

## Iran Update, November 4, 2023

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

Information Cutoff: 2:00 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 and in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).*

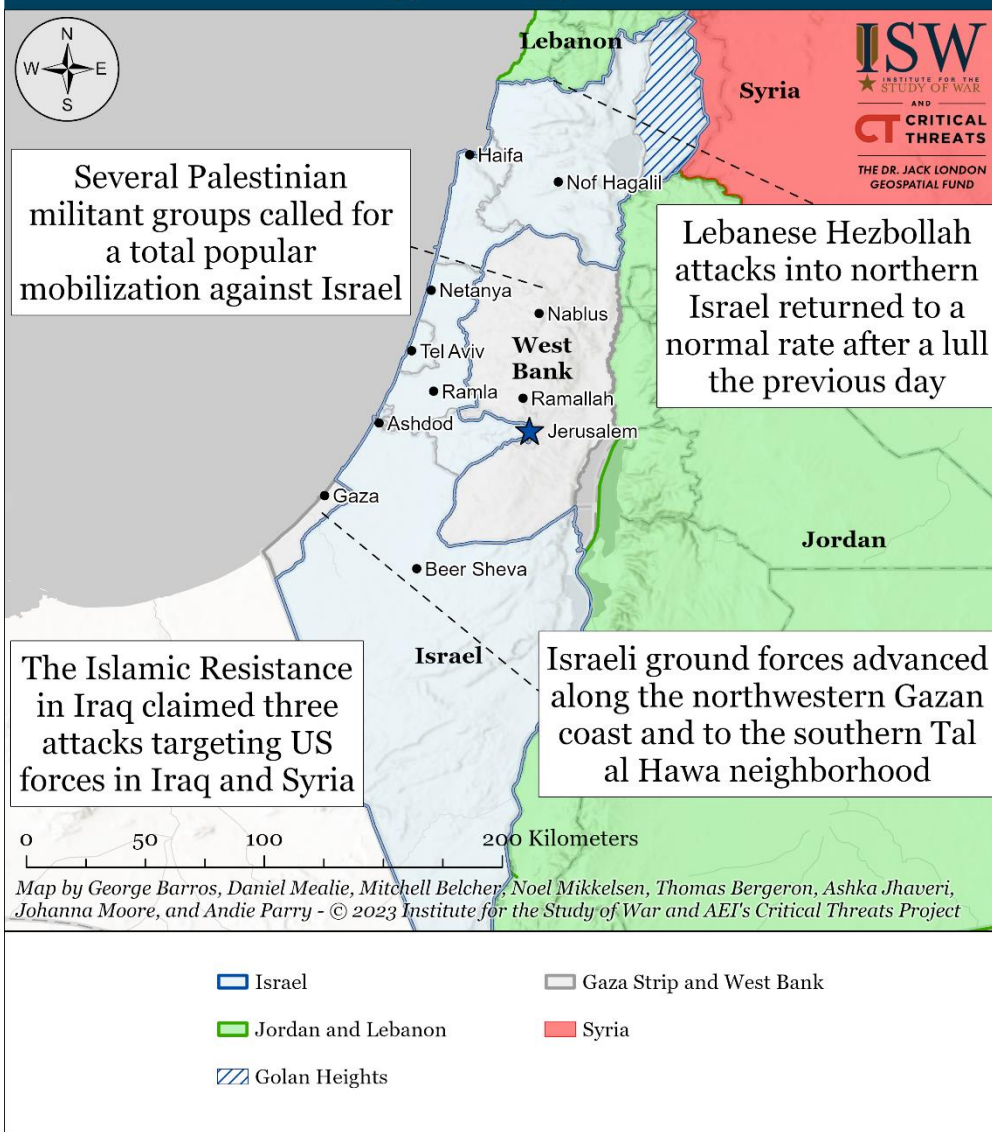
*Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are 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. 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 3.**
- 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 Lahiya along the coast since October 27. A Palestinian journalist reported Israeli ground forces are “actively operating” in northwestern Beit Lahiya.[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]

