Iran Update, November 8, 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.
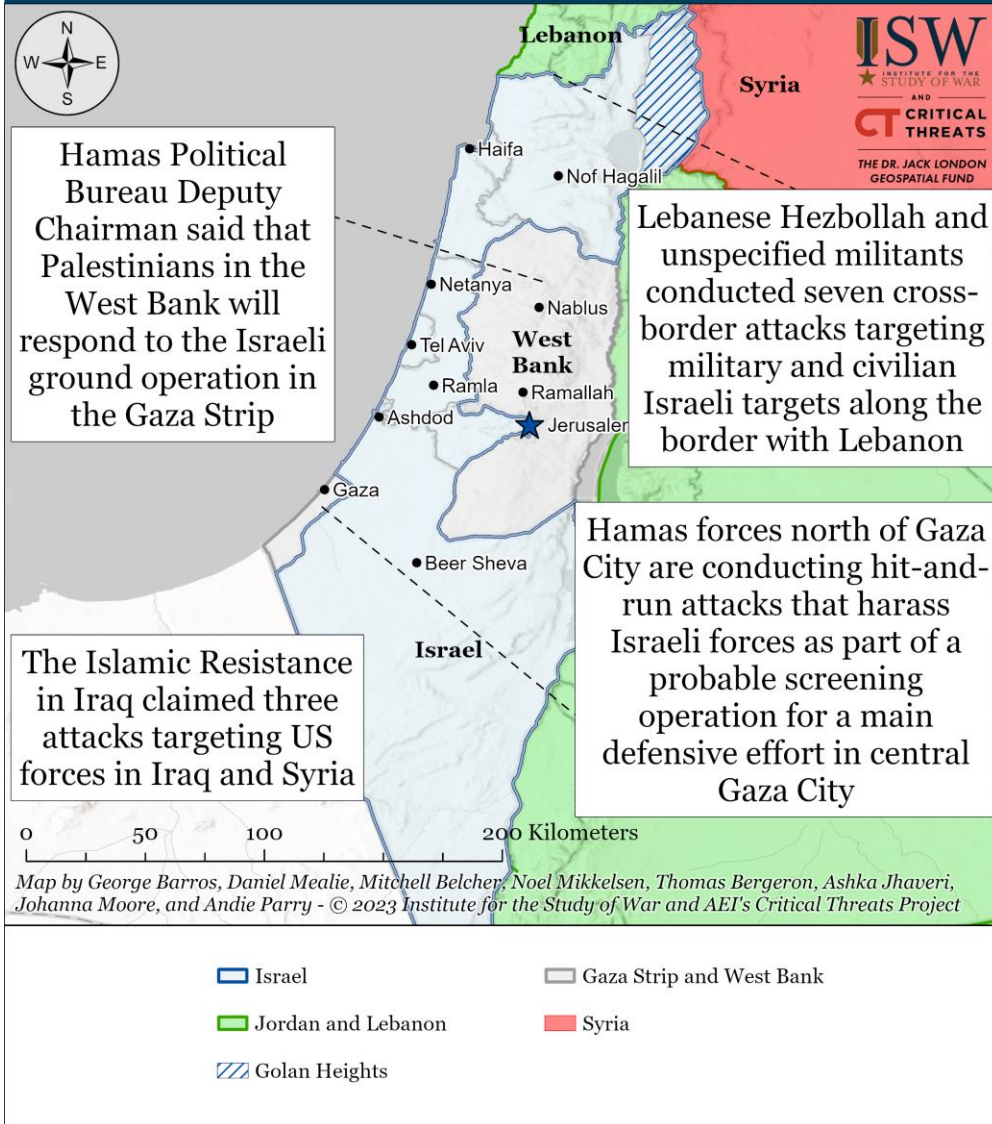
Note: This update has been revised to clarify that the reconciliation deal between Hamas and Fatah occurred in 2022. A previous version of this update did not specify the year

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. Hamas forces north of Gaza City conducted hit-and-run attacks that harassed Israeli forces, which supports CTP-ISW's previous assessment that Hamas units in the northern Gaza Strip are screening a main defensive effort in central Gaza City.
2. Hamas Political Bureau Deputy Chairman Saleh al Arouri said that Palestinians in the West Bank will respond to the Israeli ground operation in the Gaza Strip, which is consistent with repeated Hamas calls for further resistance in the West Bank.
3. Hamas political leaders continue to call for Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) to increase its involvement in the Hamas-Israel war to alleviate the pressure that Hamas is facing in Gaza.
4. Brazilian police working with Mossad arrested LH operatives who were planning an attack on Jewish targets in Brazil on November 8.
5. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for three attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria on November 8. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed 45 attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East since October 18.

