

Iran Update



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Information Cutoff: September 27, 2024, 2:00pm ET

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. 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 defines the “Axis of Resistance” as the unconventional alliance that Iran has cultivated in the Middle East since the Islamic Republic came to power in 1979. This transnational coalition is comprised of state, semi-state, and non-state actors that cooperate to secure their collective interests. Tehran considers itself to be both part of the alliance and its leader. Iran furnishes these groups with varying levels of financial, military, and political support in exchange for some degree of influence or control over their actions. Some are traditional proxies that are highly responsive to Iranian direction, while others are partners over which Iran exerts more limited influence. Members of the Axis of Resistance are united by their grand strategic objectives, which include eroding and eventually expelling American influence from the Middle East, destroying the Israeli state, or both. Pursuing these objectives and supporting the Axis of Resistance to those ends have become cornerstones of Iranian regional strategy.

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.

The IDF is still investigating whether Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah survived the IDF strike that targeted his headquarters in Dahieh, Beirut, on September 27.^[1] The IDF reported on September 27 that the IDF targeted Nasrallah in Hezbollah's underground central command headquarters.^[2] IDF Spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari reported that the IDF is still investigating whether Nasrallah survived the airstrike.^[3] Israeli officials told the *New York Times* that Israeli leadership decided to conduct the strike after receiving real-time intelligence indicating that Nasrallah was present for a meeting.^[4] Israeli media speculated after reviewing imagery and video that the IDF used multiple large bunker-buster bombs to penetrate and destroy Hezbollah's

underground command center.[5] An unspecified source close to Hezbollah cited by Agence France-Presse (AFP) claimed that Nasrallah is "fine." [6]

The IDF is conducting a decapitation campaign targeting senior Hezbollah leadership as part of its air campaign across Lebanon. This campaign could impact Hezbollah's ability to effectively organize and direct its forces. The IDF reported that its September 24 airstrike which killed Hezbollah's Rocket and Missile Unit Commander Ibrahim Muhammad Qabisi also killed Qabisi's deputy Abbas Sharafeddine and a senior commander from Hezbollah's missile division, Hussein Ezzeddine.[7] Ezzeddine was reportedly close to the former top Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur, who Israel killed in late July.[8] The IDF has conducted several major airstrikes in recent days targeting senior Hezbollah commanders and their communication networks.[9] CTP-ISW noted that Israel detonating Hezbollah pagers and personal radios disrupted the group's internal communications and may have prompted the group to begin using less secure methods of communication that Israel could then intercept and exploit.[10]

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel seeks to defeat Hezbollah in Lebanon and destroy Hamas in Gaza, and the achievement of these objectives would fundamentally change the security landscape in the Middle East.[11] Defeating both groups would also either achieve or create conditions to achieve all of Israel's war aims. These war aims are destroying Hamas as a governing and military force, preventing terrorist attacks in Israel, returning the hostages, protecting Israel's borders, and returning citizens to the north.[12] Iran has historically relied on Hezbollah to implement its Middle Eastern strategy. Hezbollah trainers have trained Iraqi, Syrian, and Houthi fighters to support Iran's regional goals.[13] Hezbollah also supported Iran by deploying forces into Syria to support the Bashar al Assad regime.[14] Both Hamas and Hezbollah have used their large, well-developed non-state military forces to threaten Israel from the north and south in support of Iranian objectives.[15] The defeat or severe degradation of these two groups would significantly alter the current security architecture in the Middle East that has prevailed since at least the mid-2000s.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel has "destroyed nearly all of Hamas battalions" and is now focused on eliminating Hamas' remaining fighting capabilities, which is generally consistent with CTP-ISW's assessment of Hamas' current strength.[16] CTP-ISW assesses that Israeli operations have defeated or severely degraded Hamas units across the Gaza Strip.[17] Defeat occurs when an enemy force has temporarily or permanently lost the physical means or the will to fight and is forced to yield to the friendly commander's will. Hamas' units do not appear to be fighting as cohesive military formations.[18] Defeating Hamas militarily is a prerequisite to destroying the group militarily and politically. Destroying Hamas as a military organization requires the IDF to damage Hamas' military forces to such a degree that they cannot function without being entirely rebuilt.[19] Destroying Hamas as a political organization would require additional political measures, including the creation of a transitional governing authority to rule the Strip. Defeating or destroying Hamas would prevent future terrorist attacks from the Gaza Strip and remove one entity that Iran can use to attack Israel.

