

# Iran Update



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**Information Cutoff: August 4, 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.*

**Iran and its Axis of Resistance will most likely conduct a coordinated, large-scale drone and missile attack on Israel in response to Israel killing Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran. CTP-ISW previously outlined this scenario as one of the most dangerous courses of action that Iran could pursue.**[1] Iranian state media reported on August 4 that Iran and the Axis of Resistance will conduct a “quadrilateral operation” against Israel.[2] The operation would reportedly involve Lebanese Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Iranian-backed Iraqi militias conducting coordinated strikes on Israel at the same time as Iranian forces. Iranian state media added that Hezbollah seeks to attack Israel to retaliate for Israel killing a senior Hezbollah officer in Beirut on July 30, while the Houthis seek to retaliate against Israel for the IDF airstrike on July 20 that hit Houthi military targets in al Hudaydah, Yemen.[3] The leader of Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba, Akram al Kaabi, published an image on August 4 signaling his intent to participate in an attack on Israel.[4] Three anonymous US and Israeli

officials told Axios on August 4 that Iran and the Axis of Resistance could conduct their coordinate attack as soon as August 5.[5]

Iran and the Axis of Resistance will probably conduct an attack that is more escalatory than the drone and missile attack that Iran conducted against Israel in April 2024. Iran and its allies fired around 170 one-way attack drones, 120 ballistic missiles, and 30 cruise missiles at Israel in the April 2024 attack. Iran designed this strike package of over 300 projectiles to inflict serious damage on Israel and sought to thereby establish deterrence. But the United States, Israel, and their allies intercepted the vast majority of projectiles, so that the Iranian attack did significantly less damage than Tehran intended.[6]

### **Iran could modify the April 2024 attack model in at least four ways to increase the likelihood of inflicting serious damage on Israel.**

**1. Iran could increase the volume of projectiles fired at Israel.** Iran could fire more drones and missiles from Iranian territory or instruct its proxy and partner militias across the Middle East to fire more. Drones and missiles fired from Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria would be much harder to intercept than those launched from Iran given the shorter distances and flight times to Israel. US and Israeli forces would have significantly less time than they did in April 2024 to intercept those projectiles.

**2. Iran could change the number of locations in Israel that it targets.** Iran targeted two remote locations in Israel in the April 2024 attack.[7] Iran could exploit the short flight times from Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria to concentrate fire on a single target rather than against two. Shorter flight times for drones from Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria could make it easier to coordinate them with ballistic missiles fired from Iran. Tehran could alternatively attack a greater number of targets across Israel.

**3. Iran could order simultaneous attacks on US forces, especially in eastern Syria.** Iran only targeted Israeli targets in the April 2024 attack. Iranian-backed militia attacks attacking US positions could, in some circumstances, pull American attention and resources away from identifying and intercepting projectiles bound for Israel.[8] Iranian leaders may calculate that their projectiles have a higher likelihood of penetrating Israeli air defenses if the United States has to focus on defending its own forces.

**4. Iran and its allies could conduct a series of drone and missile attacks over several days.** The April 2024 attack consisted of only one large volley of drones and missiles fired from Iran. But Iran and its allies could fire multiple volleys over an extended period in the next attack. Stretching attacks over this period could enable Iran and the Axis of Resistance to learn and adjust their attacks as they observe how successful each volley is.

Iran and the Axis of Resistance have a shrinking window of opportunity to attack Israel as the United States moves additional military assets to the Middle East. The United States has decided to send a carrier strike group, naval cruisers and destroyers, and a squadron of fighter jets to the Middle East in preparation for an Iranian-led attack on Israel.[9] The arrival of these assets to the region would improve the ability of the United States to respond to an Iranian attack, which Iranian leaders almost certainly recognize. Tehran may conclude that it needs to launch an attack before the United States

can position and ready its assets in the region in order to maximize how much damage Iran inflicts on Israel.