Israel-Hamas War as of November 8, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

Hamas Political Bureau Deputy Chairman said that Palestinians in the West Bank will respond to the Israeli ground operation in the Gaza Strip

Lebanese Hezbollah and unspecified militants conducted seven cross-border attacks targeting military and civilian Israeli targets along the border with Lebanon

Hamas forces north of Gaza City are conducting hit-and-run attacks that harass Israeli forces as part of a probable screening operation for a main defensive effort in central Gaza City

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed three attacks targeting US forces in Iraq and Syria

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

Israel — Gaza Strip and West Bank — Jordan and Lebanon — Syria — Golan Heights

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
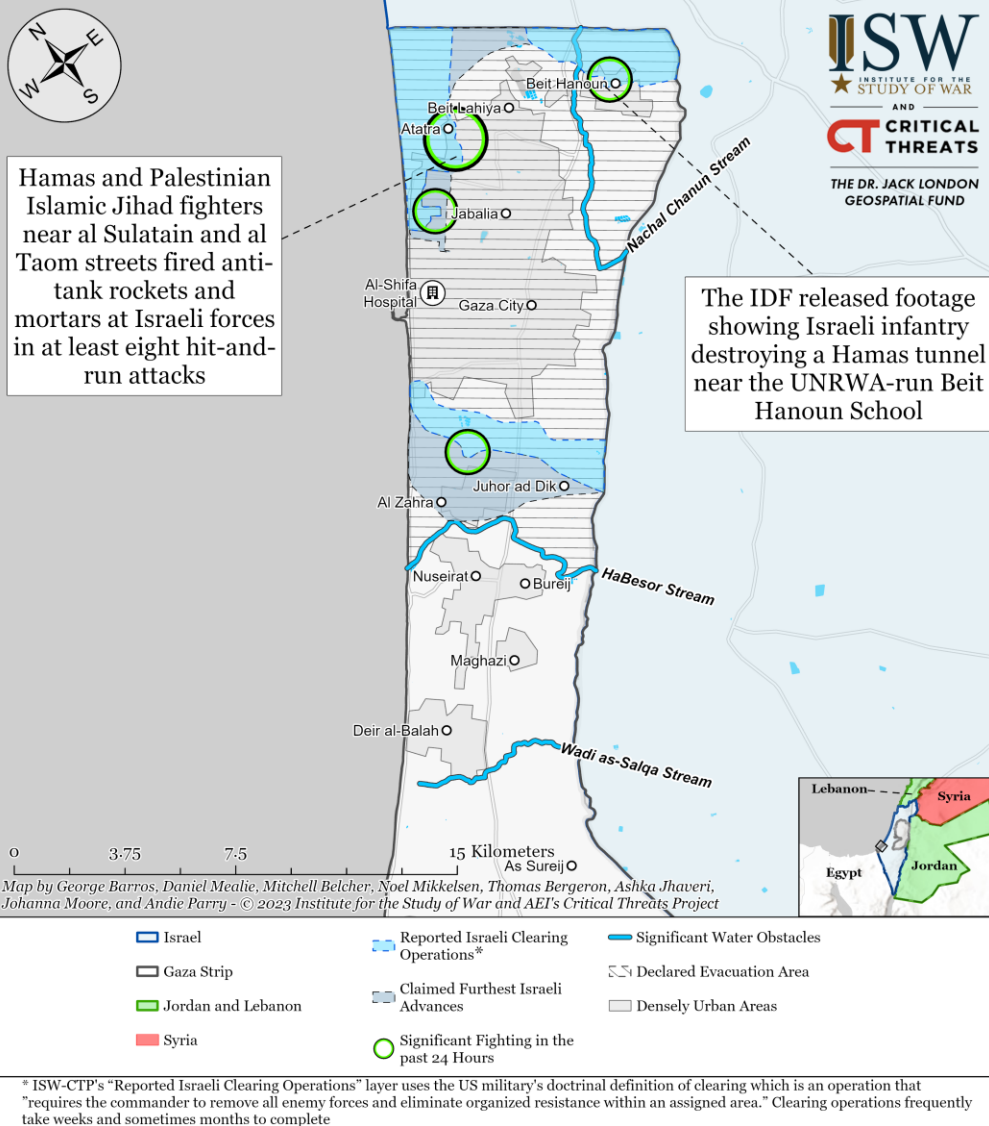- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip