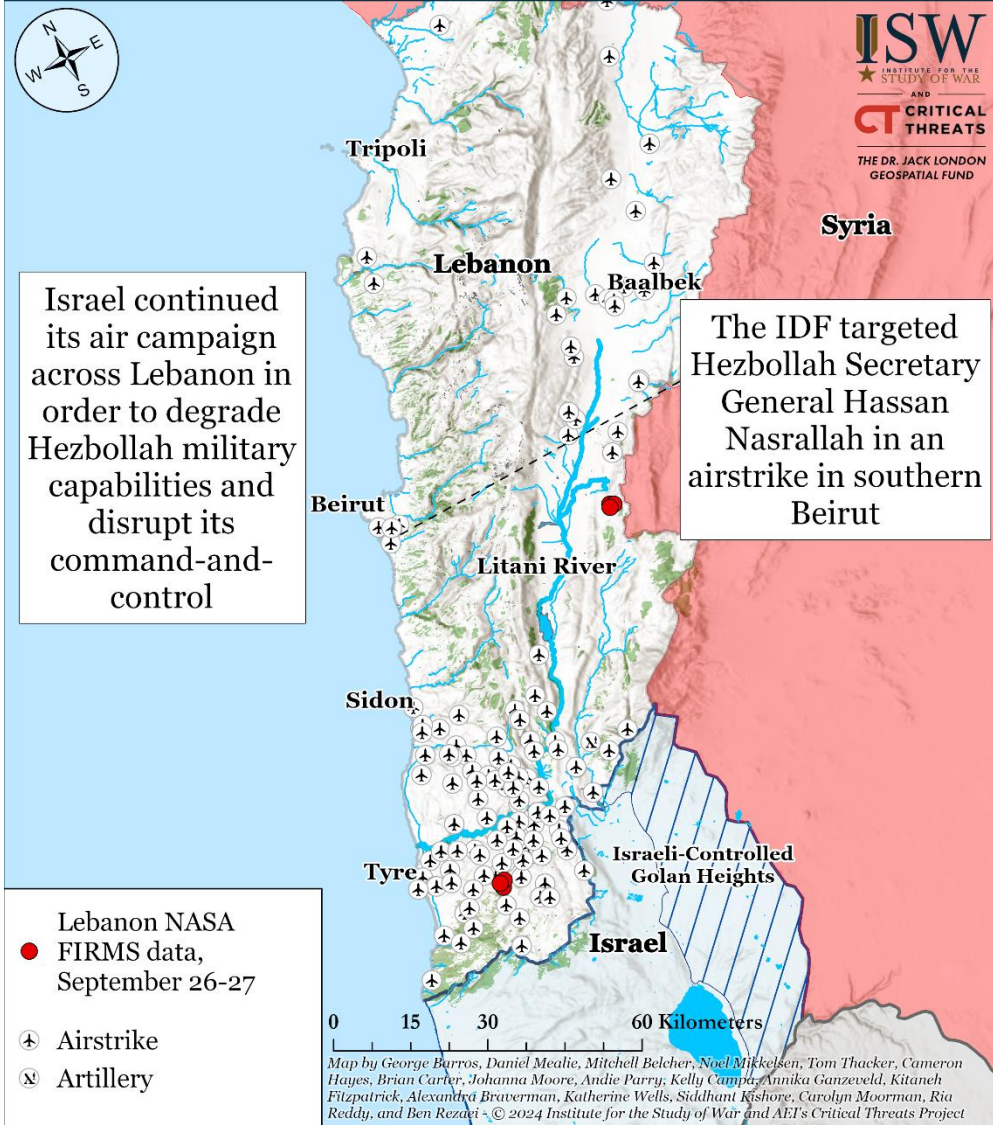
Netanyahu said that Israel seeks to "defeat Hezbollah," which would return Israeli citizens to the north.[20] The ongoing Israeli air campaign has severely damaged Hezbollah's command-and-control network. Hezbollah has so far failed to cease rocket fire into northern Israel, and Israel's top military

commanders are signaling that a ground operation may be necessary to accomplish Israel’s war aims. These operations are presumably designed to defeat Hezbollah’s will or ability to continue the fight, thereby forcing Hezbollah to end its attacks and allowing Israeli citizens to return to the north. The Hezbollah that would emerge from such a war would be severely damaged and unable to execute the activities it traditionally has—at least for a time—thus leading to profound changes in regional security architecture. These changes would likely require Iran to make a series of choices related to how it would manage its Axis of Resistance in the future.

