

## Iran Update, March 2, 2024

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Information Cutoff: 2:00 pm ET

*CTP-ISW will publish abbreviated updates on March 2 and 3, 2024. Detailed coverage will resume Monday, March 4, 2024.*

*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](#).*

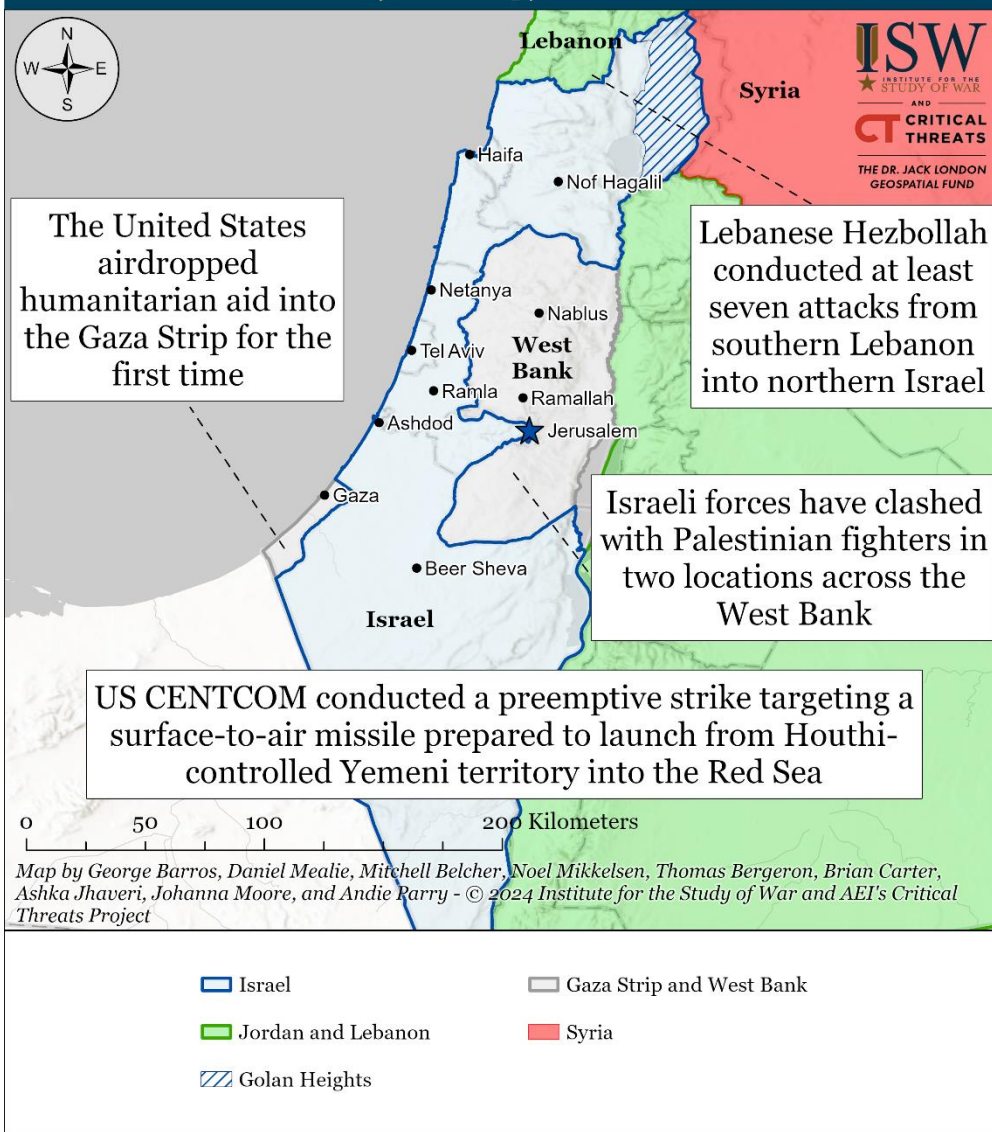
*Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are 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. Click [here](#) to subscribe to the Iran Update.*