Hamas forces north of Gaza City conducted hit-and-run attacks that harassed Israeli forces, which supports CTP-ISW's previous assessment that Hamas units in the northern Gaza Strip are screening a main defensive effort in central Gaza City. This is consistent with Hamas's intent to fight a "long war...to force" Israel into a ceasefire.[1] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) published a map showing the area of responsibility of one Hamas company between al Toam and al Falouja roads in the northern Gaza Strip on November 3.[2] Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) fighters near al Sulatain and al Taom streets, which are in or in the

vicinity of this sector, fired anti-tank rockets and mortars at Israeli forces in at least eight hit-and-run attacks.[3] Commercially available satellite imagery also showed tank tracks and cleared terrain consistent with Israeli clearing operations. Palestinian media also reported Israeli activity south of the al Toam-al Falouja sector.[4] This sector is large for a company-sized unit defending against a mechanized advance in an urban environment, assuming that Hamas tactical units are roughly similar to or smaller than US infantry units.[5] Hamas has not used more complex or advanced systems and tactics, such as house-borne improvised explosive devices, explosively-formed penetrators, advanced anti-tank missiles, or larger and more complex road-buried improvised explosive devices. This suggests that Hamas is weighting its main effort in Gaza City rather than the northern Gaza Strip.[6]
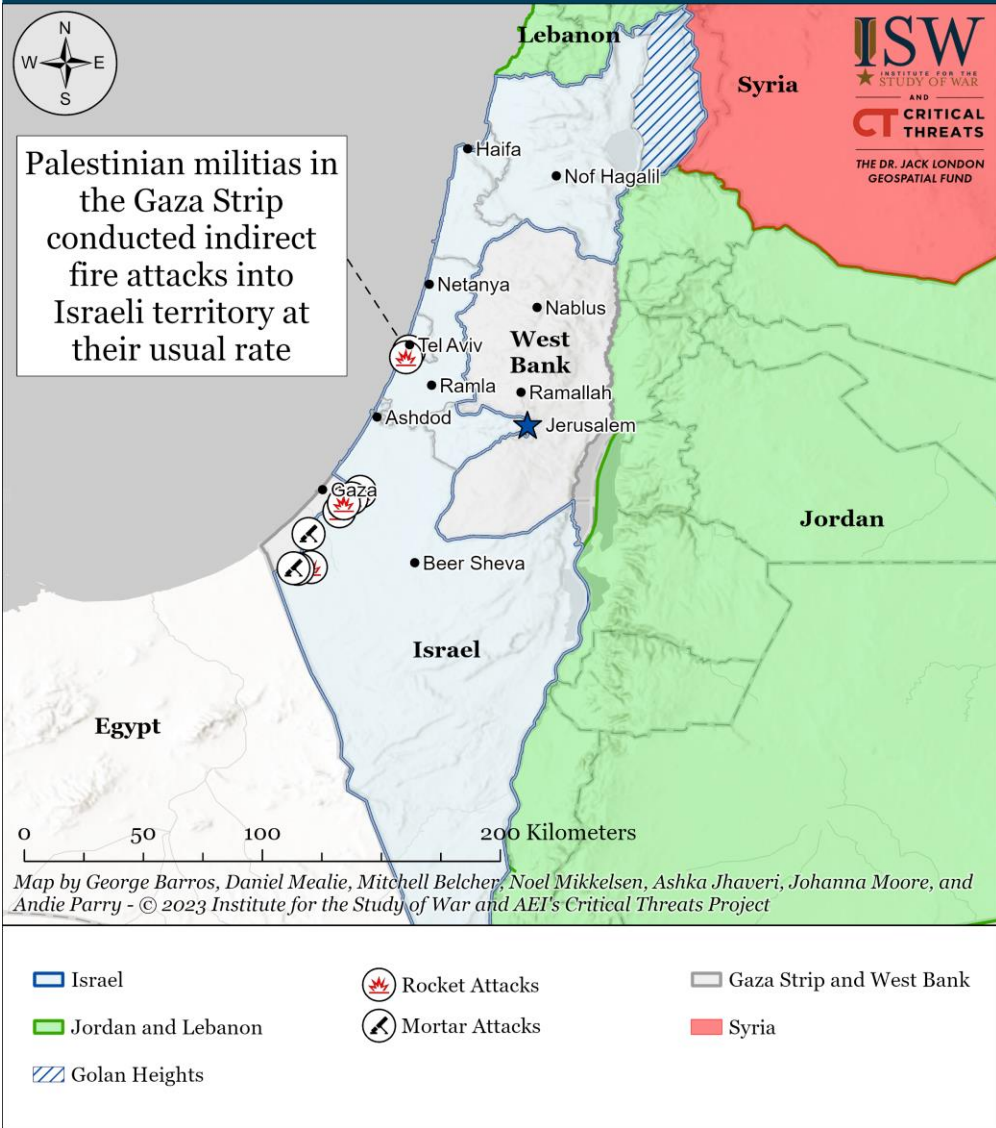
Israeli forces continued clearing operations in Beit Hanoun in the northeastern Gaza Strip on November 8. The IDF released footage showing Israeli infantry destroying a Hamas tunnel near the UNRWA-run Beit Hanoun School.[7] The Israeli infantry and engineering units are tasked with clearing and destroying Hamas tunnels, according to the IDF.[8]