Israeli Air Force Commander Major General Tomer Bar reported on September 26 that the IDF Air Force is preparing to provide air support for a potential ground operation into Lebanon.[21] Bar stated that the Air Force would work with Israeli ground forces to provide air cover and destroy targets above and below ground. IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzl Halevi told Israeli forces on September 25 that the Israeli air campaign into Lebanon is “prepar[ing] the area for the possibility of [Israeli forces’] entry.”[22] Halevi said that the IDF is preparing for maneuver operations that would involve Israeli forces engaging Hezbollah fighters and advancing into Lebanese towns and villages that are Hezbollah “military outposts.” Hezbollah operates dozens of so-called “military areas” close to civilian, UNIFIL, and Lebanese Army infrastructure in southern Lebanon.[23] Israeli Security Cabinet approved new war aims on September 16 as part of the October 7 War to return Israeli citizens to their homes in northern Israel.[24] The 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War taught the IDF the lesson that airstrikes alone cannot stop Hezbollah rocket barrages, even when such an air campaign is very effectively designed and executed on a tactical level.[25]

Israeli Air Campaign in Lebanon

As of September 27, 2024 at 14:00 PM ET

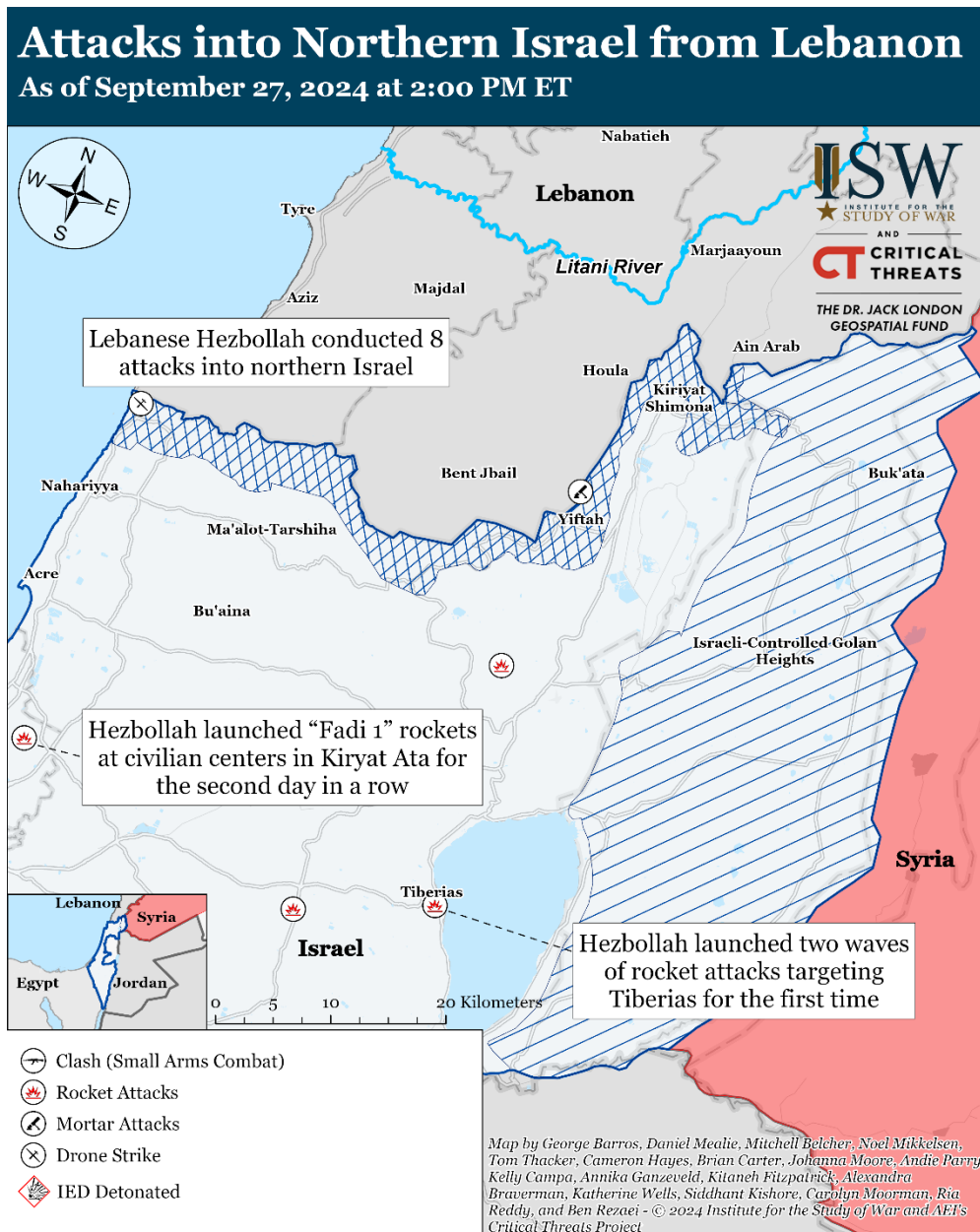


This map illustrates individual Israeli air and artillery strikes based on local Lebanese reporting. This map depicts strikes reported from 2:00pm ET on September 26 to 2:00pm ET on September 27. This map is not exhaustive. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify the locations of Israeli strikes.

Hezbollah continued its expanded attack campaign targeting Israeli civilian and military locations in northern Israel on September 26 and 27. Hezbollah targeted two Israeli towns, including Tiberias and Ilaniya, for the first time.[26] Hezbollah launched two waves of rocket attacks targeting Tiberias.[27] Israeli media reported that all five Hezbollah rockets launched as part of the first barrage fell into the Sea of Galilee.[28] Hezbollah launched medium-range “Fadi 1” rockets at several Israeli civilian centers in Kiryat Ata, Haifa District, for the second day in a row.[29] Hezbollah launched

rockets and artillery shells in two separate attacks targeting IDF military sites in northern Israel on September 26 and 27.[30]

The Wall Street Journal reported on September 26 that Hezbollah is facing internal disagreements about how to respond to the recent Israeli air campaign.[31] The *Wall Street Journal*, citing people familiar with Hezbollah discussions, reported that some Hezbollah members believe the group is acting too cautiously and should instead retaliate quickly against Israel. The sources further revealed that some Hezbollah members expressed frustration with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) for failing to step in to support the group in recent days. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that Hezbollah leadership seeks to avoid a regional war which it views as a “trap” set by Israel.[32]



