Iran Update



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Information Cutoff: 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.

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi threatened senior Saudi officials, warning that the Axis of Resistance would attack Saudi energy assets and infrastructure if Saudi Arabia supports an Israeli attack on Iran, according to anonymous Iranian officials speaking to Reuters.[1] Araghchi traveled to Riyadh on October 9 to discuss the October 7 War with senior Saudi officials.[2] Araghchi said that Iran "sent a clear message" to Saudi Arabia that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias or the Houthis could "respond" if Saudi Arabia supports an Israeli attack.[3] Reuters separately reported that Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates have told the United States that they will deny Israel use of their respective airspaces to attack Iran, citing three unspecified Gulf sources. The sources added that the Gulf states are pushing the United States to prevent Israel from attacking Iranian energy assets or infrastructure because they fear that such an attack could trigger Iranian-backed attacks on them.[4] Araghchi traveled to Doha following his one-day visit to Riyadh and met with Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al

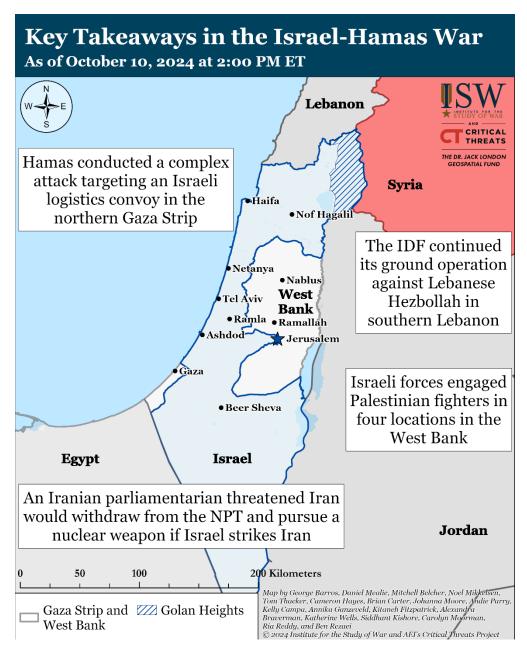
Iranian Parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Committee member Alaeddin Boroujerdi said on October 10 that Iran could withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in response to an Israeli strike on Iran. [6] Boroujerdi said that a withdrawal "could be necessary to defend [Iranian] interests." Boroujerdi suggested that Iran could then build a nuclear weapon in this scenario. Iran ratified the NPT, which prohibits nuclear weaponization, in 1970 and has repeatedly threatened to withdraw to impose pressure on the West. [7]

Lebanese Hezbollah has likely lost under five percent of its original fighting force over the past year. Western estimates of Hezbollah's fighting force range from 20,000 to 50,000 fighters.[8] Now-dead Hezbollah Secretary General Hassam Nasrallah claimed in 2021 that Hezbollah had 100,000 fighters, which was very likely an exaggeration.[9] CTP-ISW has tallied over 600 Hezbollah fighter and commander death announcements over the past year. [10] The majority of these fighters died from the IDF air campaign to degrade Hezbollah capabilities in Lebanon. Hezbollah had issued timely mourning posts of its fighters throughout the conflict until Israel began its intensive air campaign against the force in late September 2024.[11] Local sources have continued to announce fighter deaths even after Hezbollah stopped distributing notices.[12] The IDF spokesperson separately said on October 5 that Israeli forces have killed 440 Hezbollah operatives since beginning ground operations in southern Lebanon, bringing the Hezbollah death toll to around 1,100.[13] The IDF has killed additional fighters since October 5, though the number is unclear.[14] IDF operations, including the widespread September pager and radio attacks, have almost certainly seriously injured thousands of Hezbollah fighters and rendered them unable to fight, moreover.[15] While the IDF has significantly degraded Hezbollah leadership, Hezbollah still retains the bulk of its rank-and-file forces capable of conducting attacks into northern Israel and engaging Israeli forces in Lebanon.