Israeli forces continued operations in the vicinity of al Shati Refugee Camp on November 8. Hamas claimed that it targeted IDF armor using anti-tank tandem rockets in Sheikh Radwan, which is east of al Shati Refugee Camp.**[9]**

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of November 8, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad fighters near al Sulatain and al Taom streets fired anti-tank rockets and mortars at Israeli forces in at least eight hit-and-run attacks

The IDF released footage showing Israeli infantry destroying a Hamas tunnel near the UNRWA-run Beit Hanoun School

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

Israel
Gaza Strip
Jordan and Lebanon
Syria

Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*
Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances
Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours

Significant Water Obstacles
Declared Evacuation Area
Densely Urban Areas

* 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

Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 8, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory at their usual rate

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

Legend: Israel | Rocket Attacks | Gaza Strip and West Bank | Jordan and Lebanon | Mortar Attacks | Syria | Golan Heights

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

Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip conducted indirect fire attacks into Israeli territory at their usual rate. The al Qassem Brigades—the militant wing of Hamas—claimed responsibility for three indirect fire attacks, including two attacks against Tel Aviv.[10] The al Quds Brigades—the militant wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—claimed responsibility for nine indirect fire attacks on November 7-8, primarily targeting civilian and military targets in southern Israel.[11] The National Resistance Brigades—the militant wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)—conducted one mortar attack targeting a southern Israeli town.[12] The al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades—the self-appointed militant wing of Fatah—claimed responsibility for one rocket attack targeting an Israeli town in the south.[13]

