

Iran Update



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June 16, 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. Click [here](#) to subscribe to the Iran Update.

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.

Key Takeaways:

- **Gaza Strip:** Palestinian fighters have continued to defend against Israeli forces in western Rafah. The IDF announced on June 16 it has begun executing a daily 11-hour “tactical pause” along a route east of Rafah to increase humanitarian aid delivery into the southern Gaza Strip.
- **West Bank:** Israeli forces engaged the al Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades in al Faraa refugee camp, Tubas, and Balata refugee camp, Nablus.
- **Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights:** The IDF intercepted a “suspicious aerial target” over Lebanese airspace approaching Nahariya.
- **Yemen:** United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported two explosions near a vessel approximately 40 nautical miles south of al Mokha, Yemen.

Key Takeaways in the Israel-Hamas War

As of June 16, 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 National Resistance Brigades conducted a mortar attack targeting Israeli forces southeast of Zaytoun on June 15.[1]

The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades conducted mortar and rocket attacks targeting Israeli forces along the Netzarim Corridor on June 16.[2]

Palestinian fighters have continued to defend against Israeli forces in western Rafah since CTP–ISW's last data cut off on June 15. The al Qassem Brigades and National Resistance Brigades mortared Israeli forces around Tal al Sultan.[3] The al Quds Brigades fired a rocket propelled grenade targeting an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) vehicle in Saudi neighborhood.[4]

The IDF announced on June 16 it has begun executing a daily 11-hour “tactical pause” along a route east of Rafah to increase humanitarian aid delivery into the southern Gaza Strip.[5] The IDF stated that it decided to suspend military activities daily between 0800 and 1900 local time along an approximately 10.5 kilometer route that leads from the Kerem Shalom crossing along Salah ad Din Road to al Fukhkhari, south of Khan Younis.[6] The IDF stated that there will be no changes to how humanitarian aid enters the Gaza Strip.[7] UN officials previously said in May 2024 that heavy fighting around Kerem Shamon crossing made it too dangerous for UN trucks inside the Gaza Strip to reach the crossing.[8] Scott Anderson, who is a senior official at UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), said that the pauses should allow UNRWA and other aid groups to coordinate with trucks at Kerem Shalom crossing in safer conditions and without needing to coordinate with the IDF.[9] The IDF has previously announced “tactical pauses” in several neighborhoods in the Gaza Strip to facilitate humanitarian aid delivery to Palestinian civilians.[10] The new 11-hour daily tactical pauses are longer and cover a larger area than the IDF’s previous pauses.

The IDF said that the pauses began on June 15.[11] Israeli media reported that several Israeli officials were unaware of the IDF’s decision prior to its announcement.[12] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the Israeli Defense Ministry that the pauses were “not acceptable.”[13] The IDF clarified that the fighting in Rafah will continue despite the tactical pauses east of the city.[14]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

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Israeli forces are instituting a daily 11-hour “tactical pause” along a route east of Rafah to facilitate humanitarian aid deliveries

Palestinian fighters continued to defend against Israeli forces in western Rafah

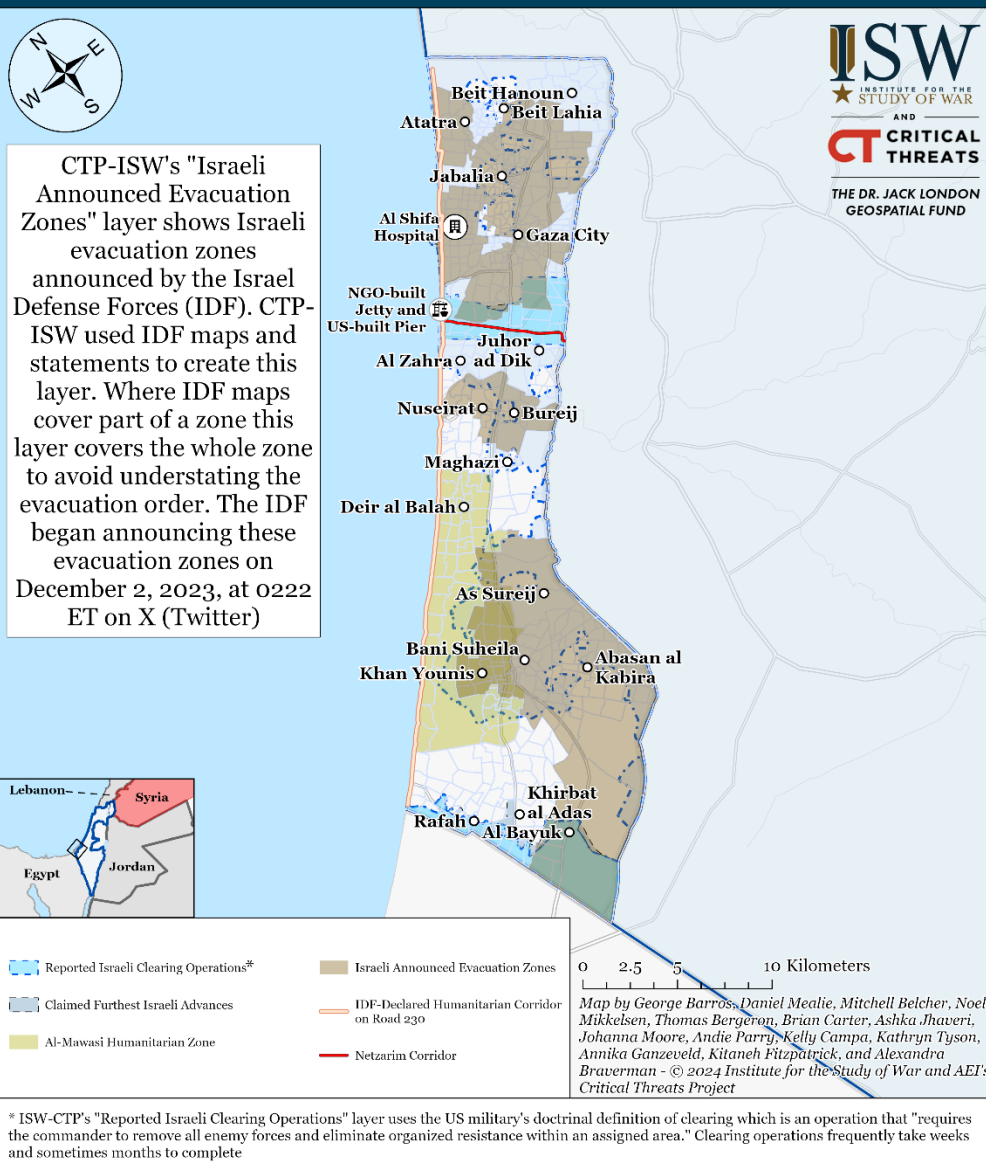
0 5 10 20 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Kathryn Tyson, Annika Ganzeveld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, and Alexandra Braverman
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Reported Israeli Clearing Operations	IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridor on Road 230	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 June 16, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