**Iran has dismissed calls from Western and Arab countries to temper its response to Israel killing several senior Axis of Resistance leaders, including Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh, in recent days.** Iran told unspecified Arab diplomats on August 3 that it does not care if its retaliation triggers a war, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.<sup>[10]</sup> This report comes immediately after Iranian Acting Foreign Affairs Minister Ali Bagheri Kani held his multiple phone calls with his Egyptian and Jordanian counterparts, during which he emphasized Iran’s “serious determination to hold [Israel] accountable.”<sup>[11]</sup> The Jordanian foreign affairs minister traveled to Iran on August 4 reportedly as part of a “last-ditch effort” to dissuade Iran from attacking Israel.<sup>[12]</sup> The Jordanian efforts to prevent an Iranian attack were likely unsuccessful given that Iranian officials have repeatedly emphasized since July 31 the need to retaliate against Israel for killing Haniyeh in Iranian territory.<sup>[13]</sup> An unspecified Iranian source separately told al Jazeera on August 4 that Israel has sent mediators to try to contain the Iranian attack but that Iran has “ruled out this issue.”<sup>[14]</sup>

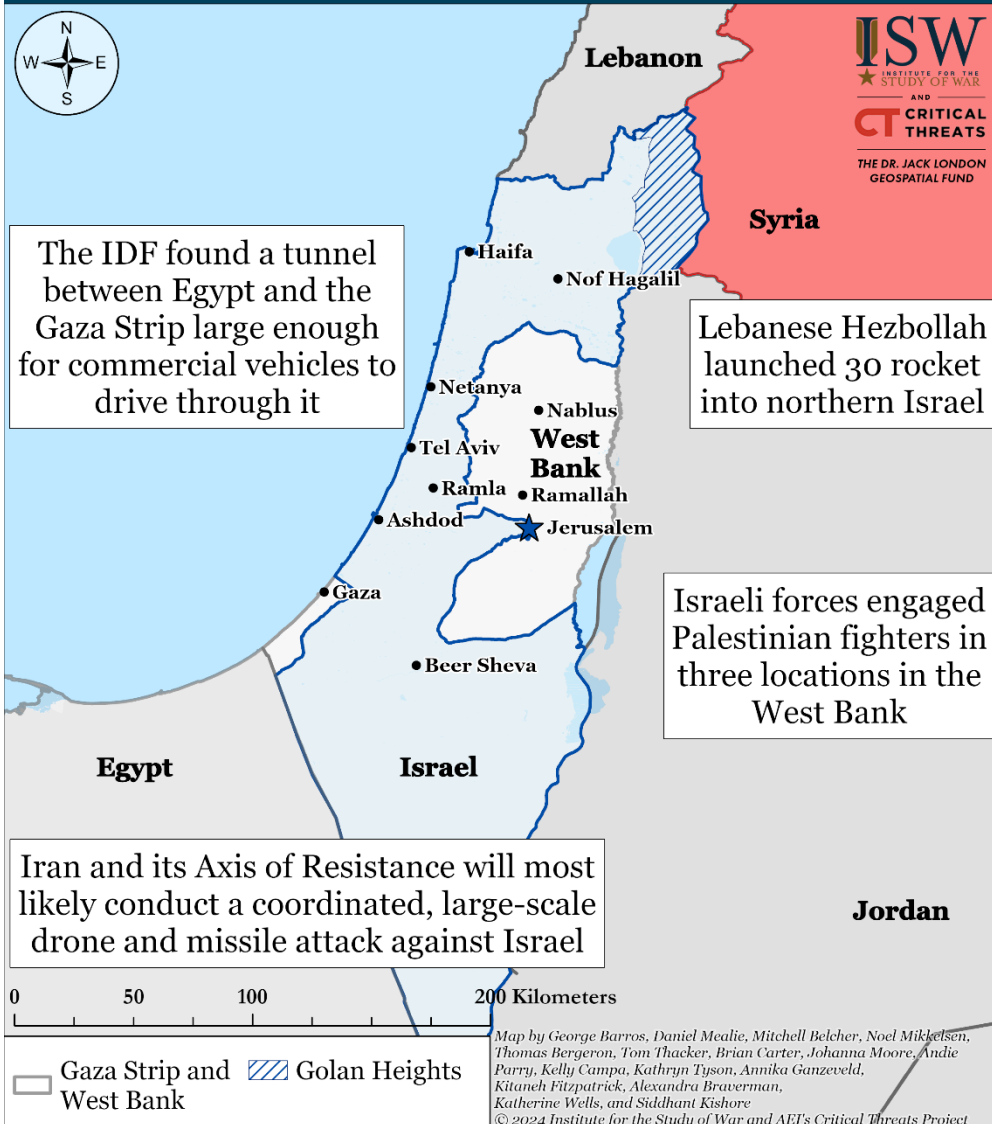
**Iranian armed forces-run Defa Press called on August 4 for the Axis of Resistance to target “prominent” Israeli leaders in retaliation for Haniyeh’s death.**<sup>[15]</sup> Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Foundation President Amir Hossein Ghazi Zadeh Hashemi similarly called on August 1 for killing one of Israel’s “main” leaders.<sup>[16]</sup>

