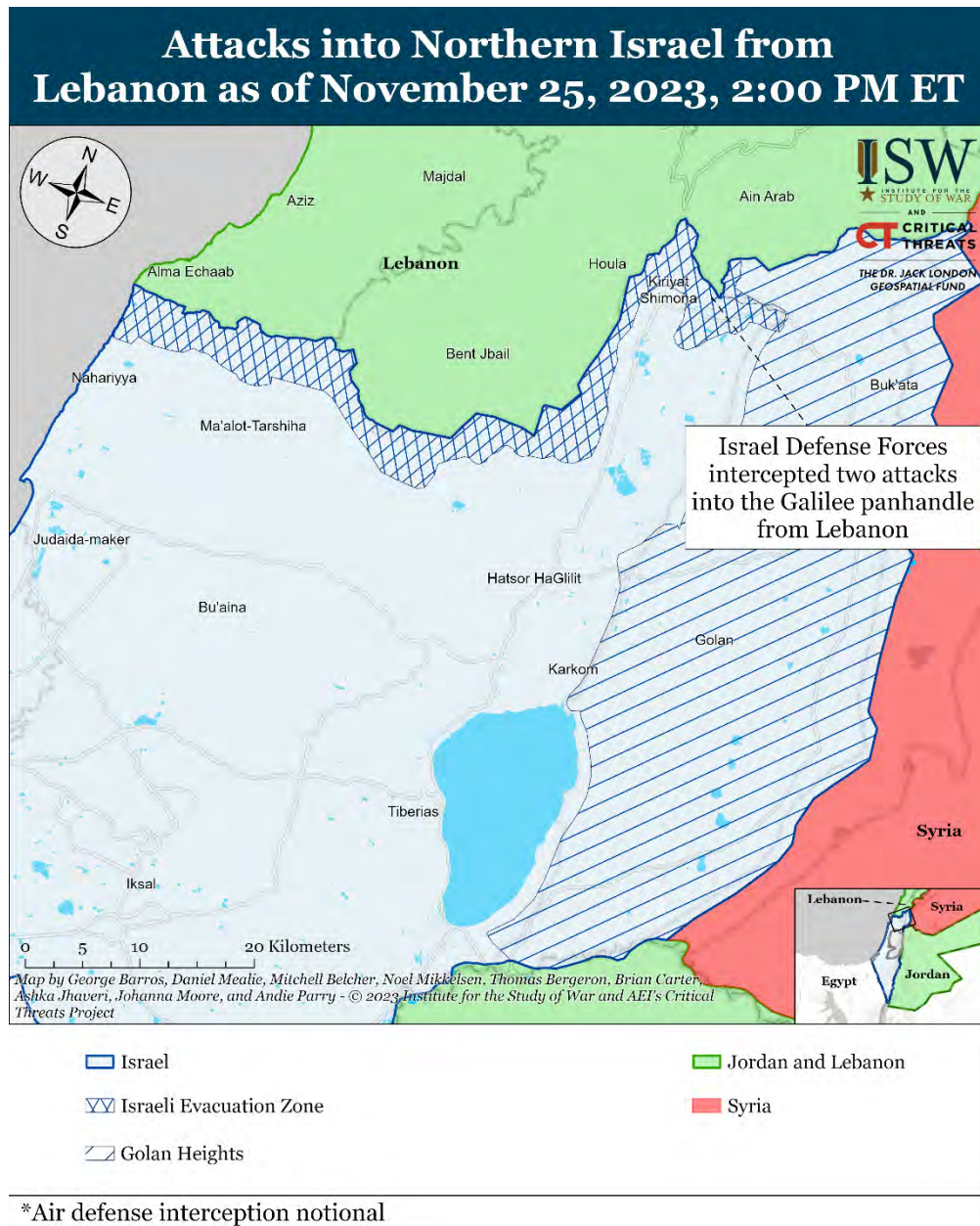
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Israeli and Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) media suggested that LH conducted 2-3 attacks into northern Israel on November 25. LH media, citing Israeli reports, claimed that LH fired anti-armor guided missiles and drones at unspecified locations in northern Israel. The IDF separately intercepted a drone and surface-to-air missile entering Israeli territory from Lebanon.[25] The IDF reported that it intercepted the missile over the Galilee panhandle, as the missile targeted an Israeli drone.[26] The IDF conducted an airstrike on LH infrastructure in southern Lebanon in retaliation for the attempted attack on the Israeli drone.[27] No group has claimed responsibility for any of the attacks into Israeli territory on November 25 at the time of publication. The al Qassem Brigades announced on November 23 that LH would observe the pause in fighting brokered between Israel and Hamas.[28] The likely LH attacks into northern Israel on November 25

suggest that the al Qassem Brigades either intentionally or unintentionally did not accurately portray LH's position or LH changed its calculus regarding the pause.



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

Iranian-backed Iraqi factions are trying to exploit the Israel-Hamas war to erode US military and political influence in Iraq. Iranian leaders routinely assert that one of their greatest strategic objectives is expelling the United States and its influence from the Middle East. Iranian leaders appear to assign particular priority to removing the United States from Iraq given how important they consider Iraq to the security of the Iranian regime.

- Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba Secretary General Akram al Kaabi released a statement on November 23 calling for a “declaration of war” against the United States and its expulsion from Iraq.[29] Kaabi released the statement in response to US fighter jets striking KH sites in Jurf al Saqr, Babil Province, Iraq, on

November 22. The United States conducted these strikes in response to repeated KH attacks against US servicemembers in recent weeks. Kaabi described the presence of US combat forces, advisers, and technicians in Iraq as “hostile.”

- Asaib Ahl al Haq Secretary General Qais al Khazali separately stated that US forces have no intention of leaving Iraq and are justifying their presence under the pretext of fighting ISIS during an interview with LH-controlled outlet al Ahed on November 24.[30] Khazali stated that US attacks on Iraqi security forces and especially the Popular Mobilization Forces are “unacceptable.” Iranian-backed militias have tried to highlight KH’s membership in the PMF in recent days to portray the US airstrikes on KH positions as attacks against a state-affiliated security organization rather than members of the US-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization that is KH. Khazali also emphasized Iraqi resistance groups’ support for Palestinians in the Israel-Hamas war.
- Iraqi parliamentarian Alaa al Rikabi claimed on November 25 that former Parliament Speaker Mohammed Halbousi blocked an extraordinary parliamentary session to expel US Ambassador to Iraq Alina Romanowski before he was dismissed on November 14.[31] The Iraqi Federal Supreme Court issued a ruling to remove Halbousi from parliament on November 14.[32] Halbousi, an important Sunni politician and the leader of the Taqqadum Movement, claimed that the Federal Supreme Court’s ruling was unconstitutional and was a move by unspecified parties to create political divisions within society.[33] Rikabi’s November 25 claim supports CTP-ISW’s hypothesis that Halbousi was removed from his post as part of political efforts to reduce the US presence in Iraq.

Iran and its Axis of Resistance appear to be continuing to threaten Israeli-affiliated commercial shipping.

- Likely Houthi fighters seized an Israeli-owned, Malta-flagged freighter transiting the Red Sea on November 25. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations reported that “Yemeni authorities” forced a ship near al Hudaydah, Yemen, to “alter course” on November 25.[34] The ship is believed to be the Israeli-owned, Malta-flagged Zim Luanda. The Houthi movement has not officially claimed responsibility for the attack. Houthi spokesperson Yahya Saree wrote “ZIM” in a one-word post on X (Twitter) on November 25, however.[35] Houthi members have used one-word posts to indicate their responsibility for attacks on Israeli targets in recent weeks, however. Houthi Political Bureau member Hizam al Asad previously wrote the Israeli city “Eilat” in a post on X on October 27—the same day that the Houthi movement conducted a drone attack targeting southern Israel.[36] At least two unspecified drones originating from the “Red Sea area” struck Egyptian territory near Taba, a resort town adjacent to Eilat, on October 27.[37] The November 25 seizure follows the Houthi’s November 23 warning that it will continue attacks against Israeli ships and interests until Israel’s “aggression against Gaza stops.”[38] The seizure also follows Emirati reporting on November 23 that Tehran ordered its proxies in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen to abide by the temporary pause in fighting between Israel and Hamas.[39] Houthi Naval Forces Chief of Staff Mansur al Saadi has received extensive training from Iran, and the US Treasury Department sanctioned him in March 2021 for planning attacks against international shipping in the Red Sea.[40]
- The IRGC may have conducted a one-way drone attack on an Israeli-owned, Malta-flagged freighter in the Persian Gulf on November 24. A suspected Iranian Shahed-136 one-way attack drone struck the CMA CGM Symi.[41] The Associated Press reported on November 25 that US officials suspect the IRGC of conducting the attack. LH-affiliated al Mayadeen, citing informed sources, reported the attack on November 25.[42] Iranian state media recirculated al Mayadeen’s reporting of the attack.[43] Iranian officials and media have not denied Iranian involvement in the attack at the time of writing.
- Houthi fighters recently hijacked an Israeli-owned, Japanese-operated freighter transiting the Red Sea on November 19.[44] Houthi fighters fast-roped onto the deck of the *Galaxy Leader* from a helicopter and took 25 crew members hostage.[45] The Israeli government said that the Houthis hijacked the ship under Iranian “guidance.”[46]

Iranian-sponsored Attacks in the Middle East as of November 25, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Iranian Deputy Parliament Speaker Mojtaba Zonnour warned on November 25 that Iran can inspect and stop ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz if they jeopardize Iranian national security.[47] It is unclear whether Zonnour made this warning in response to the suspected IRGC attack on the Israeli-owned freighter in the Persian Gulf on November 24. Zonnour previously served as Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's deputy representative to the IRGC between 2008-2011.[48]

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—did not claim any attacks against US forces in Iraq or Syria on November 25. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has not claimed any attacks since the Israel-Hamas pause in fighting went into effect. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq and its affiliated groups claimed 74 attacks against US forces in the Middle East between October 18 and November 23.[49]

Iranian Tourism and Cultural Heritage Minister and former IRGC official Ezzatollah Zarghami stated that he previously visited Hamas tunnels in the Gaza Strip and taught Hamas fighters how to use the Iranian-made Fajr-3 rocket during an interview with Iranian state television on November

20.[50] Zarghami stated that he traveled to the Gaza Strip as a “production manager” of the Fajr-3 rocket. Zarghami was a member of the IRGC in the 1980s and served as the IRGC Radio Program head between 1982 and 1986.[51] He served as the president of the state-controlled outlet IRIB between 2004 and 2014 and has served as Iran’s tourism minister since August 2021.[52]

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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 26, 2023

Iran Update, November 26, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Annika Ganzeveld, Andie Parry, Johanna Moore, Brian Carter, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Neither Israel nor Hamas claimed violations of the humanitarian pause in the Gaza Strip as they completed the third swap of Hamas-held hostages for Israeli-held prisoners. CTP-ISW did not record verifiable reports of kinetic activity inside the Gaza Strip or reports of attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel.
2. Israel said that Hamas established a checkpoint on the Salah al Din road to prevent aid from reaching northern Gaza Strip residents.
3. Israeli forces arrested 21 individuals in several raids across the West Bank. Palestinian militia fighters clashed with Israeli forces for nine hours in the Jenin refugee camp.
4. Lebanese Hezbollah and other Iranian-backed militias did not conduct any attacks into northern Israel.
5. Israeli aircraft conducted an airstrike on Damascus International Airport and possibly a second airstrike on Mezzeh Military Airport near Damascus, damaging both facilities.
6. Unspecified fighters attempted to seize the Israeli-owned, Liberian-flagged *Central Park* oil tanker in the Gulf of Aden and may have successfully held the tanker for some short period of time.
7. An IDF fighter jet intercepted a drone flying toward Israel over the Red Sea.
8. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—did not claim any attacks against US forces in Iraq or Syria.
9. Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah announced that it will reduce its rate of attacks against US forces in Iraq and Syria and halt attacks against Israel until the end of the Israel-Hamas humanitarian pause.
10. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian discussed efforts to extend the Israel-Hamas pause in fighting during a phone call with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan.
11. Iranian Artesh Commander Major General Abdol Rahim Mousavi stated that the Artesh is prepared to deploy “near” the Gaza Strip to provide medical aid to Palestinians.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 26, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Neither Israel nor Hamas claimed violations of the humanitarian pause in the Gaza Strip as they completed the third swap of Hamas-held hostages for Israeli-held prisoners on November 26. Israel and Hamas confirmed that Hamas released 17 hostages held in the Gaza Strip in exchange for Israel releasing 39 Palestinian prisoners.[1] The hostages included the first American whom Hamas has released since the war began.[2] Hamas also released a Russian citizen whom they claimed that they released because of Russian President Vladimir Putin's support for the Palestinian cause.[3] Russia hosted Hamas leadership in Moscow on October 26.[4] Hamas separately said on November 26 that it seeks to extend the pause after the four-day period ends on November 27.[5] Israeli Army Radio reported that there are efforts to extend the pause by an additional four days in return for Hamas releasing 40 hostages.[6] This report is

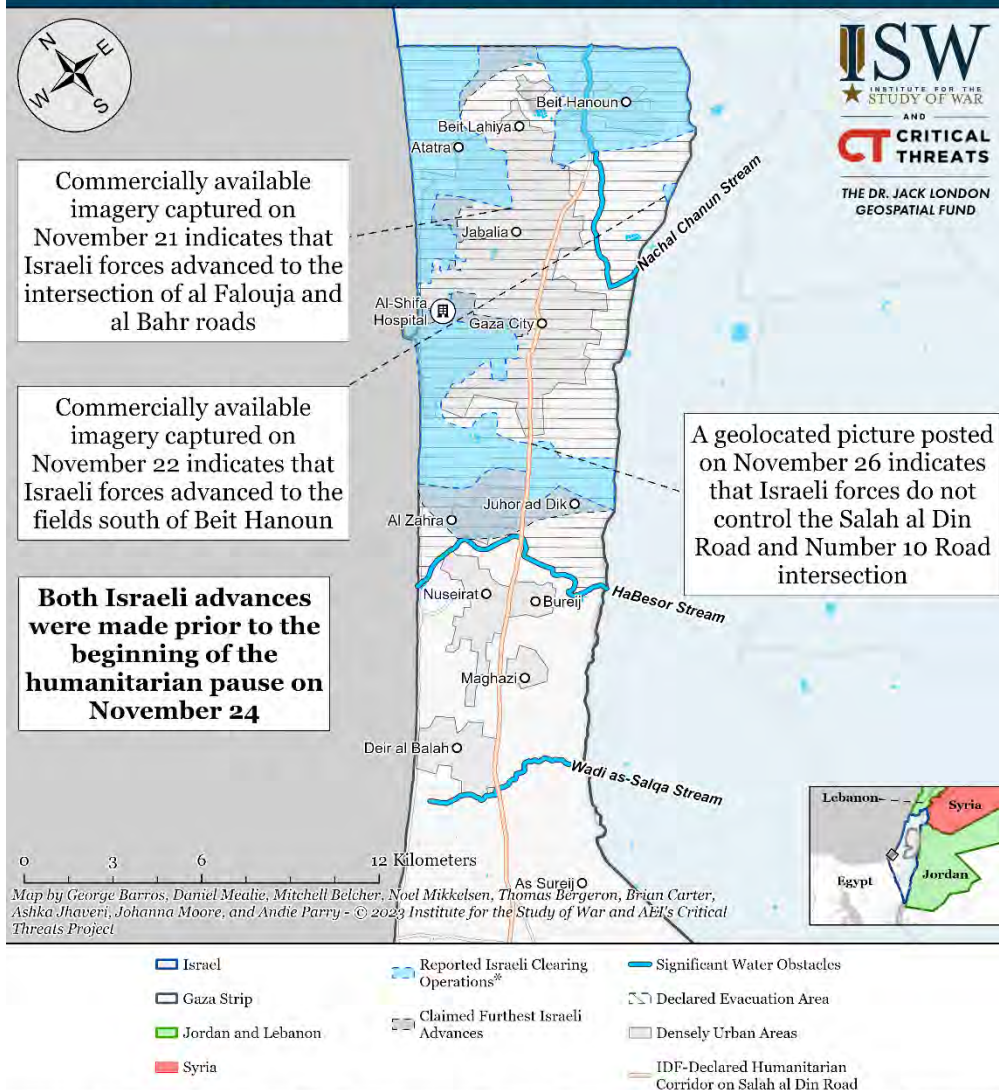
consistent with previous reports saying that Israel and Hamas agreed to extend the pause for 24 hours for every 10 hostages released by Hamas.^[7]

An Israeli official said that Israel did not violate the terms of the humanitarian pause on November 25 after Hamas accused Israel of releasing Palestinian prisoners out of order. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on November 26 that an unidentified Israeli official denied that Israel had broken any terms of the hostage exchange and that Israel was not aware of any stipulation regarding the order of prisoners.^[8] Hamas publicly released on November 22 what it claimed were the details of its agreement with Israel.^[9] The agreement that Hamas released did not include stipulations covering the order in which Israel must release Palestinian prisoners.^[10]

Israel said on November 26 that Hamas established a checkpoint on the Salah al Din road to prevent aid from reaching northern Gaza Strip residents.^[11] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Arab media spokesperson published an image that has been geolocated in support of its assertion.^[12] The location of the checkpoint—based on a geolocated image—is 1.3 kilometers from a Hamas tunnel entrance, according to a 2014 map published by the *Wall Street Journal*.^[13] Hamas media adviser Taher al Nunu claimed that Israel is violating the pause agreement by failing to supply sufficient aid to the northern Gaza Strip on November 25, but the director general of the Hamas-run Gazan Health Ministry said that Israel has allowed some fuel and medical aid to enter the northern Gaza Strip.^[14] Qatar similarly confirmed on November 26 that humanitarian aid is reaching the northern Gaza Strip.^[15] Israel also confirmed that humanitarian aid is reaching the northern Gaza Strip.^[16] The mayor of Gaza city contrastingly said on November 26 that no fuel has reached Gaza city.^[17] Israel said the UN manages some of the aid flows.^[18] The Hamas and Israeli statements regarding humanitarian aid flow to the northern Gaza Strip are consistent with the hypothesis that Hamas is redirecting aid before it gets to the northern Gaza Strip.

