

Iran Update, November 7, 2024

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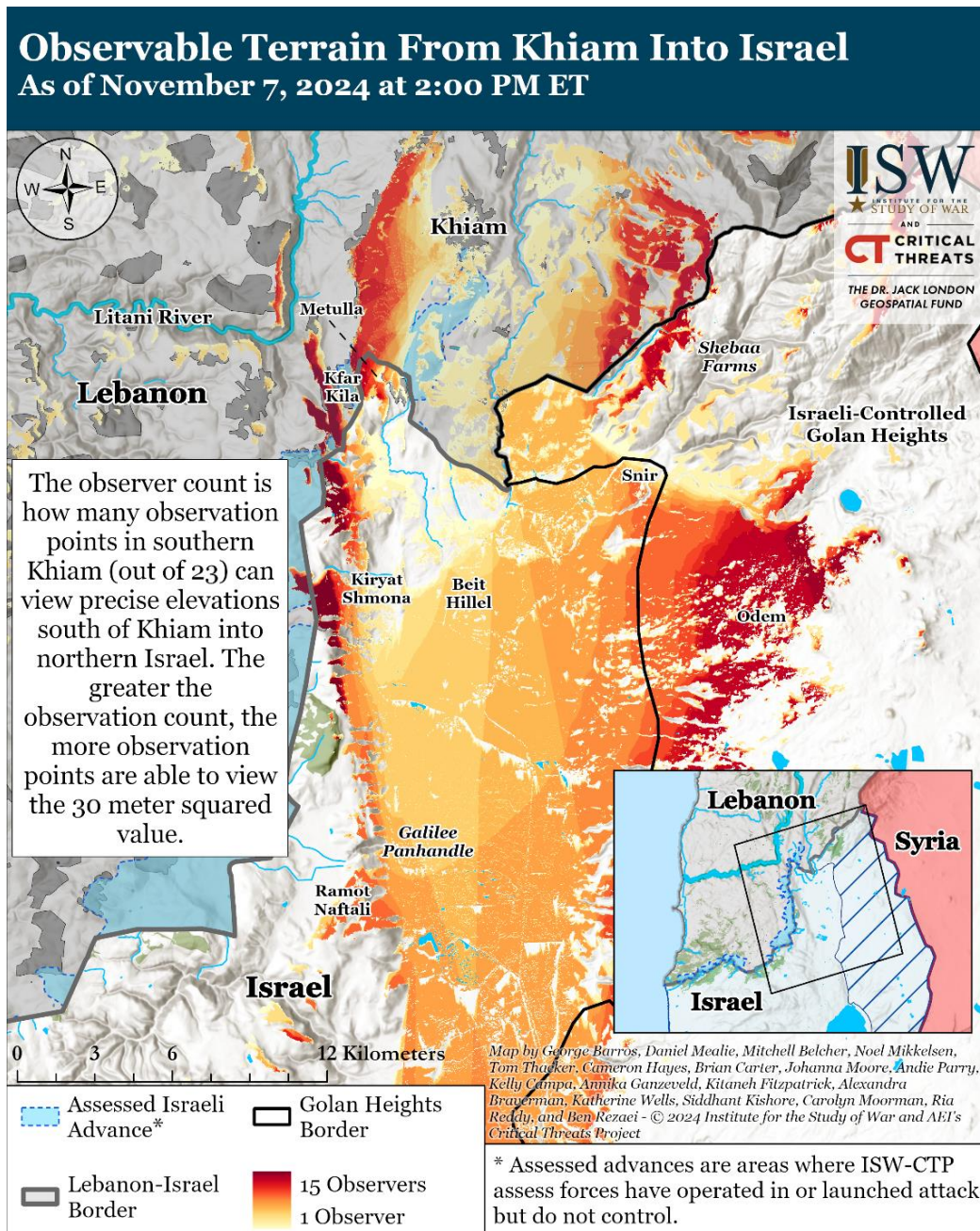
Information Cutoff: 2:00pm ET

Hezbollah executed a prepared but limited defense of Khiam in southeastern Lebanon against the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) from October 28 to 31.[1] Hezbollah’s Operations Room claimed that the group prevented an Israeli force from seizing and controlling terrain in Khiam by executing a “fire defense,” which likely refers to a prepared but limited defense that involved pre-registering targets for indirect fire while committing only a small amount of infantry.[2] This requires a certain level of preparation by Hezbollah but it is limited because a small amount of infantry could not hope to hold Khiam against an Israeli mechanized assault. Hezbollah fighters conducted 70 attacks over the IDF’s three-day advance towards Khiam. Most of these attacks were indirect fire attacks using rockets, thus supporting the theory that Hezbollah planned a defense centering on indirect fire.[3] Hezbollah did not claim small arms engagements with Israeli forces during this period, suggesting that Hezbollah commanders used light infantry fighters sparingly, if at all. Lebanese sources reported small arms engagements between Hezbollah fighters and the IDF but did not specify at what range the engagements occurred.[4] The low number of small arms engagements suggests that Hezbollah commanders were either unwilling or unable to deploy many infantrymen during the IDF advance into Khiam and preferred to deplete stocks of rockets, anti-tank guided missiles, and mortar shells.

Hezbollah’s prepared fire-heavy defense also suggests that Hezbollah commanders were focused on inflicting casualties rather than holding ground. This would be consistent with a defense that prioritizes the attrition of enemy forces and thus the enemy’s will to fight over holding ground. The IDF advanced at least five kilometers from Israel towards and into Khiam during the three-day operation. Hezbollah claimed that the IDF withdrew into northern Israel from Khiam on October 31 but did not provide additional evidence.[5]

Hezbollah’s defense of Khiam has been the most organized defense of a southern Lebanon village since the IDF began its ground operation in Lebanon in early October. Hezbollah commanders may have chosen to defend this area given that Khiam is located on high ground from which Hezbollah could fire into northern Israel. Khiam, moreover, grants Hezbollah a vantage point from which it could observe Israeli forces and other targets around the Galilee Panhandle. The IDF never confirmed that it operated in Khiam and did not publicize Hezbollah equipment or infrastructure seized there. Geolocated footage

posted on November 6 showed the IDF 8th Armored Brigade (res.) (91st Division) operating in Khiam in recent days, however.[6] Israeli forces destroyed firing points aimed toward northern Israeli towns and located and destroyed weapons, including Kornet missiles, grenades, and explosives in Khiam.[7] The IDF killed the commander of Hezbollah’s local unit in Khiam unit on November 3 after the IDF withdrew from the town.[8] The IDF continued artillery shelling of Khiam and its outskirts post-withdrawal.[9] The fact that Hezbollah’s tactical command echelons near Khiam managed to execute a defense is not a strong indicator that Hezbollah’s higher command echelons have recovered from the severe degradation caused by Israeli air and ground operations. The defense of Khiam could be planned and executed at a relatively low echelon of command.