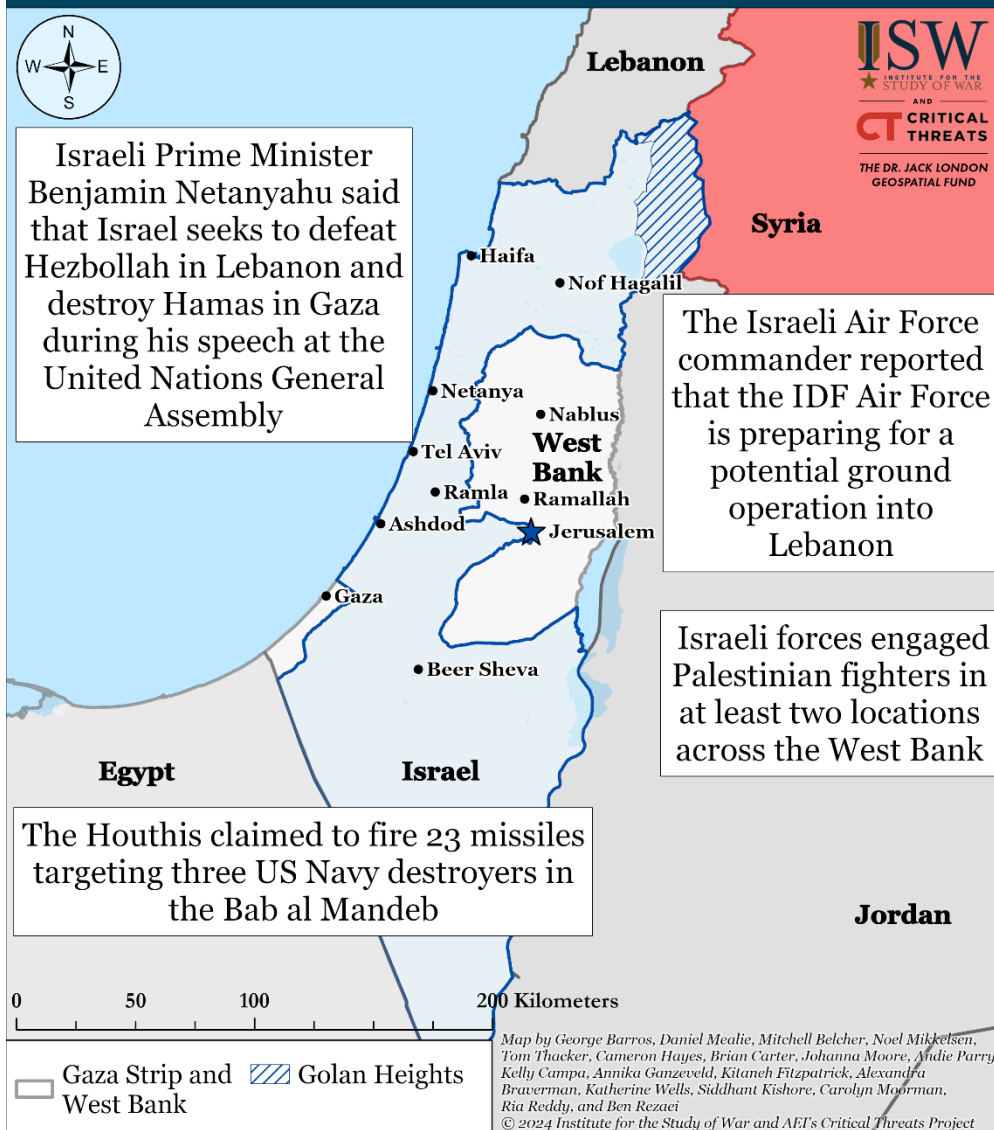
Iran’s Axis of Resistance is conducting a multi-front attack campaign targeting Israeli territory which may be intended to draw Israeli resources and attention away from its campaign in Lebanon. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—launched a one-way attack drone at an unspecified Israeli target in the Golan Heights on September 27.[33] Houthi spokesperson Yahya Saree announced on September 27 that the Houthis launched a ballistic missile targeting Tel Aviv and a drone attack targeting Ashkelon.[34] The IDF reported that it shot down a Houthi ballistic missile with the Arrow air defense system outside Israeli borders and that the IDF was not aware of a drone reaching Israel on the night of September 26-27.[35] Members of Iran’s Axis of Resistance have intervened in Israel’s war with Hezbollah, in part, by intensifying attacks on Israel.[36] These groups could calculate that these attacks would strain Israeli air defenses by forcing the air defense systems to track multiple targets from multiple directions simultaneously.

Key Takeaways:

- **Israeli Strike Targeting Nasrallah:** The IDF is still investigating whether Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah survived the IDF strike that targeted his headquarters in Dahieh, Beirut, on September 27. Israeli officials told the *New York Times* that Israeli leadership decided to conduct the strike after receiving real-time intelligence indicating that Nasrallah was present for a meeting.
- **Israeli War Aims:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel seeks to defeat Hezbollah in Lebanon and destroy Hamas in Gaza, and the achievement of these objectives would fundamentally change the security landscape in the Middle East. Defeating both groups would also either achieve or create conditions to achieve all of Israel’s war aims.
- **Lebanon:** Israeli Air Force Commander Major General Tomer Bar reported on September 26 that the IDF Air Force is preparing to provide air support for a potential ground operation into Lebanon. The Wall Street Journal reported on September 26 that Hezbollah is facing internal disagreements about how to respond to the recent Israeli air campaign.
- **Hezbollah’s Attack Campaign in Northern Israel:** Hezbollah continued its expanded attack campaign targeting Israeli civilian and military locations in northern Israel on September 26 and 27.
- **Iran’s Axis of Resistance in the October 7 War:** Iran’s Axis of Resistance is conducting a multi-front attack campaign targeting Israeli territory which may be intended to draw Israeli resources and attention away from its campaign in Lebanon.