Israel said its forces killed five Hamas commanders in airstrikes in the Gaza Strip prior to the beginning of the humanitarian pause on November 24.^[19] The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—announced the death of several commanders responsible for Hamas' military operations in the northern Gaza Strip.^[20] The commanders included the Northern Gaza Strip Brigade Commander Ahmed Ghandour, who directed all Hamas activity in the northern Gaza Strip. Ghandour also coordinated militia activity in the West Bank. The airstrikes also killed the head of Hamas' Tulkarm Committee Farsan Khalifa. Khalifa developed cells of fighters in the Nur al Shams refugee camp near Tulkarm in the West Bank.^[21] Hamas has been rebuilding ties with militia groups in the West Bank and seeking to attract support, according to a 2023 Reuters report.^[22] The IDF has worked to eliminate Hamas operatives and commanders at the field and senior levels since October 7.^[23]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 26, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



NOTE: The IDF has said that its forces are stationed along ceasefire lines across the Gaza Strip during the pause in fighting. CTP-ISW's map of Israeli clearing operations shows reported Israeli clearing operations and the claimed furthest Israeli advances. CTP-ISW will not be mapping the shift in Israeli operating areas during the humanitarian pause.

CTP-ISW did not record verifiable reports of kinetic activity inside the Gaza Strip or reports of attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel on November 26.

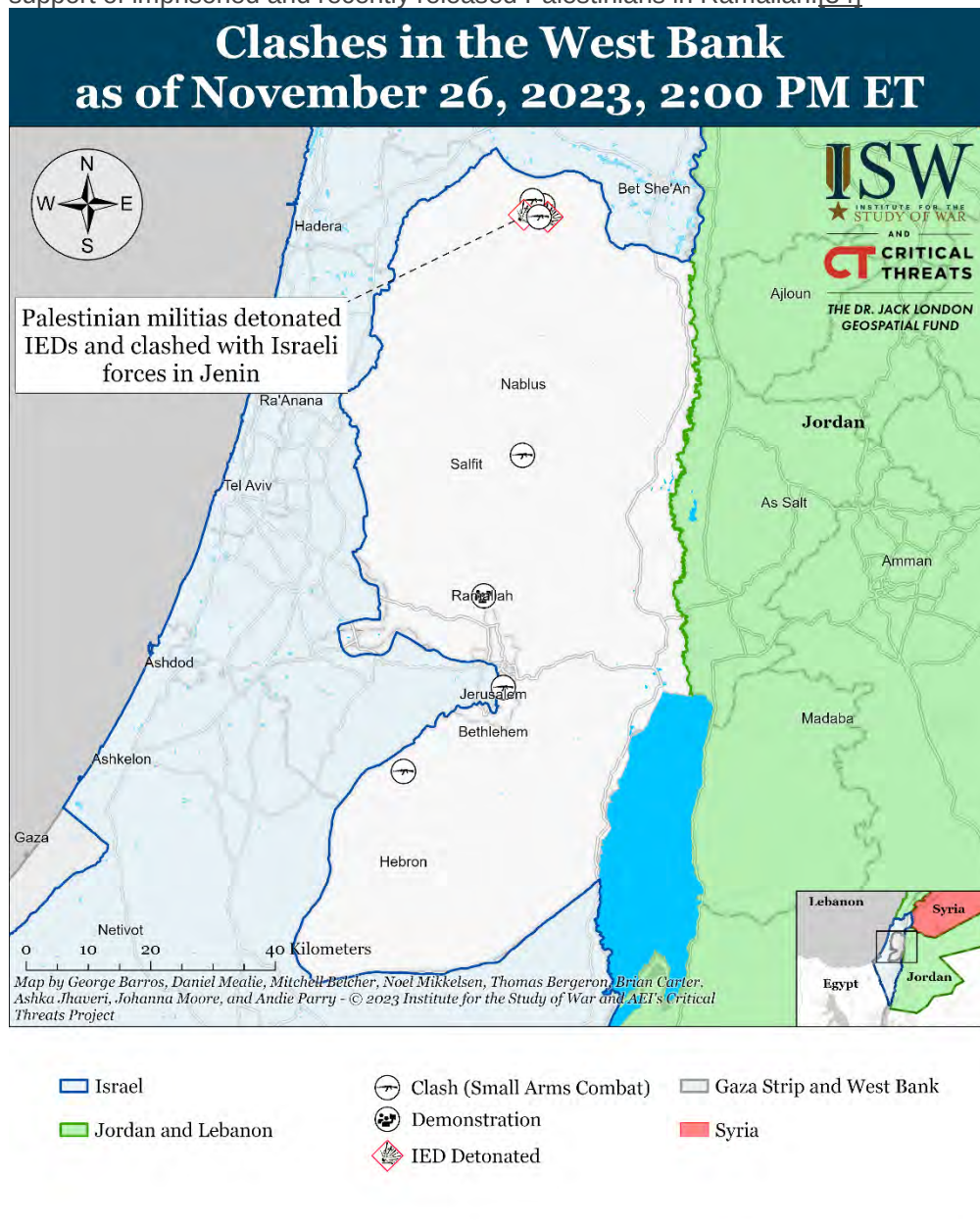
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there
- **Israeli forces arrested 21 individuals in several raids across the West Bank on November 26.[24]** These individuals included a Hamas member, who killed two Israelis in a terror attack in Huwara in August 2023, according to the IDF and the co-founder of the West Bank branch of the al Qassem Brigades, Abdel Hakim Hanini.[25]

Palestinian militia fighters clashed with Israeli forces for nine hours in the Jenin refugee camp on November 26.^[26] The Jenin Battalion of the al Quds Brigades claimed that its fighters ambushed and fired on Israeli forces and detonated IEDs against Israeli military vehicles in the al Damj neighborhood of Jenin during an Israeli raid.^[27] The Jenin Battalion of the al Quds Brigades claimed five fighters died in the clashes with Israeli forces.^[28] Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades fighters similarly used small arms and IEDs in clashes with Israeli forces in Jenin.^[29] The IDF said that it destroyed a facility used for making IEDs and conducted a drone strike in Jenin.^[30] Co-founder of the West Bank branch of the al Qassem Brigades Abdel Hakim Hanini threatened that Palestinian militias would conduct an "appropriate" response to the "scale of the crime" in the Jenin camp.^[31] Palestinian militias announced a general strike in response to their fighter deaths in the Jenin raid.^[32] Palestinian militants separately clashed with Israeli forces in three other areas of the West Bank on November 26.^[33]

CTP-ISW recorded one demonstration in the West Bank on November 26. Palestinians demonstrated in support of imprisoned and recently released Palestinians in Ramallah.^[34]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Iranian-backed militias did not conduct any attacks into northern Israel on November 26.

Israeli aircraft conducted an airstrike on Damascus International Airport and possibly a second airstrike on Mezzeh Military Airport near Damascus on November 26, damaging both facilities. The Syrian Defense Ministry reported that an Israeli airstrike targeted Damascus International Airport and damaged its runway.^[35] Iranian state media posted footage after the airstrike, showing smoke plumes over the runway.^[36] Israel previously conducted an airstrike on Damascus International Airport on November 22.^[37] The United Kingdom-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that Israeli aircraft targeted an air defense system located at Mezzeh Military Airport on November 26.^[38] CTP-ISW cannot independently verify this claim from SOHR. The airstrike on Damascus International Airport disrupts a transportation node through which the IRGC has historically tried to transfer military materiel and personnel to Syria and Lebanon. Israel has conducted similar strikes at the Damascus International Airport to prevent Iranian weapons deliveries.

Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

Unspecified fighters attempted to seize the Israeli-owned, Liberian-flagged *Central Park* oil tanker in the Gulf of Aden and may have successfully held the tanker for some short period of time on November 26.^[39]

The UK Maritime Trade Operations reported that “unauthorized persons” boarded a vessel southwest of Aden, Yemen, on November 26.^[40] An unidentified US official confirmed the seizure to Western media.^[41] A US Navy warship responded to *Central Park*’s distress signal, and unspecified US officials stated that the ship is now “safe and free,” according to Reuters.^[42]

No group claimed responsibility for the attempted seizure, although the most likely perpetrators are either the Houthis or Somali pirates.

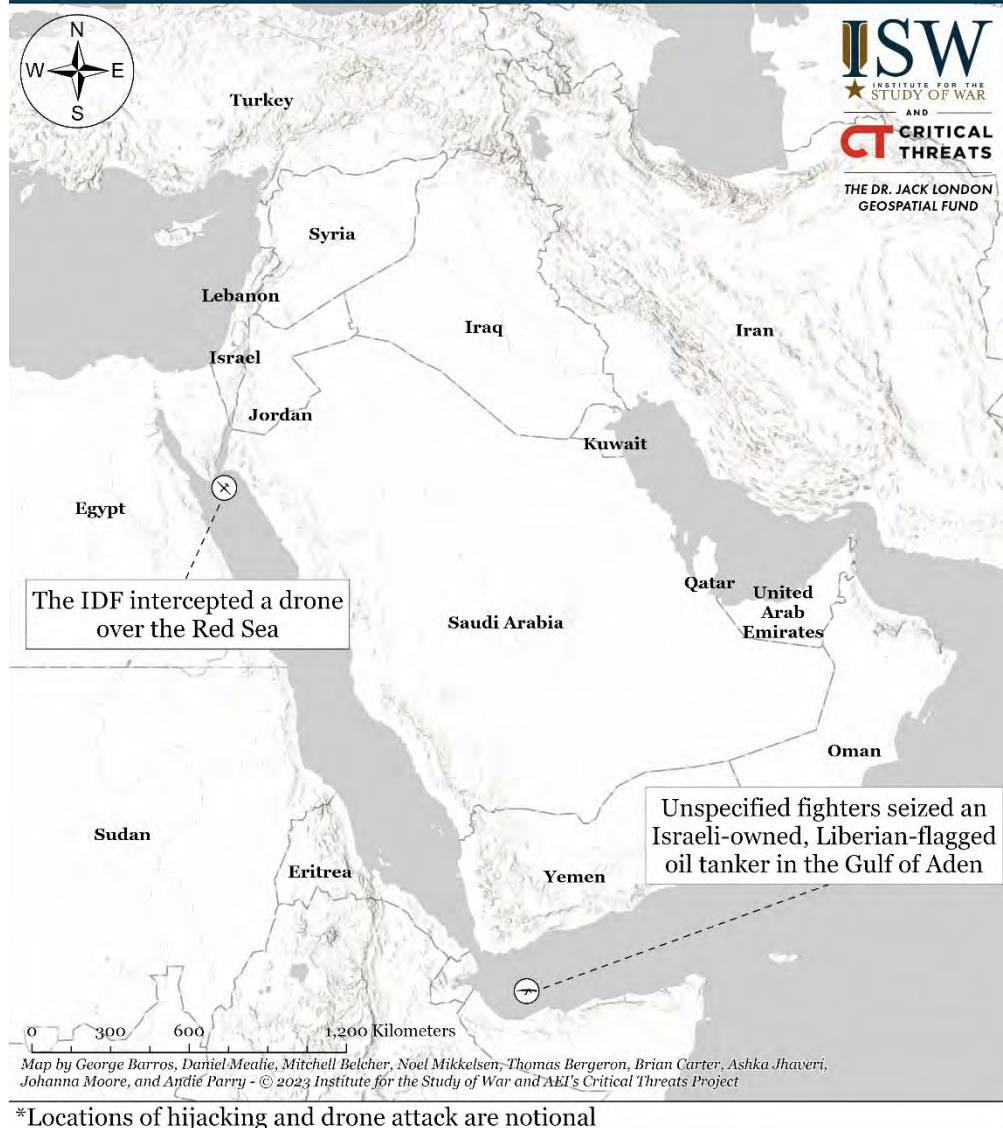
- A Yemeni journalist reported on November 26 that the fighters who boarded the ship are likely members of the Houthi movement.^[43] IRGC-affiliated outlet Tasnim News Agency separately reported that the seizure would mark the fourth seizure or attack on Israeli ships by the Axis of Resistance since October 7.^[44] Houthi fighters previously hijacked an Israeli-owned freighter transiting the Red Sea on November 19. CTP-ISW also assessed that the IRGC may have conducted a one-way drone attack on an Israeli-owned freighter in the Persian Gulf on November 24 and that the Houthis likely seized an Israeli-owned freighter transiting the Red Sea on November 25.^[45]
- Western media noted on November 26 that Somali pirates do not typically operate in the area off the coast of northwestern Somalia where the tanker was seized.^[46] Somali pirates last seized a commercial vessel on November 22, when they hijacked an Iranian fishing vessel off the coast of Somalia’s autonomous Puntland region.^[47] Somali pirates’ most recent attempted hijacking before the November 22 incident occurred in 2018.^[48]

An IDF fighter jet intercepted a drone flying toward Israel over the Red Sea on November 25.^[49] The IDF reported that the drone failed to enter Israeli airspace. The Houthi movement has repeatedly attempted to conduct drone and missile attacks against Israel since October 19.^[50] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has also claimed attacks on Israeli territory since November 3.^[51]

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—did not claim any attacks against US forces in Iraq or Syria on November 26. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has not claimed any attacks since the Israel-Hamas pause in fighting went into effect. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq and its affiliated groups claimed 74 attacks against US forces in the Middle East between October 18 and November 23.^[52]

Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah (KH) announced on November 25 that it will reduce its rate of attacks against US forces in Iraq and Syria and halt attacks against Israel until the end of the Israel-Hamas humanitarian pause.[53] The statement added that KH will resume attacks against US forces after the pause until they leave Iraq. KH is a member of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which conducted attacks against US forces in Iraq and Syria almost daily between October 18 and November 23.[54] Emirati media reported on November 23 that Tehran ordered its proxies in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen to abide by the temporary pause in fighting between Israel and Hamas.[55]

Iranian-sponsored Attacks in the Middle East as of November 26, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian discussed efforts to extend the Israel-Hamas pause in fighting during a phone call with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan on November 25.[56] Abdollahian stressed the need to “completely stop Israeli crimes” against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Fidan emphasized Turkey’s determination to extend the current humanitarian pause. Abdollahian called on Turkey, along with other Muslim countries, to take “stronger actions” to support Palestinians. This call is consistent with CTP-ISW’s previous assessment that Iran is attempting to exploit the Israel-Hamas war to undermine Turkish-Israeli rapprochement.[57] Abdollahian met with Turkish President

Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Fidan in Ankara on November 1 as part of his second regional diplomatic tour since October 7.[58]

Thai Deputy Prime Minister Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara thanked Iran for its efforts to facilitate the release of Thai hostages from Hamas during a meeting with Iranian Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Ali Bagheri Kani in Bangkok on November 23.[59] Hamas released 14 Thai nationals between November 24-25.[60] Bagheri Kani also met with the Thai deputy foreign affairs minister, national security council head, and parliamentary president during his visit to Bangkok. He discussed increasing Iran's economic and security ties with Thailand during his meetings with these officials.

Iranian Artesh Commander Major General Abdol Rahim Mousavi stated that the Artesh is prepared to deploy "near" the Gaza Strip to provide medical aid to Palestinians.[61] The Artesh is Iran's conventional military. Mousavi made this statement during a meeting with nursing students from the Artesh University of Medical Sciences in Tehran on November 26. Mousavi claimed that Hamas, which he referred to as "one of the branches" of the Axis of Resistance, "defeated" Israel. Mousavi repeated previous Iranian rhetoric that Israel failed to achieve any military successes in the Gaza Strip and was therefore "forced" to accept Hamas' terms in the four-day humanitarian pause. CTP-ISW has not observed any Artesh forces deploy to or near the Gaza Strip.