Recent statements by senior Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) commanders suggest that the IRGC may conduct a direct attack on Israel from Iranian territory in response to the October 25 Israeli strike targeting Iran. These IRGC commanders have warned in recent days that Iran will conduct a third “True Promise Operation” against Israel. “True Promise Operation” refers to the previous large-scale Iranian drone and missile attacks on Israel in April and October 2024, which Iranian officials refer to as True Promise Operation 1 and True Promise Operation 2, respectively.[10] Senior IRGC commanders, including IRGC Deputy Commander Brigadier General Ali Fadavi and IRGC Second Coordination Deputy Brigadier General Ali Fazli, have recently warned that Iran will “certainly” launch a third “True Promise Operation” against Israel.[11]

Iran may conduct a smaller-scale direct attack on Israel than it did in April and October 2024 in order to preserve its diminishing long-range missile stockpile. Iran used a total of around 300 long-range ballistic missiles in its attacks on Israel earlier this year.[12] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) damaged mixing equipment and facilities used to produce long-range ballistic missiles in its strikes into Iran on October 25, which will likely disrupt Iran’s ability to manufacture ballistic missiles.[13] This disruption could cause the Iranian regime to refrain from conducting a large-scale missile attack on Israel since it might currently lack the capability to readily replace the missiles it would use in such an attack. Iran could conduct a joint attack with Iranian-backed Iraqi militias against Israel in order to preserve its long-range missile stockpile, however. Unspecified US and Israeli officials told Axios on November 5 that the IRGC has been transferring drones and ballistic missiles to Iranian-backed Iraqi militias since the Israeli strikes on October 25.[14]

Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei described the features a future supreme leader should embody during his first public meeting with the Assembly of Experts on November 7.[15] Khamenei stated that the Assembly should select a leader who embodies the revolution and carries it forward to maintain the revolution’s “main goal” of “implementing the religion of Islam in the country and in people’s lives.”[16] Khamenei notably did not reveal any specific details about his successor. The Assembly of Experts is the regime body constitutionally responsible for monitoring and selecting the supreme leader. The newest Assembly was elected in March 2024 and will serve until 2032.[17] This iteration of the Assembly will likely be the Assembly that chooses the next Supreme Leader following Khamenei’s death.

Houthi Supreme Leader Abdulmalik al Houthi stated on November 7 that the reelection of former US President Donald Trump does not impact the Houthis’ campaign against shipping or Israel.[18] Abdulmalik said that Houthi fighters will continue to attack merchant vessels and US and Royal (UK) Navy vessels transiting through the Red Sea.[19] He also said that the Houthis would continue direct attacks on Israel. Abdulmalik added that they have experienced Trump before.[20] CTP-ISW has observed over 270 Houthi attacks targeting commercial vessels since November 2023.[21]

Key Takeaways:

- **Hezbollah Operations in Lebanon:** Hezbollah executed a prepared but limited defense of Khiam in southeastern Lebanon against the IDF from October 28 to 31. The group said that it prevented an Israeli force from seizing and controlling terrain in Khiam by executing a “fire defense,” which likely refers to a prepared but limited defense that involved pre-registering targets for indirect fire while committing only a small amount of infantry.
- **Iranian Retaliation Against Israel:** Recent statements by senior Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) commanders suggest that the IRGC may conduct a direct attack on Israel from Iranian territory in response to the October 25 Israeli strike targeting Iran. Iran may conduct a smaller-scale direct attack on Israel than it did in April and October 2024 to preserve its diminishing long-range missile stockpile.
- **Iran:** Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei described the features a future supreme leader should embody during his first public meeting with the Assembly of Experts on November 7.
- **Houthi Response to US Election:** Houthi Supreme Leader Abdulmalik al Houthi stated on November 7 that the reelection of former US President Donald Trump does not impact the Houthis’ campaign against shipping or Israel. Abdulmalik said that Houthi fighters will continue to attack merchant vessels, US and Royal (UK) Navy vessels transiting through the Red Sea, and Israel itself.

Key Takeaways in the October 7 War

As of November 7, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET





The IDF issued evacuation orders for areas west of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip

Hezbollah executed a prepared but limited defense of Khiam in southeastern Lebanon against the IDF from October 28 to 31

The IDF concluded its three-day large-scale counter-terrorism operation in the northern West Bank

Recent statements by senior IRGC commanders suggest that the IRGC may conduct a direct attack on Israel from Iranian territory in response to the October 25 Israeli strike targeting Iran

0 50 100 200 Kilometers

 Gaza Strip and West Bank  Golan Heights

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Tom Thacker, Cameron Hayes, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Annika Ganzeveld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Alexandra Braverman, Katherine Wells, Siddhant Kishore, Carolyn Moorman, Ria Reddy, and Ben Rezaei
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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 continued clearing operations in the northern Gaza Strip on November 6.[22] The IDF killed approximately 50 Palestinian fighters in Jabalia. Commercially available satellite imagery published on November 6 and a local Palestinian journalist's report indicates that the IDF conducted clearing operations near al Sikka Street, east of Jabalia.[23] Hamas detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) targeting Israeli forces in Jabalia.[24]

The IDF issued new evacuation orders for areas west of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip on November 7.[25] The IDF evacuation orders come after the IDF expanded its clearing operations there on November 6.[26] The IDF confirmed that elements of the IDF 900th Infantry Brigade operated around Beit Lahia after receiving credible intelligence indicating that Hamas fighters continue to operate in the area.[27] CTP-ISW has observed almost daily Palestinian militia attacks in the areas west of Beit Lahia during the past week, which is consistent with the IDF's assessment of militia presence in the area.[28] The IDF Arabic-language spokesperson stated that Palestinian fighters have used the areas under the IDF's latest evacuation zone to conduct rocket attacks into Israel.[29] The IDF is also facilitating the evacuation of Gazans from Beit Lahia through established routes amid the ongoing clearing operations in the area.[30]

Hamas fired rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) targeting an Israeli bulldozer conducting clearing operations west of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip on November 6.[31]

The IDF conducted an airstrike targeting a Hamas command-and-control site inside a compound previously used as a school in the al Shati refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip on November 7.[32] Reuters reported that the IDF conducted an airstrike targeting a UN-run school compound in al Shati refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip.[33] The airstrike killed at least 12 Palestinian civilians, according to a Palestinian journalist.[34]

Gazans protested price gouging of humanitarian aid and goods for the fourth consecutive day as protests expanded to the northern Gaza Strip on November 7.[35] A local Palestinian journalist reported that Gazans carried out demonstrations in several markets in eastern Zaytoun.[36] Gazans have been separately protesting in the central Gaza Strip since November 5.[37]

