

Iran Update, November 12, 2023

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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 in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

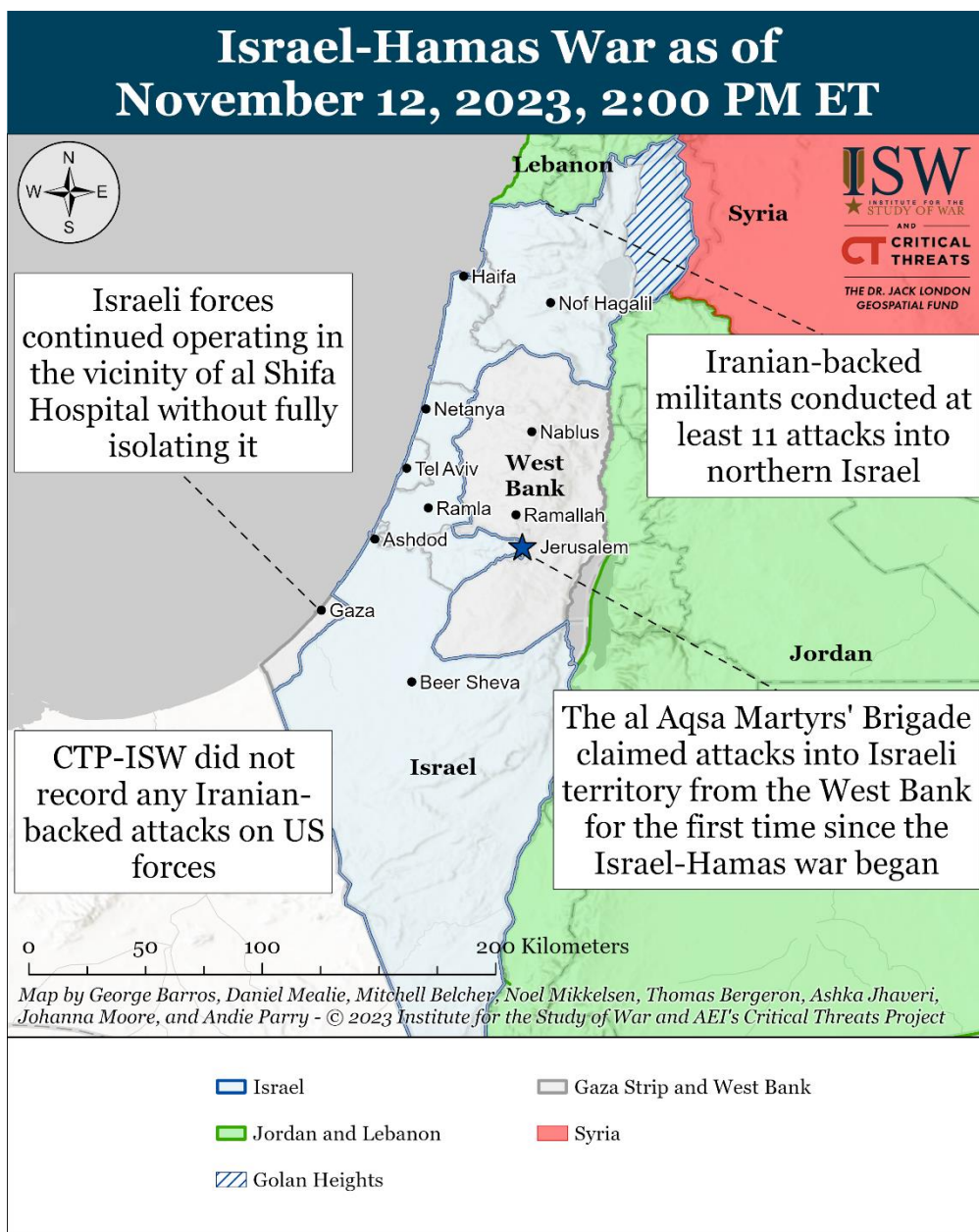
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered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



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]