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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 27, 2023

Iran Update, November 27, 2023

Andie Parry, Ashka Jhaveri, Kathryn Tyson, Peter Mills, Brian Carter, Amin Soltani, and Nicholas Carl

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

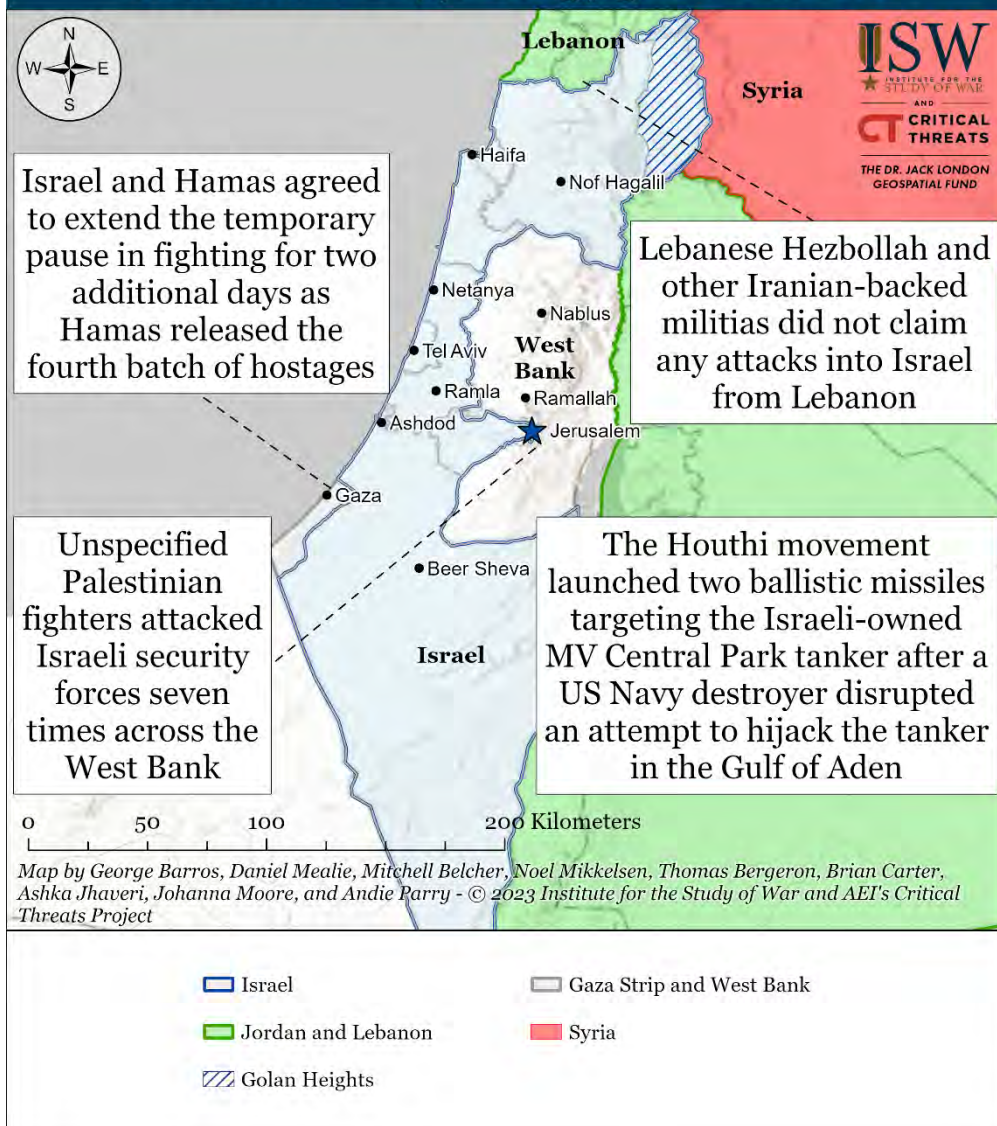
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Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Hamas and Israel completed the fourth swap of Hamas-held hostages for Israeli-held prisoners in accordance with their humanitarian pause agreement. Israel and Hamas agreed to extend the pause in fighting an additional two days to last until November 30.
2. Israel said that Hamas violated the terms of the humanitarian pause on November 25 by releasing a child without their parent in the prisoner swap.
3. Israel identified the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahiya as a location that Hamas uses for military activity prior to Israeli forces clearing the hospital, which contradicts claims that Israel raided the hospital without a stated reason.
4. Al Araby reported that Hamas is preparing to resume fighting with Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip.
5. Human Rights Watch reported that a rocket misfire likely caused the explosion at al Ahli Hospital in the Gaza Strip on October 17.
6. Palestinian fighters attacked Israeli forces seven times in the West Bank.
7. Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Iranian-backed militias did not conduct any attacks into northern Israel.
8. The Houthi movement launched two ballistic missiles targeting the Israeli-owned MV *Central Park* tanker after the US Navy destroyer USS *Mason* disrupted an attempt to hijack the tanker in the Gulf of Aden.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 27, 2023, 5:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip.

Hamas and Israel completed the fourth swap of Hamas-held hostages for Israeli-held prisoners on November 27 in accordance with their humanitarian pause agreement.^[1] Hamas released 11 Israeli hostages.^[2] Israel is set to release three women and 30 others, including minors, in exchange.^[3] Palestinian media sources, including Hamas-affiliated outlets, reported that Israel released some of the prisoners at the time of writing.^[4] The parties had delayed the exchange briefly, as Israel and Hamas disagreed on which hostages Hamas would release.^[5] Hamas had sent a list of hostages to be released to Israel on November 26 that Israel renegotiated on November 27, causing the delay.^[6]

Israel and Hamas agreed to extend the pause in fighting an additional two days to last until November 30. Hamas announced that it would extend the pause by two days under the same terms as

those of the original agreement, implying that Israel and Hamas would continue to exchange hostages/prisoners, humanitarian aid would continue entering the Gaza Strip, and Israel would continue to refrain from flying aircraft over the strip.[7] The Qatari Foreign Affairs Ministry similarly said that Israel and Hamas agreed to extend the pause by another two days.[8] A senior adviser to the Israeli prime minister acknowledged that the extension would occur once Hamas released the fourth round of hostages on November 27, which happened later in the day as reported above.[9] Israel has not made an official statement on the pause extension at the time of writing, however.[10] The White House confirmed the agreement to extend the pause.[11] The US National Security Council spokesperson said that Hamas agreed to release another 20 women and children over the next two days.[12] Senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) official Daoud Shehab acknowledged on November 27 before the two-day extension announcement that PIJ was “evaluating” the possible extension.[13] This statement suggests that PIJ leadership intends to continue observing the pause in fighting.

Hamas, Qatar, and the United States expressed a desire to extend the pause even further. Hamas Political Bureau member Khalil al Hayya stated that Hamas was able to find enough females and youth held hostage to extend the truce for two additional days but hoped to extend it for a longer period.[14] Hayya also said that Hamas seeks to enter a new deal that releases hostages other than women and children.[15] Senior PIJ official Daoud Shehab indicated that the release of Israeli soldiers would have an unspecified price, however.[16] The Qatari Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson similarly stated that Qatar hopes the pause will lead to a permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.[17] US President Joe Biden lastly stated that he is working to extend the pause beyond the additional two days.[18] Israel has remained adamant that it will continue fighting to eradicate Hamas after the pause.[19]

Israel said that Hamas violated the terms of the humanitarian pause on November 25 by releasing a child without their parent in the prisoner swap. Two Israeli officials told CNN that there was a dispute on November 25 after Hamas released Hila Rotem—one of the child hostages—without her mother.[20] Hamas was holding Hila Rotem and her mother Raaya Rotem but claimed that it could not find the mother prior to the hostage release.[21] Hila Rotem said her mother was with her the entire time they were captive, and that Hamas separated them two days before the hostage release.[22]

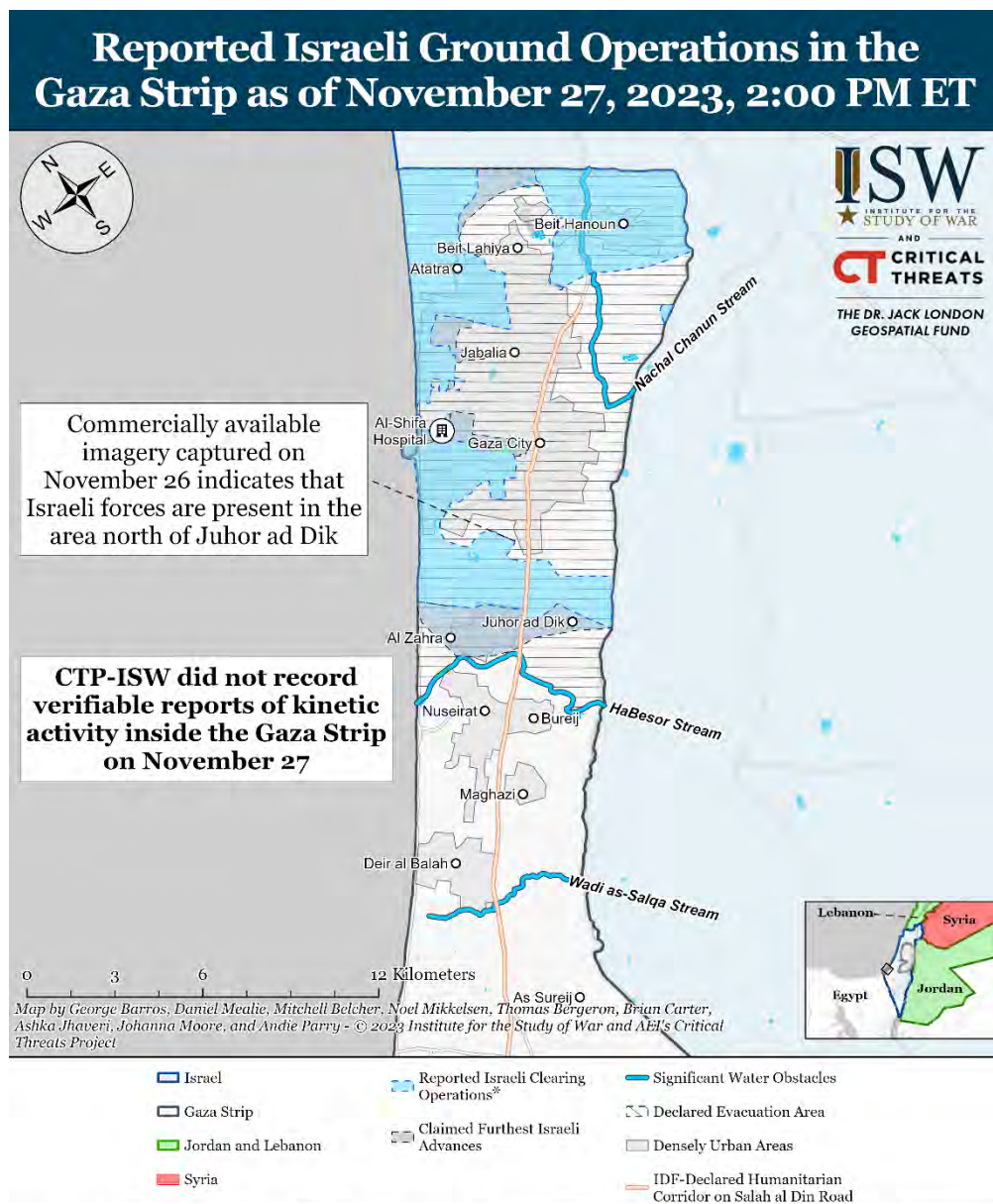
The United Nations confirmed on November 27 that clean water and medical aid reached the northern Gaza Strip.[23] Hamas Political Bureau member Khalil al Hayya said in an interview with al Jazeera on November 26 that the United Nations is not doing the work required to deliver aid to the Gaza Strip.[24] Hamas leadership previously criticized the humanitarian aid flow to the northern Gaza Strip on November 24.[25] The Hamas-run Health Ministry and Qatar confirmed on November 26 that humanitarian aid is reaching the northern Gaza Strip.[26] Israel said on November 26 that Hamas established a checkpoint on the Salah al Din road to prevent aid from reaching northern Gaza Strip residents.[27] The Hamas, Qatari, and Israeli statements regarding the humanitarian aid flow to the northern Gaza Strip are consistent with the hypothesis that Hamas is redirecting aid before it gets there.

Israel identified the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahiya as a location that Hamas uses for military activity prior to Israeli forces clearing the hospital, which contradicts claims that Israel raided the hospital without a stated reason. A Palestinian journalist stated on November 27 that Israel did not claim that the Indonesian Hospital was a Hamas militant base before raiding it.[28] Israel published a video on November 6 explaining how the Indonesian Hospital was built above Hamas tunnels, however.[29] The hospital is furthermore directly adjacent to a Hamas tunnel entrance, according to a 2014 map published by the *Wall Street Journal*. [30] Israel has repeatedly claimed that Hamas uses hospitals for military activity. The IDF published a report on November 21 describing how its forces operating in the northern Gaza Strip uncovered weapons and access routes to underground infrastructure in and around hospitals.[31] The report includes a map of Hamas infrastructure in hospitals, including the Indonesian Hospital.[32] Palestinian journalists and local media reported that Israeli forces cleared the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahiya on November 23.[33]

Al Araby reported that Hamas is preparing to resume fighting with Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip.[34] The report said that Hamas is studying the movement of Israeli deployments on the ground and planning to use fresh units that it has not yet committed to combat.[35] Unspecified experts told al Araby that Hamas’ uncommitted forces constitute more than 75 percent of Hamas’ forces.[36] Israel estimates that it has killed between 1,000 and 2,000 Hamas fighters out of its military force of 40,000.[37]

Human Rights Watch reported that a rocket misfire likely caused the explosion at al Ahli Hospital in the Gaza Strip on October 17.[38] A munition hit a paved area inside the hospital compound, killing hundreds. The Human Rights Watch said that “the sound preceding the explosion, the fireball that accompanied it, the size of the resulting crater, the type of splatter adjoining it, and the type and pattern of fragmentation visible around the crater are all consistent with the impact of a rocket.”[39] The evidence makes the possibility of an Israeli-dropped bomb on the hospital highly unlikely, according to the report.[40] Israeli officials claimed that PIJ militants conducted a rocket attack that failed and hit the active hospital at the time.[41] Hamas, Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), and the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine condemned the Human Rights Watch report.[42]

Israel said Elon Musk has preliminarily agreed not to activate the Starlink satellite system in the Gaza Strip unless Israel permits him to do so.[43] The Israeli Communications Minister said that the understanding is vital in Israel’s fight against Hamas.[44] Elon Musk traveled to Israel and met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on November 27.[45]



* ISW-CTP's "Reported Israeli Clearing Operations" layer uses the US military's doctrinal definition of clearing which is an operation that "requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area." Clearing operations frequently take weeks and sometimes months to complete

NOTE: The IDF has said that its forces are stationed along ceasefire lines across the Gaza Strip during the pause in fighting. CTP-ISW's map of Israeli clearing operations shows reported Israeli clearing operations

and the claimed furthest Israeli advances. CTP-ISW will not be mapping the shift in Israeli operating areas during the humanitarian pause.

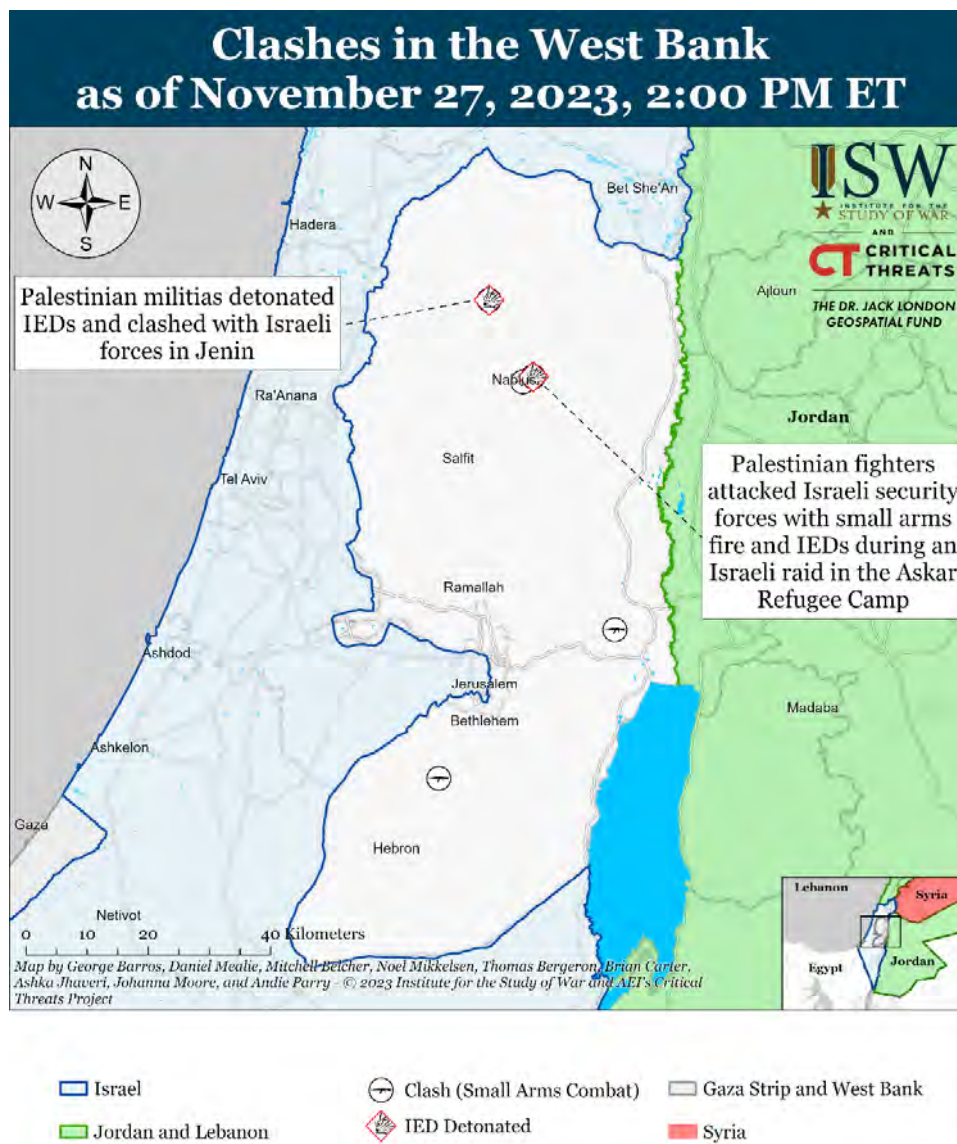
CTP-ISW did not record verifiable reports of kinetic activity inside the Gaza Strip or reports of attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel on November 27.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Palestinian fighters attacked Israeli forces seven times in the West Bank on November 27. Palestinian fighters engaged Israeli forces in an hours-long clash and detonated an IED targeting Israeli forces in Jaba village near Jenin.[46] Palestinian fighters also engaged Israeli forces with small arms fire and IEDs in four refugee camps near Hebron, Jericho, and Nablus.[47] The IDF said on November 27 that it conducted overnight raids and arrested 20 individuals throughout the West Bank, including 15 Hamas fighters.[48] The IDF also claimed to have seized "five illegal vehicles" during the raids.[49] The IDF did not specify why the vehicles were illegal.