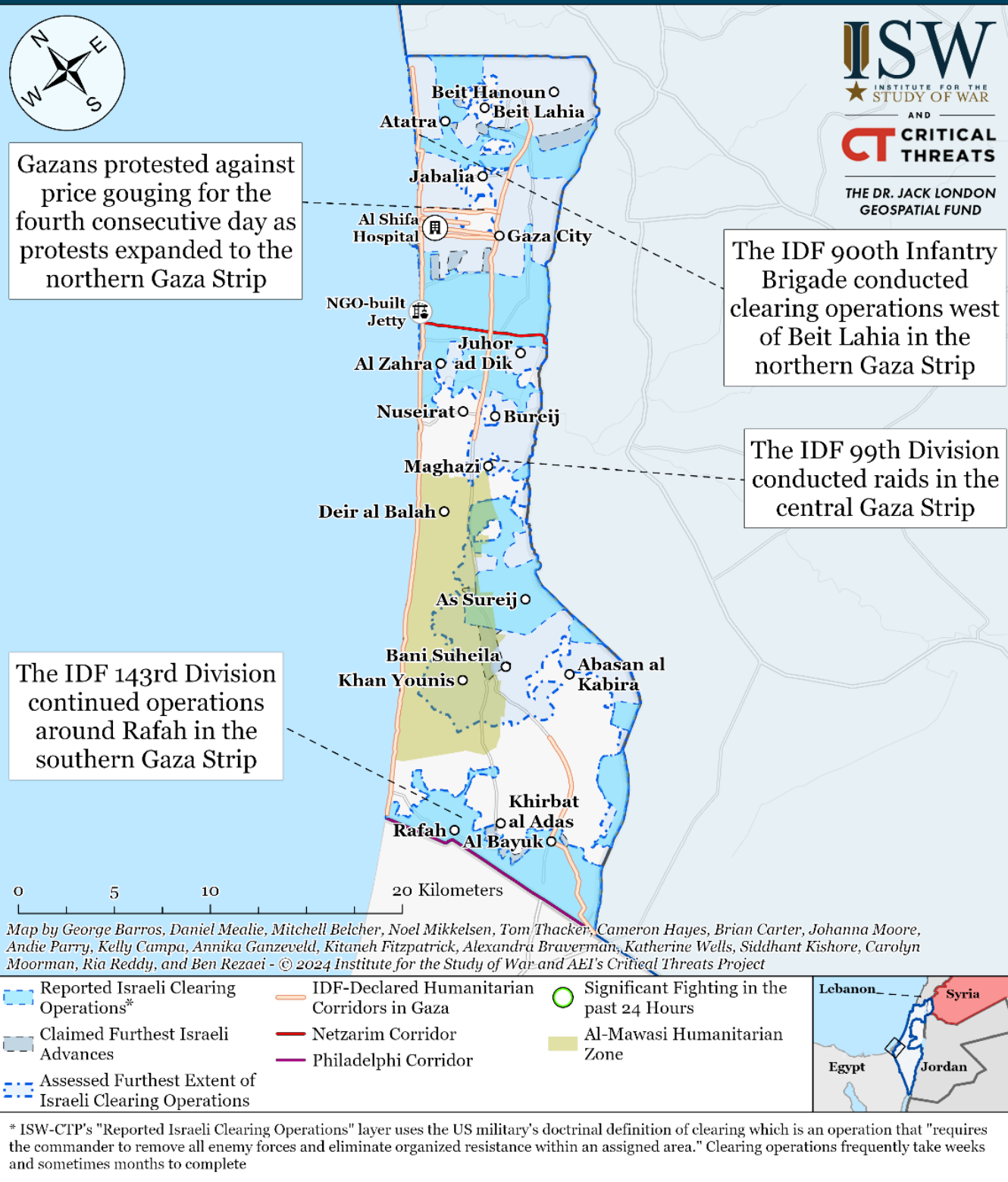
The IDF 99th Division began operations in the central Gaza Strip on November 7 after its deployment along the Netzarim corridor on November 6.[38] Palestinian media reports reported IDF gunfire around Nuseirat and Maghazi refugee camps in the central Gaza Strip.[39]

The IDF 143rd Division continued operations around Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on November 7.[40] The IDF killed an unspecified number of fighters and destroyed militia infrastructure in the area. The IDF also conducted an airstrike that killed a Palestinian fighter in Rafah.[41]

The IDF reported on November 7 that the IDF 143rd Division located and destroyed two tunnel systems in an unspecified location in the southern Gaza Strip.[42] The IDF 261st Infantry Brigade located the tunnel systems and conducted a “targeted operation” above and below ground in recent weeks to destroy the system.[43] The IDF conducted airstrikes targeting Hamas’ positions and observation posts in the area before destroying the tunnels. The IDF located approximately twenty exit shafts belonging to the two-kilometer-long tunnel system. Palestinian fighters had booby-trapped some of the tunnel shafts. The IDF also engaged and killed several Palestinian fighters through ground and air engagements during the operation.

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

As of November 7, 2024, 2:00 PM ET

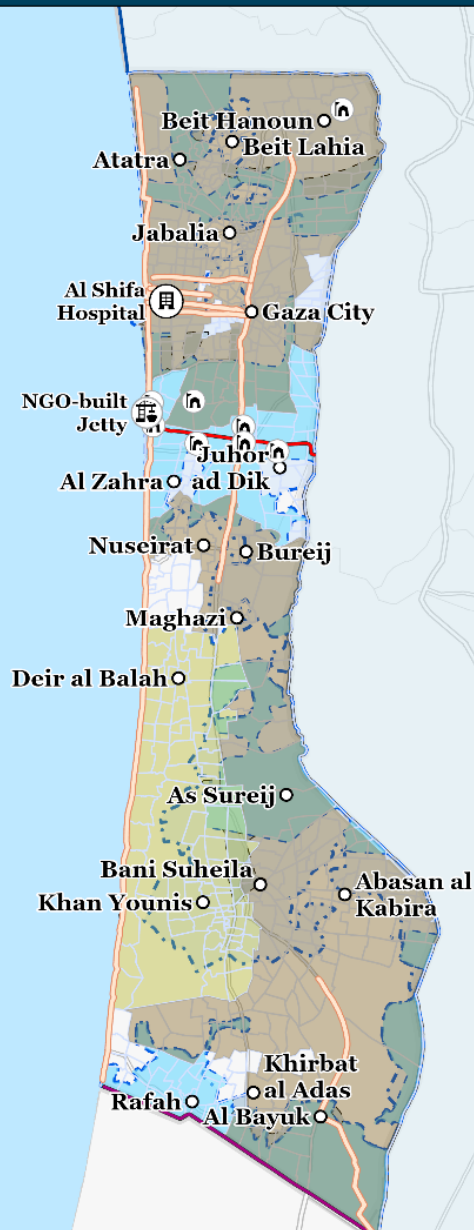


Israeli-Announced Evacuation Zones in the Gaza Strip

As of November 7, 2024 at 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)