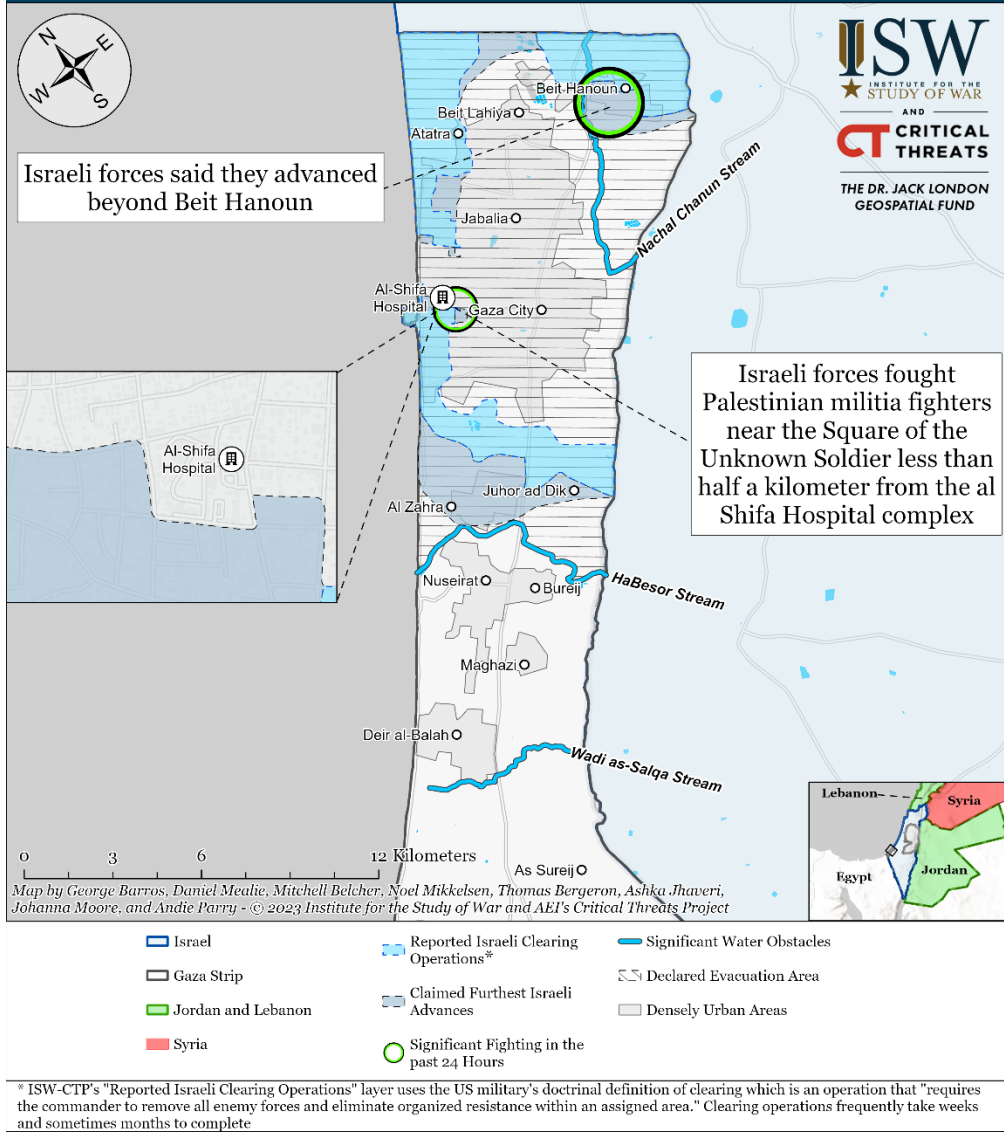
The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed that it shot down an Israeli drone using a man portable air defense system (MANPADS) on November 11.[8] The al Quds Brigades released a video of one of its fighters firing the MANPADS, but the video did not show the target.[9]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