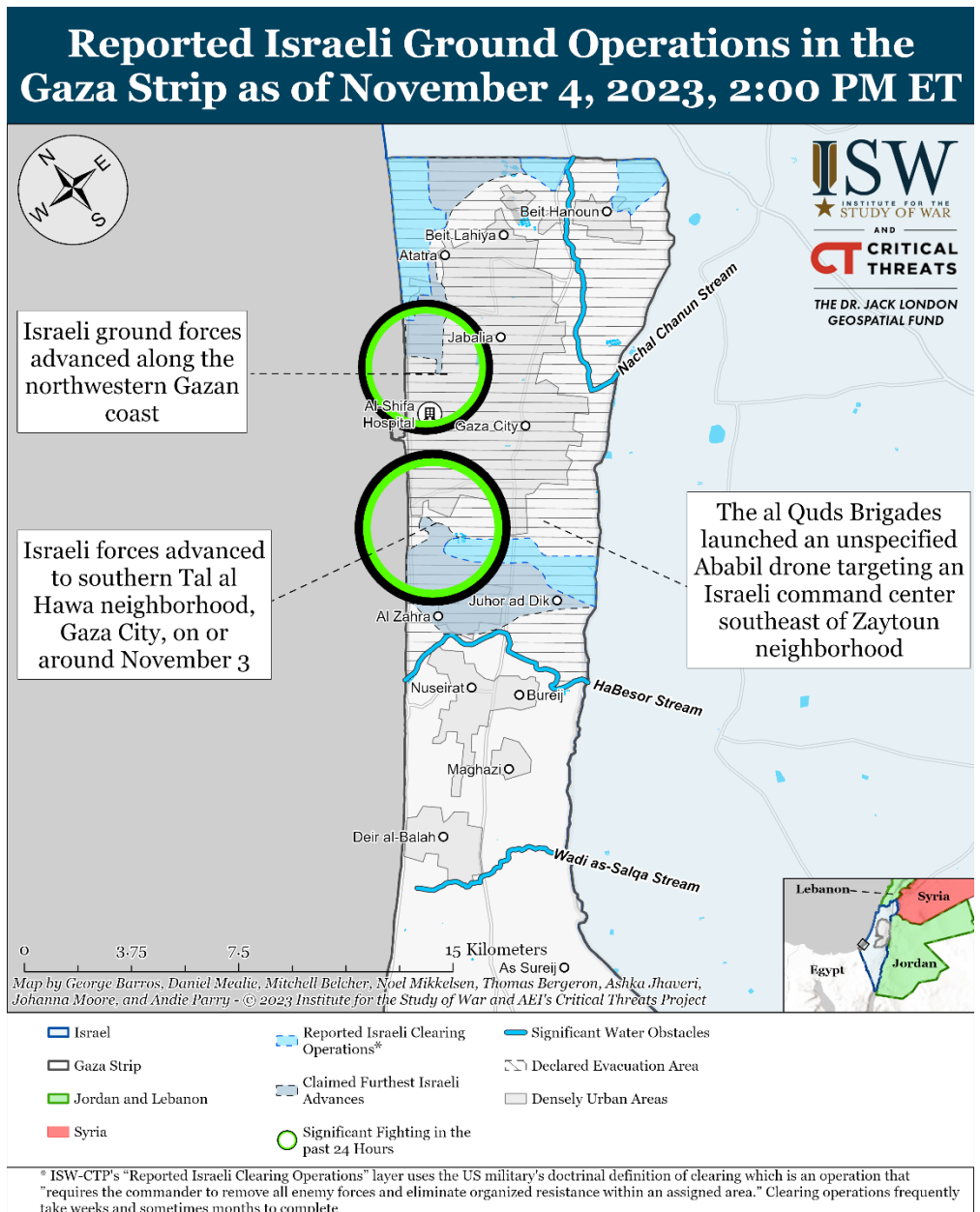
The al Qassem Brigades continued to attack Israeli forces near Juhor ad Dik on November 4.[17] The al Qassem Brigades claimed that it fired anti-tank rockets at Israeli vehicles near Juhor ad Dik on November 3.[18] The group also said it mortared Israeli vehicles east of Juhor ad Dik on November 4 in 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]