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Northern Gaza Strip:** The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) continued to operate in the northern and central Gaza Strip on March 2. Hamas targeted Israeli forces in Zaytoun with rocket-propelled grenades and explosively-formed penetrators.
- **Southern Gaza Strip:** The IDF 89th Commando Brigade (98th Division) continued to conduct clearing operations in western Khan Younis.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** The United States airdropped humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip for the first time on March 2.
- **Yemen:** US CENTCOM conducted a preemptive strike targeting a surface-to-air missile that Houthi fighters had prepared to launch from Houthi-controlled Yemeni territory into the Red Sea.

# Israel-Hamas War as of March 2, 2024, 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 Defense Forces (IDF) continued to operate in the northern and central Gaza Strip on March 2.** The IDF 215th Artillery Brigade (162nd Division) directed an airstrike targeting three Palestinian fighters in western Gaza City's Rimal neighborhood.[1] Israeli forces concluded a clearing operation to reduce Hamas fighters and infrastructure in neighborhoods including Rimal on February 15.[2] The IDF joint special operations multidimensional unit and Nahal Brigade killed

several fighters in the central Gaza Strip on March 2.[3] The Nahal Brigade has been operating in Zaytoun as part of the IDF's clearing operation there, which began on February 20.

Hamas fighters in southeastern Zaytoun resumed contact with their headquarters and reported several attacks targeting Israeli forces in Zaytoun.[4] The fighters detonated explosively-formed penetrators and fired anti-tank rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) at Israeli armor in the area.[5]

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and the Palestinian Mujahideen Movement claimed to shoot down an IDF reconnaissance drone over Beit Lahia.[6]

**The IDF 89th Commando Brigade (98th Division) continued to conduct clearing operations in western Khan Younis.**[7] Israeli forces found small arms during a raid targeting a building owned by Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The IDF 7th Brigade directed a series of airstrikes that killed eight Palestinian fighters in Khan Younis, including one who was carrying a suspected IED.[8]

Hamas fighters detonated a house-borne improvised explosive device (HBIED) targeting seven Israeli soldiers in northern Khan Younis on March 2.[9] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, which is the self-proclaimed military wing of Fatah, reported that its fighters conducted several attacks using mortars and RPGs in Khan Younis City.[10]

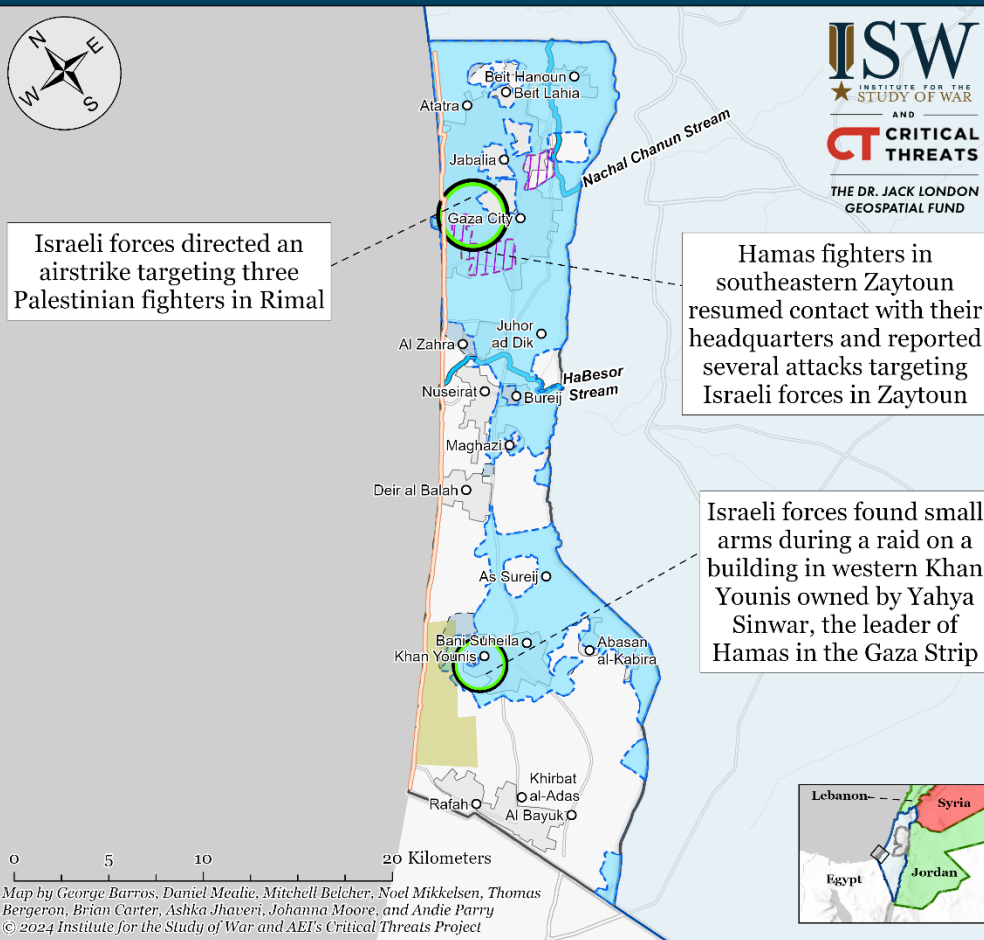
# Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of March 2, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



