Iran Update



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Information Cutoff: October 25, 2024, 2:00 pm 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.

Note: CTP-ISW is tracking early reports that Israel has launched airstrikes in Iran in retaliation for the Iranian ballistic missile attack on Israel on October 1. CTP-ISW will continue to track these developments and report on them further in the coming days.

Four unspecified Iranian officials outlined to Western media how Tehran could retaliate in response to an Israeli strike on Iran.[1] These comments were likely an information operation meant to coerce Israel into limiting its strike on Iran. The Iranian officials, which

included two Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) officers, told the *New York Times* that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei ordered the Iranian armed forces to develop multiple retaliatory options.[2] The officials claimed that if Israel inflicts "major harm," such as by targeting energy and nuclear infrastructure or senior Iranian officials, the retaliatory options would include firing as many as 1,000 ballistic missiles at Israel, increasing Iranian-backed militia attacks across the Middle East, and disrupting commercial traffic in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.[3] The threat against global shipping comes as Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have threatened to start an "energy war" in the Middle East.[4] The Iranian officials also claimed that Tehran could refrain from retaliating if Israel only strikes military targets—rather than energy or nuclear infrastructure or senior Iranian officials.[5]

US Air Force F-16s from the 480th Fighter Squadron arrived in the Middle East on October 25.[6]

Two unspecified Hamas officials claimed that Hamas will replace its leader, Yahya Sinwar, with a five-person committee based in Doha.[7] The committee was reportedly formed after Israel killed Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in July 2024. The committee was meant to facilitate decision-making when Sinwar was out of contact in the Gaza Strip, which happened regularly. The committee is led by Khalil al Hayya, who represents Hamas in the Gaza Strip on the committee. The committee also includes Zaher Jabarin, who represents the West Bank, Khaled Meshal, who represents the Palestinian diaspora, Mohammad Darwish, who is the Hamas Shura Council head, and the secretary of the Hamas Political Bureau, whose identity is unknown.

Hayya reiterated Hamas' maximalist demands for a ceasefire-hostage agreement with Israel on October 24, reflecting how Hamas's strategy is unlikely to change significantly following the death of Sinwar.[8] Hayya discussed the maximalist demands in a meeting with Egyptian intelligence director Hassan Mahmoud Rashad. The meeting comes as Egypt proposed a new "small" ceasefire-hostage deal that would require Hamas to release a "small" number of Israeli hostages for a "few" days ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.[9]

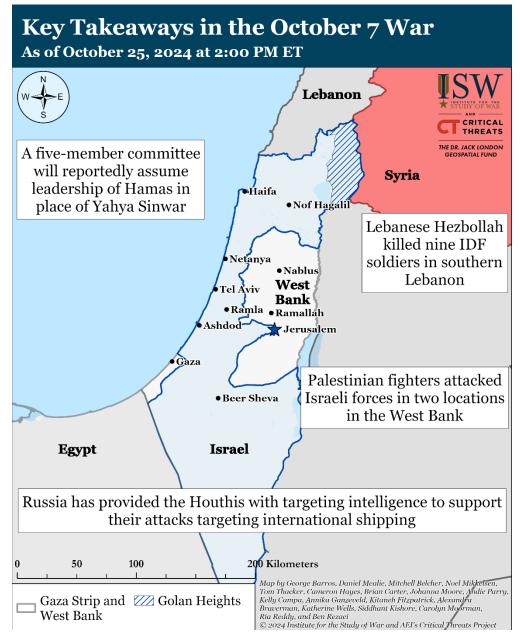
Russia has provided the Houthis with targeting intelligence to support their attacks targeting international shipping, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.[10] The IRGC reportedly facilitated the transfer of the intelligence to the Houthis at some unspecified point in 2024, helping the Houthis to target vessels that had deactivated their radio signals. The US Maritime Administration in March 2024 advised vessels to deactivate their radios when transiting near Yemen in order to protect themselves from Houthi attacks.[11] Iran has separately tried to broker a deal between Russia and the Houthis that would transfer Russian anti-ship cruise missiles to the Houthis, further enabling attacks on international shipping.[12] There is no evidence that Russia has sent missiles to the Houthis at this time, however, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.[13]