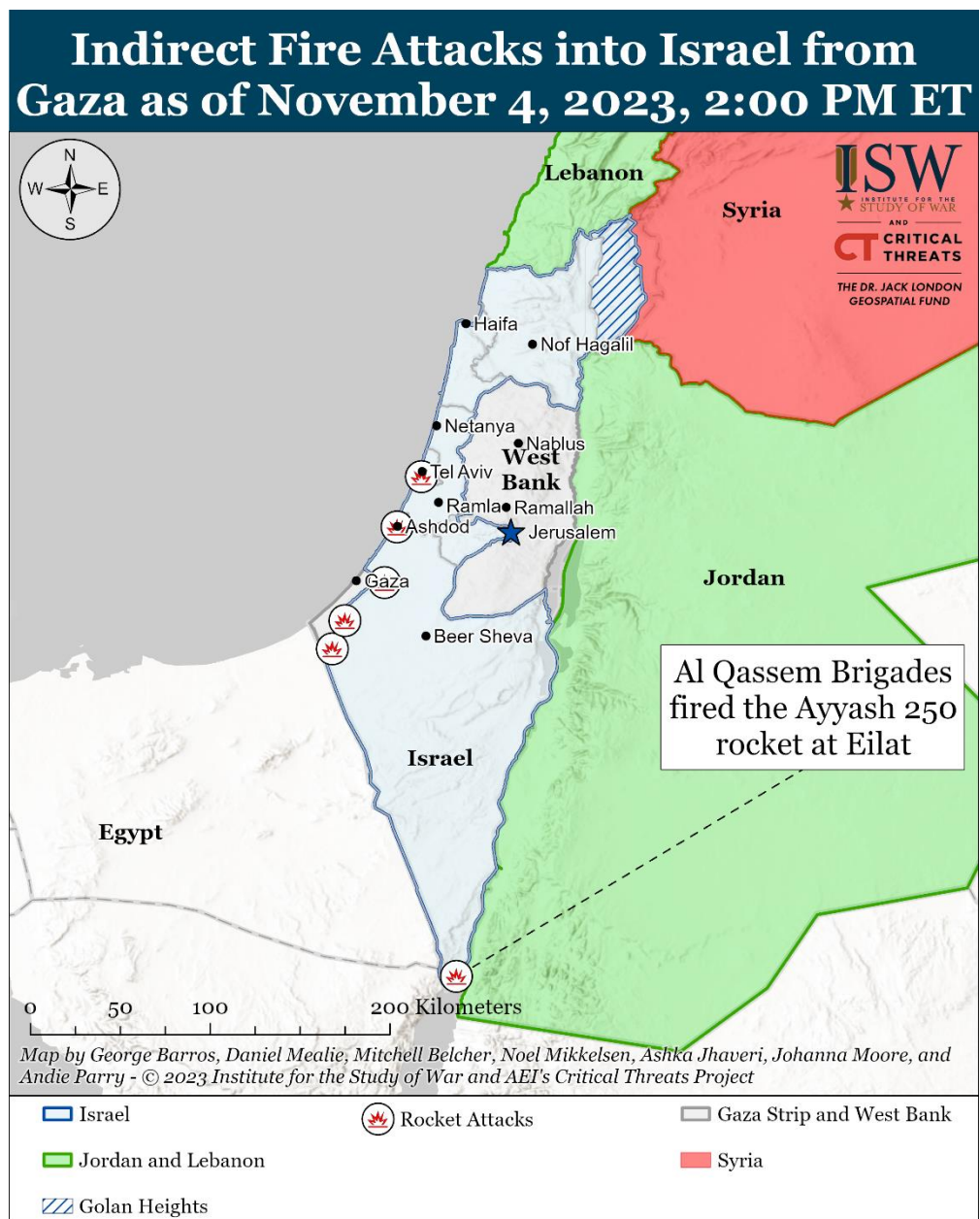
An al Quds Brigades operations officer said on November 3 that the al Quds Brigades and al Qassem brigades are coordinating at the tactical and operational levels to defend against the IDF ground operation.[24]



