

Iran Update, February 17, 2024

Johanna Moore, Kathryn Tyson, Alexandra Braverman, and Brian Carter

Information Cutoff: 2:00 pm ET

CTP-ISW will publish abbreviated updates on February 17 and 18, 2024. Detailed coverage will resume Monday, February 19, 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](#).

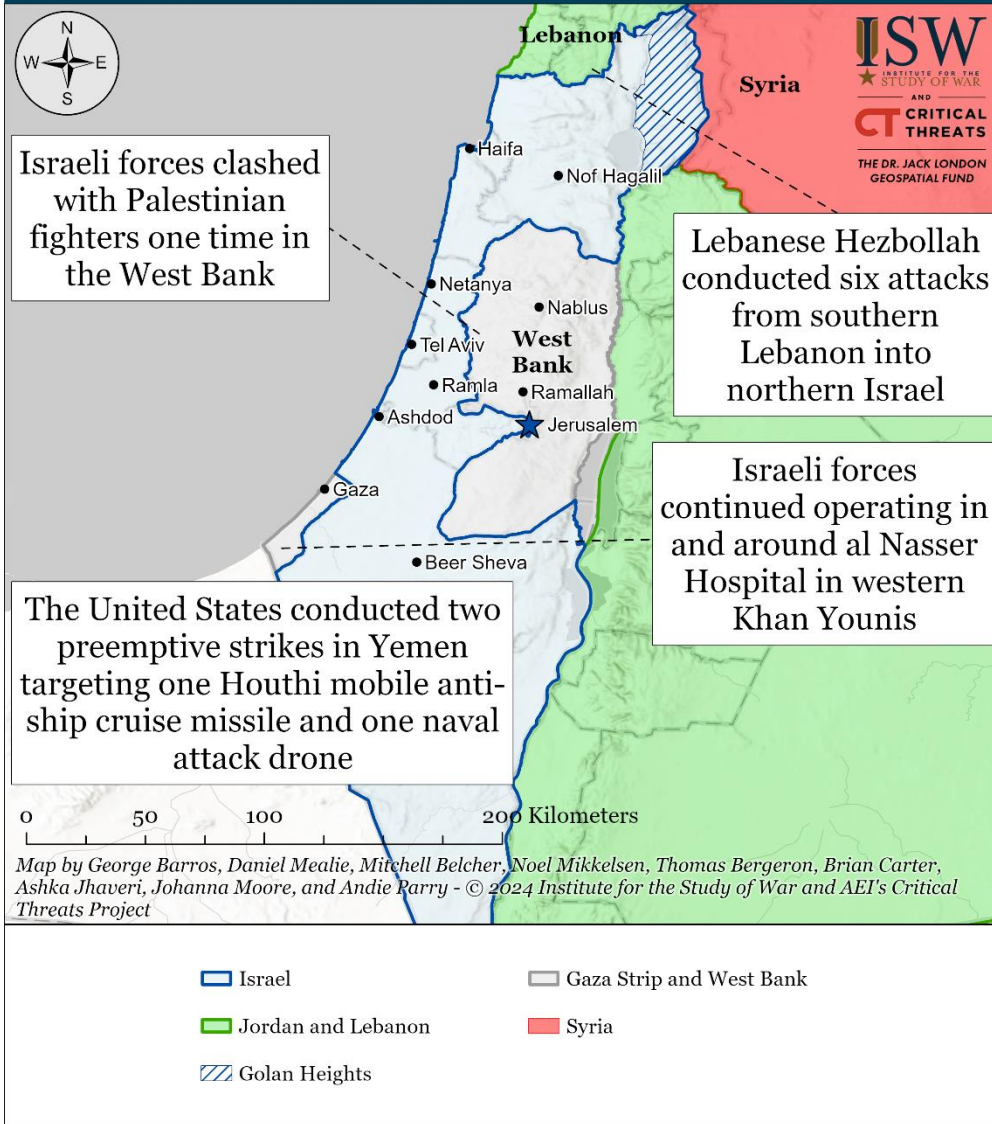
Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered 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:** Israeli forces continued operations in and around al Nasser Hospital in western Khan Younis on February 17. Israeli special operations forces arrested 100 individuals at the Hospital and killed Palestinian fighters operating nearby.
- **Negotiations:** An unspecified senior Hamas member told al Jazeera on February 17 that Hamas plans to suspend ceasefire negotiations with Israel until aid is delivered to the northern Gaza Strip.
- **Yemen:** The Houthi movement said that it launched anti-ship ballistic missiles targeting the *Pollux*, a Panamanian-flagged and registered and Danish-owned vessel in the Red Sea on February 16 and 17.