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of November 8, 2023, 2:00 PM ET
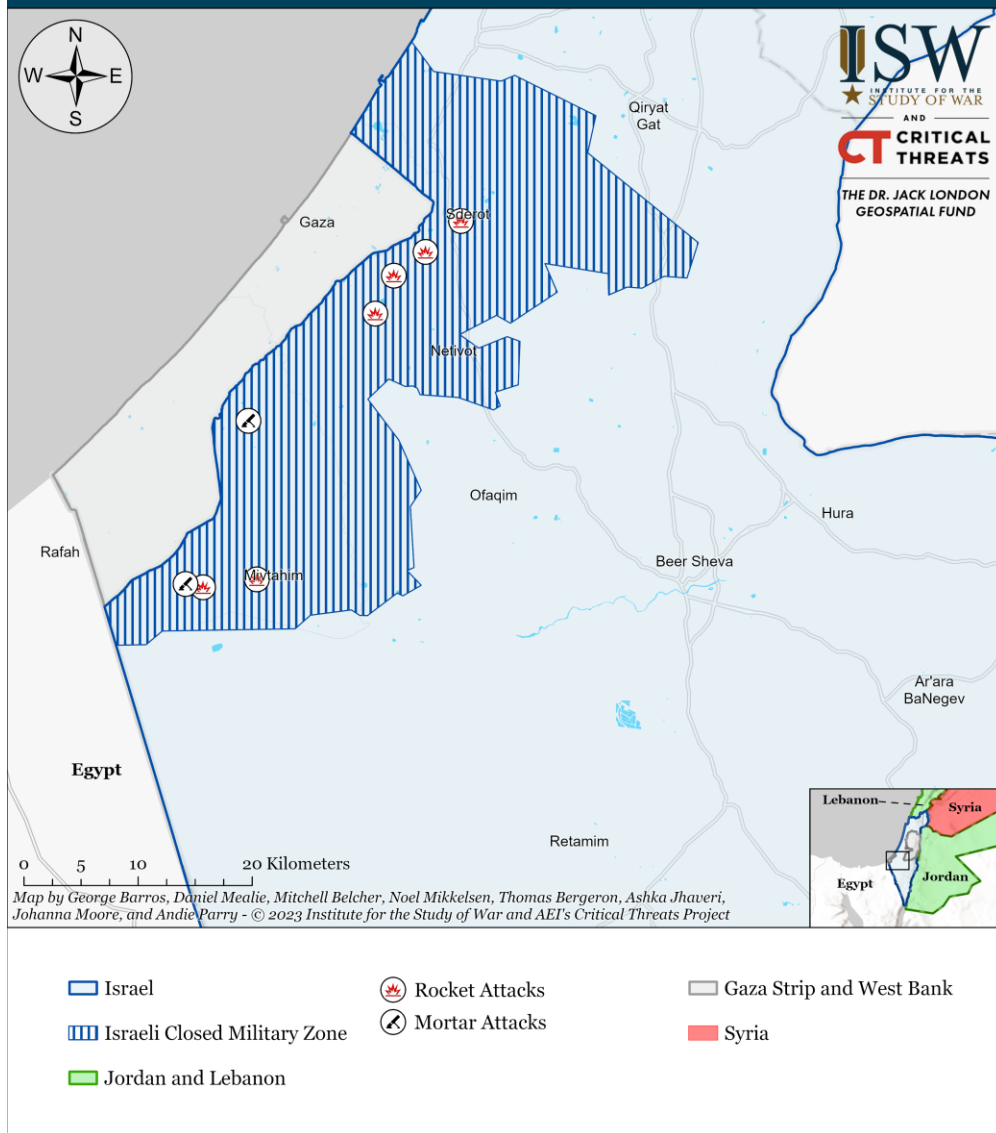
Recorded reports of rocket attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.
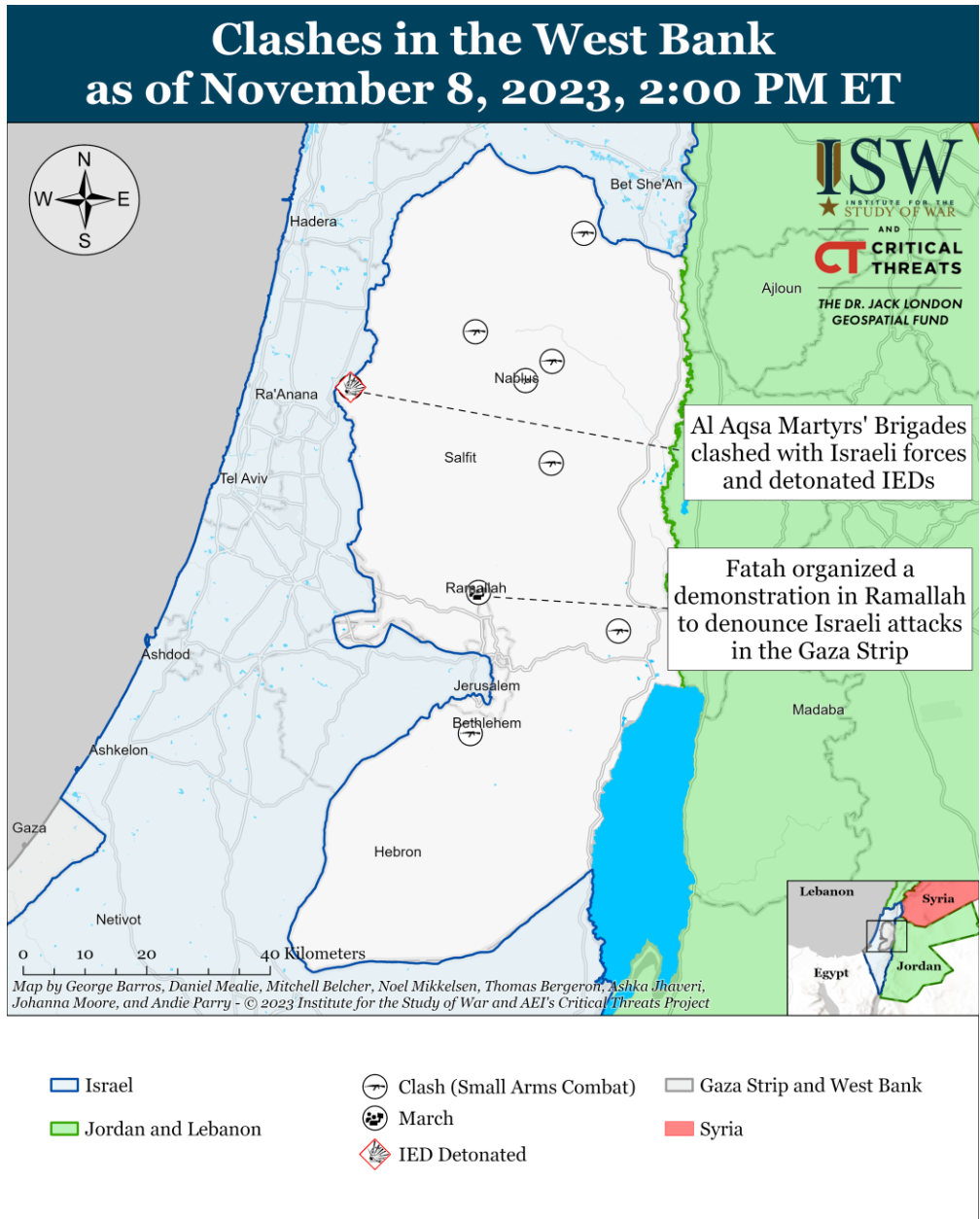
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