Lebanon since October 24.[14] The IDF 2nd Carmeli Brigade (Res.) (146th Division) encountered Hezbollah militants during clearing operations in a forested area in southwestern Lebanon on October 24.[15] The Hezbollah militants emerged from a tunnel shaft and threw grenades at Israeli forces.[16] Hezbollah killed four reservist soldiers in an exchange of fire and injured six others.[17] The IDF assessed that the Hezbollah militants were also killed in the exchange.[18] The IDF has continued to encounter and directly engage Hezbollah forces, typically in small groups of fighters, during clearing

operations.[19] Hezbollah also conducted an indirect fire attack and killed five reservists from the 8th Armored Brigade (91st Division).[20] Israeli Army Radio reported that Hezbollah launched a barrage of rockets targeting an area near a building where 8th Armored Brigade soldiers were staying.[21] An IDF logistics convoy unit was also present in the building.[22] The attack injured 24 other IDF soldiers.[23] Hezbollah has primarily targeted Israeli forces in southern Lebanon with indirect fire.[24]

Key Takeaways:

- **Iran:** Four unspecified Iranian officials outlined to Western media how Tehran could retaliate in response to an Israeli strike on Iran.
- **Hamas:** Two unspecified Hamas officials claimed that Hamas will replace its leader, Yahya Sinwar, with a five-person committee based in Doha.
- **Houthis**: Russia has provided the Houthis with targeting intelligence to support their attacks targeting international shipping, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.



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 IDF 162nd Division has killed "dozens" of fighters, seized weapons, and destroyed Palestinian militia infrastructure during clearing operations since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on October 24.[25] The IDF reported on October 25 that the 162nd Division is operating in "the heart" of Jabalia refugee camp around Kamal Adwan Hospital.[26] An Israeli military

correspondent reported that Israeli forces have surrounded the hospital and have begun to evacuate patients and detain fighters present.[27] The correspondent said that around 600 Palestinians have been evacuated from the Kamal Adwan Hospital area.[28] Geolocated footage posted on October 23 showed Israeli forces detaining Palestinian men near the Khalifa bin Zayed al Nahyan Primary School in Jabalia refugee camp.[29] Israeli forces also destroyed a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device and engaged nearby fighters in an unspecified part of Jabalia.[30]

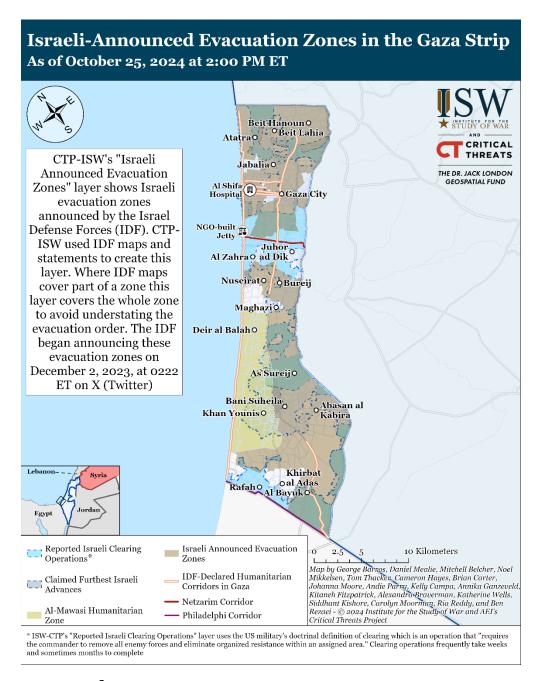
The IDF 252nd Division engaged Palestinian fighters and destroyed Hamas infrastructure and rocket launch sites during clearing operations in the central Gaza Strip on October 25.[31]

Palestinian media reported that Israeli forces conducted a limited raid in Khan Younis on October 25.[32] A Palestinian journalist claimed that Israeli air elements and artillery supported ground forces in al Manara, Qizan al Najjar, Maan, and Jurt al Lut, east of Khan Younis. The journalist also claimed that 38 Palestinians died during the Israeli raid.