Israeli forces directed an airstrike targeting three Palestinian fighters in Rimal

Hamas fighters in southeastern Zaytoun resumed contact with their headquarters and reported several attacks targeting Israeli forces in Zaytoun

Israeli forces found small arms during a raid on a building in western Khan Younis owned by Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip



Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry  
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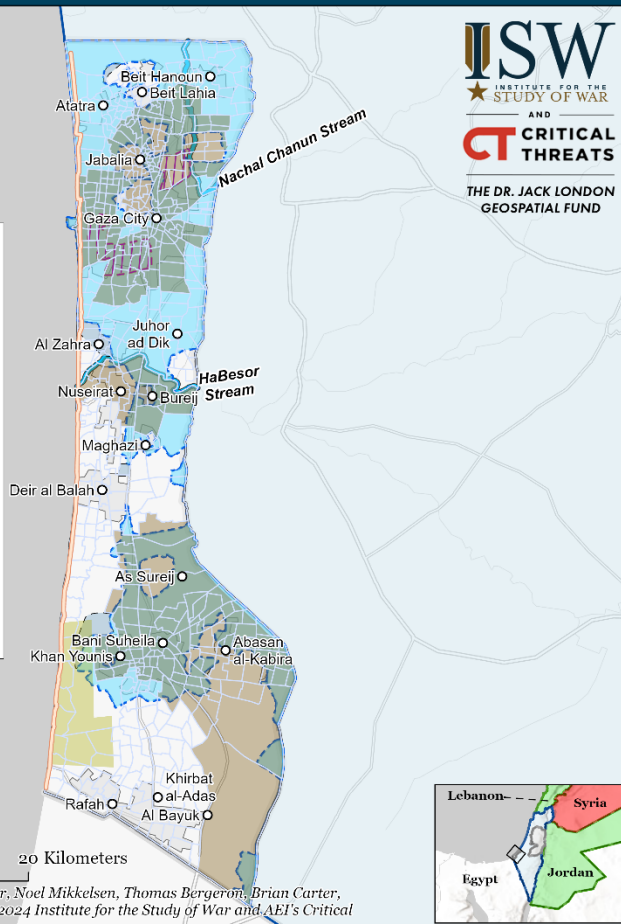
- Israel
- Reported Israeli Clearing Operations\*
- Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone
- Significant Water Obstacles
- Gaza Strip
- Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances
- IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridor on Road 230
- Densely Urban Areas
- Jordan and Lebanon
- Areas Reportedly Infiltrated by Palestinian Militias
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Syria