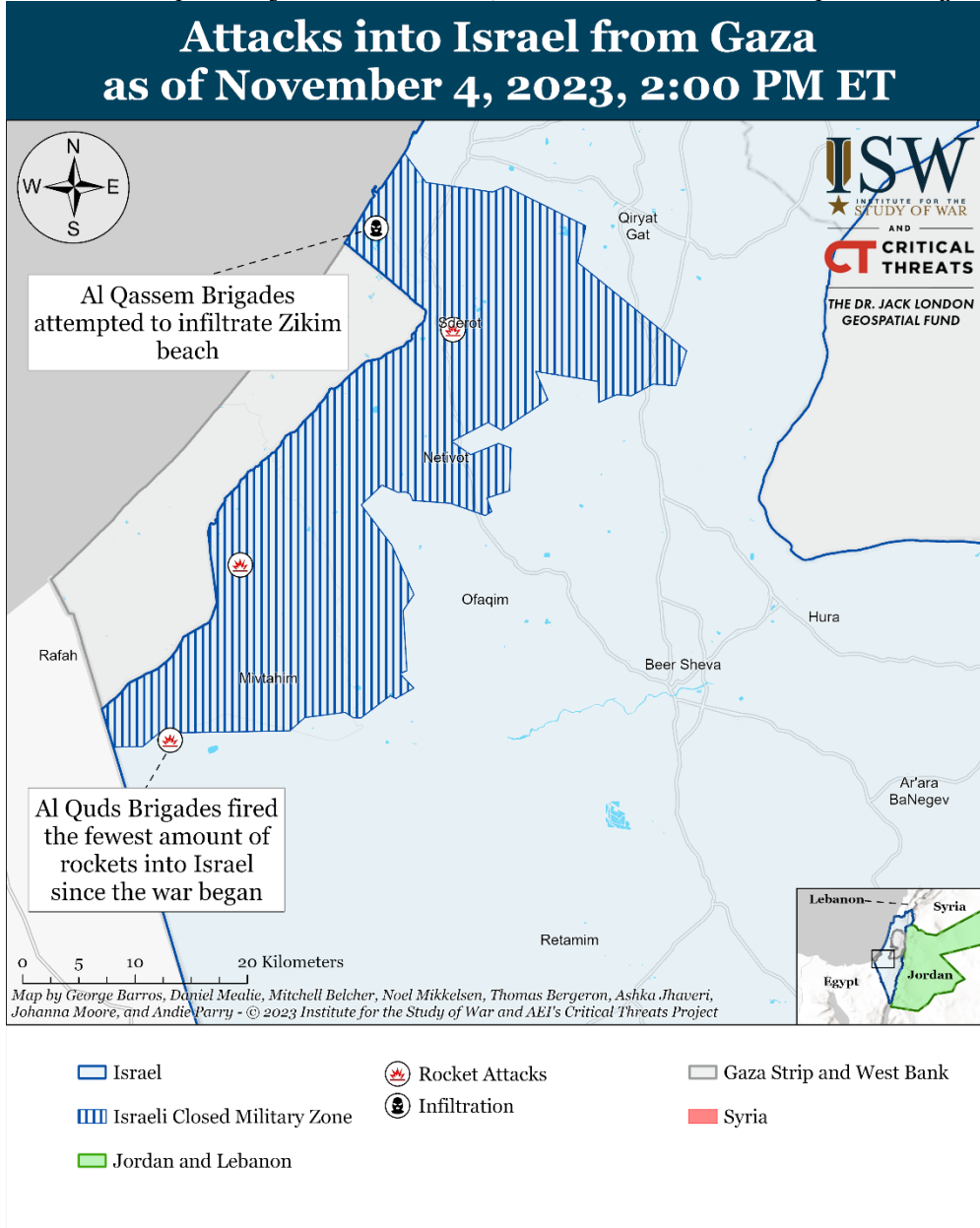
## Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli