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Iran and its Axis of Resistance will most likely conduct a coordinated, large-scale drone and missile attack on Israel in response to Israel killing Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran. CTP-ISW previously outlined this scenario as one of the most dangerous courses of action that Iran could pursue.
- Iran could modify the April 2024 attack model in at least four ways to increase the likelihood of inflicting serious damage on Israel. Iran could fire more projectiles at Israel, change the number of locations targeted, or conduct a series of attacks over an extended period. Iran could also order simultaneous attacks on US forces.
- Iran has dismissed calls from Western and Arab countries to temper its response to Israel killing several senior Axis of Resistance leaders, including Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh, in recent days. Iranian state media and officials have also called for targeting senior Israeli officials as part of the retaliation.

# Key Takeaways in the Israel-Hamas War

As of August 4, 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 Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Air Force struck two Hamas command and control sites in schools in Sheikh Radwan, southern Gaza City, on August 4.**<sup>[17]</sup> The IDF stated that the Hamas Sheikh Radwan Battalion hid in and planned attacks from Hassan Salameh and Nasr schools.<sup>[18]</sup> Palestinian journalists reported that the IDF strikes on the schools killed at least 30 Palestinians.<sup>[19]</sup> The IDF struck a separate school in Sheikh Radwan used by Hamas as a

headquarters on August 3.[20]

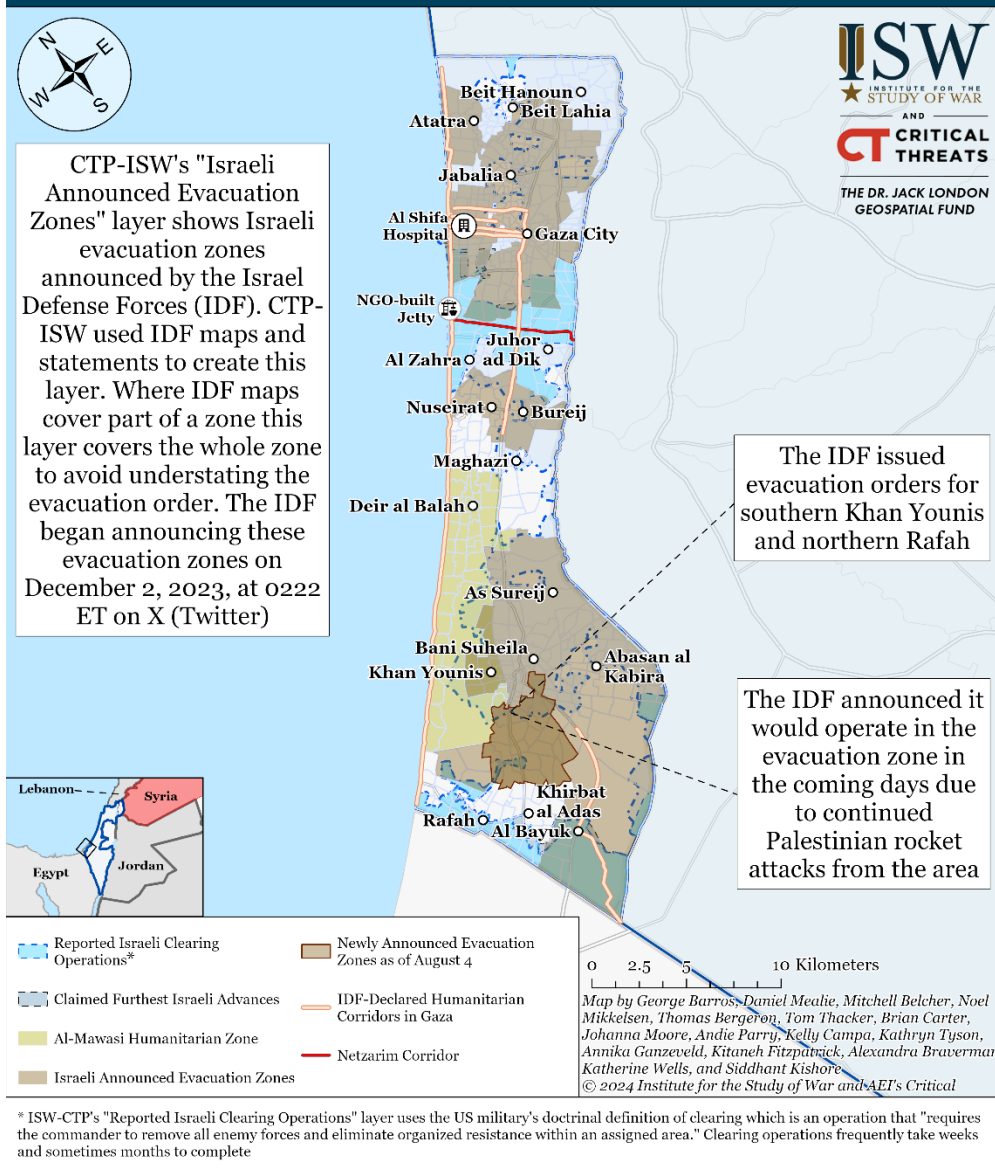
**The IDF announced that it killed Hamas fighter Ismail Nofal in the central Gaza Strip on August 1.[21]** The IDF 143rd Division directed the precision strike on Nofal.[22] The IDF said that Nofal participated in the October 7, 2023, attacks on Israel and had launched rockets into Israel since then.[23] Nofal is the son of Ayman Nofal, the former commander of Hamas' Central Brigade who was killed in October 2023.[24]