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

LH and other Iranian-backed militias did not conduct any attacks into northern Israel on November 27. The IDF did not conduct any airstrikes into Lebanon or Syria on November 27.

Iran and Axis of Resistance

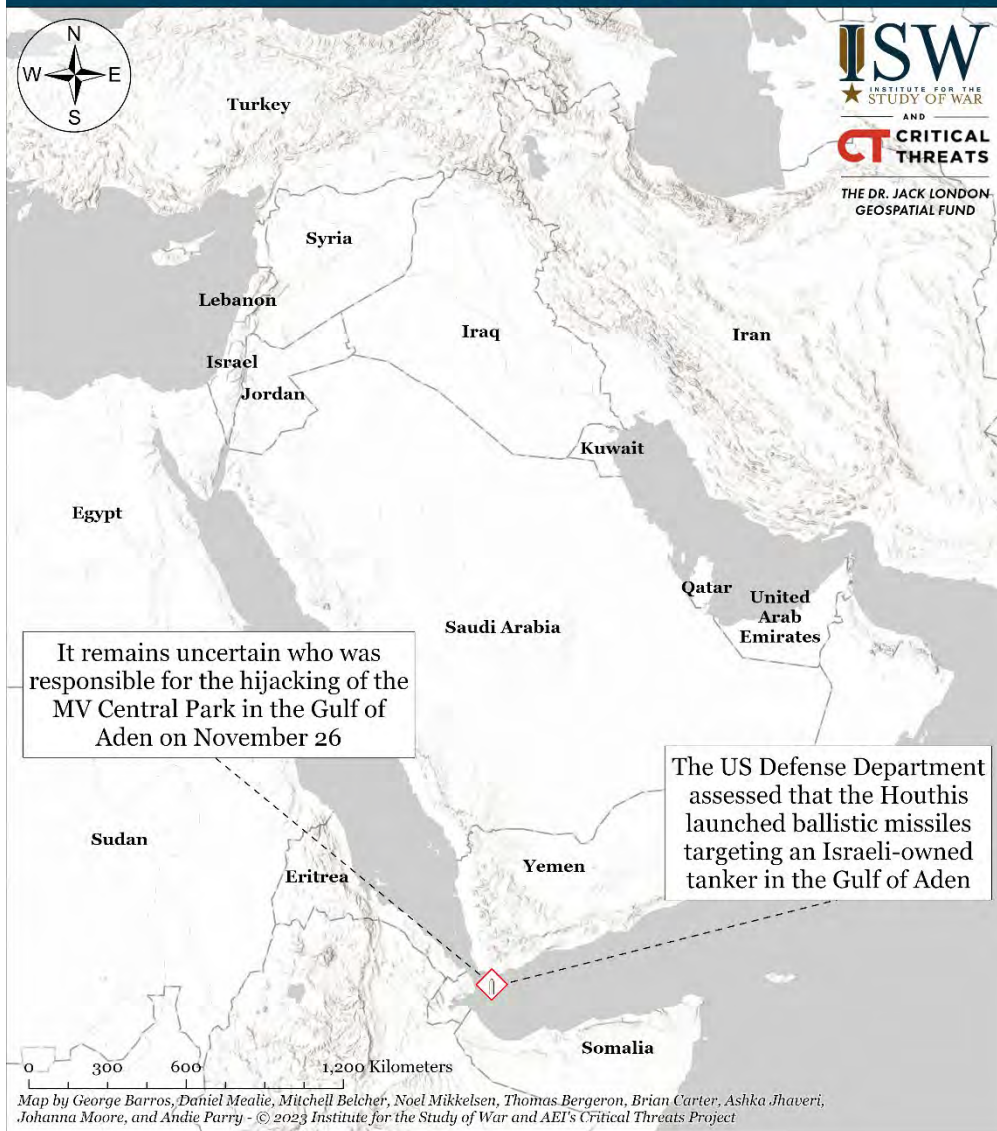
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Houthi movement launched two ballistic missiles targeting the Israeli-owned MV *Central Park* tanker on November 27 after the US Navy destroyer USS *Mason* disrupted an attempt to hijack the tanker in the Gulf of Aden. The USS *Mason* responded to a distress call from the *Central Park* on November 26 as unspecified hijackers boarded the tanker.^[50] The *Mason* apprehended five hijackers.^[51] US Central Command (CENTCOM) said on November 27 that “two ballistic missiles were fired” from Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen targeting the USS *Mason*.^[52] The US Defense Department later amended this statement, assessing that it was “more likely” that the Houthis targeted the *Central Park* than the *Mason*.^[53] Senior Houthi official Mohammed al Bukhaiti implied the Houthis’ responsibility for the missile launch, claiming that the missiles targeting the *Mason* either “made impact [with the ship] or were intercepted,” because the missiles’ capabilities mean that a margin of error of ten miles is impossible.^[54] The missiles landed ten nautical miles from the *Mason* in the Gulf of Aden.^[55] The Houthis previously fired on a US Navy vessel in 2016, when Houthi fighters fired two ballistic missiles targeting the USS *Mason*.^[56]

It remains uncertain who was responsible for the hijacking of the MV *Central Park* in the Gulf of Aden on November 26. Pentagon Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said that the attempted hijacking of the *Central Park* “appeared” to have been carried out by Somali pirates and not the Houthis, though he added that the US military is “continuing to assess” the identity of the hijackers.^[57] An unspecified senior US official told Fox News that the US Navy “pursued [the hijackers] towards Yemen” after the hijackers attempted to escape from the *Central Park*.^[58] Senior Houthi official Mohammed al Bukhaiti claimed that the US Navy “fabricated” the rescue of the *Central Park*, despite implying Houthi responsibility for the ballistic missile launches.^[59] Bukhaiti reiterated that the Houthis will only target ships belonging to Israel.^[60] It remains possible that Somalis attacked the *Central Park*, given the presence of smuggling routes between Somalia and Yemen in the Gulf of Aden.^[61] A retreat toward Yemen by Somali pirates would be consistent with Somali pirates familiar with smuggling routes and networks in Yemen.

Iranian-sponsored Attacks in the Middle East as of November 27, 2023, 5:00 PM ET



Senior Iranian military officials presided over the annual Artesh Navy Day ceremony in Bandar-e Anzali on November 27.^[62] The Artesh is Iran's conventional military. The Iranian Armed Forces General Staff chief and the Artesh Navy commander reiterated Iran's steadfast commitment to maintaining maritime security in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea.

The Iranian foreign affairs minister discussed the Israel-Hamas war with his Indian counterpart in Tehran on November 27.^[63] The two officials emphasized the need for continued provision of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.

Iranian officials are continuing attempts to pressure Israel into extending the pause in fighting by warning that Israel's failure to extend it will precipitate an escalation of the war. An Iranian Expediency Discernment Council member and former IRGC commander warned of "harsh revenge" if Israel continues operations in the Gaza Strip.^[64] The Iranian defense minister added that the United States and Israel will pay "a much heavier price" if Israeli operations resume.^[65] The Iranian Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson emphasized Iran's desire for a "lasting ceasefire" during his regular press briefing.^[66] These

statements are consistent with prior Iranian talking points surrounding the pause in fighting, as CTP-ISW previously reported.^[67]

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- [1] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1729226453764444475> ; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1729237285604835580>
 - [2] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/540>; <https://twitter.com/N12News/status/1729233274852291065>
 - [3] <https://t.me/hamasps/17984>
 - [4] <https://t.me/newpress1/59936>; <https://t.me/QudsN/335650> ; <https://twitter.com/ShehabAgency/status/1729268795754385706> ; <https://twitter.com/ShehabAgency/status/1729269552981164156>
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 - [8] <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/27/middleeast/israel-hamas-truce-extended-intl> ; <https://twitter.com/majedalansari/status/1729177252473274539>
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 - [13] <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/27/israel-hamas-war-list-of-key-e...>
 - [14] <https://t.me/hamasps/17986> ; <https://youtu.be/MdQrFGf3NcQ?si=fx1Uh8B3mQQHxcwk>
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 - [19] <https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1728440484623011908> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1728804410866753949> ; <https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1728685177784902128> ;
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 - [25] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/8588>; <https://t.me/hamasps/17955>
 - [26] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/8588>; <https://twitter.com/ShehabAgency/status/1728737564268585266>
 - [27] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1728754788152569935>; <https://twitter.com/TuiteroMartin/status/1728775404432114157/photo/1>
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 - [36] [https://www.alaraby\[dot\]co.uk/politics/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D...](https://www.alaraby[dot]co.uk/politics/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D...)
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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 28, 2023

Iran Update, November 28, 2023

Brian Carter, Andie Parry, Amin Soltani, Johanna Moore, Kathryn Tyson, and Nicholas Carl

Contributor: James Cary

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

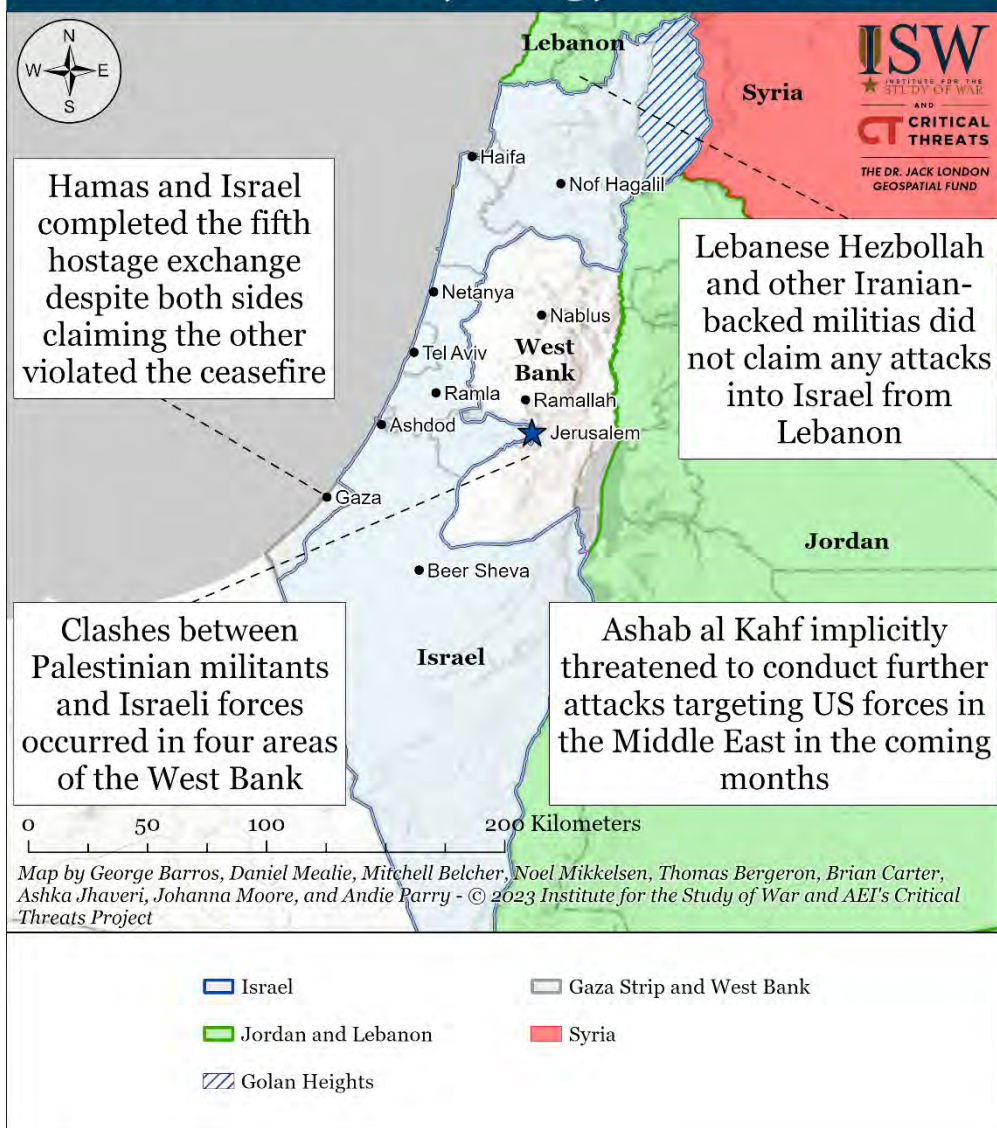
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israel and Hamas both reported at least one violation of the temporary truce agreement in the Gaza Strip, but neither side escalated the situation to more general fighting across the strip. Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Israel completed the fifth swap of hostages in the Gaza Strip for Israeli-held Palestinian prisoners in accordance with their humanitarian pause agreement.
2. Hamas' governance capacity appears to be breaking down in the Gaza Strip, even in the southern part, which will complexify Israeli clearing operations.
3. The Wall Street Journal reported that Egypt and Qatar are trying to negotiate a "long-term ceasefire" in the Gaza Strip.
4. Hamas fighters clashed with Israeli forces in Tubas and assisted a Hamas member to evade Israeli arrest. Clashes continued between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters in at least three other locations in the West Bank.
5. LH and other Iranian-backed militias did not conduct any attacks into northern Israel.
6. Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Ashab al Kahf implicitly threatened to conduct further drone and rocket attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East in the coming months.
7. Russo-Iranian military cooperation has continued to deepen, especially in recent weeks.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 28, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip.

Israel and Hamas both reported at least one violation of the temporary truce agreement in the Gaza Strip on November 28, but neither side escalated the situation to more general fighting across the strip. Both parties claimed that the other bore responsibility for the violations. Neither side indicated an intention to resume hostilities as a result of the violations, however. Israeli Army Radio reported that Palestinian fighters detonated three improvised explosive devices (IED) targeting Israeli forces in two separate attacks.[1] Palestinian fighters detonated two remotely detonated IEDs targeting IDF soldiers boarding armored vehicles near Rantisi Hospital, which is along the agreed truce line, in one attack.[2] Palestinian fighters also detonated one IED and fired small arms at Israeli forces in an unspecified location, according to Israeli Army Radio.[3] Israel said the two attacks “slightly” wounded five Israeli soldiers.[4] Hamas’ military spokesperson said that there was “field friction” in the northern Gaza Strip that

was part of a “clear violation by [the IDF] of the truce agreement.”^[5] The spokesperson said Hamas remains committed to the pause in fighting.^[6]

Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and Israel completed the fifth swap of hostages in the Gaza Strip for Israeli-held Palestinian prisoners on November 28 in accordance with their humanitarian pause agreement.^[7] Hamas released 10 Israeli hostages and two Thai nationals.^[8] Israel released 30 Palestinian women and minors in exchange.^[9] PIJ fighters accompanied the hostages through the Gaza Strip as they were released, marking the first time that PIJ has publicly engaged with the hostage release protocol.^[10] The reported violations of the pause agreement did not disrupt the hostage-prisoner swap, as the exchange occurred after the attacks in the Gaza Strip and Israel and Hamas accused one another of violations.