The IDF 143rd Division continued clearing operations in Rafah on October 25.[33] The IDF reported that Israeli forces destroyed militia targets and killed Palestinian fighters through ground and air engagements.[34]

The IDF reported that its 143rd Division killed the Hamas Nukhba commander in the Central Camps Brigade on October 23.[35] The IDF stated that the commander participated in the murder and kidnapping of Israeli civilians in Migunit near Reim on October 7.[36] He also directed attacks on Israeli forces during the October 7 War. The IDF stated that the commander worked as a member of UNRWA starting in July 2022.[37]





West Bank

Axis of Resistance objectives:

Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

Palestinian fighters have attacked Israeli forces in at least two locations in the West Bank since CTP-ISW's data cutoff on October 24.[38] PIJ fired small arms targeting IDF observation posts and "military targets" in the Mevo Dotan settlement in the northern West Bank on October 24.[39] Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) separately fired small arms targeting IDF military equipment at the Jalamah checkpoint on the Israel-West Bank border on October 25.[40]



Northern Israel and Lebanon

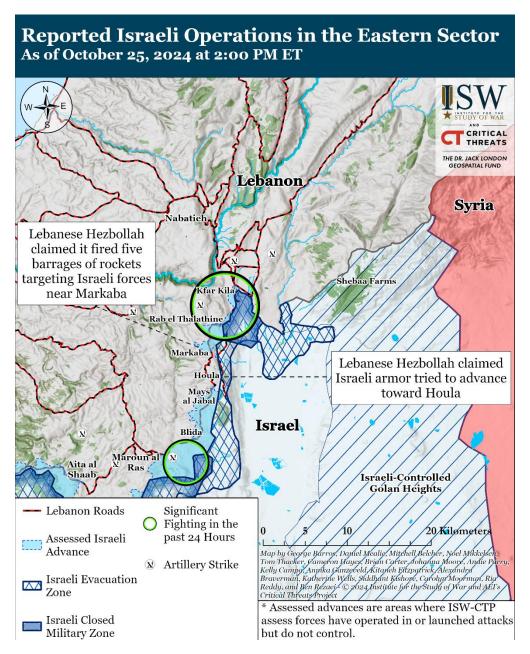
Axis of Resistance objectives:

- · Prepare for an expanded and protracted conflict with Israel in the near term
- Expel the United States from Syria

The IDF 98th Division continued clearing operations in southeastern Lebanon.[41] The 98th Division identified and killed a cell of Hezbollah fighters preparing to ambush Israeli forces.[42] Israeli forces also destroyed a Kornet anti-tank missile launcher that was ready to launch.[43]

Hezbollah has claimed at least 12 attacks targeting Israeli forces in the 98th Division's area of operations in southern Lebanon since CTP-ISW's data cutoff on October 24.[44] Hezbollah fired antitank guided missiles targeting Israeli personnel and armor on the outskirts of Odaisseh and claimed to fire another ATGM targeting an IDF rescue force.[45] Hezbollah claimed it fired at least five distinct barrages of rockets and ATGMs targeting Israeli forces near Markaba.[46] Hezbollah also claimed to target an IDF unit with unspecified weapons in Wazzani, east of Kfar Kila.[47]

The IDF 91st Division continued clearing operations in southeastern Lebanon. The 91st Division directed an airstrike targeting killed the commander of the Aitaroun area's Radwan unit, Abbas Adnan Musallam.[48] Musallam conducted numerous attacks against Israeli forces.[49] Israeli Army Radio said that Musallam conducted attacks targeting Malkia and Avivim in northern Israel and had planned a ground attack targeting those communities.[50] Hezbollah claimed an Israeli tank attempted to advance towards Houla on October 25.[51] Hezbollah claimed it confronted the tank with anti-tank guided missiles, small arms, and rocket-propelled grenades.[52] Hezbollah also claimed it fired rockets targeting Israeli forces on the outskirts of Houla.[53]