Israel-Hamas War as of February 17, 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.

Israeli forces clashed with Palestinian fighters in the northern and central Gaza Strip on February 17. The Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades—the self-proclaimed military wing of Fatah—fired small arms and rocket-propelled grenades targeting Israeli forces east of Gaza City.[1] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Nahal Brigade and 215th Artillery Brigade (both assigned to the 162nd Division) directed an airstrike on February 17 that targeted Hamas fighters in an unspecified area of the central Gaza Strip.[2]

Israeli forces continued operations in and around Nasser Hospital in western Khan Younis on February 17. Israeli special operations forces began operating in Nasser Hospital on February 15 after receiving “credible intelligence” that Hamas-held hostages were in the hospital.[3] Shayetet 13 arrested approximately 100 individuals at Nasser Hospital on February 17.[4] The IDF Egoz and Maglan units identified and killed Palestinian fighters operating around the hospital.[5]

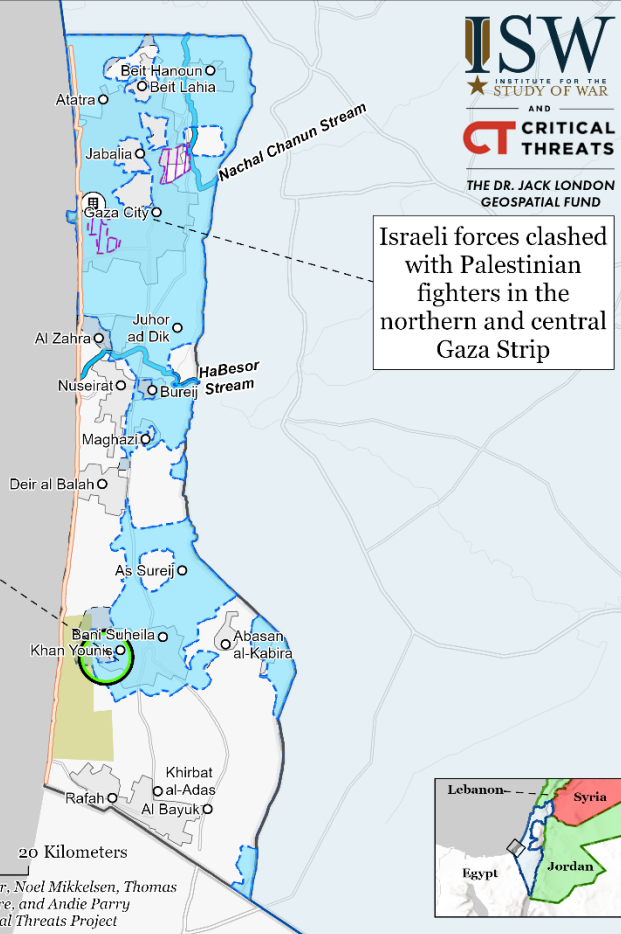
Israeli forces continued clearing operations in Khan Younis city.[6] The 7th Brigade raided Palestinian militia weapons caches in Khan Younis city and captured small arms and explosives.[7] The IDF 98th Division directed an airstrike that targeted three Palestinian fighters traveling towards a suspected launch position in Khan Younis.[8]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of February 17, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



Israeli forces clashed with Palestinian fighters in the northern and central Gaza Strip

Israeli forces continued operating in and around al Nasser Hospital in western Khan Younis