Confrontations erupted between Israeli forces and Palestinians waiting for the release of the fourth round of Palestinian prisoners outside Ofer Prison on November 27. Israeli forces shot and killed one Palestinian and fired tear gas near the prison.^[11] Confrontations also broke out the night of the first prisoner release, injuring several Palestinians.^[12] Hamas called for Palestinians to gather in front of Ofer Prison ahead of the fifth prisoner release on November 28.^[13] Palestinian media reported that Israeli security forces have forbidden the families of released Palestinian prisoners from celebrating.^[14]

Hamas’ governance capacity appears to be breaking down in the Gaza Strip, even in the southern part, which may complexify Israeli clearing operations. The policy lead at Oxfam—an anti-poverty non-profit—called the situation in the Gaza Strip “absolute chaos” and without the “rule of law.”^[15] These claims are consistent with previous reports about the status of Hamas governance in the southern Gaza Strip.^[16] The Associated Press reported on November 12 that Palestinians in the southern Gaza Strip are “openly challenging” Hamas’ authority, for instance. A UN spokesperson similarly said that the Gaza Strip’s social fabric was “fraying” amid widespread violence among local civilians.^[17] These reports suggest that the Hamas local governance structure in the Gaza Strip is breaking down, which may complexify Israeli clearing operations by making it more difficult for Israel to coordinate temporary population evacuations ahead of military operations, although it is not clear that Hamas would have cooperated with such Israeli activities.^[18]

The Wall Street Journal reported on November 28 that Egypt and Qatar are trying to negotiate a “long-term ceasefire” in the Gaza Strip.^[19] Egyptian and Qatari officials told the *Wall Street Journal* that the long-term ceasefire “would likely require” major concessions, such as Hamas demilitarizing and releasing all IDF soldiers held hostage in return for Israel ending military operations in the Gaza Strip and releasing thousands of Palestinian prisoners. This reporting indicates that negotiations over the release of IDF soldiers could be more fraught than negotiations over civilians. The Egyptian and Qatari officials offered no explanation of or detailed system for how Hamas’ demilitarization would take place. Hamas seeks the total destruction of the Israeli state, which Hamas has historically pursued through military means. Hamas furthermore has military capabilities and infrastructure outside of the Gaza Strip, such as in the West Bank and southern Lebanon. Hamas Political Bureau member Ghazi Hamed said on November 1 that Hamas will repeat its brutal October 7 attack “a second, a third, [and] a fourth” time and that “anything [Hamas does] is justified.”^[20] The deal outlined by Egyptian and Qatari officials furthermore includes no measure to remove Hamas from power in the Gaza Strip, according to the Wall Street Journal report. The United States, European Union, and Israel have all demanded and continue to seek the removal of Hamas as the governing authority responsible for the Gaza Strip.^[21]

The *Wall Street Journal* also said that CIA Director William Burns and Israeli Mossad chief David Barnea met with Qatari officials in Doha on November 28 to “build on the progress” of the current truce and “initiate discussions about . . . a potential longer-term ceasefire deal.”^[22]

Several Palestinian sources reported that fuel imported during the humanitarian pause is not reaching the northern Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) claimed that Israeli forces prevented a fuel truck from entering the northern Gaza Strip on November 28.^[23] The fuel was intended for PRCS ambulances in the northern Gaza Strip. The PRCS did confirm that 31 humanitarian aid trucks entered the northern Gaza Strip.^[24] Lebanese Hezbollah outlet al Manar claimed that Israeli forces are actively preventing fuel from reaching hospitals in the northern Gaza Strip, citing the Hamas-run Gazan Health Ministry.^[25]

The director of the Government Media Office in Gaza similarly claimed that Israel is obstructing the delivery of fuel, especially to the Gaza and North Gaza governorates, which have not had fuel deliveries for 50 days.[26] The director of the Government Media Office in Gaza is on the board of directors for two Hamas-affiliated news outlets and attended the Islamic University of Gaza, which Hamas controls and from which many senior Hamas leaders graduated.[27] The Qatari Foreign Affairs Ministry also called for a nonstop line of humanitarian aid to reach the northern Gaza Strip on November 28. The ministry clarified that the amount of aid reaching the Gaza Strip, "especially the northern region," is increasing, however.[28]



NOTE: The IDF has said that its forces are stationed along ceasefire lines across the Gaza Strip during the pause in fighting. CTP-ISW's map of Israeli clearing operations shows reported Israeli clearing operations and the claimed furthest Israeli advances. CTP-ISW will not be mapping the shift in Israeli operating areas during the humanitarian pause.

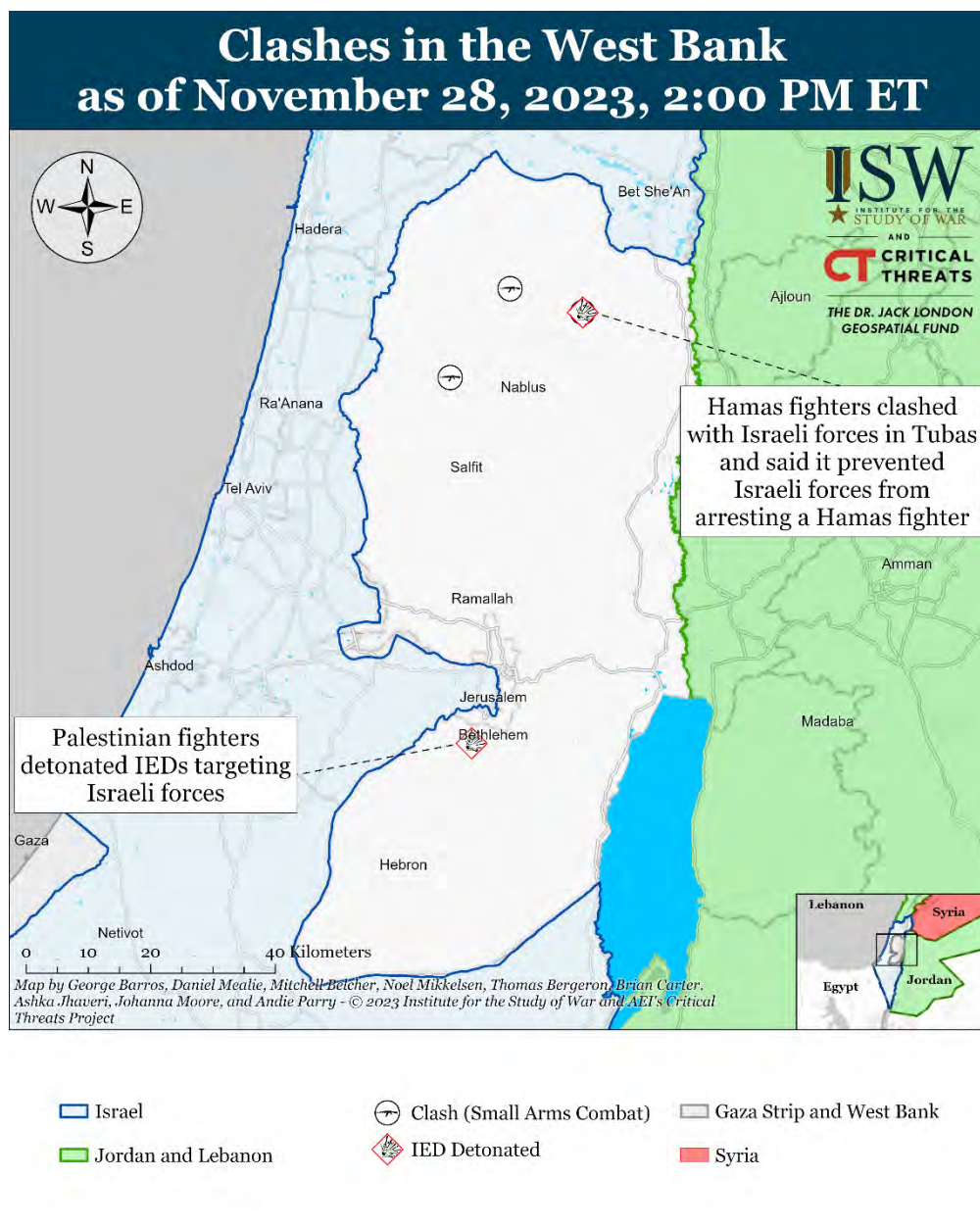
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Hamas fighters clashed with Israeli forces in Tubas and assisted a Hamas member to evade Israeli arrest on November 28.^[29] Hamas fighters used IEDs and small arms fire against Israeli soldiers.^[30] Israeli forces assaulted a building in which a Hamas member was barricaded before escaping.^[31] The al Qassem Brigades Tubas wing said that it is continuing to resist Israel and that the confrontation will be a long fight.^[32]

Clashes continued between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters in at least three other locations in the West Bank on November 28. Unidentified Palestinian fighters separately targeted Israeli forces with IEDs in Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem and fired small arms at Israeli forces in three other towns.^[33] The IDF furthermore said on November 28 that Israeli forces conducted overnight raids and arrested 13 individuals throughout the West Bank.^[34] The IDF stated that its forces confiscated small arms, knives, incendiary materials, and military equipment in Hebron.^[35]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

LH and other Iranian-backed militias did not conduct any attacks into northern Israel on November 28.

Iran and Axis of Resistance Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Ashab al Kahf (AK) implicitly threatened to conduct further drone and rocket attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East in the coming months.^[36] This statement comes as other Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have similarly messaged that they will resume attacks on US forces after the humanitarian pause in the Israel-Hamas war ends. Abu Alaa al Walai—the secretary general of Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada—indicated that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq would stop its attacks during the pause.^[37] The secretary general of Kataib Hezbollah (KH), Abu Hussein al Hamidawi, similarly announced on November 25 that KH would reduce the pace of attacks against US forces in the Middle East and Israel for the duration of the humanitarian pause in the Gaza Strip.^[38] Neither the Islamic Resistance in Iraq nor any of its affiliated militias, such as AK, KSS, and KH, have claimed any attacks on US forces since the humanitarian pause took effect in the Gaza Strip on November 24.^[39]

Russo-Iranian military cooperation is continuing to deepen and seemingly at an accelerated rate in recent weeks. Iran's deputy defense minister, Mehdi Farhi, announced on November 28 that Moscow has agreed to sell Su-35 fighter jets, Mi-28 attack helicopters, and Yak-130 combat trainer jets to Iran.^[40] Iranian leaders have long sought to acquire advanced aircraft from Russia and have appeared to face repeated delays throughout the process.^[41] Russian officials have not yet confirmed the deal at this time. Iran's announcement is the latest indication of several in recent weeks that Iran and Russia are further expanding their military cooperation. US officials warned on November 21 that Iran may be preparing to supply advanced short-range ballistic missiles to support the Russian invasion of Ukraine.^[42] This warning is consistent with CTP-ISW's previous assessment that Iran and Russia could conclude a drone and/or missile agreement after UN restrictions on Iran expired in October 2023.^[43] US officials separately warned on November 2 that Russian Wagner forces plan to transfer air defense systems to Lebanese Hezbollah.^[44] The transfer of Russian advanced aircraft to Iran could still take months or even longer to complete. Iranian leaders have repeatedly indicated since late 2022 that they would soon receive advanced aircraft from Russia without receiving anything yet.^[45] Russia similarly agreed to sell S-300 air defense systems in 2007 but did not complete the delivery until 2016.^[46] Russia's military support to Iran and the Axis of Resistance comes as Moscow and Tehran have tried to coordinate politically vis-à-vis the Israel-Hamas war.^[47] Iranian and Russian officials have engaged one another repeatedly in recent weeks to discuss the war and cooperate in advocating for a ceasefire.

Iran is continuing to pressure the United States and Israel into extending the pause in fighting by warning that failing to extend it will precipitate an escalation of the war. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian warned that the United States and Israel will face "harsh consequences" if they fail to establish a permanent ceasefire during an interview with al Jazeera on November 28.^[48] This statement is consistent with prior Iranian talking points surrounding the pause in fighting, as CTP-ISW previously reported.^[49]

Abdollahian discussed the Israel-Hamas war during a phone call with his Swiss counterpart on November 28. ^[50] The two officials discussed efforts to extend the pause in fighting between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed the Israel-Hamas war during a phone call on November 26.^[51] They emphasized the need for maximal cooperation between their countries vis-a-vis the war. Raisi's planned visit to Ankara on November 28 was canceled due

to unspecified reasons. IRGC-affiliated media reported that Raisi is now scheduled to visit Ankara at the beginning of December.[52]

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei met with senior Artesh Navy commanders on National Artesh Navy Day on November 28.[53]

- [1] https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1729503790917673407?s=20; https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1729503794218569895?s=20
- [2] https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1729503790917673407?s=20; https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1729503794218569895?s=20
- [3] https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1729503790917673407?s=20; https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1729503794218569895?s=20
- [4] https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1729503790917673407?s=20; https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1729503794218569895?s=20
- [5] https://t.me/spokesman_2020/75
- [6] https://t.me/spokesman_2020/75
- [7] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1729592502045311457> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1729580808950694378> ; <https://t.me/hamasps/17999>
- [8] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1729568976223486001> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1729606169470075159>
- [9] <https://t.me/hamasps/17994> ; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1729588302229930473> <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1729598322355159546> ; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1729597478020788310>
- [10] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16753>
- [11] <https://t.me/almanarnews/137995> ; <https://t.me/hamaswestbank/48277> ; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1729257771726463227>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2023/nov/28/israel-hamas-war-live...>
- [12] <https://t.me/QudsN/334392> ; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1728104947605205284> ; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1728089416286061015> ; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1728089416286061015>
- [13] <https://t.me/jeninnews1/77657>
- [14] <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1729292018294153370>
- [15] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-is-falling-into-absolute-chaos...>
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- [18] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-hamas-war-southern-gaza-inv...>
- [19] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/negotiators-press-to-extend-israel...>
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- [22] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/negotiators-press-to-extend-israel...>
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- [28] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OZdYTEOq6Y> ; <https://www.alaraby dot co.uk/politics/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%86%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D9%8A%D8%AB%D8%A8%D8%AA-%D9%86%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9>
- [29] <https://t.me/hamaswestbank/48280>
- [30] <https://t.me/hamaswestbank/48280> ; <https://t.me/jeninnews1/77588> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1729462453077950660> ; <https://twitter.com/SafaPs/status/1729501215208145221> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/335739> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/335843> ; <https://t.me/jeninnews1/77603>
- [31] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1729462453077950660> ; <https://t.me/hamaswestbank/48280>

- [32] <https://t.me/hamaswestbank/48280>
- [33] <https://t.me/QudsN/335711> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1729462448678187196> ; <https://t.me/Qu>
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- [34] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1729462389035135024>
- [35] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1729462448678187196>
- [36] https://t.me/aishab_alkahf/111
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- [38] <https://www.shafaqdot.com/ar/%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%B6%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D9%84>
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- [43] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-september-27-2023>
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- [47] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-21-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-19-2023-65...> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-16-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-3-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-november-2-2023> ; <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-30-2023>
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- [50] <https://mfa.dotir/portal/NewsView/734865> ; <https://www.irna.dotir/news/85304983>
- [51] <https://president.dotir/fa/148507> ; <https://www.farsnewsdotir/news/14020907000868>
- [52] <https://www.farsnewsdotir/news/14020907000553>
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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 29, 2023

Iran Update, November 29, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Annika Ganzeveld, Kathryn Tyson, Peter Mills, Brian Carter, Nicole Wolkov, and Frederick W. Kagan

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

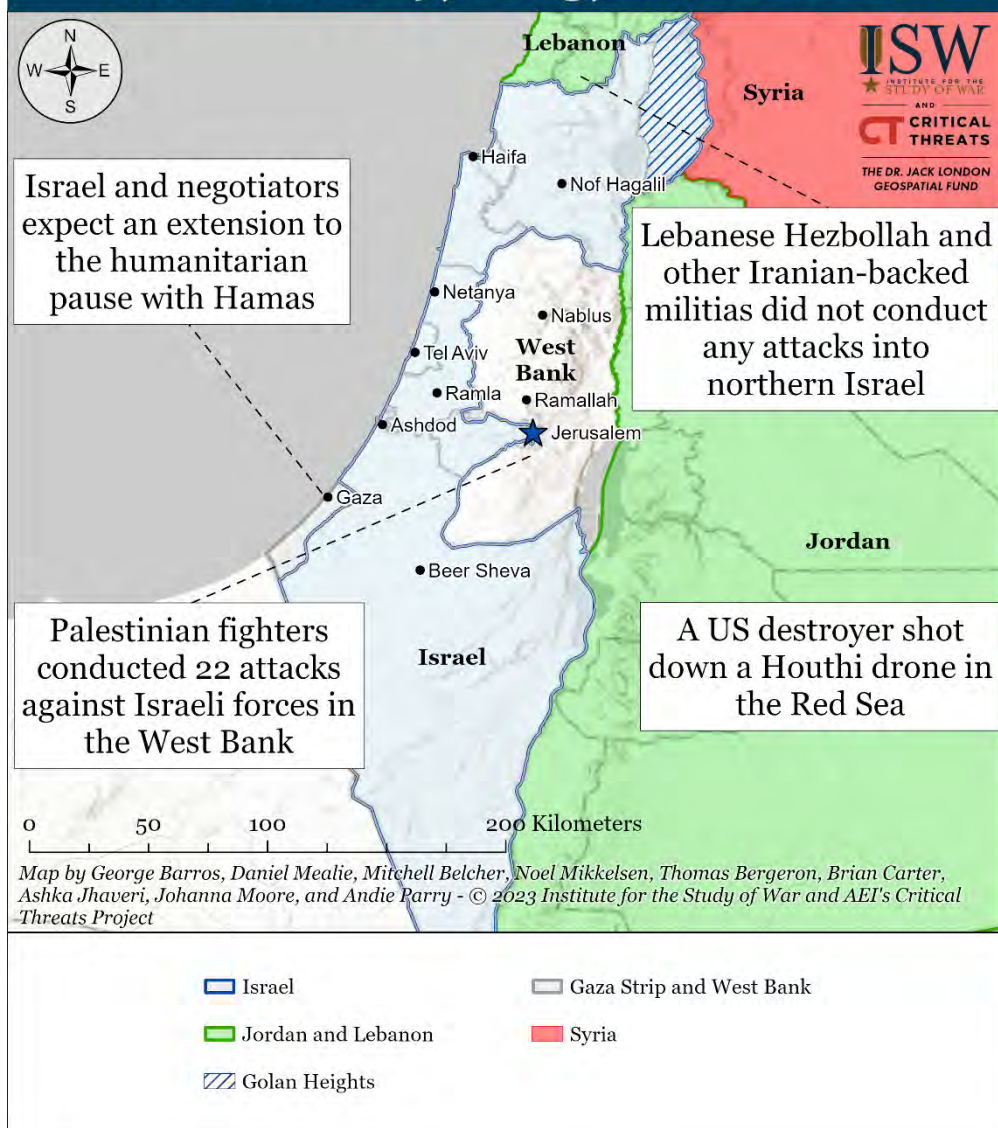
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Israeli officials and international mediators expect that the humanitarian pause with Hamas will be extended. The current pause in fighting between Israel and Hamas lasts until November 30.
2. The New York Times reported on November 29 that international mediators are hoping that short-term pauses will pave the way for a longer-term cease-fire to end the war.
3. Israel is insisting that it will continue operations in the Gaza Strip to eliminate Hamas, which is consistent with Israel's stated objectives.
4. Hamas and Israel completed the sixth swap of hostages in the Gaza Strip for Israeli-held Palestinian prisoners on November 29 in accordance with their humanitarian pause agreement.
5. The US destroyer USS Carney shot down a Houthi drone launched from Yemen on November 29.
6. An Iranian drone conducted "unsafe and unprofessional actions" near US aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower in the Persian Gulf on November 28.
7. Saudi Arabia offered to increase investments in the Iranian economy if Iran reins in its proxies and prevents the Israel-Hamas war from turning into a regional conflict, according to Arab and Western officials.
8. The al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, al Quds Brigades, and unspecified Palestinian fighters conducted small arms clashes and IED attacks against Israeli forces during Israeli raids in Jenin.
9. Lebanese Hezbollah and other Iranian-backed militias did not conduct any attacks into northern Israel on November 29.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 29, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip.