Key Takeaways in the Israel-Hamas War

As of September 27, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

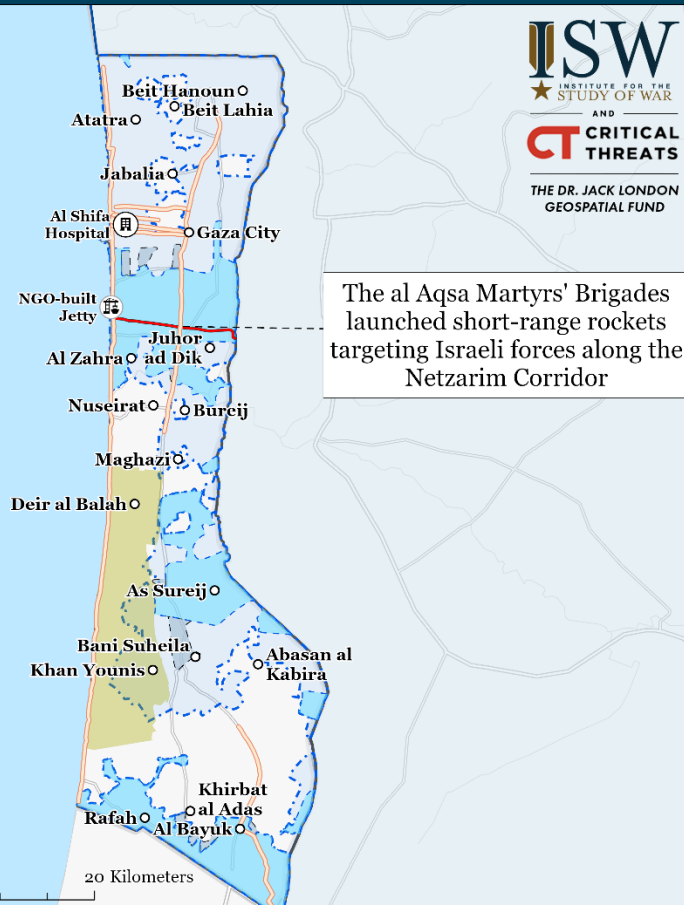
Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to sustain clearing operations in the Gaza Strip
- Reestablish Hamas as the governing authority in the Gaza Strip

The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades—the self-proclaimed military wing of Fatah—launched short-range rockets targeting Israeli forces along the Netzarim Corridor south of Gaza City on September 27.[37]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