**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]



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



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## West Bank

### Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

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

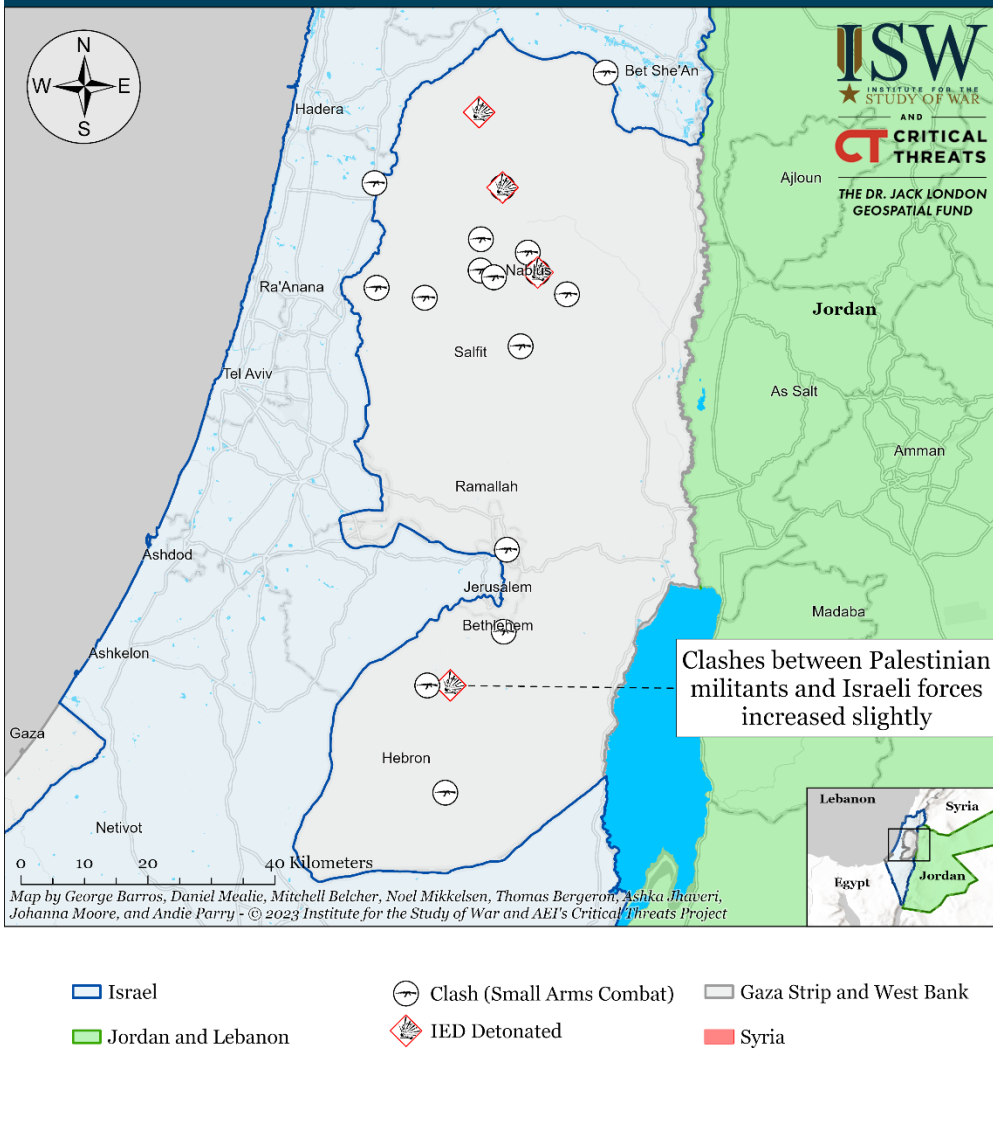
**Clashes between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces in the West Bank increased slightly on November 4.** CTP-ISW recorded 17 clashes in the West Bank, an increase from 12 the day prior.[31] CTP-ISW also recorded five instances of Palestinian militants conducting IED attacks