\* 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

# Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones in the Gaza Strip as of March 2, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



CTP-ISW's "Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones" layer shows Israeli evacuation zones announced by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). CTP-ISW used IDF maps and statements to create this layer. Where IDF maps cover part of a zone this layer covers the whole zone to avoid understating the evacuation order. The IDF began announcing these evacuation zones on December 2, 2023, at 0222 ET on X (Twitter)



Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2024 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

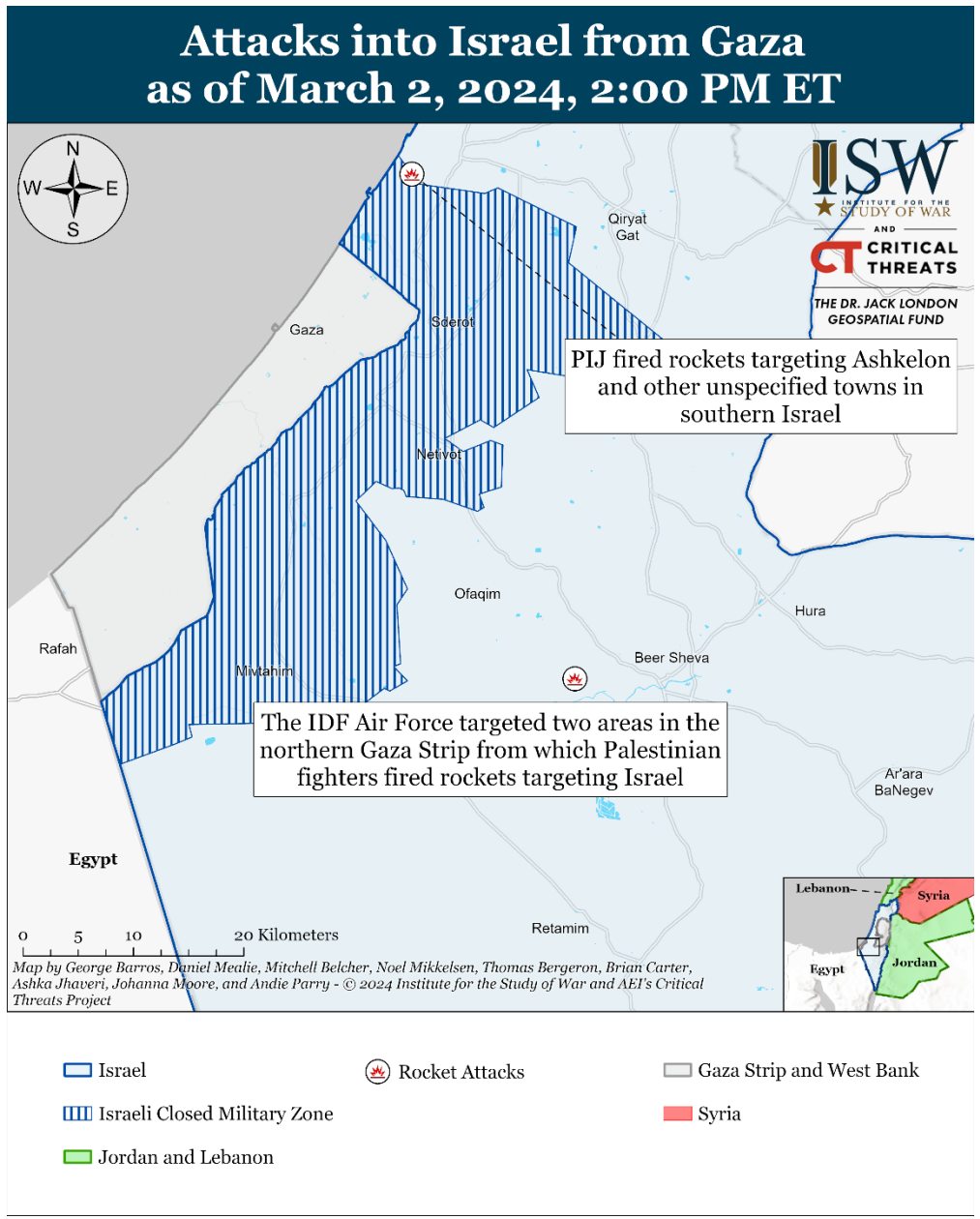
- Israel
- Gaza Strip
- Jordan and Lebanon
- Syria
- Reported Israeli Clearing Operations\*
- Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances
- Areas Reportedly Infiltrated by Palestinian Militias
- Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones
- Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone
- IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridor on Road 230
- Densely Urban Areas
- Significant Water Obstacles