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

Palestinian militants clashed with Israeli forces nine times across the West Bank on November 8. The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade claimed it engaged Israeli forces with small arms fire and detonated an IED in Qalqilya city.[14] The Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades-affiliated Tulkarm Battalion said one of its militants died during clashes on November 7 and threatened revenge against Israel.[15] Most small arms clashes occurred in the northern West Bank.[16] Unspecified militants shot at an Israeli settlement near Nablus amid heightened tension between Palestinians and settlers in the West Bank.[17] The attacks on Israeli settlements are consistent with Iranian and Hamas

rhetoric describing Israeli settlers in the West Bank as legitimate military targets. The IDF detained 27 wanted persons in raids in the West Bank, 10 of whom are affiliated with Hamas.[18]

Hamas Political Bureau Deputy Chairman Saleh al Arouri said Palestinians in the West Bank will respond to the Israeli ground operation in the Gaza Strip, which is consistent with repeated Hamas calls for further resistance in the West Bank.[19] Arouri praised the Fatah fighters on the ground and called on everyone in the West Bank to actively participate in resistance.[20] Hamas and Fatah signed a reconciliation deal on October 13, 2022, after having been at odds for more than a decade.[21] Hamas chairman Khaled Mashaal called on Fatah to defeat Israel together with Hamas in late October 2023.[22] CTP-ISW previously assessed that the Israel-Hamas War may be driving Palestinian militia coordination in the West Bank despite continued tension between the two groups.[23]

Clashes in the West Bank as of November 8, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades clashed with Israeli forces and detonated IEDs

Fatah organized a demonstration in Ramallah to denounce Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

Legend:
- Israel
- Jordan and Lebanon
- Clash (Small Arms Combat)
- March
- IED Detonated
- Gaza Strip and West Bank
- Syria

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

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights
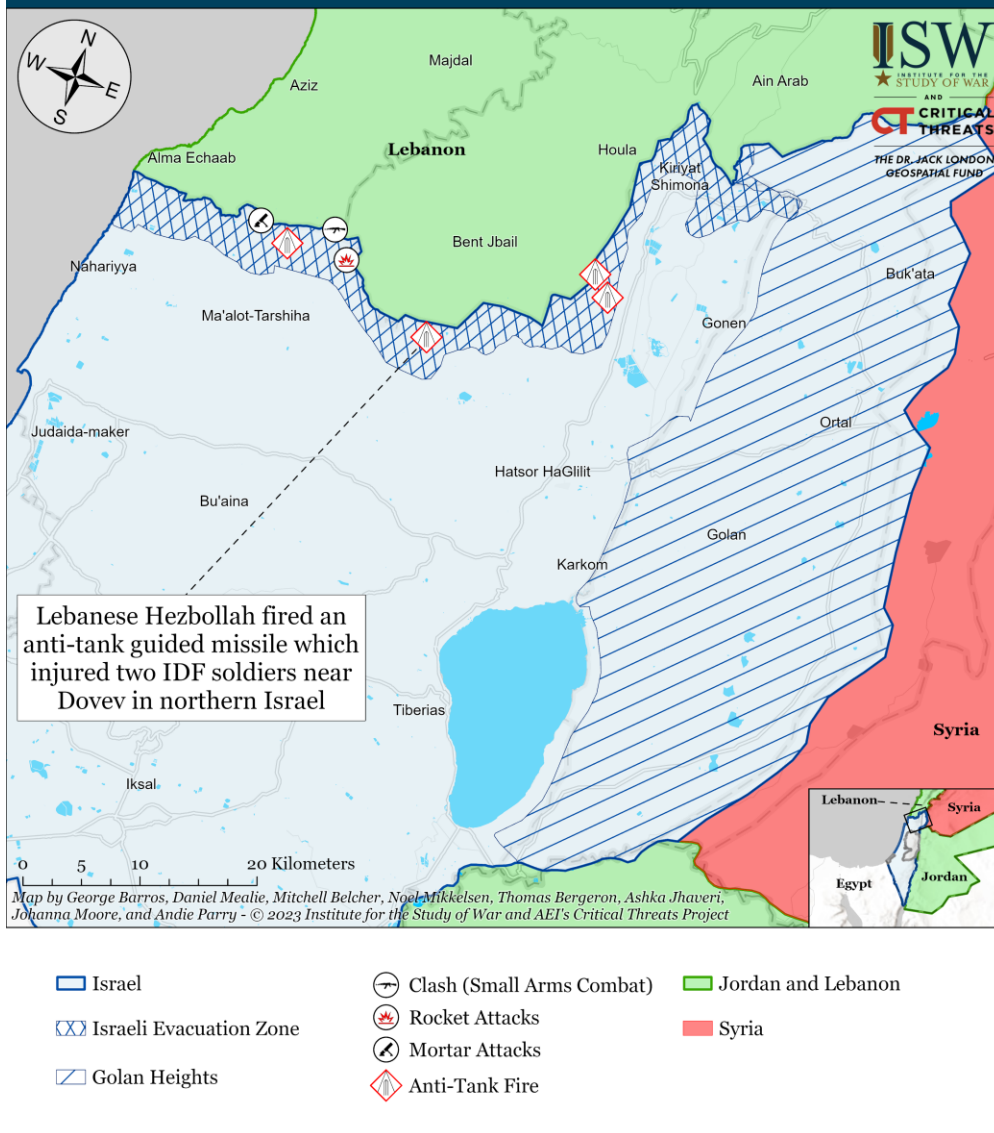
Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- 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), continued cross-border attacks into northern Israel at their normal rate on November 8. LH claimed two unspecified attacks on Israeli border positions and one anti-tank guided missile attack near Dovev in northern Israel.[24] Israeli media reported that two IDF soldiers were wounded in the attack on Dovev.[25] The IDF responded by firing artillery at the source of the attacks in Lebanon.[26] Unspecified militants fired rockets, mortars, and anti-tank missiles in four separate attacks on Israeli military and civilian targets in northern Israel.[27]