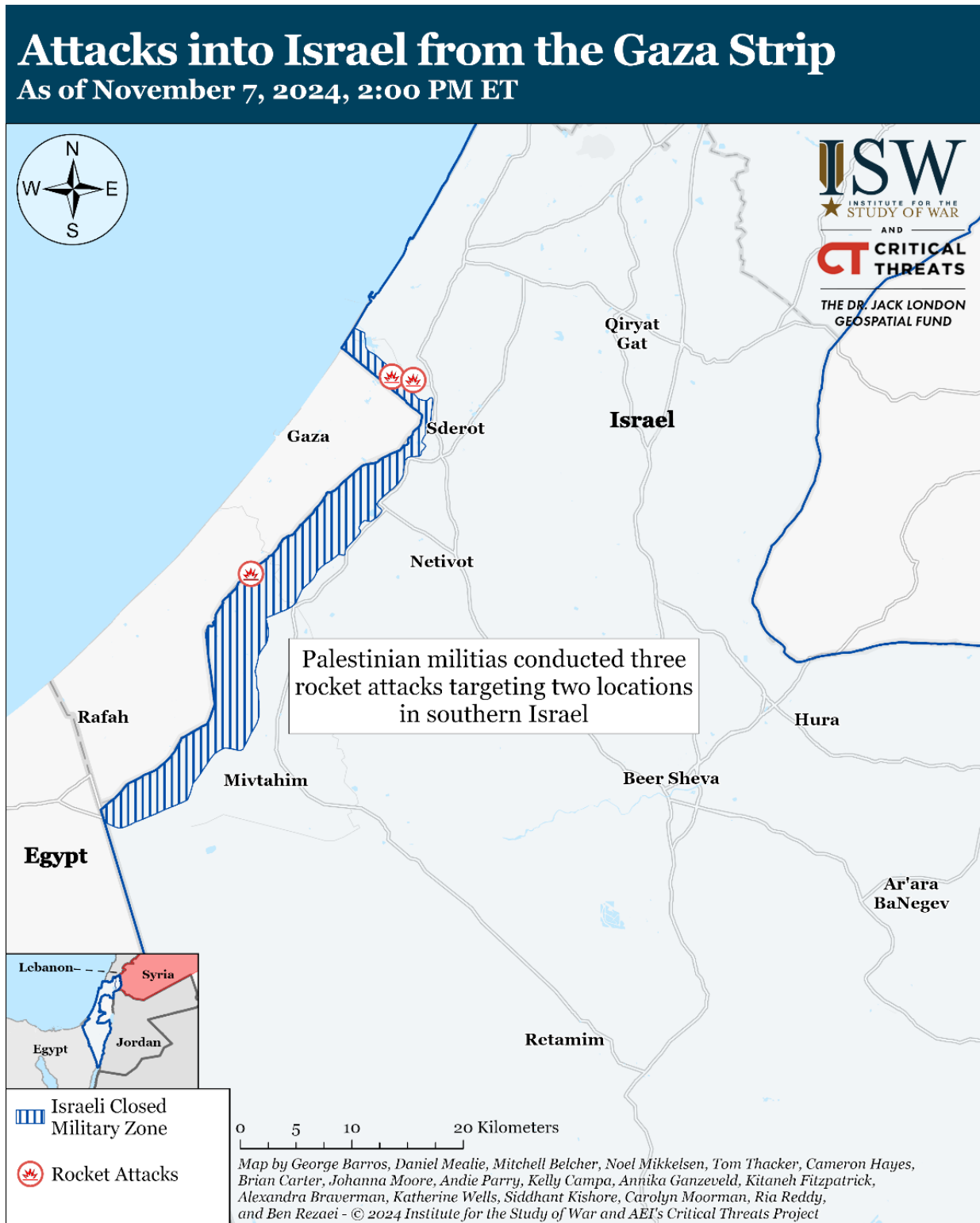
- Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*
- Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones
- Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances
- IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridors in Gaza
- Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone
- Netzarim Corridor
- Philadelphi Corridor

0 2.5 5 10 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Tom Thacker, Cameron Hayes, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Annika Ganzeveld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Alexandra Braverman, Katherine Wells, Siddhant Kishore, Carolyn Moorman, Ria Reddy, and Ben Rezaei - © 2024 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

* 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

Palestinian militias conducted three rocket attacks targeting two locations in southern Israel on November 6 and 7.[44] The IDF intercepted one projectile that crossed over into Netiv Haasara from the Gaza Strip.[45]



West Bank

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

The IDF conducted a raid in Tulkarm on November 7 as part of its large-scale counterterrorism operation in the northern West Bank to dismantle Palestinian militia networks there. IDF troops targeted armed Palestinian fighters operating in and around Tulkarm refugee camp.[46] Palestinian militias, including PIJ and the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, engaged IDF forces in small arms clashes and detonated improvised explosive devices (IED) around Tulkarm in at least twelve engagements on November 7.[47] The IDF Air Force conducted a drone strike targeting a group of gunmen in Tulkarm.[48] The IDF announced the conclusion of its counterterrorism operation in the northern West Bank shortly after publicizing its drone strike.[49] The northern West Bank has long been a hotspot for Palestinian militancy, and Israeli forces focused counterterrorism efforts in the northern West Bank in late Summer and Fall 2024.