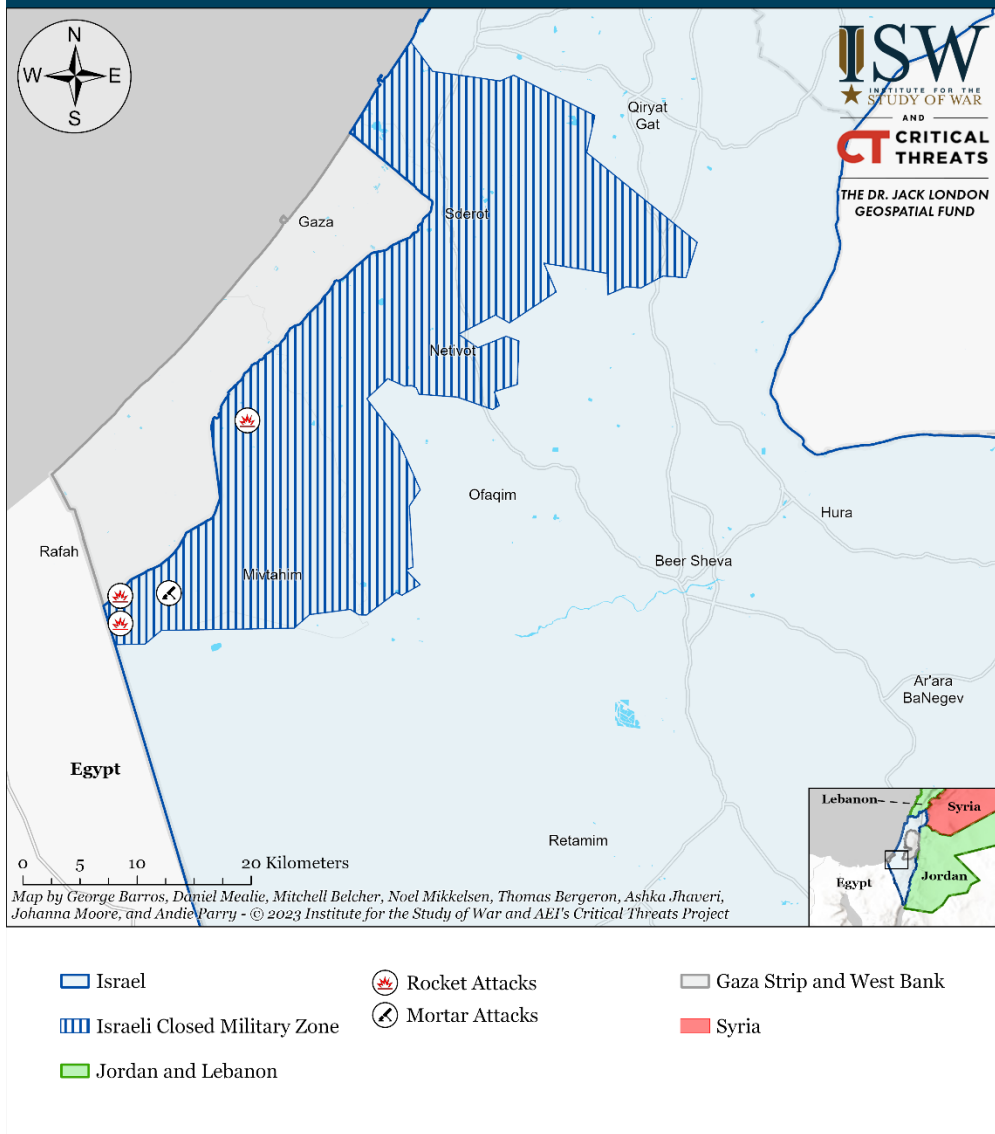


Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 12, 2023, 2:00 PM ET



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



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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