**The IDF 252nd Division continued clearing operations around the Netzarim Corridor on August 4.** The IDF 252nd Division directed airstrikes targeting several Palestinian fighter cells and a Hamas weapons warehouse.[25] Palestinian fighters targeted Israeli forces along the Netzarim Corridor with rockets and mortars.[26]

**The IDF issued new evacuation orders for southern Khan Younis and northern Rafah on August 4.[27]** The IDF said it would operate in the evacuation zone in the coming days “with force” due to continued rocket attacks from this area.[28] The IDF has reportedly defined the South Khan Younis Battalion, which operates in this area, as not yet fully degraded and of “medium competence.”[29] Hamas has fired at least two medium-range rocket attacks from this zone since August 2, which an Israeli military correspondent said was likely Hamas “emptying [its] inventories” in the area.[30] Hamas most recently targeted Ashdod and Gan Yavne from this area on August 4.[31] The IDF has not previously operated in this part of the Gaza Strip, despite months of ground operations in Khan Younis. The IDF first went into Khan Younis in December 2023 before withdrawing in April 2024.[32] The IDF 98th Division most recently withdrew from eastern Khan Younis on July 30 after conducting a week of re-clearing there.[33]

# Israeli-Announced Evacuation Zones in the Gaza Strip

As of August 4, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET

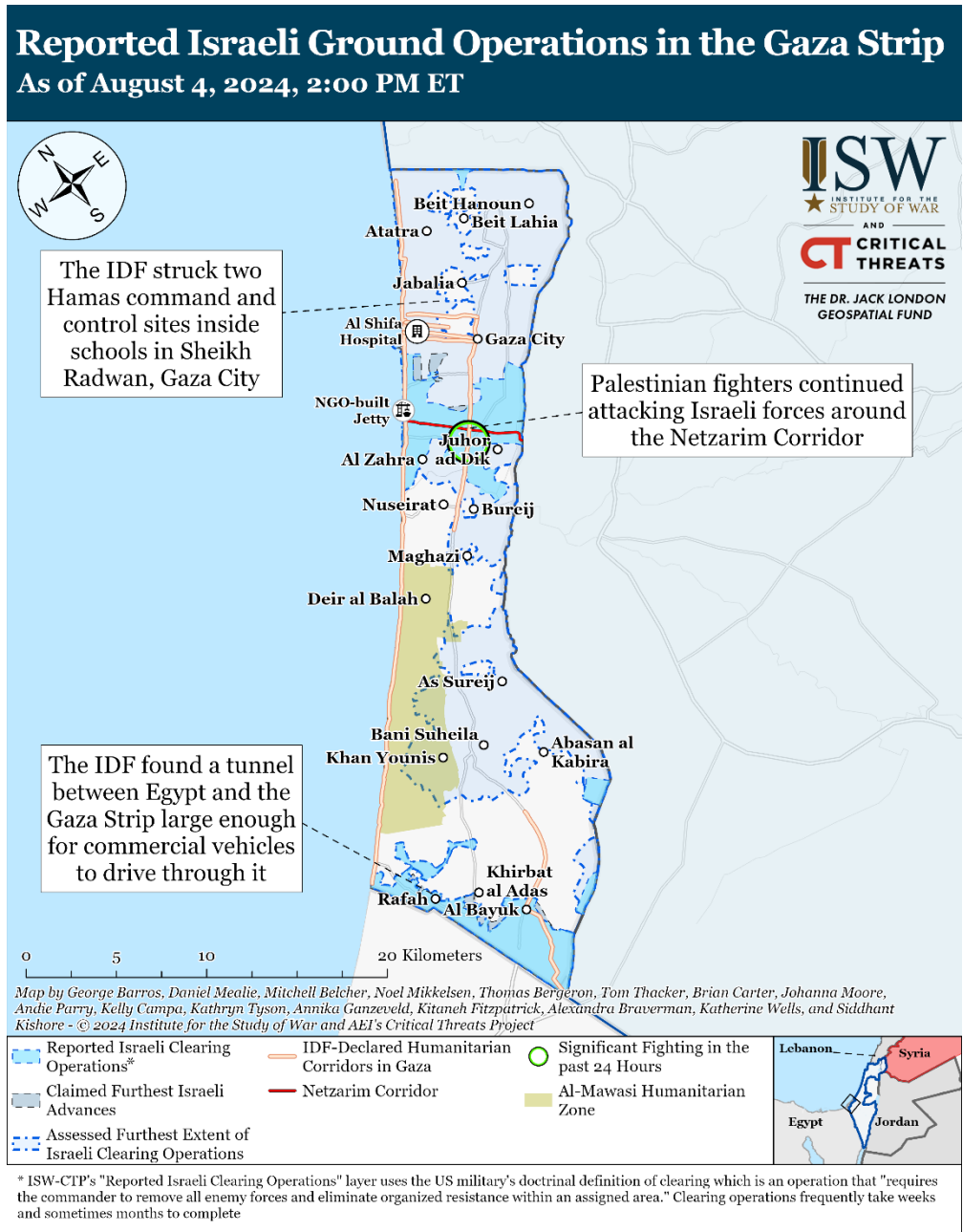


**IDF uncovered a tunnel between Egypt and the Gaza Strip large enough for commercial vehicles to drive through it.**[34] The IDF 162nd Division and the Yahalom combat engineering unit discovered the three-meter-tall tunnel on the Philadelphi Corridor in July 2024.[35] Israeli forces are continuing to investigate the tunnel before demolition. The IDF said it would "thoroughly destroy" all tunnels along the Philadelphi Corridor and would "prevent their formation in the future." [36]

**The IDF 162nd Division continued clearing operations in Rafah on August 4.**[37] The IDF Nahal Brigade directed strikes on several militia sites across Rafah to kill fighters and destroy infrastructure.[38] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades targeted Israeli forces near the Rafah crossing with

rocket fire.[39]