Israel will only continue ceasefire negotiations with Hamas based on the US-proposed ceasefire agreement supported by the UN Security Council, according to an unidentified senior Israeli negotiator.^[15] The official said that Hamas made “substantial” changes to “dozens of sections” in the proposal. The official called on mediators to ensure that negotiations follow the outline of the proposal. Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh claimed that Hamas and other Palestinian militias have shown “great flexibility,” ignoring the fact that Hamas has not changed its maximalist negotiating position since December 2023.^[16] Haniyeh accused Israel of rejecting Hamas’ flexibility to “circumvent and deceive” negotiators to rescue remaining Israeli hostages and continue military operations in the Gaza Strip. White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said that Egyptian and Qatari mediators will approach Hamas to inquire whether the group will accept the US-proposed ceasefire.^[17]

The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades launched a salvo of rockets targeting the IDF Sufa site in southern Israel on June 16.[18]



West Bank

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

Israeli forces engaged the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades in al Faraa refugee camp, Tubas, and Balata refugee camp, Nablus, on June 16.[19]



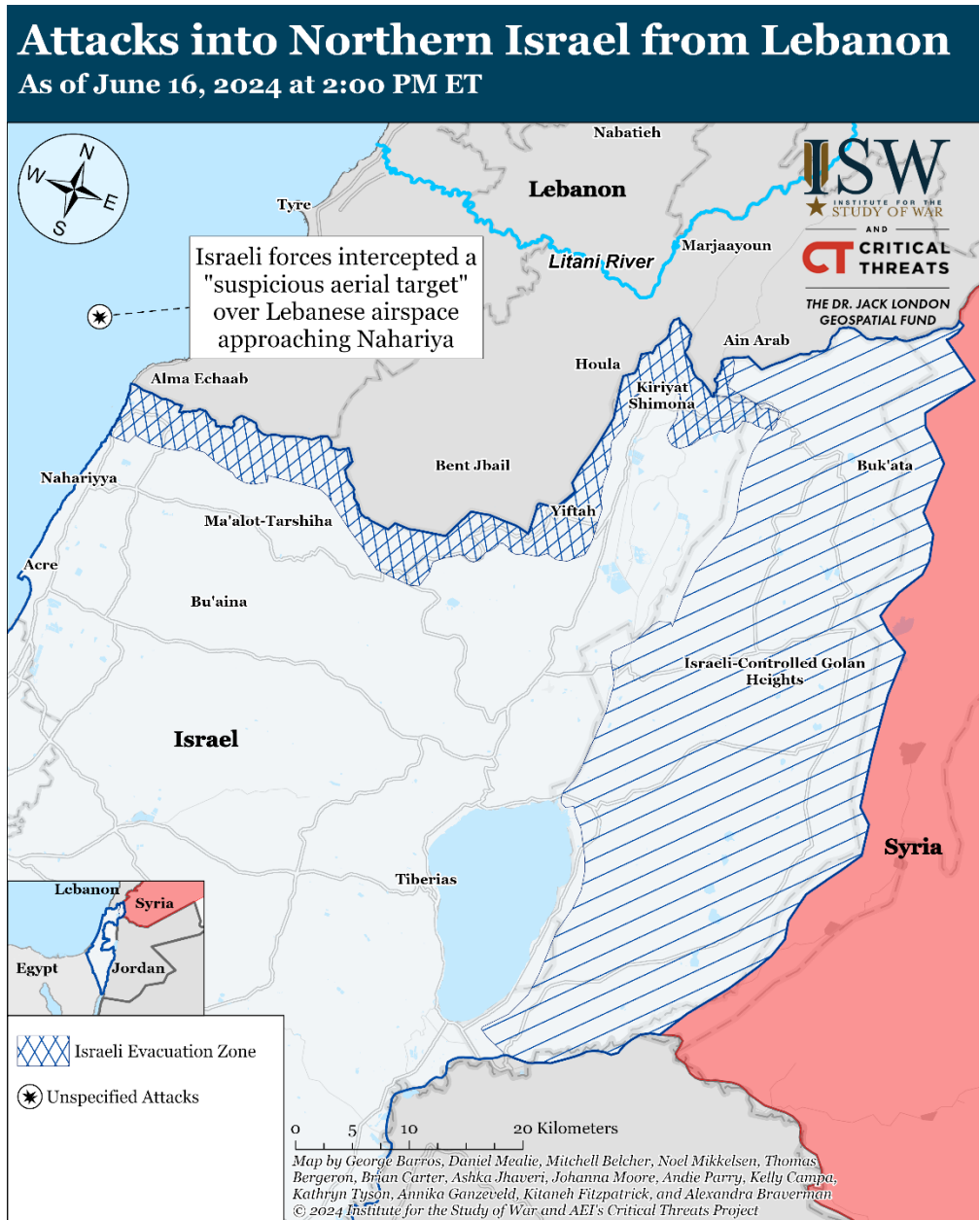
This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