Hamas political leaders continue to call for LH to increase its involvement in the Hamas-Israel war to alleviate the pressure that Hamas is facing in the Gaza Strip. Hamas Political Bureau Deputy Chairman Saleh al Arouri praised LH and called for it to increase its attacks on northern Israel on November 8.[28] LH Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem expressed support for Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel but did not say on November 8 that LH would increase operations against Israel.[29]

Attacks into Northern Israel from Syria and Lebanon as of November 8, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

Lebanese Hezbollah fired an anti-tank guided missile which injured two IDF soldiers near Dovev in northern Israel

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

Legend:
- Israel
- Israeli Evacuation Zone
- Golan Heights
- Clash (Small Arms Combat)
- Rocket Attacks
- Mortar Attacks
- Anti-Tank Fire
- Jordan and Lebanon
- Syria

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

Brazilian police working with Mossad arrested LH operatives who were planning an attack on Jewish targets in Brazil on November 8. Brazilian Federal Police arrested two people, whom LH allegedly recruited and financed, on terrorism charges in Sao Paulo.[30] The Israeli Prime Minister's Office stated Iran directed and financed the attempted terror attack, which was planned by LH.[31] LH has operated networks in South America for decades to launder money and conduct terror attacks.
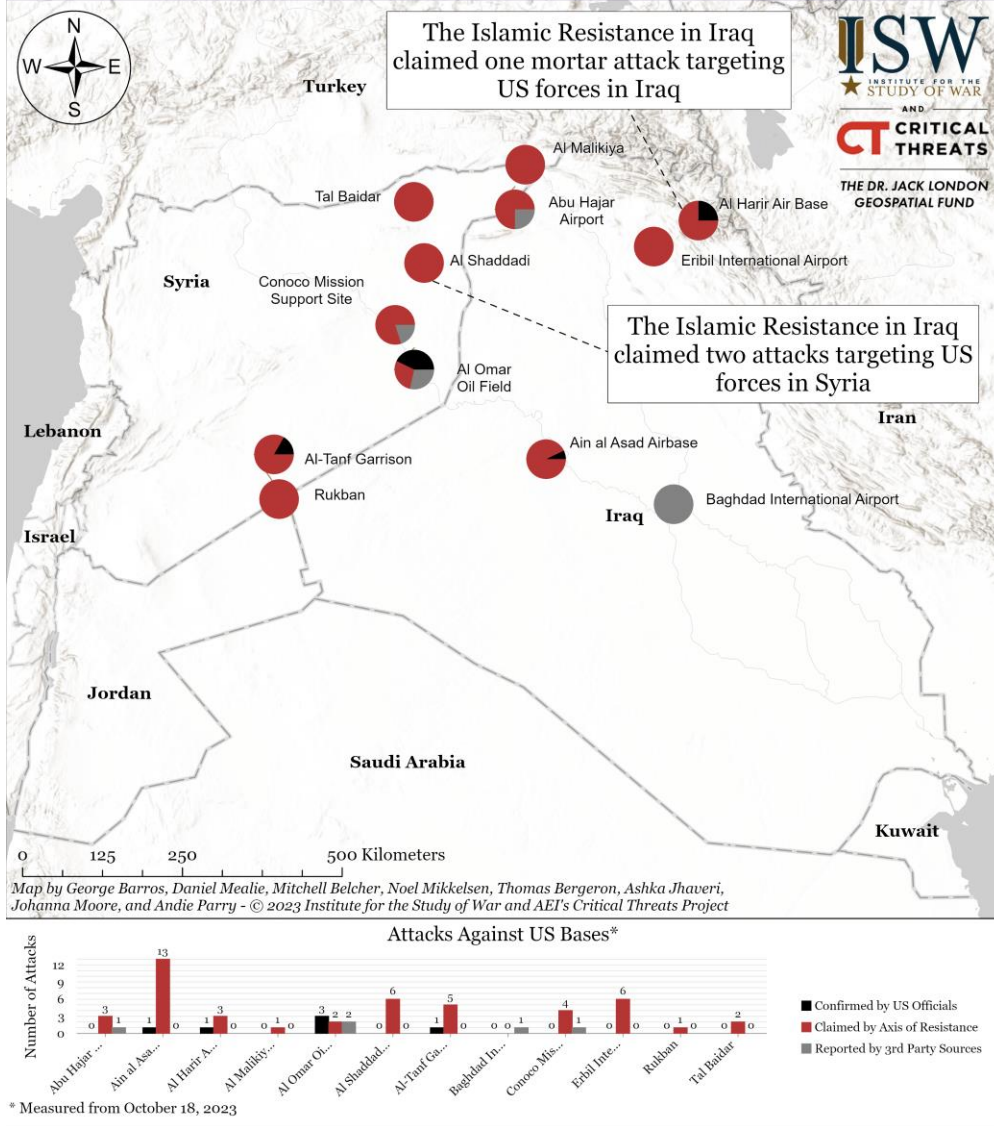
- LH conducted two terror attacks targeting the Israeli embassy and a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1992 and 1994, respectively.[32] The US Treasury Department designated four LH operatives in September 2023, who were connected to these terror attacks and continue to facilitate financing for LH across Latin America.[33]