Israeli forces continued operations in Aitaroun on October 25. Hezbollah fired rockets targeting Israeli soldiers east of Aitaroun on October 25.[54] Lebanese sources reported that Hezbollah fighters engaged Israeli forces in unspecified clashes in Aitaroun.[55]

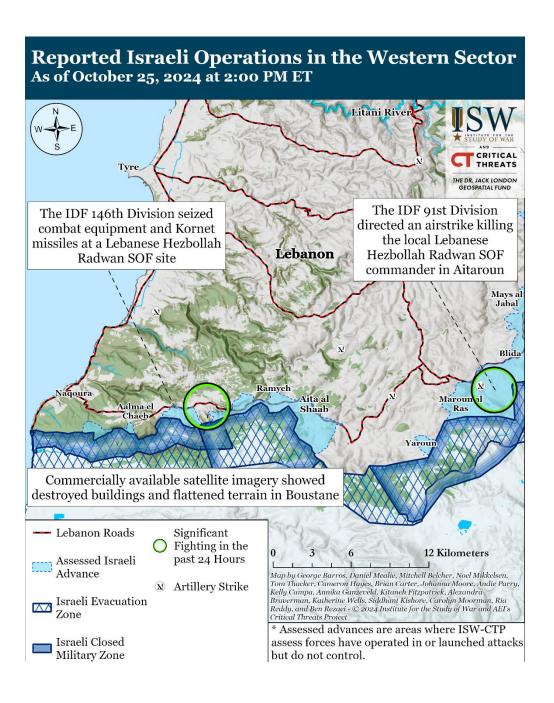
The IDF 146th Division continued clearing operations in southwestern Lebanon on October 25. Commercially available satellite imagery captured on October 25 showed flattened terrain and destroyed buildings in Boustane, a Lebanese border village west of Marwahin, indicating that Israeli forces operating in the area. The 146th Division attacked over 50 Hezbollah targets, including an anti-tank position and other infrastructure.[56] The IDF 2nd Infantry Brigade (Res.) recently located two underground Hezbollah combat compounds in a Lebanese village.[57] Israeli forces found and killed Hezbollah fighters inside one of the compounds.[58] The 2nd Infantry Brigade also identified a large weapons depot in a "rugged mountainous area."[59] The IDF said a Radwan special operations

force (SOF) company had intended to use this weapons cache to conduct a ground attack into Israel.[60] Israeli forces used 11 trucks to transport Kornet anti-tank missiles, launchers, grenades, rifles, and other combat equipment found in the Radwan depot to Israel.[61]

Hezbollah continued to target Israeli forces in southwestern Lebanon. Hezbollah claimed it fired antitank guided missiles and Israeli personnel and armor on the outskirts of Marwahin.[62] Hezbollah claimed it killed or injured an IDF tank's crew.[63]

UNIFIL reported that Israeli soldiers fired at UN peacekeepers at an observation post near Dahyra, southwestern Lebanon, on October 22.[64] UNIFIL said that the peacekeepers observed Israeli forces conducting clearing operations in houses near a permanent UN observation post.[65] Israeli forces fired small arms at the post "upon realizing they were being observed."[66] The UNIFIL peacekeepers withdrew from the post as a result.[67] UNIFIL reminded the IDF to ensure the safety of UN personnel.[68]

UNIFIL reported that UNIFIL personnel and infrastructure have been impacted by fire of "unknown origin" in at least three incidents in southern Lebanon since October 23.[69] UNIFIL said in an October 25 statement that two UNIFIL medical evacuation teams met in Yaroun to transfer a patient on October 23. Fire of unknown origin impacted one of their vehicles and "immobilized it." UNIFIL said that a shell or rocket hit and damaged a UNIFIL medical facility in Beit Lif on October 23. UNIFIL also said that two shells or rockets damaged living accommodations at a UNIFIL position in Kfarchouba.