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

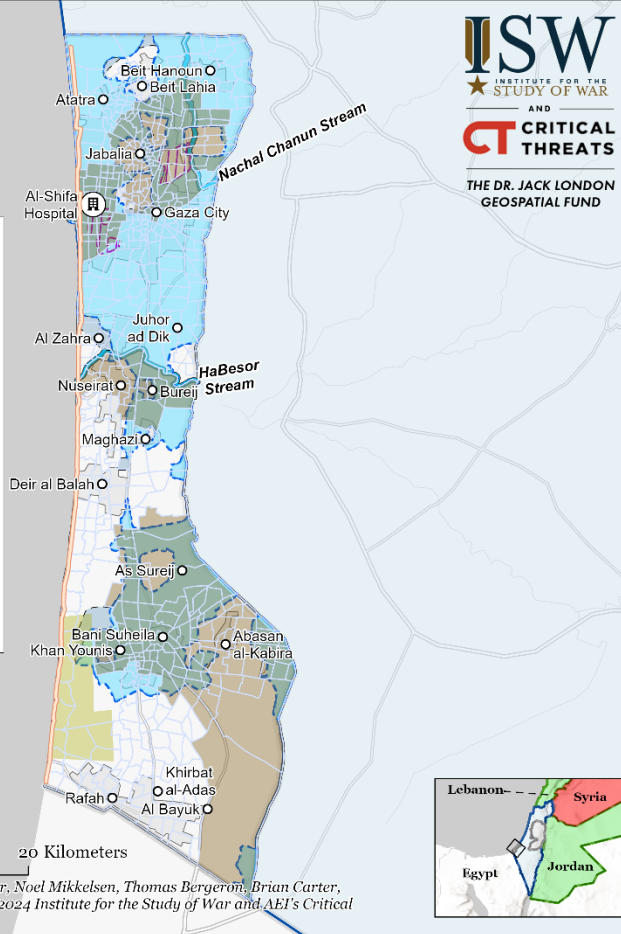
- Israel
- Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*
- Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone
- Significant Water Obstacles
- Gaza Strip
- IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridor on Road 230
- Densely Urban Areas
- Jordan and Lebanon
- Syria
- Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances
- Areas Reportedly Infiltrated by Palestinian Militias
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours

* 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 February 17, 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

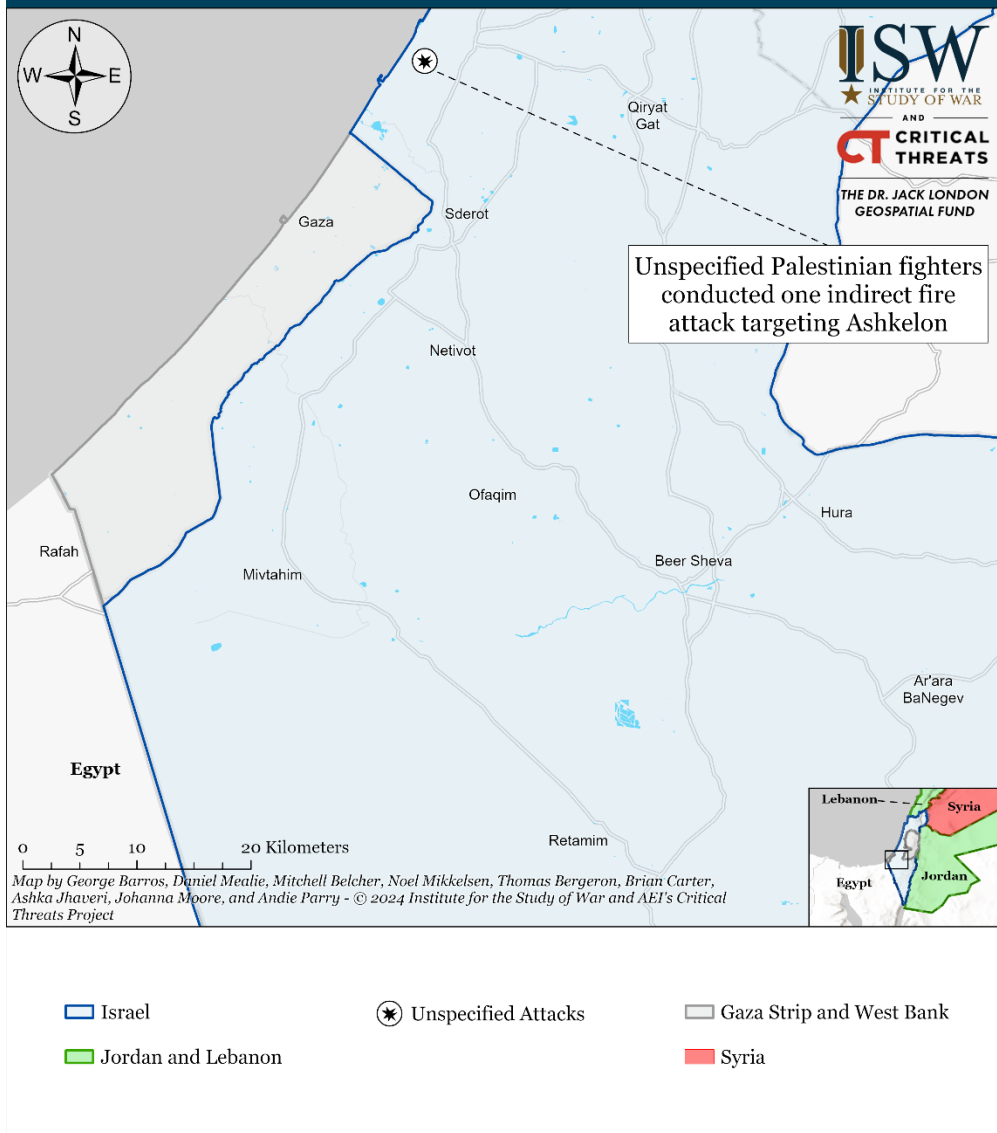
Israel	Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*	Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones	Densely Urban Areas
Gaza Strip	Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances	Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone	Significant Water Obstacles
Jordan and Lebanon	Areas Reportedly Infiltrated by Palestinian Militias	IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridor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