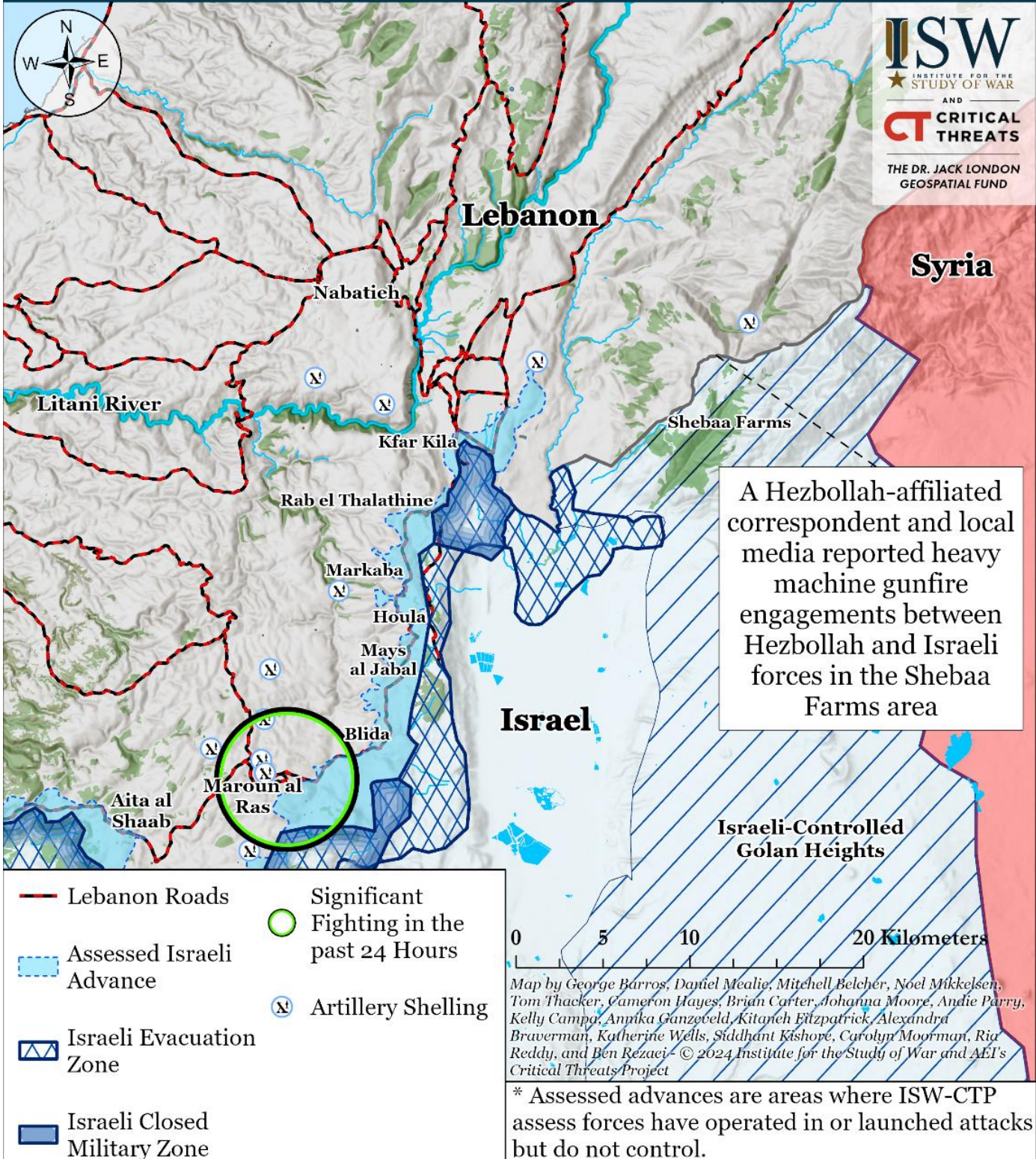
Northern Israel and Lebanon

Lebanese Hezbollah objectives:

- End Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip
- Survive the October 7 War as a capable political and military organization with control over Lebanon

A Hezbollah-affiliated correspondent and local media reported heavy machine gun fire and small arms engagements between Hezbollah and Israeli forces in the Sheeba Farms area on November 7.[50] Local media separately reported artillery shelling in the area.[51] Lebanese sources last reported engagements in this area on November 5.[52] The IDF 810th Mountain Brigade (210th Division) has conducted several “targeted raids” from Mount Dov into the mountainous terrain north of the Israeli-controlled Shebaa Farms since early October.[53] The IDF last announced the brigades’ operations on October 15, however.[54]

Reported Israeli Operations in the Eastern Sector As of November 7, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



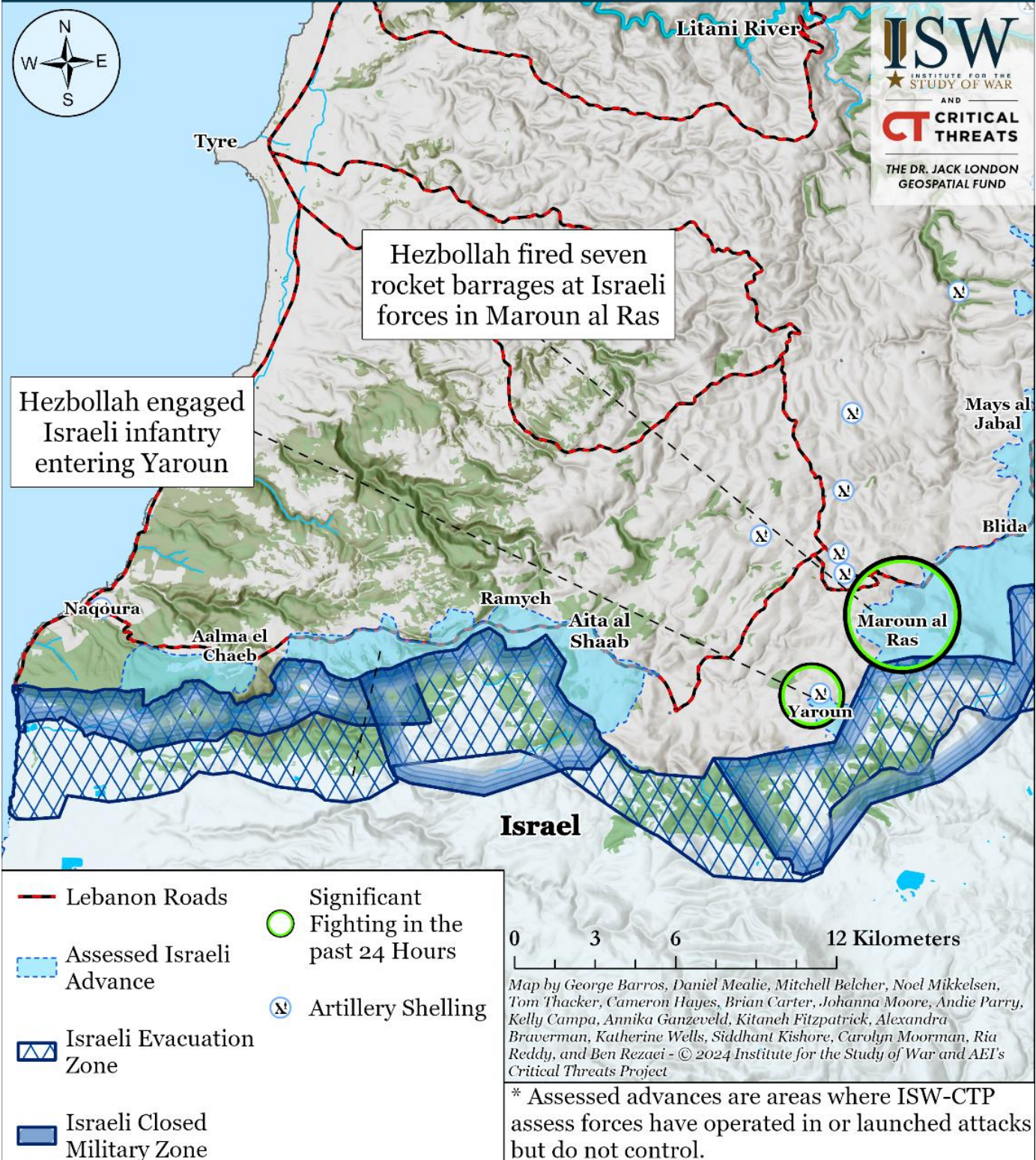
The IDF 36th Division continued operations in southeastern Lebanon.[55] Israeli forces killed Hezbollah fighters and destroyed militia infrastructure, including a military warehouse and a rocket launch site that posed a threat to Israeli forces. Hezbollah claimed on November 2 that it had confronted Israeli forces advancing towards Houla by firing anti-tank guided missiles at armored bulldozers that were leading a column of forty Israeli vehicles.[56] Israeli forces withdrew to the eastern outskirts of Houla under Israeli artillery cover, according to Hezbollah. Hezbollah then targeted Israeli forces in the eastern outskirts of Houla with multiple, large rocket salvos.[57]