As of September 27, 2024, 2:00 PM ET

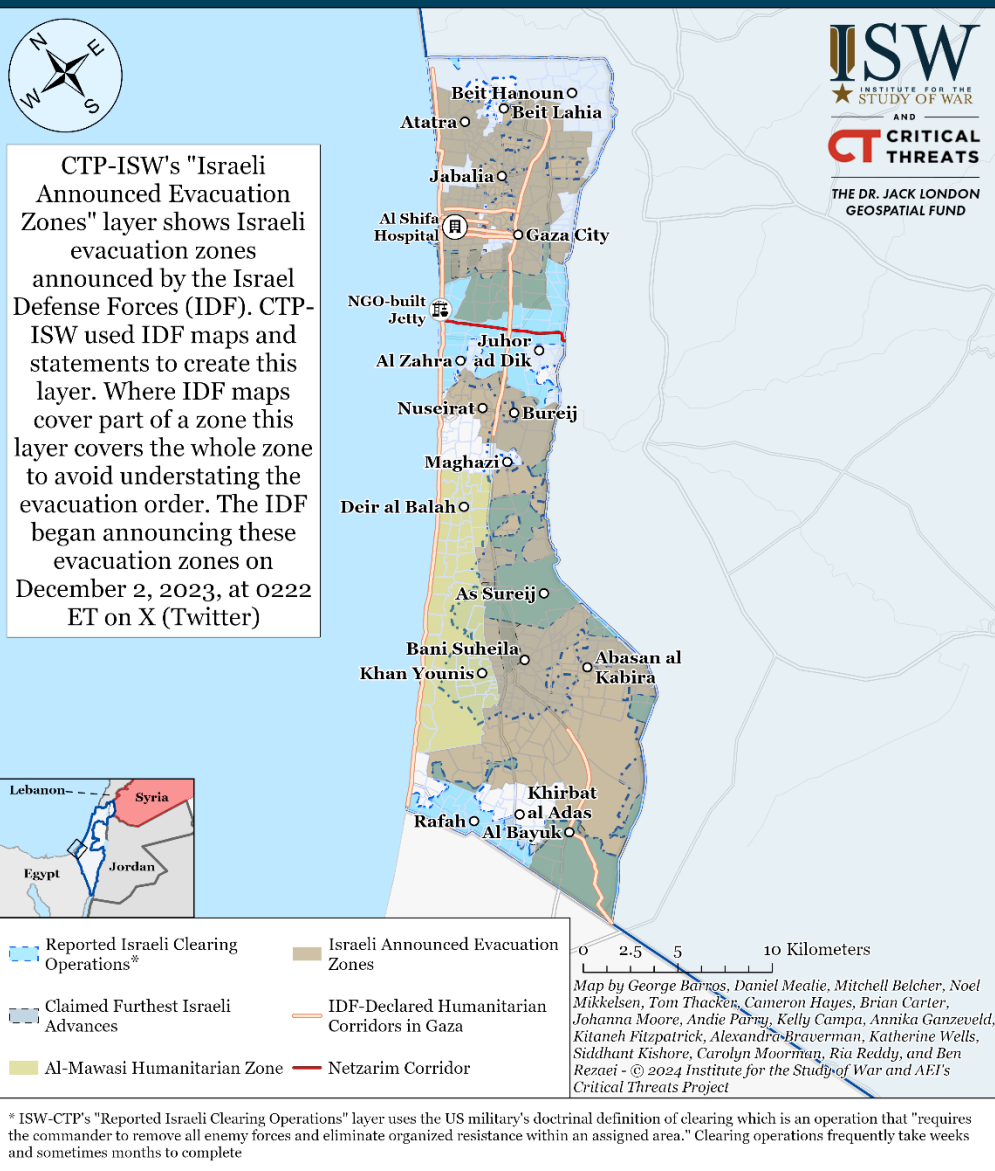


Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Tom Thacker, Cameron Hayes, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Annika Ganzeveld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Alexandra Braverman, Katherine Wells, Siddhant Kishore, Carolyn Moorman, Ria Reddy, and Ben Rezaei - © 2024 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*	IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridors in Gaza	Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours	
Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances	Netzarim Corridor	Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone	
Assessed Furthest Extent of Israeli Clearing Operations			

* 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 September 27, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



CTP-ISW has not observed any indirect fire attacks from Gaza into Israel since our last data cut-off on September 26.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

Israeli forces have engaged Palestinian fighters in at least two locations across the West Bank since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 26.[38] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades engaged IDF forces near Yabad town, southwest of Jenin, on September 26.[39] The al Aqsa Martyrs'

Brigades fired small arms and detonated IEDs targeting Israeli forces near the Balata refugee camp in Jenin on September 27.[40]



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

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Deter Israel from conducting a ground operation into Lebanon
- Prepare for an expanded and protracted conflict with Israel in the near term
- Expel the United States from Syria

Lebanese Hezbollah has conducted at least eight attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 26.[41]

See the topline for more information.

Iran and the Axis of Resistance

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian called for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas during the 79th United Nations General Assembly on September 25.[42] Pezeshkian urged the international community, particularly Western nations, to take concrete steps to halt "Israel's aggressions." Pezeshkian emphasized the importance of ongoing negotiations to address nuclear issues and stated that European foreign ministers would further review JCPOA concerns.[43]

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi met various European and Asian foreign ministers on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on September 26.[44] Araghchi discussed the need for a ceasefire in Lebanon in each of the meetings., Araghchi emphasized the need to unify efforts at the "Islamic level" in a meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein.[45] Araghchi also called for an immediate ceasefire to the Israel-Hamas war during the Non-Aligned Movement's Committee on Palestine on September 26.[46] Araghchi emphasized BRICS as a significant force in the Global South and proposed prioritizing Gaza at the upcoming BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, during a session of BRICS foreign ministers.[47] Araghchi also discussed potential cooperation with World Economic Forum President Børge Brende.[48] Araghchi separately met with Burkina Faso Foreign Minister Karim Traoré.[49]