Israeli officials and international mediators expect that the humanitarian pause with Hamas will be extended. The current pause in fighting between Israel and Hamas lasts until November 30. An anonymous senior Israeli official told the *Washington Post* that Israel expects the pause to continue for another two to three days after November 30.[1] The Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson told CNN on November 29 that they are “very optimistic” that an extension will be announced in the coming hours.[2] The *New York Times* reported that top officials from Qatar, Egypt, Israel, and the United States are discussing extending the pause to allow for further hostages/prisoner exchanges. Anonymous senior Egyptian officials told the *Wall Street Journal* that Hamas leaders said that Hamas would agree to an additional four-day extension of the truce, according to Egyptian and Qatari mediators.[3] An unnamed Israeli official said that Israel is willing to discuss the release of Israeli soldiers held hostage in the Gaza Strip when Hamas has released the

remaining 27 women and children hostages.[4] Hamas said that it is open to releasing young male hostages in exchange for senior Palestinian prisoners as part of a longer-term ceasefire.[5] Participants at the negotiations said that Mossad Director David Barnea listened to a host of proposals—including a permanent cease-fire—without giving a firm no.[6] An anonymous “official familiar with the matter” told Israeli media that Israel is not willing to extend the current ceasefire beyond December 3, however.[7] The *New York Times* reported on November 29 that international mediators are hoping that short-term pauses will pave the way for a longer-term cease-fire to end the war.[8] One of the mediators said the longer the pause lasts, the harder it will be for Israel to restart its offensive and extend it to the southern Gaza Strip.[9] A permanent ceasefire would prevent Israel from completing its stated objectives in the Israel-Hamas war, which are the destruction of Hamas’ military and governance capabilities.[10] The United States and European Union have also expressed support for these objectives, which a permanent ceasefire would block.[11]

Israel is insisting that it will continue operations in the Gaza Strip to eliminate Hamas, which is consistent with Israel’s stated objectives. The IDF Chief of Staff approved plans on November 29 for IDF combat operations in the Gaza Strip after the end of the truce agreement.[12] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said there is no scenario in which Israel does not resume fighting in the Gaza Strip.[13] Netanyahu reiterated Israel’s objectives in the Gaza Strip. He said that Israel aims to “eliminate Hamas, return all hostages to Israel, and ensure that Gaza will never again go back to being a threat to the state of Israel.”[14] Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said that Israeli forces will continue ground operations “very soon.”[15] Senior Israeli army officials stressed that for Israel to complete its objective of defeating Hamas, Israeli forces must eliminate Hamas leadership and destroy Hamas infrastructure in Khan Younis and Rafah.[16] Israeli media reported that the IDF expects to use aggressive tactics in its assault on Khan Younis.[17]

Senior Israeli army officials told Israeli media that its forces have spent the past week investigating Hamas military capabilities.[18] The IDF has mapped Hamas’ underground infrastructure and collected intelligence from computers and communication systems in preparation for ground maneuvers in the center and south of the Gaza Strip.[19] The officials noted that the bulk of weapons smuggling to the Gaza Strip has occurred through the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings.[20]

Hamas and Israel completed the sixth swap of hostages in the Gaza Strip for Israeli-held Palestinian prisoners on November 29 in accordance with their humanitarian pause agreement. The IDF reported that the Red Cross said that 10 Israeli hostages and four Thai hostages are on their way to Israel.[21] CNN reported that Hamas released an Israeli American dual citizen.[22]

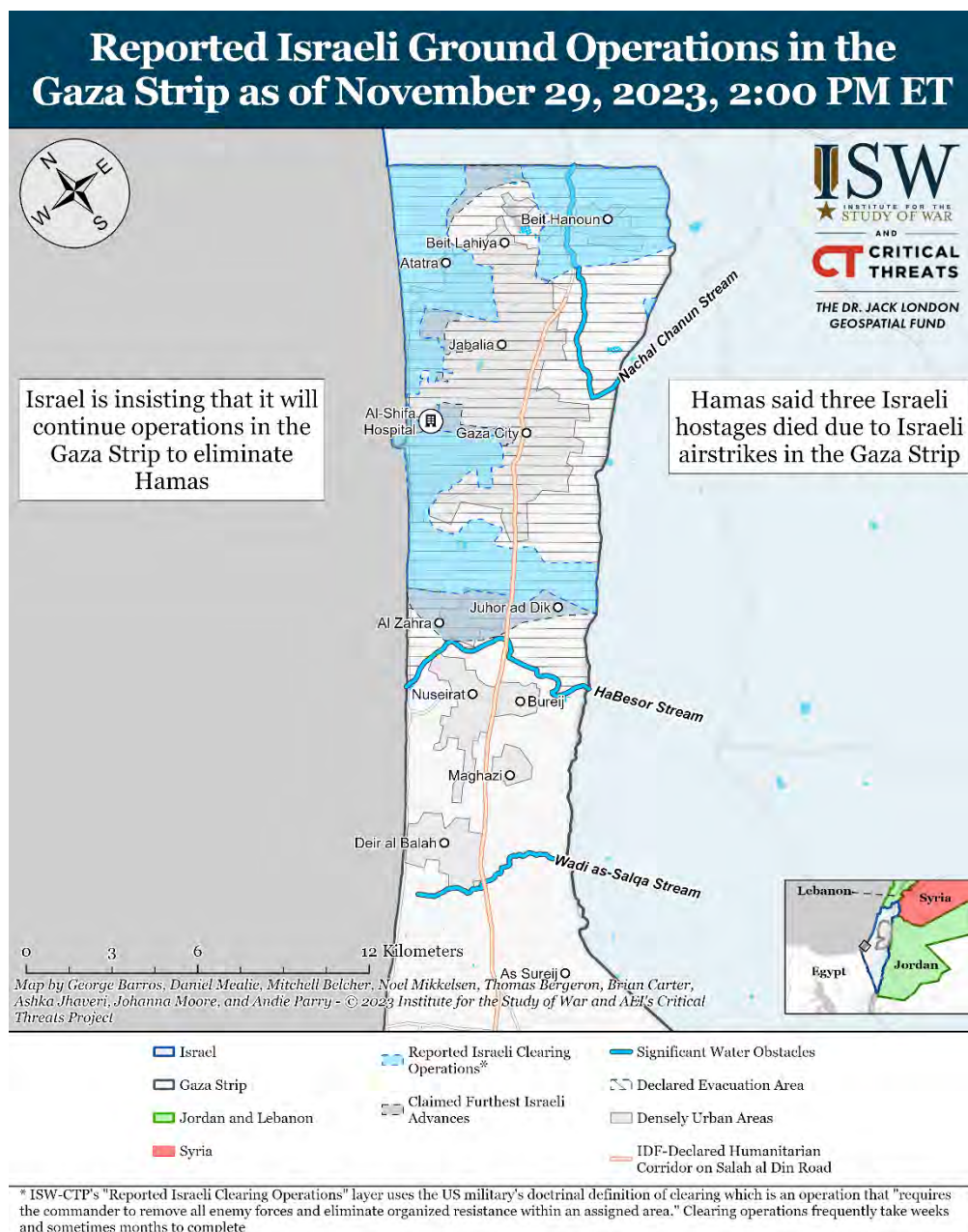
The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—released two Russian citizens as a sign of appreciation for Russian President Vladimir Putin’s support for Palestine.[23] The al Qassem Brigades previously cited Putin’s support for Palestine as its reason for releasing a Russian citizen on November 26.[24] Hamas Political Bureau member Musa Abu Marzouk said that the release is not part of the hostage/prisoner swap agreement with Israel.[25] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) confirmed that the two hostages were transferred to Israel on November 29.[26]

Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov posted footage on November 29 purportedly showing 50 Palestinian refugees from the Gaza Strip arriving in Chechnya.[27] (*NOTE: This text also appeared in the Institute for the Study of War’s November 29 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment*) Kadyrov claimed that the Gazan refugees will stay at the “Gorny Klyuch” children’s health camp in Shalinsky Raion, Chechnya and that an additional 100 Gazan refugees will arrive in Chechnya on November 30.[28] Kadyrov’s claims reflect the Kremlin’s shift to a much more anti-Israel position in the Israel-Hamas war, as well as Kadyrov’s desire to show unwavering support for Russian President Vladimir Putin.[29] ISW cannot independently verify the footage or any of Kadyrov’s claims, however.

The al Qassem Brigades said three Israeli hostages died due to Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip.[30] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said Hamas is responsible for the security of all hostages in the Gaza Strip.[31] Israel is examining the reliability of the al Qassem Brigades’ claim.[32] Senior Israeli army officials said Israel controls 45% of the Gaza Strip.[33] CTP-ISW assesses that Israel has cleared 48% of the northern Gaza Strip north of Wadi Gaza. Israel has declared the area north of Wadi Gaza “a war zone.”[34] It is not clear that the Israeli officials are using the same doctrinal terms and definitions as does CTP-ISW.

China proposed a peace plan for the Middle East that is tantamount to Israeli defeat. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi presented a four-point plan for Middle East peace to the UN Security Council. The plan aims in part to revitalize the political prospects for the two-state solution.[35] Wang told the council that there needs to be a lasting cease-fire and that those held hostage should be released, although he offered no specifics.[36] Wang said Palestinians' right to statehood and "right to return" has long been ignored.[37] The Chinese proposal does not address the future governance of Gaza, specifically whether Hamas should be allowed to continue ruling the enclave, or the demilitarization of Gaza, nor does it address Israeli concerns about their own security against future attacks such as the October 7 assault.

The United States delivered humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip and plans to continue similar shipments after the humanitarian pause ends. US Central Command confirmed on November 28 that it supported USAID efforts to increase the flow of assistance into the Gaza Strip.[38] Two US senior officials told reporters that the United States expects the increased levels of humanitarian aid and fuel entering the Gaza Strip will continue after the pause ends.[39] The United Nations continued to operate in the Gaza Strip, including in the northern Gaza Strip, on November 29.[40]



NOTE: The IDF has said that its forces are stationed along ceasefire lines across the Gaza Strip during the pause in fighting. CTP-ISW's map of Israeli clearing operations shows reported Israeli clearing operations and the claimed furthest Israeli advances. CTP-ISW will not be mapping the shift in Israeli operating areas during the humanitarian pause.

CTP-ISW did not record verifiable reports of kinetic activity inside the Gaza Strip or reports of attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel on November 29.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

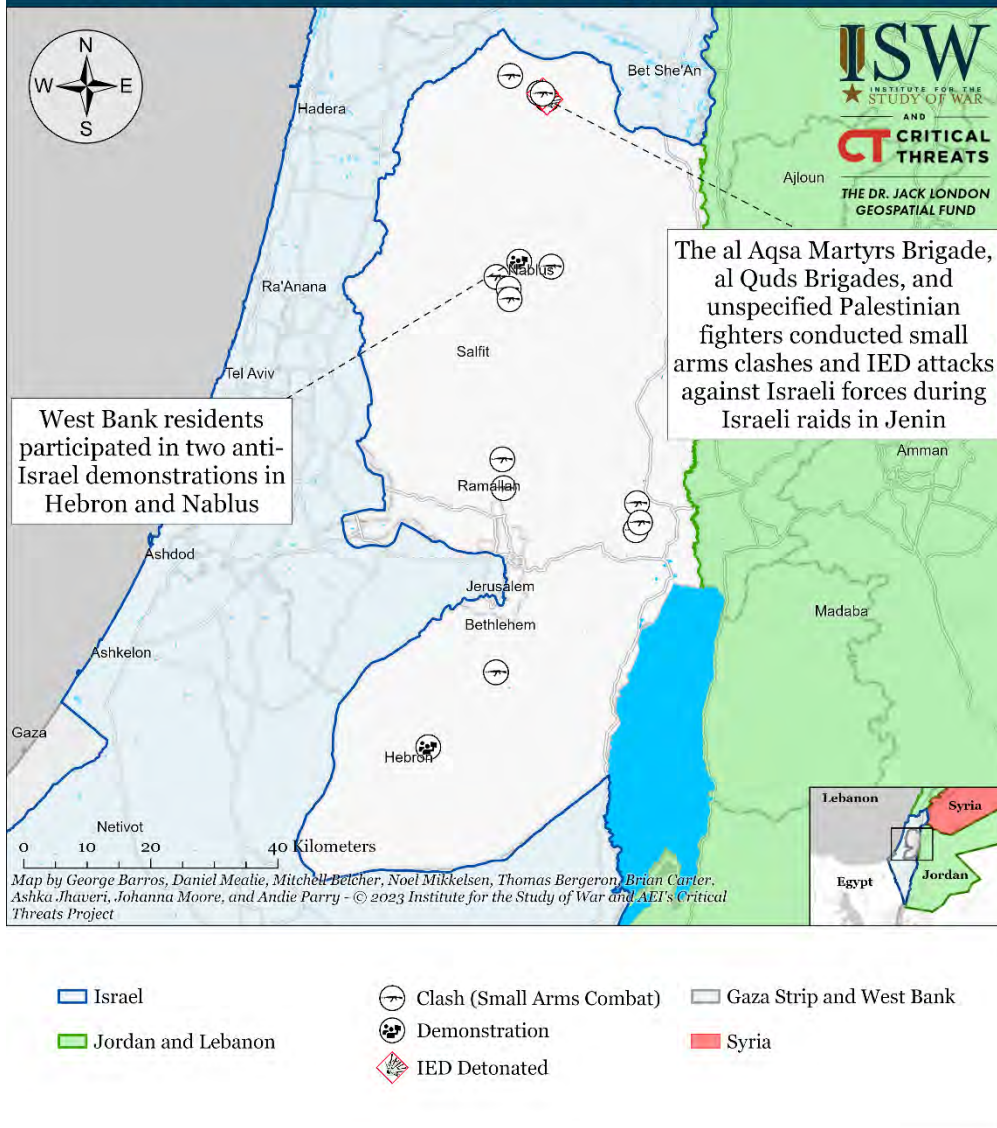
- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Palestinian fighters conducted 22 attacks against Israeli forces in the West Bank on November 29.[41]

This attack rate is more than double the average daily attack rate since November 21. The al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, al Quds Brigades, and unspecified Palestinian fighters fired small arms at Israeli forces at least 18 times in the West Bank.[42] Palestinian fighters also detonated four IEDs targeting Israeli forces across the West Bank.[43] West Bank residents participated in two anti-Israel demonstrations in Hebron and Nablus.[44]

The al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, al Quds Brigades, and unspecified Palestinian fighters conducted small arms clashes and IED attacks against Israeli forces during Israeli raids in Jenin. The IDF said that it conducted a drone strike targeting Palestinian fighters who fired at Israeli forces in the Jenin refugee camp.[45] The IDF killed two Palestinian fighters, including a commander in the Jenin Battalion of the al Quds Brigades, during hours of fighting between the IDF and Palestinian fighters in the camp.[46] The IDF said the commander carried out shooting attacks, supplied vehicles for attacks, and "promoted" other attacks.[47] The IDF also said the commander killed two Israeli civilians and four IDF soldiers in attacks in May and June.[48] Hamas condemned the Israeli operations in Jenin and called on West Bank residents and fighters to escalate "all forms of resistance" in the West Bank.[49] The IDF separately arrested five Hamas fighters in Hebron.[50]

Clashes in the West Bank as of November 29, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and other Iranian-backed militias did not conduct any attacks into northern Israel on November 29.