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**The United States airdropped humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip for the first time on March 2.**<sup>[11]</sup> US Central Command (CENTCOM) and the Jordanian Air Force delivered 38,000 meals along the coastline of the Gaza Strip. US President Joe Biden said on March 1 that the "aid flowing to Gaza is nowhere [near] enough."<sup>[12]</sup> An unspecified US official told Axios that he expected more airdrops to take place in the coming days.<sup>[13]</sup>

A senior US official told reporters that there needs to be a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip to allow for the large-scale delivery of aid.<sup>[14]</sup> Israel has reportedly agreed to a framework that would release up to 400 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for 40 Israeli hostages and a six-week truce.<sup>[15]</sup>

**Palestinian militias have conducted at least two rocket attack from the Gaza Strip targeting southern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cut off on March 1.** PIJ fired rockets targeting Ashkelon and other unspecified towns in southern Israel on March 1.[16] The IDF Air Force targeted two areas in the northern Gaza Strip from which Palestinian fighters had previously fired rockets targeting Israel on March 1.[17] PIJ fired another rocket salvo targeting Haterim in southern Israel on March 2.[18]



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

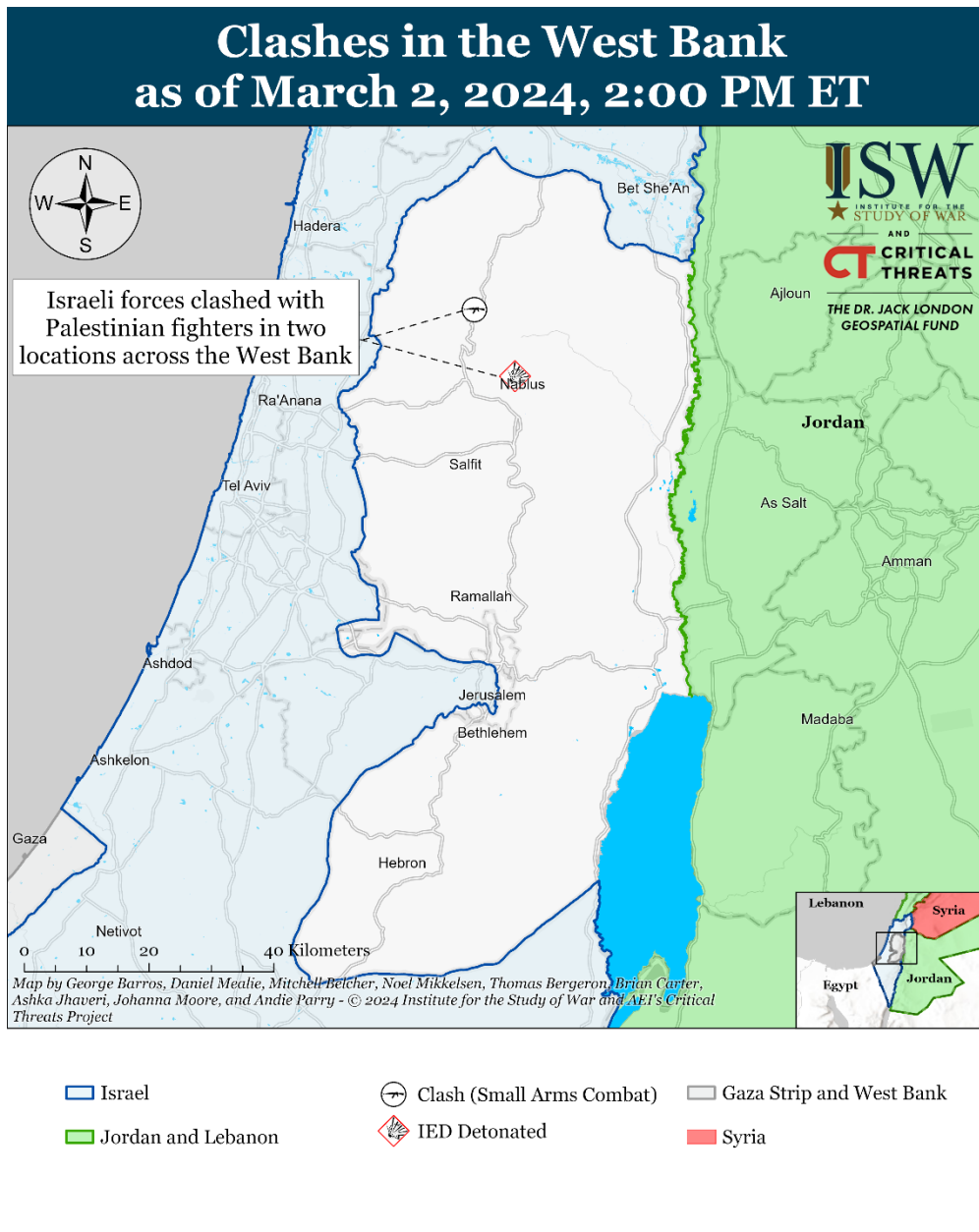
**West Bank**

**Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:**

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



**Israeli forces have clashed with Palestinian fighters in two locations across the West Bank since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on March 1.[19]**



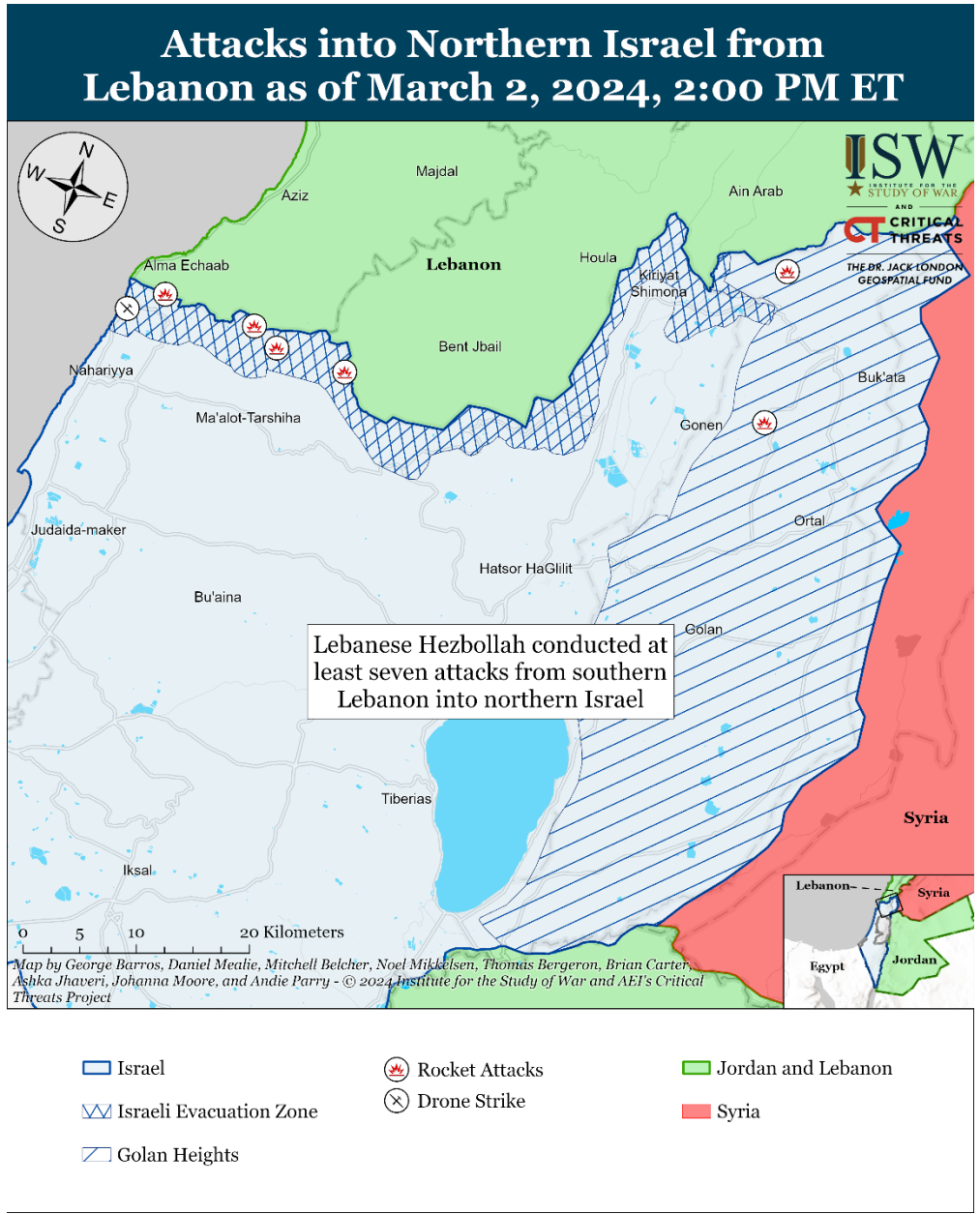
*This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.*