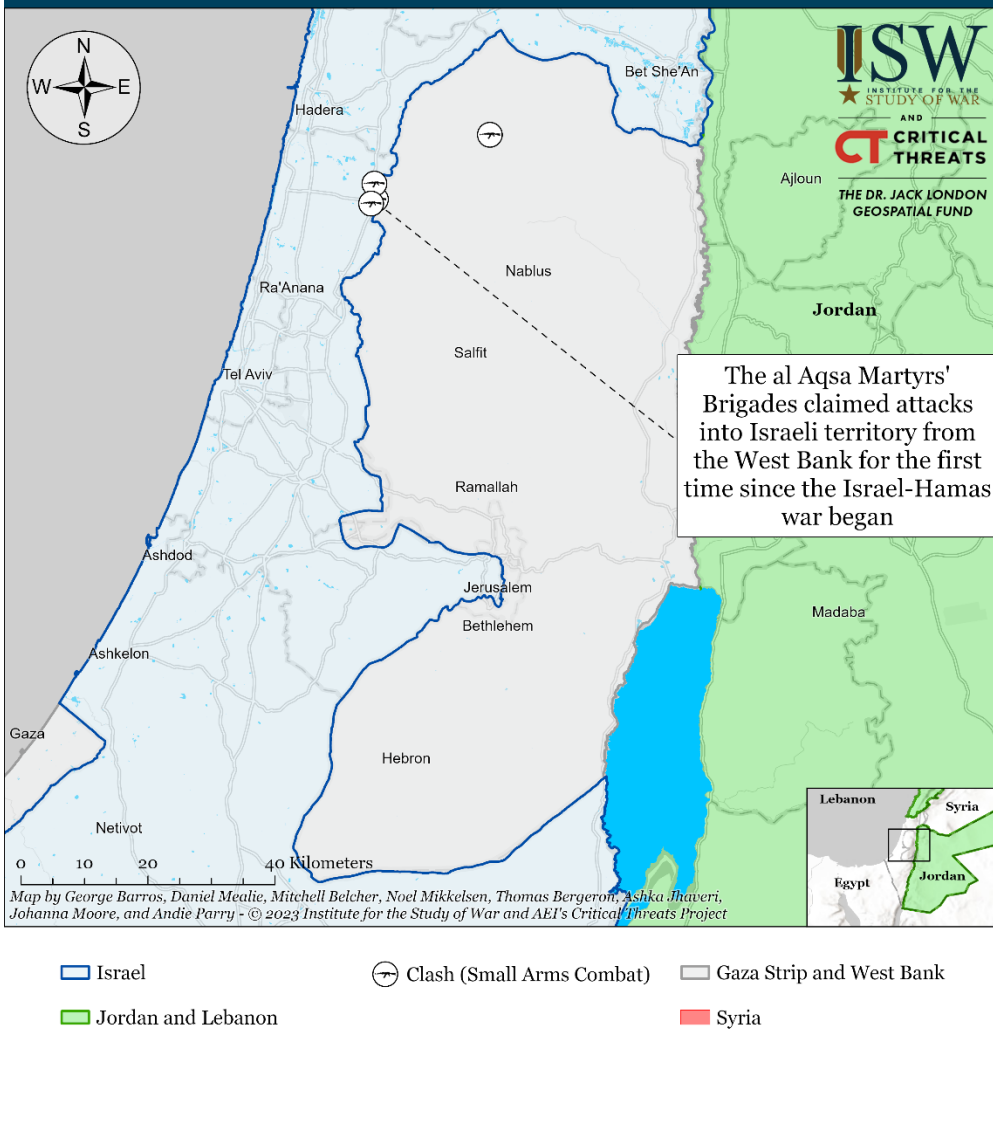
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- 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.

Clashes in the West Bank as of November 12, 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

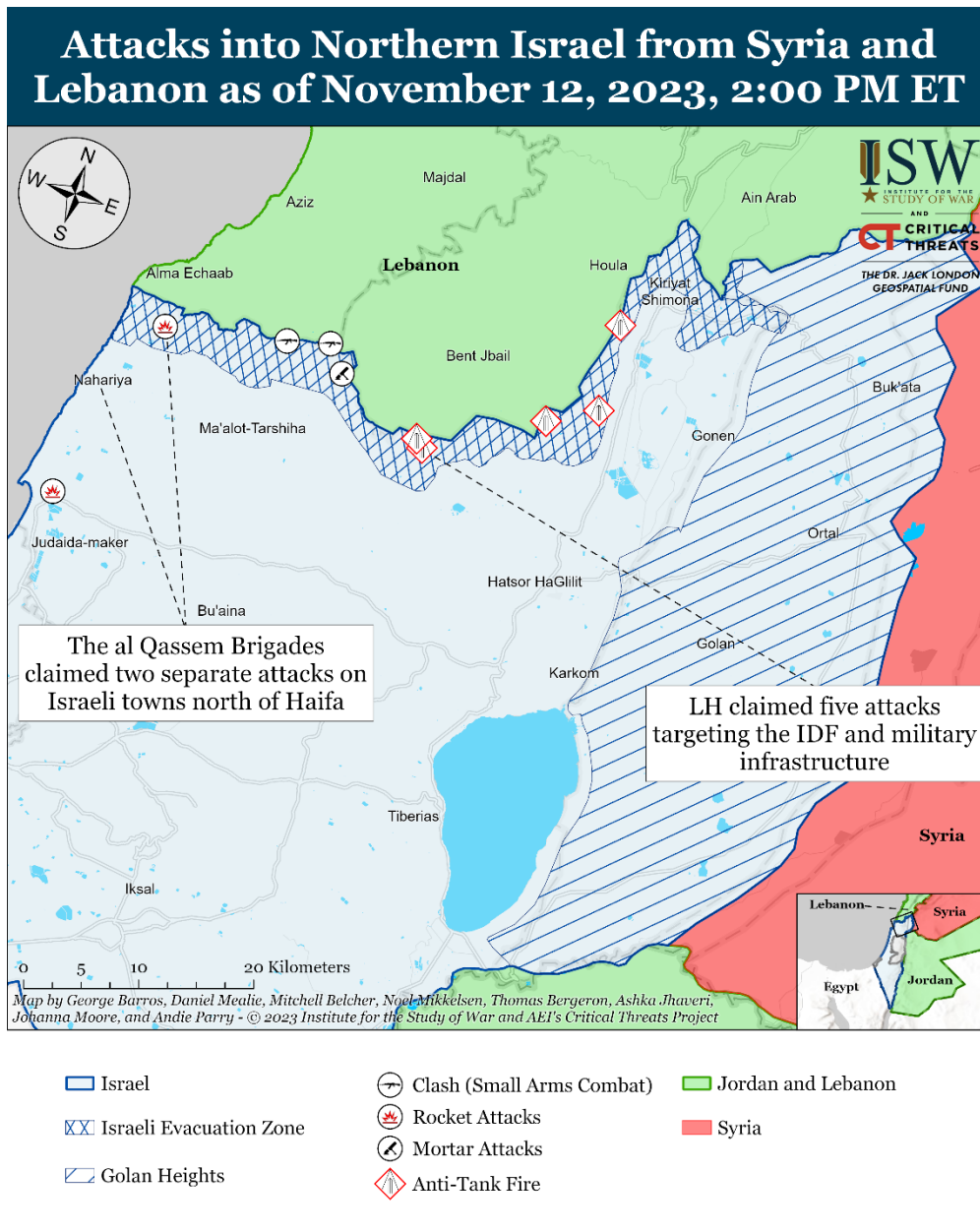
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- 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 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