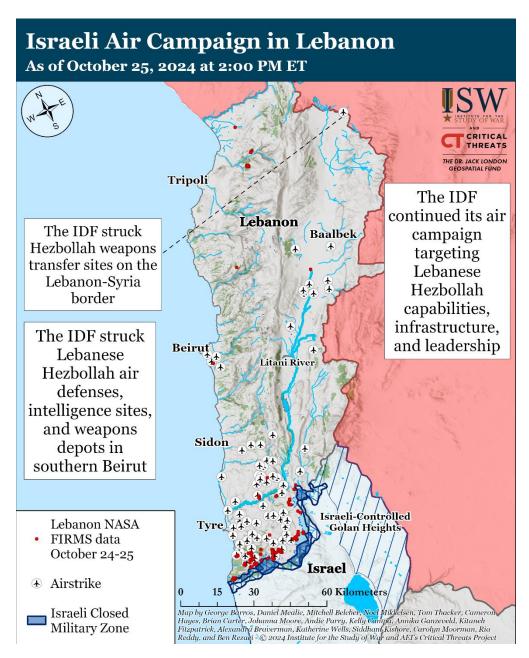


The IDF continued its air campaign to degrade Hezbollah's capabilities and infrastructure on October 25. The IDF Air Force struck over 200 Hezbollah targets across Lebanon.[70] The IDF Air Force struck multiple weapons manufacturing sites, the headquarters of Hezbollah's intelligence division, and an air defense system in Beirut.[71] The IDF issued warnings to residents of Burj al Barajneh and Hadath to evacuate at least 500 meters from Hezbollah infrastructure prior to attacking the area.[72] Local Lebanese sources reported Israeli airstrikes in Burj al Barajneh, Hadath, and Haret Hreik.[73]

The IDF continued to target Hezbollah arms smuggling infrastructure on the Syria-Lebanon border on October 25. The IDF Air Force struck Hezbollah military infrastructure used for arms smuggling at the Jousieh border crossing between Lebanon and Homs Province, Syria, on October 25.[74] Lebanese and UN officials, as well as Syrian media, reported that recent Israeli strikes

on the Jousieh, al Qaa, and Masnaa border crossings led to the crossings closing.[75] The Arida border crossing in northwestern Lebanon now remains the only border crossing open to Lebanese civilians fleeing to Syria.[76]

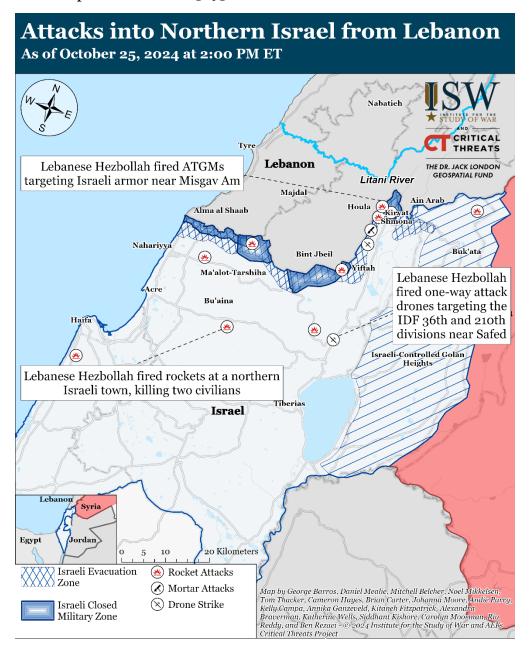
An Israeli airstrike killed three journalists from Hezbollah-affiliated outlets in southeastern Lebanon on October 25.[77] The strike targeted a guesthouse in the town of Hasbaya, killing two journalists from Hezbollah media channel al Manar and Hezbollah-affiliated al Mayadeen.[78] Al Manar operates as the media arm of Hezbollah and is designated by the US Department of Treasury as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity.[79] The IDF investigated the strike and determined the guesthouse was a "Hezbollah military infrastructure."[80]



This map illustrates individual Israeli air and artillery strikes based on local Lebanese reporting. This map depicts strikes reported from 2:00pm ET on October 24 to 2:00pm ET on October 25. This map is not exhaustive. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify the locations of Israeli strikes.