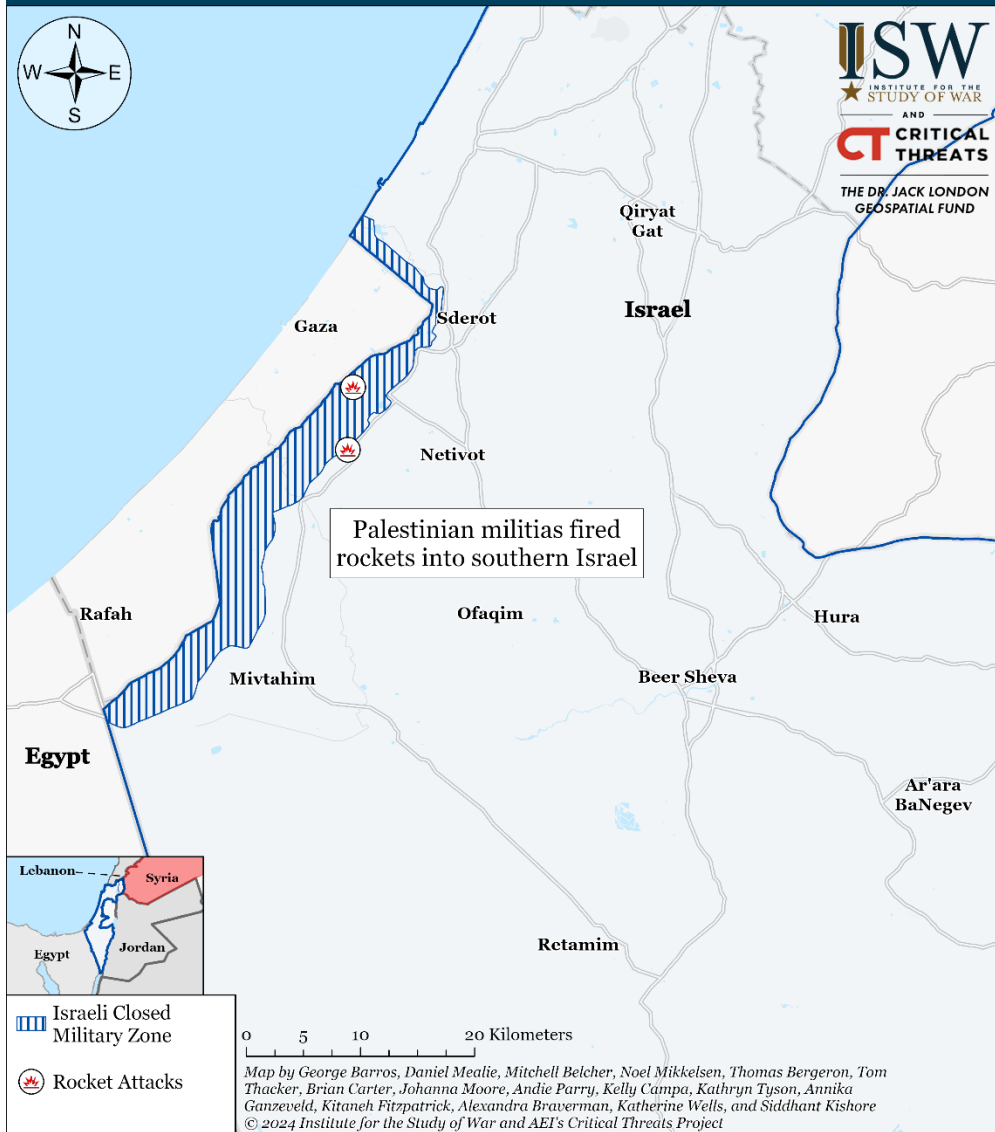
**The IDF Air Force has struck roughly 50 targets across the Gaza Strip between August 3 and 4, including Palestinian fighter cells and military buildings.[40]**



**Palestinian militias launched at least two rocket barrages targeting four areas of southern Israel on August 4.** Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine targeted Beerli and Nahal Oz in a combined attack.[41] Hamas targeted Ashdod and Gan Yavne with rocket fire in response to Israel targeting “resistance leaders.”[42] At least two of the Hamas rockets impacted near Ashdod and Ashkelon but did not cause casualties.[43]