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi addressed the United Nations General Assembly on September 26.[50] Gharibabadi criticized nuclear-armed states for failing to fulfill their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).[51] Gharibabadi urged the international community to compel Israel to join the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguards by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).[52]

The Houthis continued their campaign against US military vessels in the Red Sea. Houthi spokesperson Yahya Sarae claimed on September 27 that the Houthis launched 23 ballistic and cruise missiles at three US military destroyers near the Bab al Mandeb Strait at the same time as the Houthi attack on Israel on September 26.[53] An unspecified US official told Reuters that the three US Navy destroyers intercepted a number of missiles and drones that the Houthis had fired.[54] The official reported no damage to the destroyers.



[1] <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1839690832435134872> ; <https://t.me/moriahdoron/14528> ; <https://t.me/moriahdoron/14531> ; <https://www.jpost dot com/breaking-news/article-822131>

[2] <https://www.jpost dot com/breaking-news/article-822131> ; <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1839690832435134872> <https://t.me/moriahdoron/14528> ; <https://t.me/channelnabatieh/84862>

[3] <https://www.jpost dot com/breaking-news/article-822131>

[4] <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/09/27/world/israel-lebanon-hezbollah-hamas#israel-struck-after-learning-of-a-hezbollah-leadership-meeting-officials-say>

[5] <https://www.ynetnews dot com/article/r19jlnca>

[6] https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/source-close-to-hezbollah-says-nasrallah-fine-iran-security-official-were-checking-his-status/

[7] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1839549537335001088> ; https://www.timesofisrael dot com/liveblog_entry/idf-beirut-strike-killing-hezbollah-commander-also-took-out-two-other-top-operatives/

[8] <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cldyozyq770>

[9] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-september-20-2024> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-september-24-2024> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-september-23-2024>

[10] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-september-21-2024>

[11] <https://www.timesofisrael dot com/full-text-of-netanyahus-un-speech-enough-is-enough-he-says-of-hezbollah-also-warns-iran/>

[12] <https://www.kan dot org.il/content/kan-news/defense/569728/>

[13] <https://www.understandingwar.org/reference/fact-sheet-ali-mussa-daquduq> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/report/hezbollah-syria>

[14] <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pivot-to-Offense-How-Iran-Is-Adapting-for-Modern-Conflict-and-Warfare.pdf>

[15] <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pivot-to-Offense-How-Iran-Is-Adapting-for-Modern-Conflict-and-Warfare.pdf>

[16] <https://www.timesofisrael dot com/full-text-of-netanyahus-un-speech-enough-is-enough-he-says-of-hezbollah-also-warns-iran/>

- [17] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/israel-defeating-hamas-destroying-hamas-will-require-post-war-vision>
- [18] <https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/fm3-90-1.pdf> ; https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/adp1_02.pdf
- [19] https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/adp1_02.pdf
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- [26] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7359> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7357>
- [27] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7357> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7358>
- [28] https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/fresh-sirens-sound-in-tiberias-following-earlier-barrage-at-sea-of-galilee/
- [29] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7355>
- [30] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7347> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7360>
- [31] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-israel-attack-response-ae09f217>
- [32] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-israel-attack-response-ae09f217>
- [33] <https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1277>
- [34] <https://x.com/army21ye/status/1839628798217597030>
- [35] https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/after-sirens-idf-says-it-shot-down-missile-from-yemen-using-arrow-air-defense-system/;
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- [36] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-september-21-2024>
- [37] <https://t.me/nedalps/4403>
- [38] https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/7563 ; https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/7564 ; https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/7564
- [39] https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/7563

[40] https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/7564 ; https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/7564

[41] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7347>; <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1839544029249192240> ;
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<https://t.me/mmirleb/7357> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7358> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7359> ;
<https://t.me/mmirleb/7360>

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[43] <https://nournews dot ir/en/news/191125>

[44] <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1403/07/06/3166461>

[45] <https://www.shafaq dot com/ar/%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D9%88-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86>

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<https://x.com/army21ye/status/1839654247354290268>

[54] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/yemens-houthis-say-they-attacked-israels-tel-aviv-ashkelon-2024-09-27/>