An unspecified senior Hamas member told al Jazeera on February 17 that Hamas plans to suspend ceasefire negotiations with Israel until Palestinians in the northern Gaza strip receive humanitarian aid.[9] Israel's hostage and missing persons coordinator Gal Hirsch said that Hamas' demands during ceasefire talks are "disconnected from reality."[\[10\]](#)

Unspecified Palestinian fighters conducted one indirect fire attack targeting Ashkelon on February 17.[11] The IDF reported that it intercepted an unspecified munition targeting Ashkelon.[\[12\]](#) The Nahal Brigade and 215th Artillery Brigade directed an airstrike that targeted the Palestinian fighters who conducted the attack targeting Ashkelon.[\[13\]](#)

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of February 17, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



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

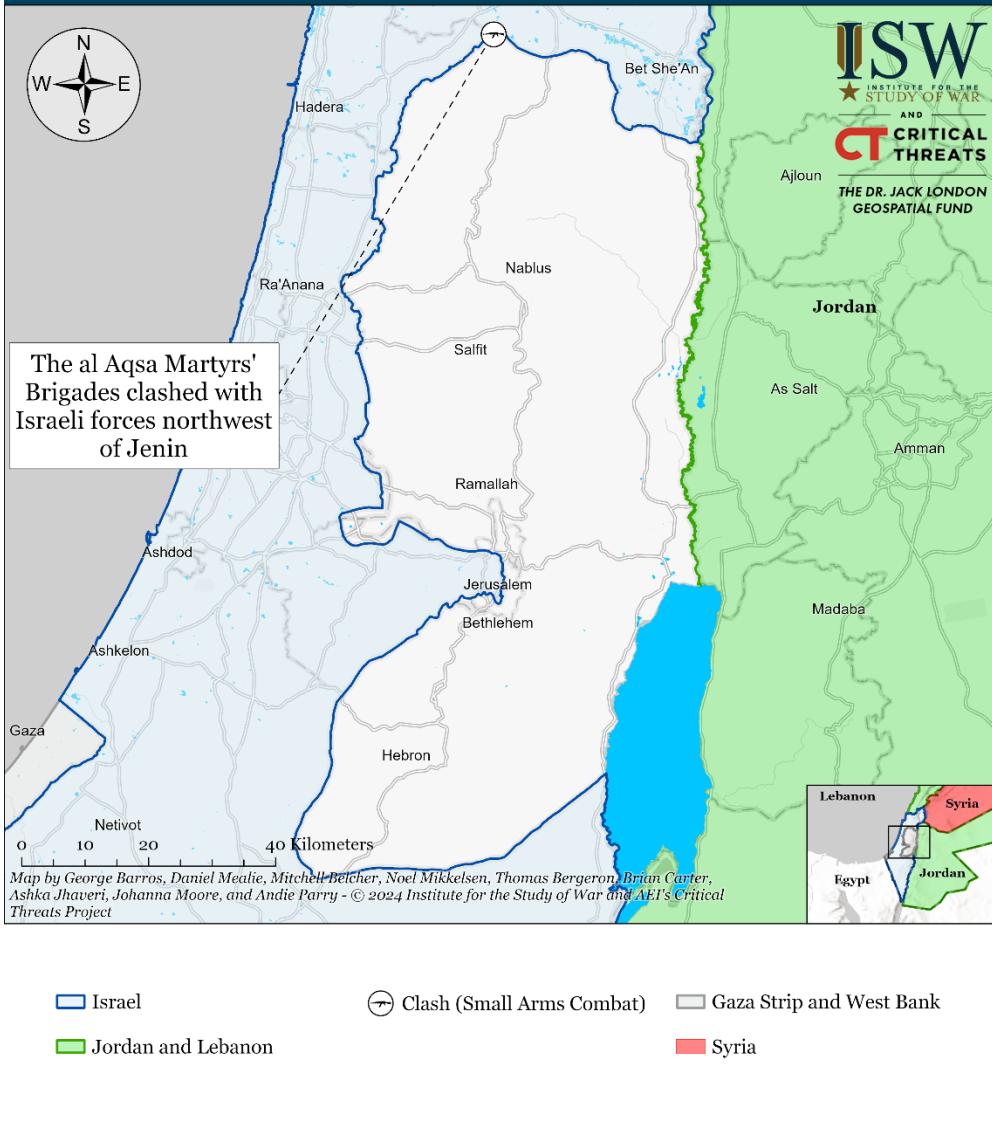
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

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

Israeli forces clashed with Palestinian fighters one time in the West Bank on February 17.^[14]

Clashes in the West Bank as of February 17, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



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

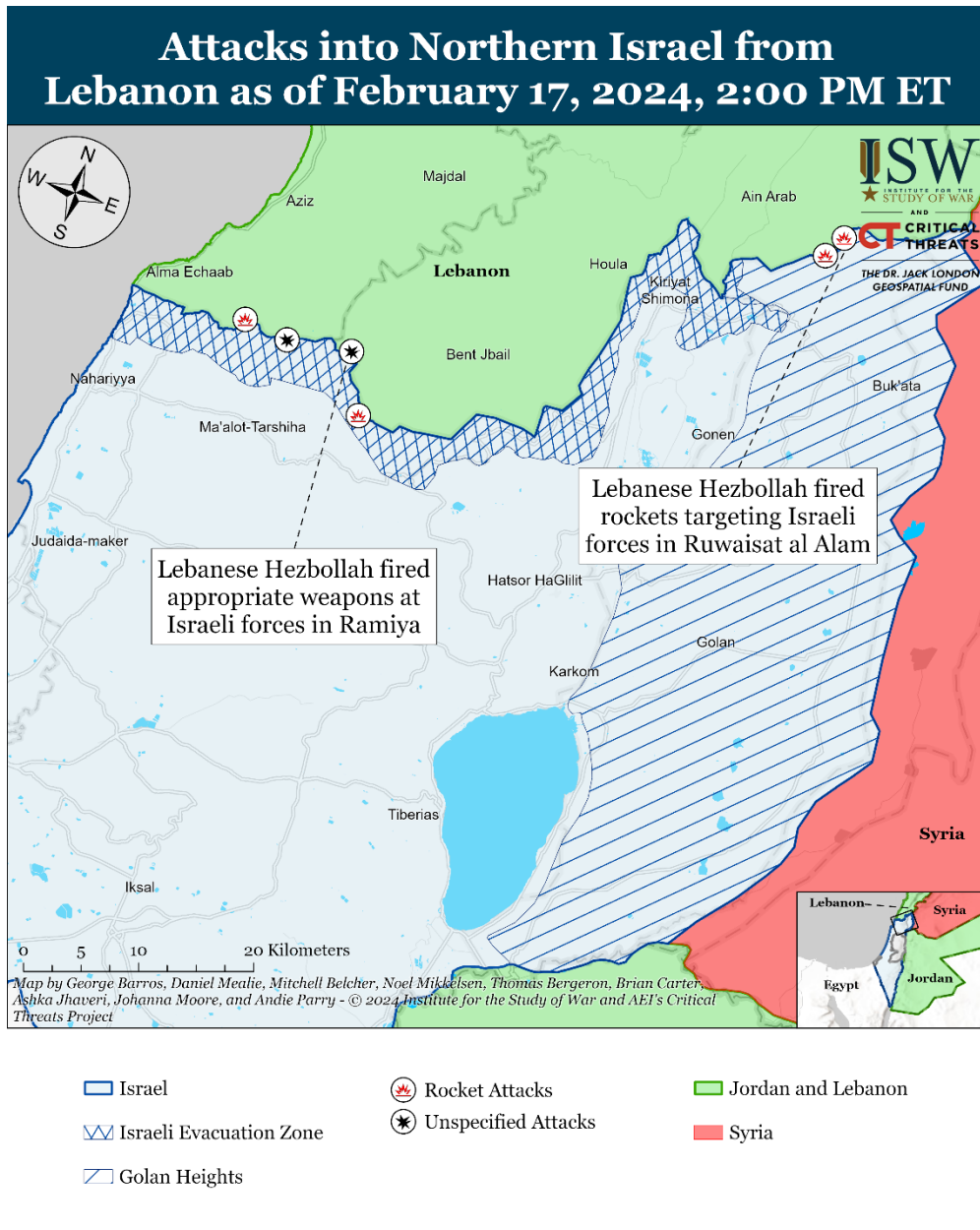
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