Israeli forces fired warning shots at a “suspicious vehicle” approaching the Israel-Lebanon border near the Israeli town of Malikiyah on November 29, according to the IDF.[51] The Lebanese National News Agency said that Israeli forces fired small arms targeting a combined Lebanese Armed Forces-UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) patrol near Houla, southern Lebanon.[52] UNIFIL told CNN that Israeli forces fired a “burst of machine gun fire” at a UNIFIL vehicle in the same area.[53]

Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

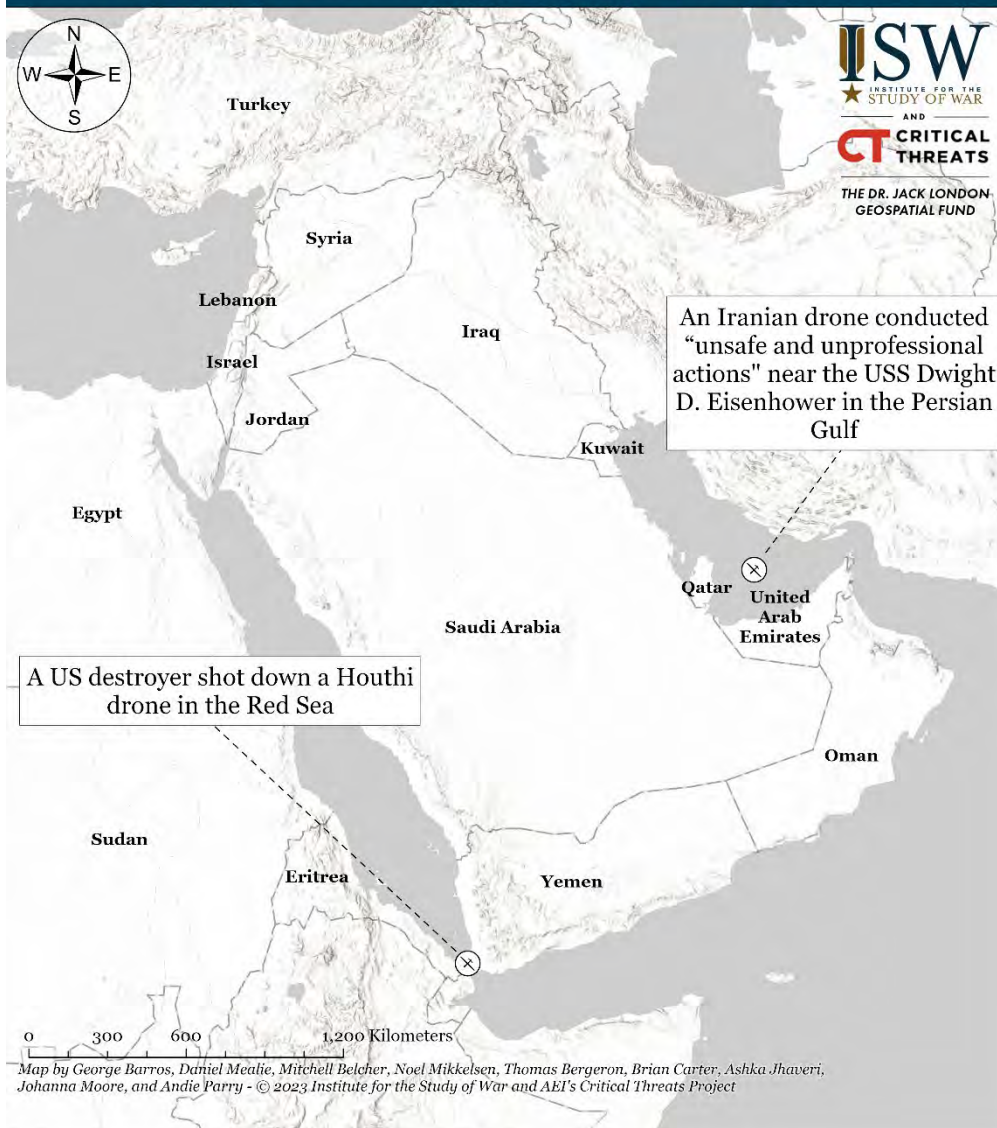
- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The US destroyer USS *Carney* shot down a Houthi drone launched from Yemen on November 29.[54] Houthi President Mahdi al Mashaat warned on November 29 that any US escalation towards the Houthis will not change the group's position towards the Israel-Hamas war.[55]

Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada (KSS) Secretary General Abu Alaa al Walai praised Iraqi resistance groups' support for Palestinians in a statement on November 29.[56] Walai published the statement in commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Walai praised Iraqi resistance groups for "confusing" supporters of Israel and "relieving the burden" on Palestinian militants. Walai reiterated KSS's opposition to US and Israeli "arrogance" and "crimes" against Palestinians.

An Iranian drone conducted "unsafe and unprofessional actions" near US aircraft carrier USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* in the Persian Gulf on November 28.[57] US Naval Forces Central Command reported that the drone came within 1,500 yards of the *Eisenhower* and that Iran ignored multiple hails and warnings. IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Ali Reza Tangsiri called on the US Navy to "behave rationally" in the Persian Gulf in an interview with Iranian state TV on November 26.[58] CTP-ISW recently assessed that the IRGC may have conducted a one-way drone attack on an Israeli-owned, Malta-flagged freighter in the Persian Gulf on November 24.[59]

Iranian-sponsored Attacks in the Middle East as of November 29, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei discussed the Israel-Hamas war with Basij members in Tehran on November 29.^[60] Khamenei claimed that Hamas' October 7 attack into Israel created a "new political geography" in the Middle East and diminished US power and influence in the region. Khamenei also discussed "American failures" in Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria in recent years. Khamenei falsely claimed, for example, that the United States previously tried to destroy LH, but that LH became "more than ten times stronger" after the 2006 Lebanon war with Israel.

Saudi Arabia offered to increase investments in the Iranian economy if Iran reins in its proxies and prevents the Israel-Hamas war from turning into a regional conflict, according to Arab and Western officials.^[61] The officials told Bloomberg that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman discussed "the possibility of deeper engagement" during their meeting on the sidelines of the joint Arab League-Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) conference in Jeddah on November 11. Bloomberg reported that Saudi Arabia is simultaneously working with the United States to prevent Iran from exploiting the Israel-Hamas war to strengthen its Axis of Resistance.

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- [2] <https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-11-2...>
- [3] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israeli-leaders-resist-calls-for-l...>
- [4] <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-hamas-war-gaza-hostages-2023-11-...>
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- [15] <https://twitter.com/IsraelHayomHeb/status/1729879068051693746>
- [16] [https://news.walla\[dot\]co.il/item/3625621](https://news.walla[dot]co.il/item/3625621)
- [17] https://twitter.com/IsraelRadar_com/status/1729853489252037015
- [18] [https://news.walla\[dot\]co.il/item/3625621](https://news.walla[dot]co.il/item/3625621)
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- [21] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1729971004980469859>
- [22] <https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-11-2...>
- [23] <https://t.me/hamasps/18009>
- [24] <https://t.me/hamasps/17972>
- [25] <https://twitter.com/IsraelHayomHeb/status/1729788437639631331>
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- [34] [https://news.walla\[dot\]co.il/item/3625621](https://news.walla[dot]co.il/item/3625621); <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1729729076766646277>
- [35] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/29/israel-palestinians-gaza...>
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- [39] <https://www.axios.com/2023/11/28/gaza-aid-pause-ceasefire-humanitarian-c...>
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IRAN UPDATE, NOVEMBER 30, 2023

Iran Update, November 30, 2023

Andie Parry, Annika Ganzeveld, Ashka Jhaveri, Kathryn Tyson, Peter Mills, and Nicholas Carl

Information Cutoff: 5:00 pm EST

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

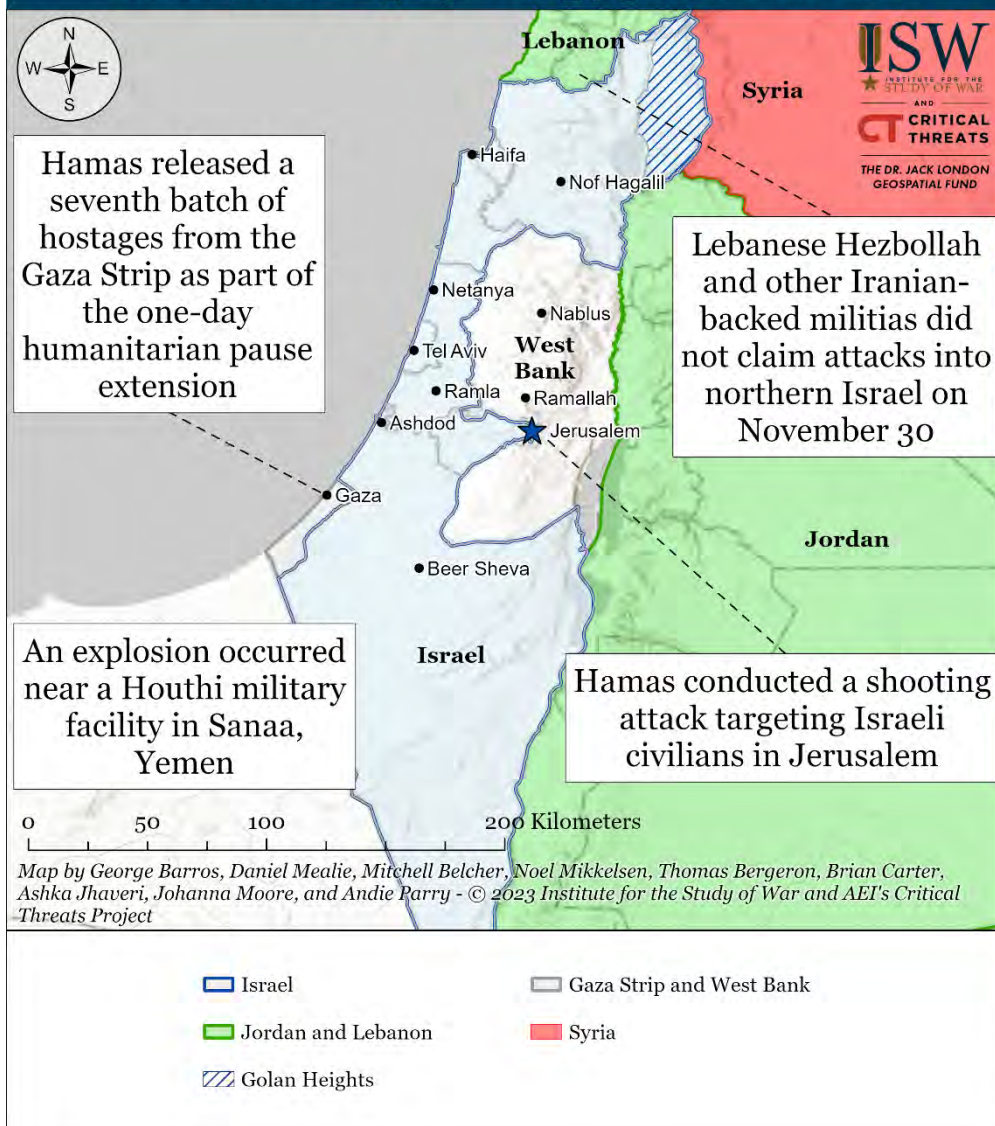
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Key Takeaways:

1. Members of the Israeli policy community have expressed concerns in recent days that Iran's so-called "Axis of Resistance" has built the capability to attack Israel from the West Bank and Lebanon in addition to the Gaza Strip. These concerns are consistent with Iranian leaders' intent to threaten Israel and its population from multiple different directions simultaneously and thereby drive citizens away from living in Israel.
2. Israel and Hamas extended the humanitarian pause agreement for an additional day, meaning that the pause is set to expire on December 1 at 0000 EST. Israel and Hamas completed the seventh swap of hostages in the Gaza Strip for Israeli-held Palestinian and Arab-Israeli prisoners on November 30 in accordance with the humanitarian pause agreement.
3. Israeli officials are emphasizing their continued commitment to destroying Hamas and their immediate military readiness. Hamas is signaling its preparedness for further fighting as well.
4. Palestinian fighters conducted nine attacks targeting Israeli forces in the West Bank. Hamas conducted a shooting attack targeting Israeli civilians in Jerusalem as well.
5. Members of the Axis of Resistance threatened to resume their regional attacks on US and Israeli targets if Israel resumes military operations in the Gaza Strip after the humanitarian pause ends.
6. An explosion occurred at a Houthi military facility in Sanaa, Yemen. The Houthis have claimed responsibility for several attacks on Israel and Israeli-owned tankers in the Red Sea throughout the Israel-Hamas war.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 30, 2023, 5:00 PM ET



Members of the Israeli policy community have expressed concerns in recent days that Iran's so-called "Axis of Resistance" has built the capability to attack Israel from the West Bank and Lebanon in addition to the Gaza Strip. An Israeli think tank published an article on November 29 describing the risk of a Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) ground attack into northern Israel in a way similar to Hamas' October 7 attack.^[1] The article stated that LH "poses a significant challenge for the IDF and still poses a clear and present danger." Mark Regev—a senior adviser to the Israeli prime minister—similarly warned on November 30 that Hamas seeks to attack Israeli targets inside and from the West Bank.^[2] Regev expressed concern that Hamas could conduct an escalation from the West Bank into Israel similar to Hamas' October 7 attack. CTP-ISW has reported extensively on how Iran has invested in building military capabilities and infrastructure in the West Bank in recent months.^[3]

These concerns are consistent with Iranian leaders' intent to threaten Israel and its population from multiple different directions simultaneously and thereby drive citizens away from living in Israel. Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Commander Major General Hossein Salami advocated for LH and Palestinian militia ground attacks into Israel during an interview with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's website in August 2022.^[4] Salami argued that such attacks would stoke internal chaos and

facilitate migration away from Israel. Iran's defense minister, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Gharai Ashtiani, more recently boasted on November 18 that Hamas' October 7 attack has reduced migration to Israel by creating economic, political, and security crises for the country.^[5]

Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip.

Israel and Hamas extended the humanitarian pause agreement for an additional day, meaning that the pause is set to expire on December 1 at 0000 EST. Israel, Hamas, and Qatar confirmed the extension late on November 29.^[6] The Qatari Foreign Affairs Ministry stated the extension includes the same conditions as the previous pause agreement, which involve a cessation of all military activities and the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip.^[7] No further extension was announced at the time of this writing.

Israel and Hamas completed the seventh swap of hostages in the Gaza Strip for Israeli-held Palestinian and Arab-Israeli prisoners on November 30 in accordance with the humanitarian pause agreement. Hamas released eight Israeli hostages to the Red Cross on November 30.^[8] The agreement stipulates that Hamas must release ten hostages to extend the pause an additional day, but Israel agreed to count two of the hostages whom Hamas released yesterday as part of the most recent ten.^[9] Hamas previously released 12 Israelis on November 29, including two dual Israeli-Russian citizens through a separate negotiation process with Russia.^[10] The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas— said that it released the Russian citizens as a sign of appreciation for Russian President Vladimir Putin's support for Palestine.^[11] Israel released 22 Palestinian youth and eight Arab-Israel women from detention on November 30.^[12]

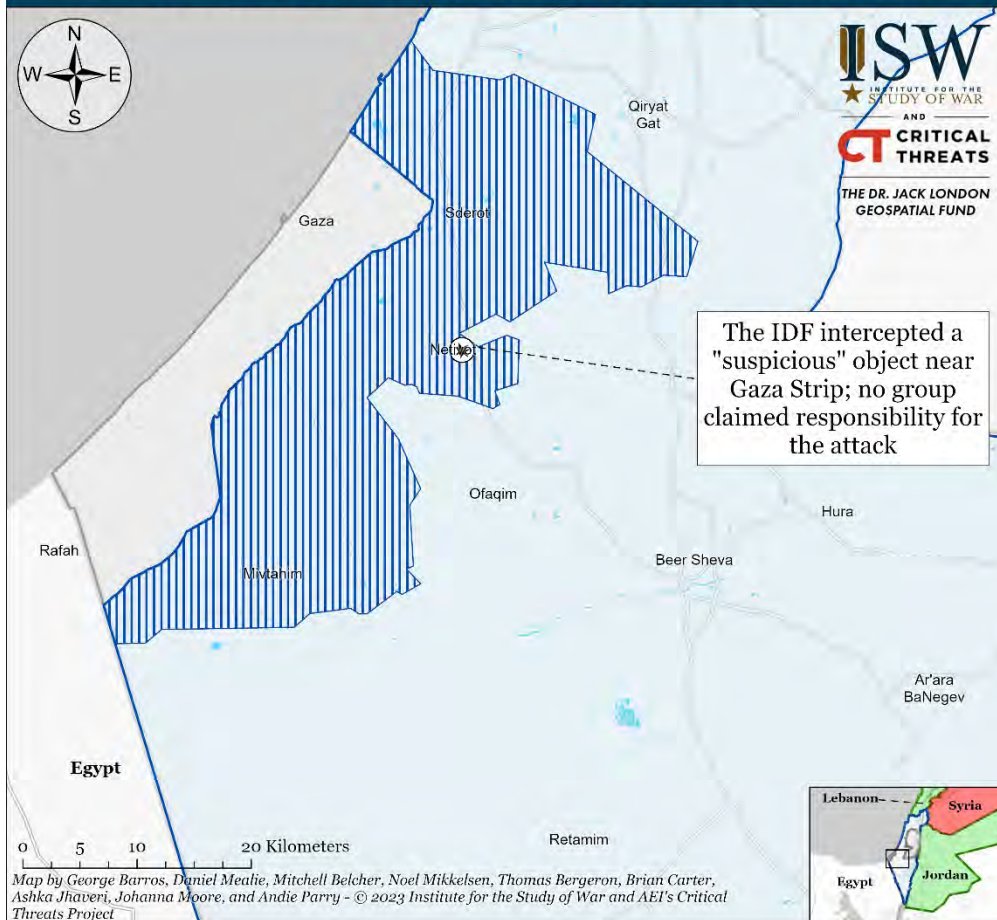
Israeli officials are emphasizing their continued commitment to destroying Hamas and their immediate military readiness. Hamas is signaling its preparedness for further fighting as well. The IDF spokesperson stated on November 30 that the IDF is ready to resume the fighting and is prepared to attack at any hour, including the night of November 30, if the pause is not renewed for another day.^[13] Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant stated that Israel will take as long as needed to win the war in the Gaza Strip against Hamas in a meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.^[14] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu similarly reiterated his oath to eliminate Hamas, saying that "nothing will stop us" after his meeting with Blinken.^[15] Netanyahu also spoke to Blinken about the "next phase" of fighting.^[16] The al Qassem Brigades issued on Telegram a warning to its fighters to be on high alert on the evening of November 29 before Israel and Hamas renewed the pause.^[17] Hamas does not ordinarily issue orders to its fighters on this public channel, suggesting the statement was intended to message Hamas' military readiness.