Israeli forces continued to operate near Maroun al Ras and Yaroun on November 7. Hezbollah claimed seven rocket attacks targeting Israeli forces on the outskirts of Maroun al Ras, southeastern Lebanon.[58] A Hezbollah-affiliated correspondent reported on November 4 that Israeli forces have been “stationed” in Maroun al Ras’ eastern outskirts.[59] Hezbollah fighters separately engaged Israeli infantry attempting to advance towards Yaroun on November 7.[60] Hezbollah claimed to kill and wounded the Israeli infantry force but provided no evidence for the claim. Lebanese media reported artillery shelling on the western side of Yaroun earlier on November 7.[61]

Lebanese media reported small arms clashes between Israeli forces and Hezbollah near Aita al Shaab, southern Lebanon, on November 7.[62]

Israeli forces continued operations in southwestern Lebanon near Alma al Shaab since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on November 6. Lebanese media reported that the IDF shelled Alma al Shaab on November 4 and 5.[63] Hezbollah claimed on November 6 that Israeli forces withdrew from multiple towns in southern Lebanon and failed to conduct a “siege” on Naqoura, southwestern Lebanon within the past week.[64] Lebanese media reported multiple instances of artillery shelling in Naqoura and areas leading to it during the past week.[65]

Reported Israeli Operations in the Western Sector As of November 7, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



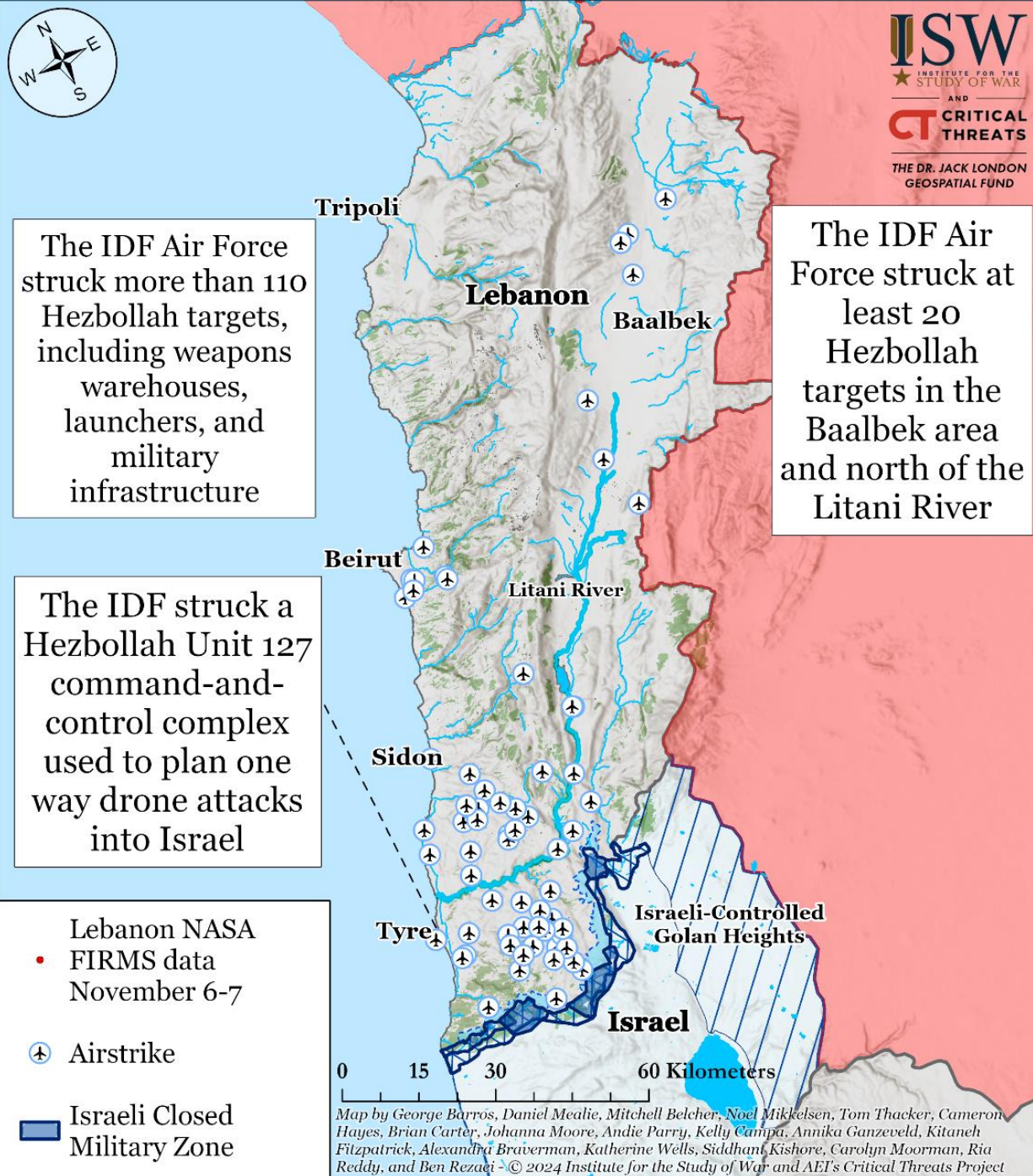
The IDF continued its air campaign targeting Hezbollah capabilities, fighters, and infrastructure on November 7. The IDF Air Force struck more than 110 Hezbollah targets, including weapons warehouses, launchers, and military infrastructure throughout Lebanon.[69] The IDF struck a missile platform used by Hezbollah fighters to launch rockets toward the Mount Carmel area in northwestern Israel.[70]The IDF also struck a Hezbollah Unit 127 command-and-control complex in Tyre, southwestern Lebanon.[71] The IDF stated that Hezbollah Unit 127 used the position for planning and launching one-way drones towards Israel.[72]