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

Iranian-backed militias, including Lebanese Hezbollah, conducted an attack into northern Israel on June 16.[20] The IDF intercepted a "suspicious aerial target" over Lebanese airspace approaching Nahariya.[21]



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

Iran and Axis of Resistance

United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported two explosions near a vessel approximately 40 nautical miles south of al Mokha, Yemen, on June 16.[22] The explosions did not cause any injuries or damage to the nearby vessel, and the vessel continued to its next port of call.

US Central Command (CENTCOM) published an update about the Palauan-flagged, Ukrainian-owned, Polish-operated commercial vessel *Verbena* on June 15.[23] The Houthis struck the *Verbena* in the Gulf of Aden on June 13 with two anti-ship cruise missiles, causing fires onboard.[24] CENTCOM reported that the *Verbena*'s crew issued a distress call and abandoned ship on June 15 due to "continuous fires and an inability to control them." [25] The Cayman Islands-flagged commercial vessel *Anna Meta* responded to the distress call and rescued the crew. CENTCOM noted that the Iranian Artesh Navy frigate *Jamaran* was eight nautical miles from the *Verbena* but did not respond to the distress call. UKMTO reported on June 15 that the crew of an unspecified vessel abandoned their vessel after the Houthis attacked it, likely referencing the *Verbena*. [26]





- [1] https://t.me/kataeb_moqawma/4305
- [2] <https://t.me/nedalps/4197>; <https://t.me/AymanGouda/6176>
- [3] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2487>; https://t.me/kataeb_moqawma/4307
- [4] <https://t.me/sarayaps/18117>
- [5] <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1802196062473482543>;
<https://x.com/GLZRadio/status/1802198907683745994>
- [6] <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1802196062473482543>
- [7] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1802217771729576045>
- [8] https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israeli-forces-push-into-rafah-as-gaza-cease-fire-talks-falter-bc776080?mod=middle-east_news_article_pos1
- [9] https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-to-pause-fighting-along-southern-route-in-gaza-to-ease-aid-blockage-66150a5a?mod=middle-east_news_article_pos1
- [10] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1724326961336434934>;
<https://x.com/IDF/status/1726214785027448945>;
<https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1742840499239563738>
- [11] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-announces-daily-pause-in-fighting-along-key-south-gaza-road-to-increase-aid-flow/>
- [12] <https://x.com/GLZRadio/status/1802232429341491675>;
<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-military-announces-tactical-pauses-gaza-aid-supplies-2024-06-16/>
- [13] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-announces-daily-pause-in-fighting-along-key-south-gaza-road-to-increase-aid-flow>
- [14] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1802217771729576045>
- [15] <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/s1hgpp3rr#autoplay>
- [16] <https://t.me/hamaswestbank/52088>
- [17] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/white-house-qatar-egypt-plan-talks-with-hamas-gaza-ceasefire-2024-06-15/>
- [18] <https://t.me/nedalps/4197>
- [19] https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6624 ; <https://t.me/moriahdoron/11148> ; https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6625
- [20] <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1802292102778216740>
- [21] <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1802308167772037390>
- [22] https://x.com/UK_MTO/status/1802377976480153860
- [23] <https://x.com/CENTCOM/status/1802087678415929507>
- [24] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-june-14-2024>
- [25] <https://x.com/CENTCOM/status/1802087678415929507>
- [26] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-june-15-2024>