The United Nations confirmed that 10,500 liters of fuel reached two northern Gaza Strip hospitals on November 29.^[18] The Palestinian Red Crescent Society and UNRWA delivered medical supplies and fuel to al Ahli hospital and al Sahaba hospital. This fuel will operate the hospitals' generators for about a week. The United Nations noted the lack of fuel in the northern Gaza Strip is disrupting water filtration plants, however. The Gazan Health Ministry director stated on November 30 that that fuel had not reached hospitals in Gaza city and the northern parts of the strip, which is preventing hospitals from resuming their full operations, according to Lebanese Hezbollah-affiliated media.^[19]

NOTE: The IDF has said that its forces are stationed along ceasefire lines across the Gaza Strip during the pause in fighting. CTP-ISW's map of Israeli clearing operations shows reported Israeli clearing operations and the claimed furthest Israeli advances. CTP-ISW will not be mapping the shift in Israeli operating areas during the humanitarian pause.

The IDF reported that it intercepted a "suspicious target" outside the Gaza Strip over Netivot on November 30.^[20] Israel frequently uses the term "suspicious target" to refer to direct and indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory. Israel has not confirmed from where the target originated and said that the event is under investigation. No group claimed the attack. Palestinian militias had not conducted indirect fire attacks into Israel from the Gaza Strip since the humanitarian pause began on November 24.^[21]

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 30, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



- Israel
- Israeli Closed Military Zone
- Jordan and Lebanon
- ✱ Unspecified Attacks
- Gaza Strip and West Bank
- Syria

West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

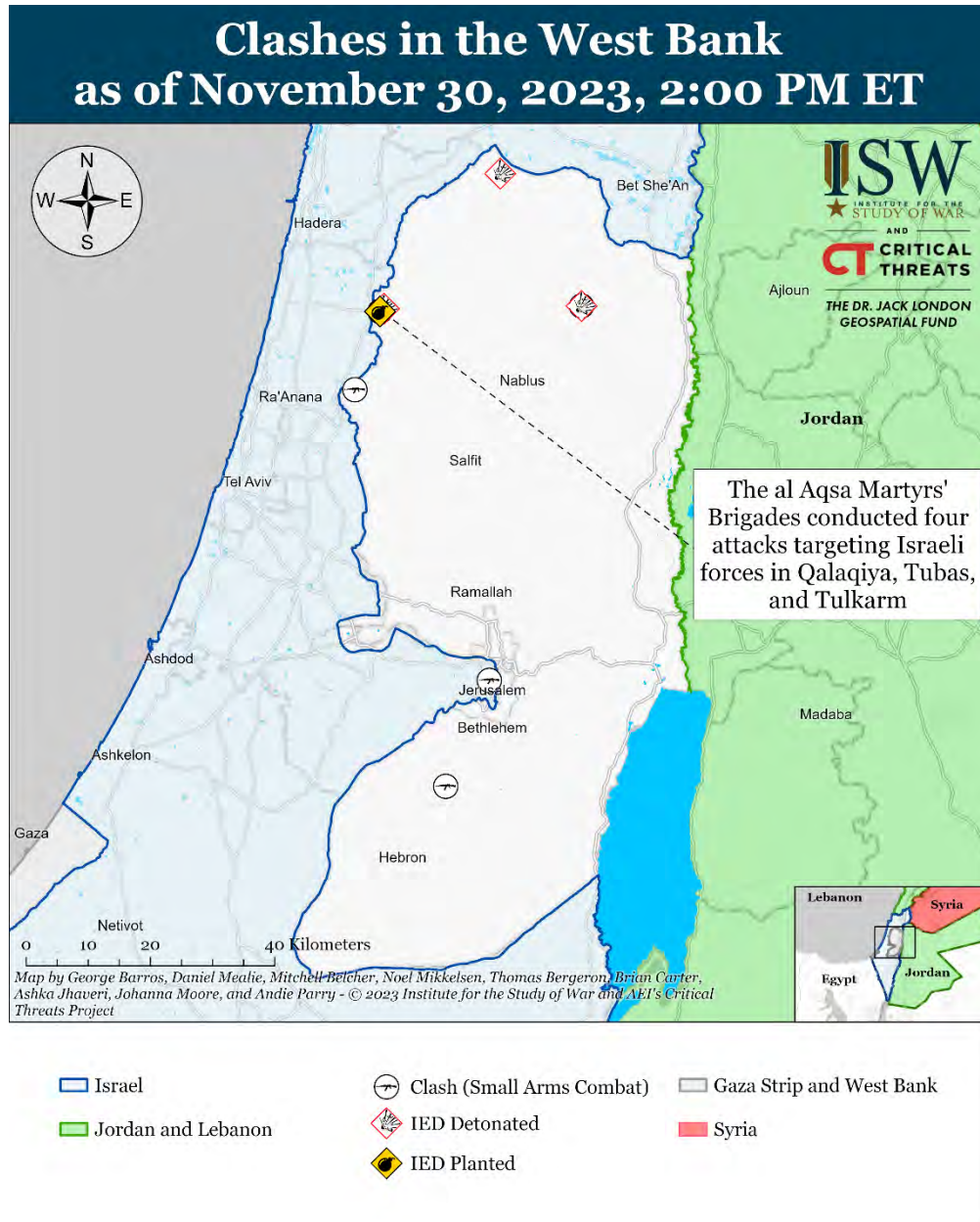
- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Palestinian fighters conducted nine attacks targeting Israeli forces in the West Bank on November 30.[22]

The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades—the self-proclaimed militant wing of Fatah—engaged Israeli forces in three small arms clashes in Qalatiya, Tubas, and Tulkarm.[23] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades also detonated an IED targeting Israeli forces during an Israeli raid in the Tulkarm refugee camp. The al Quds Brigades separately detonated an IED on Israeli forces in Tubas.[24]

Hamas conducted a shooting attack targeting Israeli civilians in Jerusalem on November 30.[25] Two Hamas gunmen fired on Israeli civilians at a bus stop near an entrance to the city before off-duty Israeli soldiers and an armed civilian killed the gunmen.[26] The Hamas attack killed three Israeli civilians and wounded at least eight others. The attack does not represent a technical violation of the humanitarian pause, which appears to apply only to the Gaza Strip based on statements made by Israel, Hamas, and Qatar. Hamas praised the attackers and said that the attack was in response to Israeli violations and "massacres" in

the Gaza Strip and West Bank and Israel's treatment of Palestinian prisoners.[27] Hamas also called for an "escalation of resistance" against Israel without specifying further. The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, al Quds Brigades, and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine celebrated the attack and reiterated the unity of their fighters with one another.[28]



This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

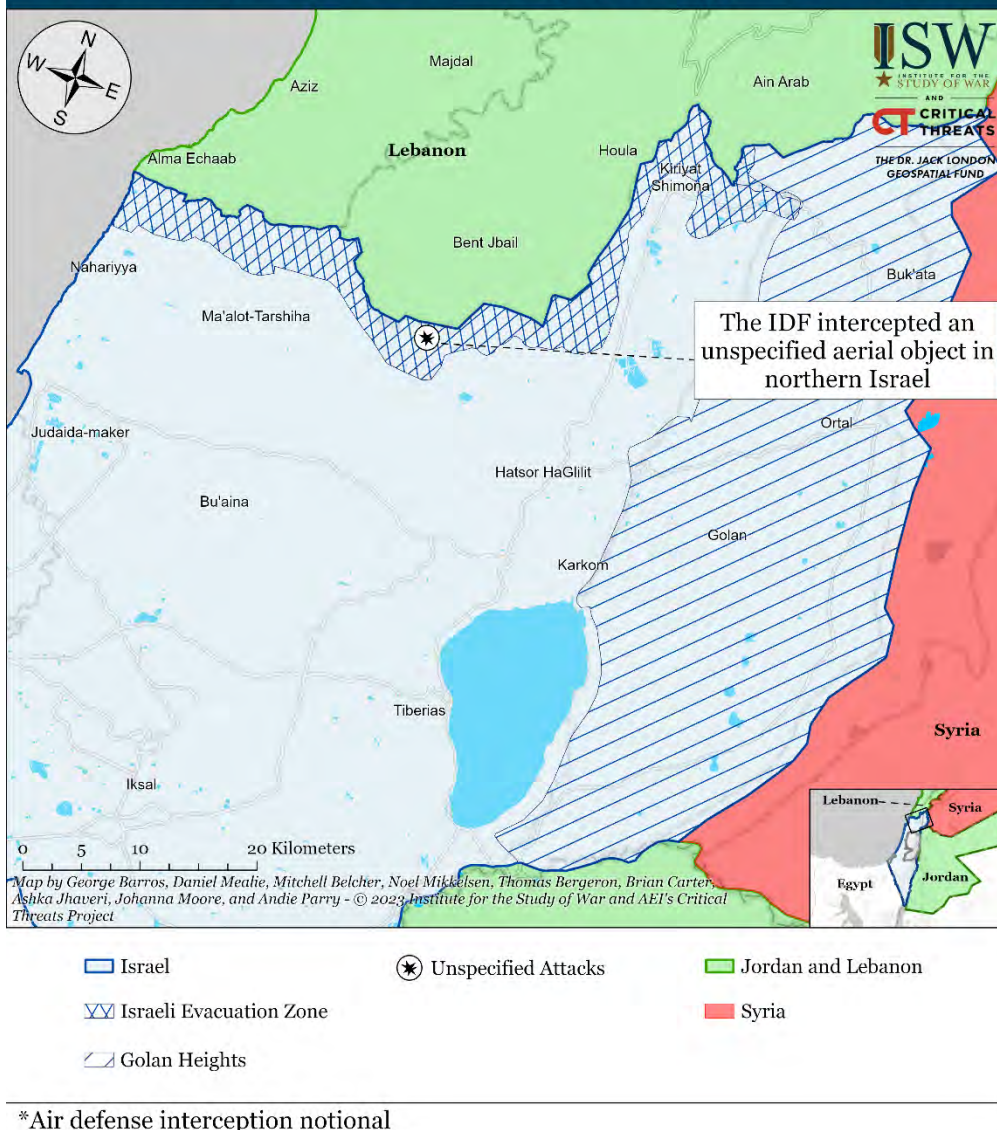
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

LH and other Iranian-backed militias did not claim any attacks into northern Israel on November 30. The IDF intercepted an unspecified "aerial target" that crossed from Lebanon into Israeli territory on November 30.[29] No group claimed responsibility for the unspecified "aerial target".

Attacks into Northern Israel from Lebanon as of November 30, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

Members of the Axis of Resistance threatened on November 30 to resume their regional attacks on US and Israeli targets if Israel resumes military operations in the Gaza Strip after the humanitarian pause ends. The Axis of Resistance—likely under Iranian direction—has conducted dozens of attacks against US and Israeli targets across the Middle East since the war began but largely stopped these attacks since the pause began on November 24. The Axis of Resistance has continued to attack and seize Israeli-operated tankers in this period, however.

- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—stated that it will escalate against the United States inside and outside Iraq if Israel resumes operations in the Gaza Strip. This statement is consistent with the threats that its constituent militias have made against the United States in recent days.^[30] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed 74 attacks on US positions in Iraq and Syria

between October 18 and November 23. Neither the Islamic Resistance in Iraq nor any of its affiliated militias have claimed any attacks on US forces since the pause took effect in the Gaza Strip on November 24.[31]

- The Houthi movement military spokesperson said on November 30 that the Houthis are ready to resume military operations against Israel if Israel resumes operations in the Gaza Strip.[32] Houthi Ambassador to Iran Ebrahim al Daylami said in a meeting with Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in Tehran on November 30 that the decision to target Israel and Israeli assets in the Red Sea is meant to defend the people of the Gaza Strip.[33] The Houthis did not officially affirm its commitment to the Israel-Hamas truce.

An explosion occurred at a Houthi military facility in Sanaa, Yemen, on November 30. Local footage shows a large cloud of smoke in the Jabal Attan area of Sanaa.[34] An independent analyst on X (Twitter) geolocated the footage to a Houthi missile base.[35] Israeli media, citing unspecified Saudi media, reported that a missile strike caused an explosion at a Houthi missile depot located in a closed military zone.[36] A Houthi Political Bureau member claimed that the explosion was caused by an unexploded piece of ordinance in a mountainous area, without mentioning the military facility.[37] The US Department of Defense press secretary confirmed on November 30 that the US military did not target a Houthi base in Yemen.[38] The Houthis have claimed responsibility for several attacks on Israel and Israeli-owned tankers in the Red Sea throughout the Israel-Hamas war.

Iranian Armed Forces General Staff Chief Major General Mohammad Bagheri discussed expanding Iranian-Saudi military ties during a phone call with Saudi Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman al Saud on November 30.[39] They also discussed “important issues in the Islamic world,” possibly including the Israel-Hamas war. Bagheri has discussed the war with foreign defense officials on numerous occasions since the war began. Bagheri held separate phone calls with the Russian and Qatari defense ministers on October 19, for example.[40]

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian criticized the Emirati government for hosting Israeli President Isaac Herzog during a phone call with his Emirati counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan on November 30.[41] Abdollahian stated that Herzog’s presence at the UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai warrants “serious consideration.” IRGC-affiliated media separately reported that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi did not attend the conference “in protest” against Herzog’s presence.[42] The Iranian regime has consistently pressured Arab and Muslim countries, especially ones that have normalized relations with Israel, since the Israel-Hamas war began to cut diplomatic and economic ties with Israel.

The Artesh and IRGC navies conducted a joint naval exercise with the Royal Navy of Oman in the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman on November 30.[43] Iranian media reported that the naval forces monitored maritime traffic as part of the exercise. Iran and Oman have regularly conducted joint exercises in recent years, such as in December 2021.[44]

Assembly of Experts member Rahim Tavakol revealed that an Assembly of Experts committee is discussing deputy supreme leader candidates during an interview with Iranian reformist-affiliated media on November 28.[45] The Assembly of Experts is an Iranian regime entity constitutionally responsible for monitoring the supreme leader and selecting his successor. The committee that Tavakol mentioned is the same three-person committee that is reportedly responsible for preparing a short list of potential candidates to succeed Ali Khamenei.[46] Tavakol confirmed that he is a member of the committee and did not deny when asked about reports that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Friday Prayer Leader Ahmad Khatami are the other members. Khatami is a staunch hardliner who entered the Assembly of Experts in 1999.[47] Any individual holding the position of deputy supreme leader would be an obvious candidate to replace current Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei when he dies. Some Western observers have noted that the Assembly of Experts is discussing deputy supreme leader candidates amid rumors of Khamenei’s deteriorating health.[48] An equally if not more plausible explanation is that the officials are having this discussion in the context of the upcoming Assembly of Experts election in March 2024. Assembly of Experts members are elected every eight years, meaning that the next assembly will probably select the next supreme leader given that Khamenei is 84 years old.[49] The Islamic Republic has had only one deputy supreme leader in its history thus far. The Assembly of Experts appointed Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri in 1985 to the position under then-Supreme Leader

Ruhollah Khomeini and designated him as Khomeini's successor.[50] Khomeini dismissed Montazeri in 1989 for questioning regime policies, such as the regime's mass execution of political prisoners in 1988.[51] The regime placed Montazeri under house arrest until 2003, and he died in 2009.[52]

Artesh Coordination Deputy Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari claimed on November 30 that Israel has withdrawn its forces from the Caucasus since the start of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7.[53] The Iranian regime has historically accused Baku of allowing Israel to use Azerbaijani territory to launch operations against Iran, as CTP-ISW has reported on numerous occasions.[54]

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- [1] <https://israel-alma dot org/2023/11/29/the-radwan-unit-is-capable-of-carrying-out-an-invasion-of-the-galilee-at-any-given-moment/>
 - [2] <https://twitter.com/MarkRegev/status/1730135798643560904>
 - [3] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-july-18-2023>
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