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-Israel 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]

# Clashes in the West Bank as of November 4, 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**

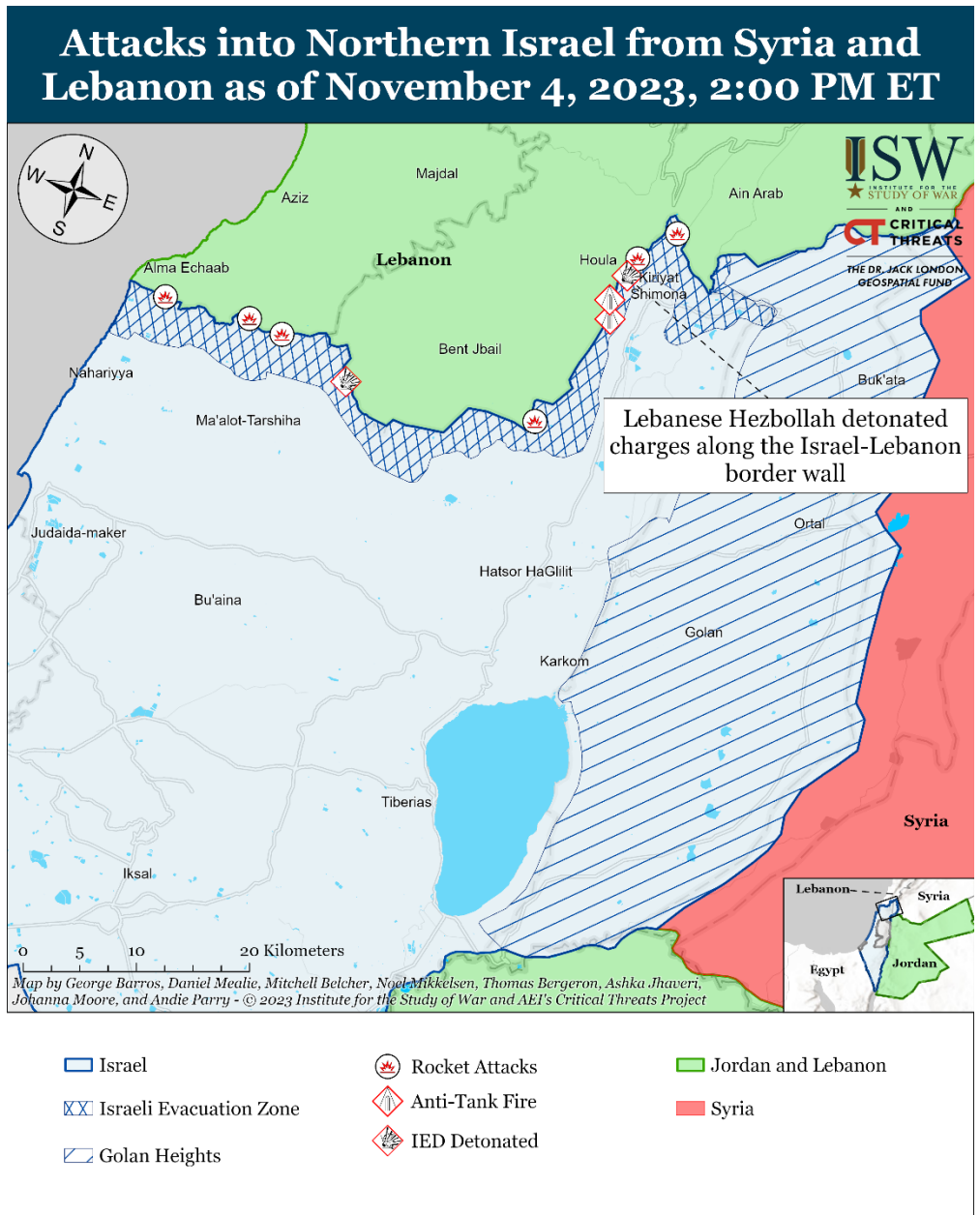
### **Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:**