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

Lebanese Hezbollah conducted six attacks from southern Lebanon into northern Israel on February 17.[15]

Unspecified fighters fired rockets from Syria towards the southern Golan Heights on February 16.[16] Israeli forces conducted airstrikes targeting a Syrian Arab Army weapons depot in Mahjah, Daraa



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

The Houthi movement said that it launched anti-ship ballistic missiles targeting the *Pollux*, a Panamanian-flagged and registered and Danish-owned vessel, in the Red Sea

on February 16 and 17.[18] US Central Command (CENTCOM) said that the Houthis launched at least three anti-ship ballistic missiles at the *Pollux*. CENTCOM added that the attack did not damage the *Pollux* or any other ships in the area.[19]

CENTCOM conducted two preemptive strikes targeting one mobile anti-ship cruise missile (ASCM) and one surface naval attack drone in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen on February 16 and 17.[20] CENTCOM conducted the strikes after determining that the cruise missile and attack drone presented an “imminent threat” to merchant vessels and US Navy ships in the Red Sea.



[1] https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/5739

[2] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1758751587789373737>

[3] <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1758071158946038180>

[4] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1758751546718711983>

[5] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1758751578029187127>

[6] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1758751587789373737> ;
<https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1758911781714436412>

[7] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1758751578029187127>

[8] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1758751583263715388>

[9] <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2024/2/17/%d8%b9%d8%a7%d8%ac%d9%84-%d9%82%d9%8a%d8%a7%d8%af%d9%8a-%d8%a8%d8%ad%d9%85%d8%a7%d8%b3-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%ad%d8%b1%d9%83%d8%a9-%d8%aa%d9%86%d9%88%d9%8a-%d8%aa%d8%b9%d9%84%d9%8a%d9%82>

[10] <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-787443>

[11] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1758815073034727863>

[12] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1758815073034727863>

[13] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1758815073034727863>

[14] https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/5738

[15] <https://t.me/mmirleb/2080>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/2082>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/2084>;
<https://t.me/mmirleb/2086>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/2088>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/2090>

[16] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1758758203817369879>; <https://t.me/QudsN/371954>

[17] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1758758203817369879>

[18] <https://twitter.com/army21ye/status/1758740938334110102>;
<https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/1758851567460217035>

[19] <https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/1758851567460217035>

[20] <https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/1758851567460217035>