# Attacks into Israel from the Gaza Strip

As of August 4, 2024, 2:00 PM ET

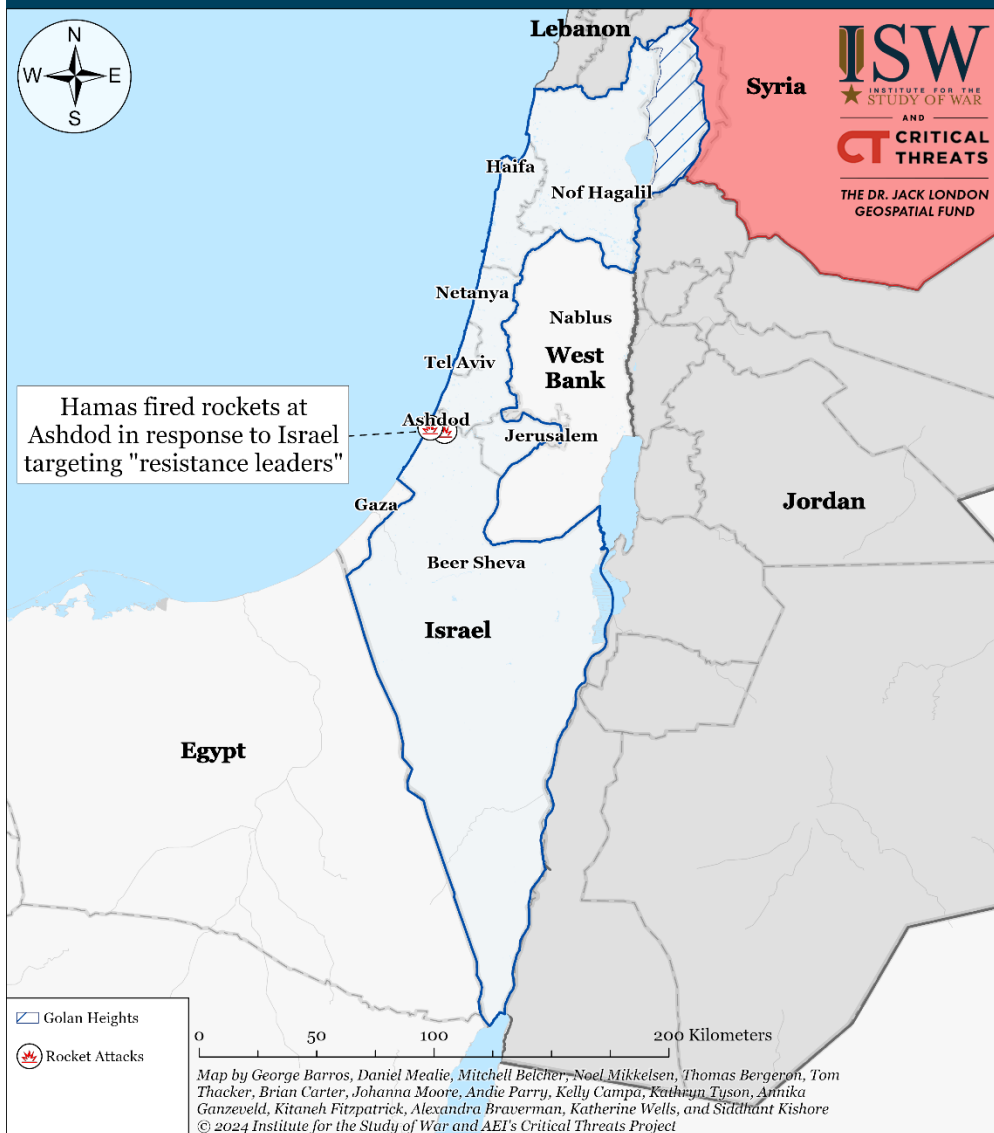


*Recorded reports of attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.*



# Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza

As of August 4, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



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

## 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 three locations in the West Bank since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on August 3.[44]** The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades attacked Israeli forces with small arms in Qalqilya.[45] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades separately fired small arms targeting Israeli forces in two locations in Jenin Governorate.[46]

**A Palestinian attacker killed two Israeli civilians and injured two others in a stabbing attack in Holon, south of Tel Aviv, on August 4.[47] Israeli forces killed the attacker.[48]** Israeli media reported that the attacker is from Salfit, West Bank, and was in Israel without a permit.[49] Hamas praised the attack and called upon Palestinians to target Israeli forces and civilians across Israel and the West Bank.[50]