Hezbollah has conducted at least sixteen attacks into Israeli since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on October 24.[81] Hezbollah fired one-way attack drones targeting the headquarters of the IDF 36th and 210th divisions at Philon base, east of Safed, on October 25.[82] The 36th and 210th Divisions are currently deployed in southern Lebanon.[83] The IDF intercepted at least one drone before it entered Israeli airspace on October 25.[84] This attack may be a part of a broader Hezbollah campaign to target IDF rear positions in northern Israel and "support lines" to defend against Israel's

ground operation in southern Lebanon.[85] CTP-ISW assessed that Hezbollah's attack on a training camp for the IDF 1st Infantry Brigade south of Haifa on October 13 likely also fell within this framework.[86] Hezbollah separately killed two Israeli civilians and injured at least 25 other civilians in a rocket attack targeting Karmiel on October 25.[87] Hezbollah conducted two attacks targeting civilian sites in Safed.[88] Hezbollah continued to target Israeli forces along the Lebanon-Israel border in five separate incidents.[89]



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Lebanese Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati in London on October 25.[90] Blinken emphasized the United States remains committed to a diplomatic resolution that "fully implements" UNSC Resolution 1701 and allows both Israelis and Lebanese citizens to return to their homes.[91]

Iran and the Axis of Resistance

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq--a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias--has claimed four attacks targeting Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on October 24. The claims include the following:

- A drone attack targeting an unspecified "vital target" in southern Israel.[92]
- Two drone attacks targeting unspecified "vital target[s]" in Eilat.[93]
- A drone attack targeting an unspecified "vital target" in northern Israel.[94]

The IDF detected a drone over the Red Sea on October 24 that was approaching Israel from the east.[95] The drone fell in an open area outside Israeli territory. The IDF said that an interceptor targeting the drone fell in an open area near Eilat due to a technical malfunction, causing no injuries or damage.[96] The IDF separately intercepted a drone in the southern Golan Heights that crossed into Israeli territory from Syria on October 25.[97]

Local Syrian media reported that 25 Houthi militants met with the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) commander in eastern Syria Hajj Askar in late September 2024.[98] The militants then traveled with "local elements" to Daraa, Rif Dimashq, and Quneitra provinces in southern Syria. The militants reportedly have experience in drone and missile operations.[99] Israeli media has observed an increase in Houthi militants in Syria over the past two months.[100]

US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that it destroyed 15 drones, land attack cruise missiles, and surface-to-air missiles fired by the Houthis and other Iranian-backed militants from October 18-24.[101] CENTCOM did not specify where it destroyed these weapons. CENTCOM determined that these weapons posed a significant risk to the United States, its partners, and civilians in the area.[102]

Iranian Artesh Air Force Commander Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi stated that Iran and Pakistan agreed to increase drone and cyber cooperation.[103] Vahedi's statement follows an October 24 meeting with Pakistani Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir in Pakistan.[104] Vahedi stated that Iran and Pakistan can exchange experiences in the field of drone training and emphasized that Pakistan has "taken good measures in the cyber field."[105]

An unidentified individual shot and killed the local Friday prayer leader in Kazeroun, Fars Province, Iran, on October 25.[106] Iranian officials emphasized that the attack was not an act of terrorism and that Iranian authorities are investigating the attack.[107]



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- [5] https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/24/world/middleeast/iran-israel-attack-plans.html
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