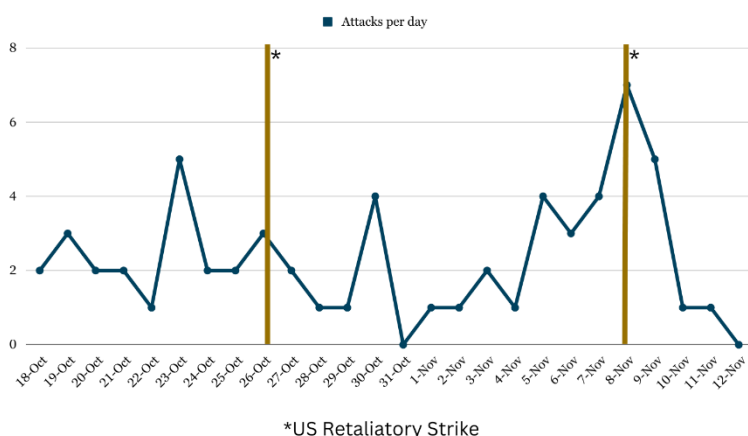
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- 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/chrisschmitz/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-f225bf0723bb5b3ae1961ba6cdef1917>
- [11] <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-palestinians-gaza-water-food-f225bf0723bb5b3ae1961ba6cdef1917>
- [12] <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-palestinians-gaza-water-food-f225bf0723bb5b3ae1961ba6cdef1917>
- [13] <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-palestinians-gaza-water-food-f225bf0723bb5b3ae1961ba6cdef1917>
- [14] <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-palestinians-gaza-water-food-f225bf0723bb5b3ae1961ba6cdef1917>
- [15] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/11/12/hamas-planning-terror-gaza-israel/>
- [16] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/11/12/hamas-planning-terror-gaza-israel/>
- [17] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/11/12/hamas-planning-terror-gaza-israel/>
- [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 dot 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 dot ir/Detail/2023/11/12/714461/Fresh-Israeli-airstrike-targets-positions-in-Syria,-no-casualties-reported>
- [31] <https://t.me/eamharbi/95>
- [32] <https://www.presstv dot ir/Detail/2023/11/12/714458/Iraqi-resistance-force-target-Eilat-second-time>
- [33] <https://t.me/eamharbi/60> ; <https://t.me/eamharbi/67>
- [34] <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3584458/secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-statement-on-us-military-strike-in-east/>
- [35] https://mp.weixin dot qq.com/s?__biz=MzI3MTQwMjgoMQ==&mid=2247560514&idx=1&sn=c8a76ebbcd3f676184317e839da385e0&chksm=eac1ff74ddb6766208fe2273b02568897b1f17d064f10059a398c9ddf00aeb46ed13560333f8&scene=0&xtrack=1#rd
- [36] <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/presidency>