The IDF continued its airstrikes targeting Hezbollah sites in Beirut’s southern suburbs.[73] The IDF Air Force struck command centers and military infrastructure in the southern suburbs of Beirut.[74] The Hezbollah Beirut regional command is responsible for this area.[75] The IDF Arabic-language spokesperson issued evacuation notices to the residents of Ouzai, Haret Hreik, Tahwitat al Ghadeer, and Hadath in Beirut’s southern suburbs before conducting airstrikes in the area.[76]

The IDF Air Force struck at least 20 Hezbollah targets in the Baalbek area and north of the Litani River.[77]The IDF reported that its airstrikes killed at least 60 Hezbollah fighters.[78] Lebanon’s Health Ministry reported that the Israeli strikes killed at least 40 people.[79] The IDF also struck Hezbollah command-and-control compounds in Nabatieh, southern Lebanon.[80] The IDF stated that Hezbollah fighters used these facilities to promote terrorist activities.[81] The IDF Arabic-language spokesperson issued an evacuation notice to the residents of Nabatieh before conducting airstrikes in the area.[82]

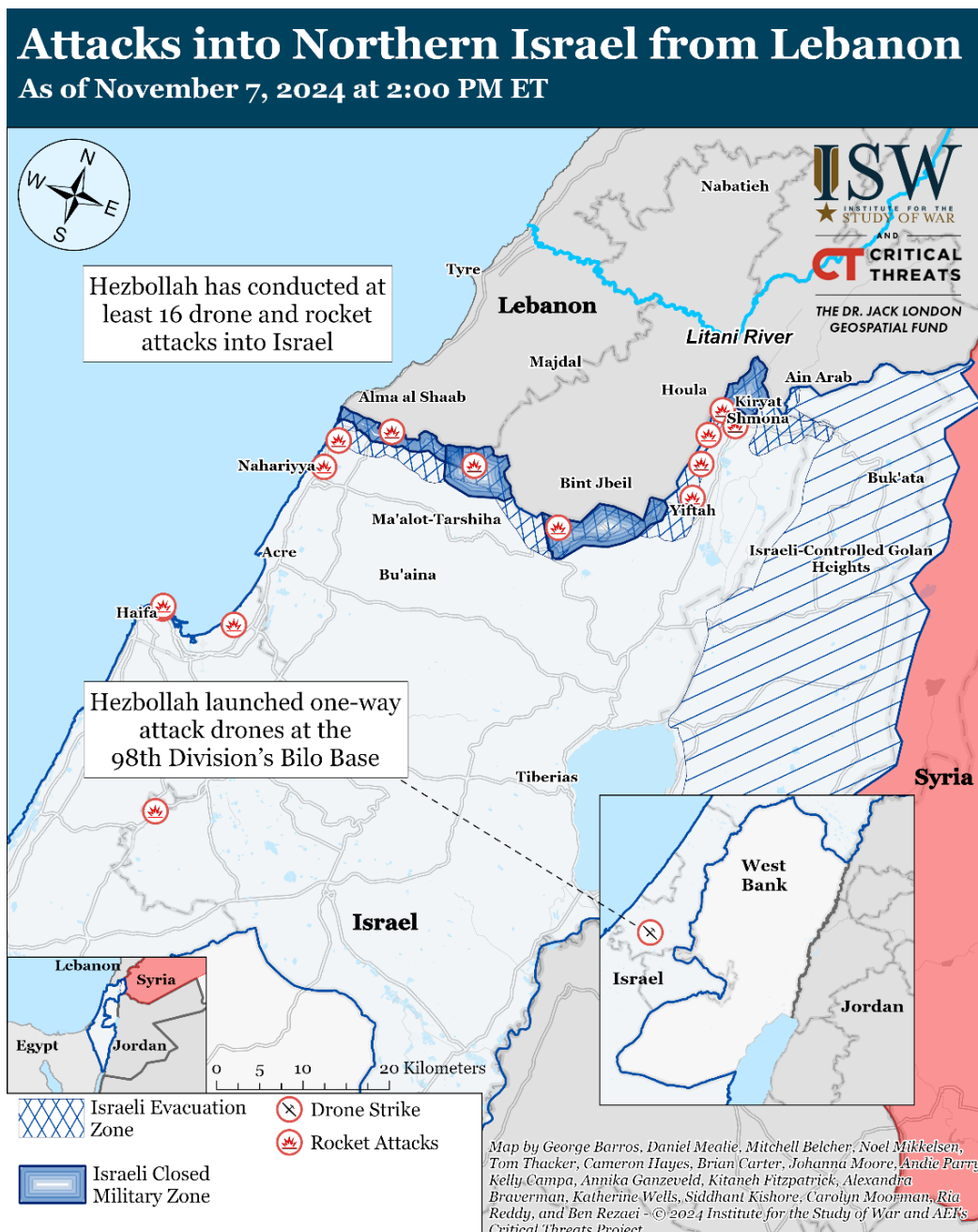
Israeli Air Campaign in Lebanon

As of November 7, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



This map illustrates individual Israeli air and artillery strikes based on local Lebanese reporting. This map depicts strikes reported from 2:00pm ET on November 6 to 2:00pm ET on November 7. This map is not exhaustive. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify the locations of Israeli strikes.

Hezbollah has conducted at least 16 drone and rocket attacks into Israel since CTP-ISW's data cutoff on November 6.[83] Hezbollah conducted seven of its 15 attacks on Israeli military sites.[84] Hezbollah launched one-way attack drones at the 98th Division's Bilo Base, south of Tel Aviv.[85] Elements of the IDF 98th Division were recently conducting clearing operations in Kafr Kila, southeastern Lebanon.[86] Hezbollah claimed on October 12 that its fighters continued to target IDF rear positions in northern Israel and "support lines" as part of its defense against Israel's ground operation in southern Lebanon.[87] Attacks on IDF support elements are meant to degrade the IDF's ability to conduct effective ground operations, though it is unclear what military effect these attacks will have if any at all.