### **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 has conducted at least seven attacks from southern Lebanon into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on March 1.[20]**



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

**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



**US CENTCOM conducted a preemptive strike targeting a surface-to-air missile that Houthi fighters had prepared to launch from Houthi-controlled Yemeni territory into the Red Sea.**<sup>[21]</sup> Houthi fighters also launched an anti-ship ballistic missile from Houthi-controlled Yemeni territory into the Red Sea on March 1. CENTCOM reported that the Houthi attack did not damage any vessels.

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[1] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1763818832940949672>

[2] <https://www.idf.il/178477>; <https://www.idf.il/180657>

[3] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1763818834950037663>;

<https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1763818829551964625>

[4] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1712>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1713>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1714>

[5] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1712>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1714>

[6] <https://t.me/sarayaps/17519>; <https://t.me/mojahdeenpal/4270>

[7] <https://www.idf.il/183691>

[8] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1763818827874242969>

[9] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1717>

[10] <https://t.me/AymanGouda/6077>

[11] <https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/1763950219547287820>

[12] [https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-03-02-24/h\\_929cf5ba4b936fdod89507506c16004f](https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-03-02-24/h_929cf5ba4b936fdod89507506c16004f)

[13] <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/02/gaza-airdrop-aid-palestinians>

[14] <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/02/gaza-airdrop-aid-palestinians>

[15] <https://abcnews.go.com/International/live-updates/israel-gaza-hamas-war/israel-agrees-to-updated-framework-in-ceasefire-hostage-deal-107520344?id=107535302%C2%A0;%C2%A0https://www.timesofisrael%C2%A0dot>

<https://www.timesofisrael.com>

[16] <https://t.me/sarayaps/17518>

[17] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1763818834950037663>;

<https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1763818823646392471>

[18] <https://t.me/sarayaps/17526>

[19] [https://t.me/elaqsa\\_1965/5900](https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/5900) ; <https://t.me/QudsN/377222>

[20] <https://t.me/mmirleb/2359> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/2365> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/2370> ;

<https://t.me/mmirleb/2375> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/2377> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/2379> ;

<https://t.me/mmirleb/2381>

[21] <https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/1763772408870097224>