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

**Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights**

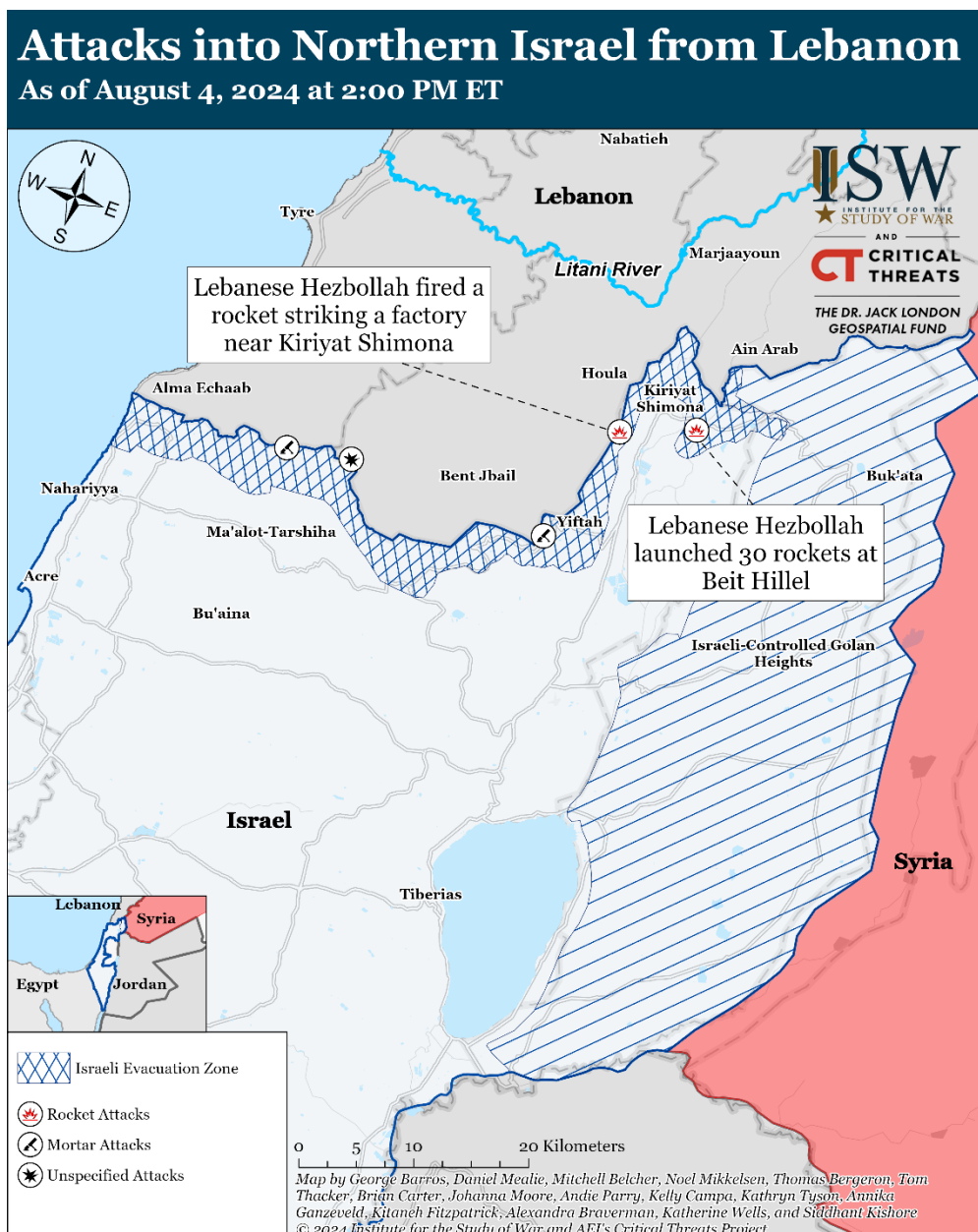
**Axis of Resistance objectives:**

- 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 five attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on August 3.**<sup>[51]</sup> Hezbollah fired a barrage of 30 rockets at Beit Hillel on August 3.<sup>[52]</sup> The IDF confirmed that one rocket struck Beit Hillel while most of the rockets were intercepted.<sup>[53]</sup> Hezbollah separately struck a factory near Kiriyat Shimona.<sup>[54]</sup> An Israeli military correspondent reported that that alerts did not activate in response to the launch and that the IDF is investigating.<sup>[55]</sup>

**The IDF Kfir Brigade completed an exercise simulating combat in Lebanon on August 1.**



## Iran and the Axis of Resistance

**Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree claimed that Houthi air defenses intercepted a US MQ-9 Reaper drone over a Houthi-controlled area of Saada Governorate, Yemen, on August 4.[56]** The Houthis claimed that they used a surface-to-air missile to down the drone.[57] US CENTCOM has not acknowledged the incident at the time of this writing.

**The Houthis struck a merchant vessel with a ballistic missile in the Gulf of Aden on August 3.[58]** The Houthi spokesperson said that they targeted the Liberian-flagged *Groton* because its owner violated the Axis of Resistance's unofficial blockade on Israel.[59] CTP-ISW previously reported the attack on the *Groton* on August 3 before the Houthis claimed the attack.[60]

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[4] [https://t.me/Akram\\_Alkaabi/148](https://t.me/Akram_Alkaabi/148)

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