- 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 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]

## Regional Battle Map

**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](https://twitter.com/tom_bike/status/1720190924339237351)
- [5] <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/03/middleeast/israel-advance-gaza-city-map-intl-cmd/index.html>
- [6] <https://t.me/qassambrigades/28963>
- [7] <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1720824341657514297?s=20>
- [8] <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-hamas-war-biden/card/map-shows-labyrinth-of-tunnels-made-by-hamas-under-gaza-identified-by-israel-IieNDixn5Bs78HeUi46v>
- [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>
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- [21] <https://x.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1720825925489553826?s=20>
- [22] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16582>
- [23] <https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1396825826994311168.html>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/16582>
- [24] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16581>
- [25] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/266>; <https://t.me/QudsN/323718>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/254>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/266>

[26] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1720819613875745202>;  
<https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1720820648484691974>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/265>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/43>

[27] <https://twitter.com/JoeTruzman/status/1720837653774680537>

[28] <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/5548>; <https://t.me/newpress1/57046>

[29] <https://t.me/sarayaps/16583>

[30] <https://t.me/almanarnews/134826>; <https://t.me/almanarnews/134825>

[31] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-november-3-2023> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323394>; <https://t.me/newpress1/57043> ; <https://t.me/newpress1/57043> ; <https://t.me/newpress1/57043> ; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5824> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323407> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323406> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323440> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323447> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323445> ; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/5826> ; <https://t.me/newpress1/57082> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323549> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323629> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323699> ; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1720798460314562857> ; <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/5633>

[32] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1720731275449807322> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323537> ; <https://t.me/jeninnews1/71949> ; <https://t.me/beitlahiaNews/5574> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323370>

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[34] [https://t.me/Nablus\\_news/82794](https://t.me/Nablus_news/82794)

[35] [https://t.me/Palestine\\_news\\_Update/1385](https://t.me/Palestine_news_Update/1385)

[36] <https://t.me/jeninnews1/72031> ; <https://t.me/tofanalqasaf/337>

[37] <https://t.me/tofanalqasaf/342>

[38] [https://t.me/shabab\\_thaer/149](https://t.me/shabab_thaer/149)

[39] <https://t.me/jeninnews1/72011> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323636> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/323637>

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[41] <https://t.me/almanarnews/134631>; <https://twitter.com/alishoeib1970/status/1720720252823040038>; <https://t.me/QudsN/323652>; <https://t.me/QudsN/323573>;  
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[42] <https://english.dot.almayadeen.net/news/politics/hezbollah-uses-burkan-rocket-in-first--bombs-several-israeli>

[43] <https://israel-alma.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Hezbollahs-Missile-and-Rocket-Arrays.pdf>

[44] <https://twitter.com/alishoeib1970/status/1720830547184795770>

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[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>

[50] <https://t.me/elamharbi/70>

[51] <https://t.me/elamharbi/70>

[52] <https://t.me/elamharbi/3>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/14>; <https://t.me/elamharbi/70>

[53] <https://t.me/elamharbi/71>

[54] <https://twitter.com/OALD24/status/1720710195314119096>

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[56] <https://www.presstv dot ir/Detail/2023/11/04/713992>; <https://mfa dot ir/portal/NewsView/733114>; <https://x.com/amirabdolahian/status/1720515410175402463?s=46&t=WJ33Mk8I8RluYYxUriq7Tg>

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