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed responsibility for three attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria on November 8. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed 45 attacks targeting US forces in the Middle East since October 18.

- The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed a rocket attack targeting a US position in al Shadaddi, Hasakah Province, Syria on November 8. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq separately claimed a drone attack targeting a US position in al Shadaddi and released a video showing the launch of two drones.[34]

- The al Dhaferin Group of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed a mortar attack targeting US forces at the al Harir Air Base in Erbil, Iraq on November 8.[35] This is the first mortar attack on the al Harir Air Base since October 18. Mortars have significantly shorter ranges than drones, meaning that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq cell that conducted the attack was operating from deep within Iraqi Kurdistan. Mortar attacks are also more difficult, though not impossible, for counter-rocket, artillery, and mortar systems to intercept. The attack came after the group released graphics on November 6 and 7 threatening further attacks.[36]

The Houthi military spokesperson claimed that the Houthis shot down a US drone over Yemeni territory on November 8. The Houthi spokesperson said the US MQ-9 Reaper drone was "carrying out hostile monitoring and spying activities" in Yemeni airspace.[37] The Houthis previously claimed they shot down US drones over Yemen in 2021, but the US military denied some of these claims.[38]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East as of November 8, 2023, 2:00 PM ET

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed one mortar attack targeting US forces in Iraq

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed two attacks targeting US forces in Syria

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

Attacks Against US Bases*

* Measured from October 18, 2023

The IRGC Navy commander warned that the presence of the *USS Florida Ohio*-class submarine endangers the Persian Gulf region on November 8.[39] The IRGC Navy commander said that "maintaining the security of the Persian Gulf is a red line for the IRGC." This official consistently repeats similar threats in response to US deployments of naval assets to the region and does not constitute an actual red line, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[40] The United States deployed the *Ohio*-class submarine to the region on November 5 to deter further Iranian escalation of the Israel-Hamas war.[41]

Iranian officials are claiming the United States coordinated nuclear threats with Israel after an Israeli minister suggested nuking the Gaza Strip. This adds a new element to the Iranian information operation to frame the United States and Israel as the antagonists in the war. Senior Iranian officials, including President Ebrahim Raisi, condemned Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu's November 4 suggestion that Israel could use a nuclear weapon on the Gaza Strip and argued that it demonstrated Israel's threat to global security on November 8.[42] IRGC-affiliated Tasnim News Agency similarly claimed that Israeli officials

coordinated Eliyahu's suggestion with American officials.[43] Tasnim added that the United States has taken control of Israeli nuclear facilities.[44] These allegations are consistent with the long-running Iranian information campaign that claims the United States directs Israeli policy.[45] CTP-ISW previously assessed that Iran is attempting to portray the United States and Israel as the antagonists in the war and deflect responsibility for any further escalation of the conflict away from itself.[46]

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