Iran and the Axis of Resistance

Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah denied reports that Iran is transferring weapons to Iranian-backed Iraqi militias and preparing to attack Israel from Iraqi territory. Kataib Hezbollah released a statement claiming that these reports are part of an Israeli effort to obtain more US support prior to an Iranian response to Israel's October 25 strikes targeting Iran.[88] Kataib Hezbollah emphasized that Iran did not ask for Iranian-backed Iraqi militia involvement in its response. The statement added that if Israel attacks a member of the Axis of Resistance, that member will respond individually and without support from other members. Kataib Hezbollah added that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias would respond "firmly" to an Israeli strike in Iraq. Kataib Hezbollah's statement follows multiple reports that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias may attack Israel in retaliation for the recent Israeli strikes on Iran.[89]

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—has claimed two attacks targeting Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on November 6. The claims include the following:

- A drone attack targeting an unspecified military target in the Jordan Valley.[90]
- A drone attack targeting an unspecified military target in Israel.[91]

Iranian officials continue to voice opposition to a proposed Azerbaijani transport corridor that would cut off Iranian trade routes through Armenia to Europe.[92] Iranian Ambassador to Armenia Mehdi Sobhani told reporters on November 7 that Iran's position on the Zangezur corridor has not changed and that Iran is against anything that leads to geopolitical changes in the Caucasus region.[93] Sobhani added separately that Iran and Armenia's cooperation over transport and trade on the Persian Gulf-Black Sea corridor is set to increase.[94] Sobhani stated that the 32km section of the Agarak-Kajaran North-South corridor tunnel is complete.[95] This tunnel is part of the North-South Armenia Road Corridor linking Georgia, Armenia, and Iran.[96] Sobhani also emphasized that a new bridge on the Azerbaijani-Iranian border should be built alongside the Aras Bridge to facilitate more trade.[97]

Iranian Deputy Defense Minister Brigadier General Hojatollah Qureishi visited Pakistan on November 7 to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in security, border management, and military exchanges.[98] Qureishi and the Iranian delegation are scheduled to meet with high-ranking Pakistani defense and military officials in Islamabad over the next two days.[99]

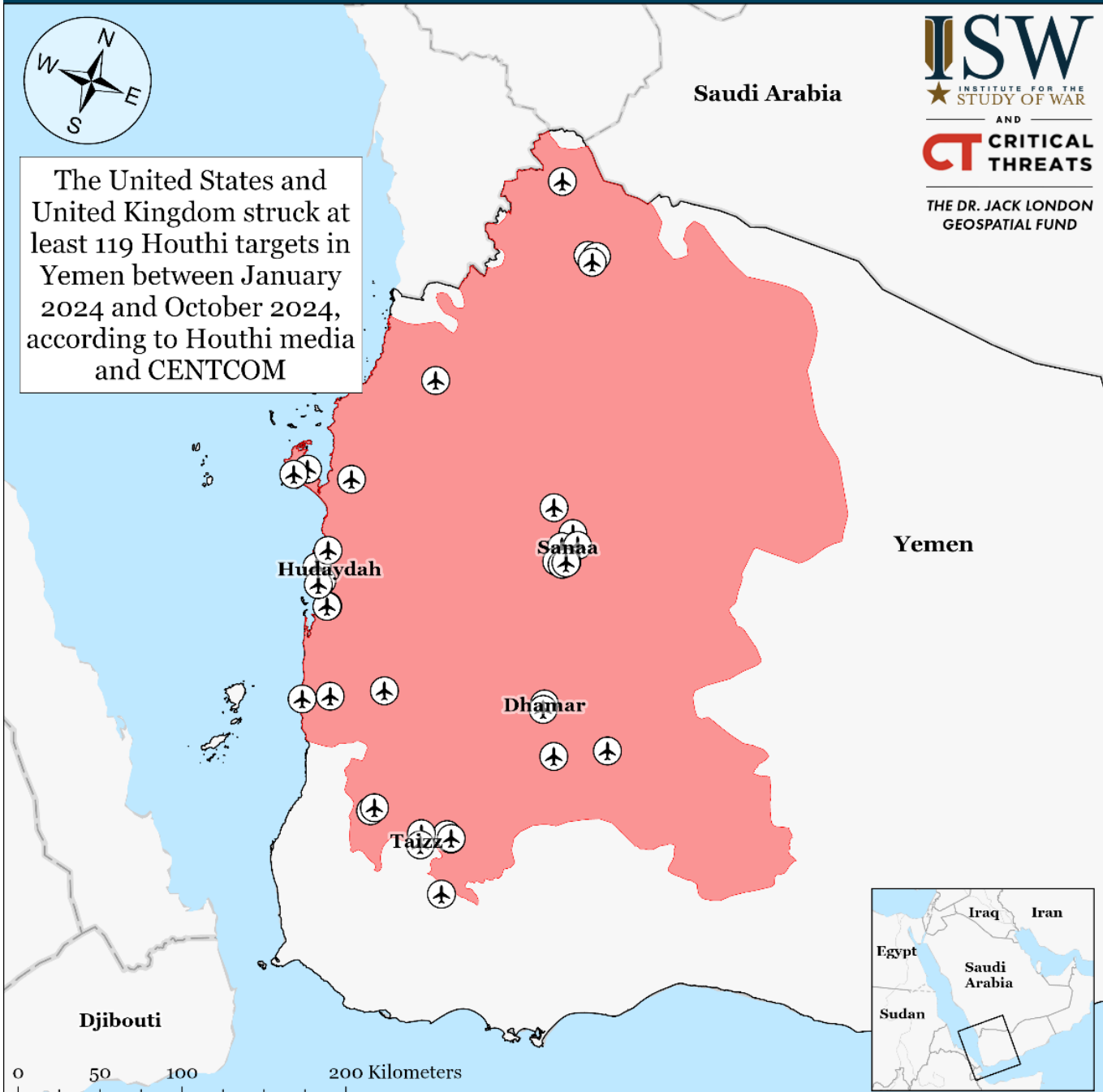
Anti-Houthi media in Yemen reported that US-UK airstrikes in Yemen have killed at least 45 Houthi fighters in Yemen since January 2024.[100] CTP-ISW has recorded at least 119 US and UK airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen between January 2024 and October 2024.[101] These targets consist mostly of weapons depots and launch sites.

US and UK Airstrikes in Yemen

As of November 7, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



The United States and United Kingdom struck at least 119 Houthi targets in Yemen between January 2024 and October 2024, according to Houthi media and CENTCOM



■ Houthi-Controlled Territory ✈ Airstrike

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Tom Thacker, Cameron Hayes, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Annika Ganzeveld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Alexandra Braverman, Katherine Wells, Siddhant Kishore, Carolyn Moorman, Ria Reddy, and Ben Rezaei

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Note: This notional map is not a definitive assessment of areas under Houthi control in Yemen. This map is primarily an illustrative reference material and does not adhere to the very high level of spatial precision that ISW and CTP uses for our Israel-Hamas and Ukraine control of terrain maps.

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.

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.

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