Israeli journalists reported on October 10 that the IDF has taken control of some border areas in southeastern Lebanon.[16] Israeli journalists recently visited the IDF 91st Division in an unspecified village in southeastern Lebanon.[17] Israeli Army Radio reported that Israeli forces took control of Lebanese villages in the area "within a few days" and are now operating within the villages to clear them of Hezbollah military infrastructure.[18] Several journalists noted that the recent Israeli ground maneuvers have made travel on the Israel-Lebanon border easier and safer from Hezbollah attacks.[19] Journalists posted photos of Israeli tanks, bulldozers, Humvees, and other machinery in southern Lebanese villages.[20] Hezbollah fighters do not appear to be conducting significant resistance to Israeli forces in these villages, as the Israeli forces have consistently encountered weapons caches and infrastructure formerly used by Hezbollah fighters that "left the area."[21] Israeli Army Radio reported that Hezbollah fighters at one point tried to reach a warehouse that had been seized by Israeli forces and were killed.[22] An Israeli commander previously noted some Hezbollah militants have withdrawn deeper into Lebanon while others have fled from Israeli forces.[23]

Key Takeaways:

- Iran: Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi threatened senior Saudi officials, warning that the Axis of Resistance would attack Saudi energy assets and infrastructure if Saudi Arabia supports an Israeli attack on Iran, according to anonymous Iranian officials speaking to Reuters.
- **Iran:** Iranian Parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Committee member Alaeddin Boroujerdi said on October 10 that Iran could withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in response to an Israeli strike on Iran.
- **Lebanon:** Lebanese Hezbollah has likely lost under five percent of its original fighting force over the past year.
- **Lebanon:** Israeli journalists reported on October 10 that the IDF has taken control of some border areas in southeastern Lebanon.



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 resumed clearing operations in Jabalia on October 10. The IDF launched a new clearing operation into Jabalia refugee camp, Gaza City, on October 6 in order disrupt Hamas reconstitution efforts. [24] The IDF Arabic-language spokesperson said on October 9 that the IDF had "temporarily stopped work" but would "resume again soon" after issuing new evacuation orders for Jabalia refugee camp. [25] The IDF stated on October 10 that its 401st Brigade (162nd Division) completely encircled Jabaliya within "a few hours." [26] The IDF 162nd Division has engaged Palestinian fighters and directed airstrikes targeting militia munitions warehouses. Israeli forces have engaged "dozens" of Palestinian fighters in the past day and found small arms, ammunition, and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). [27]

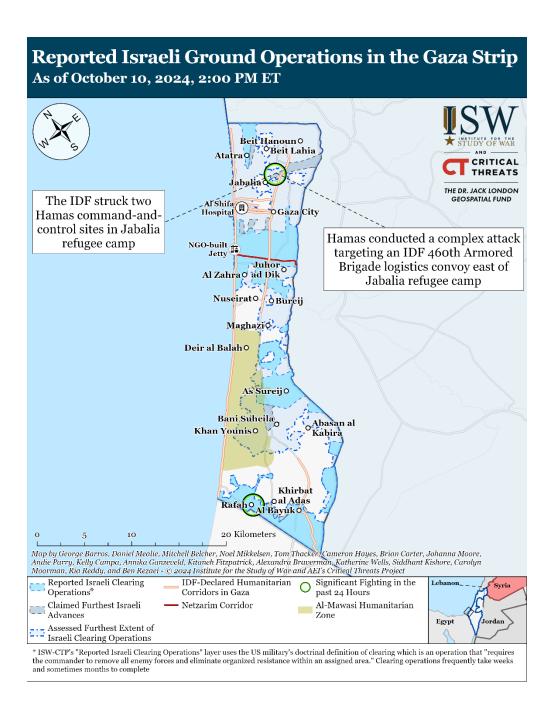
The IDF Air Force struck a Hamas command-and-control site previously used as a medical center in Jabaliya on October 10.[28] The IDF reported that at least 12 Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) commanders were killed in the strike.[29] The Gazan ambulance and emergency authority reported that six individuals were killed and 15 were injured in the Israeli strike.[30] The IDF conducted a second strike targeting a separate command-and-control site in a school that was converted into a shelter for displaced persons.[31] The Hamas-run Gazan Health Ministry reported that the Israeli airstrike killed 28 individuals and wounded 54 others.[32] The Palestinian Red Crescent's Disaster Risk Management Coordinator stated that approximately 3,000 displaced people were sheltering at the school complex the time of the airstrike.[33] at

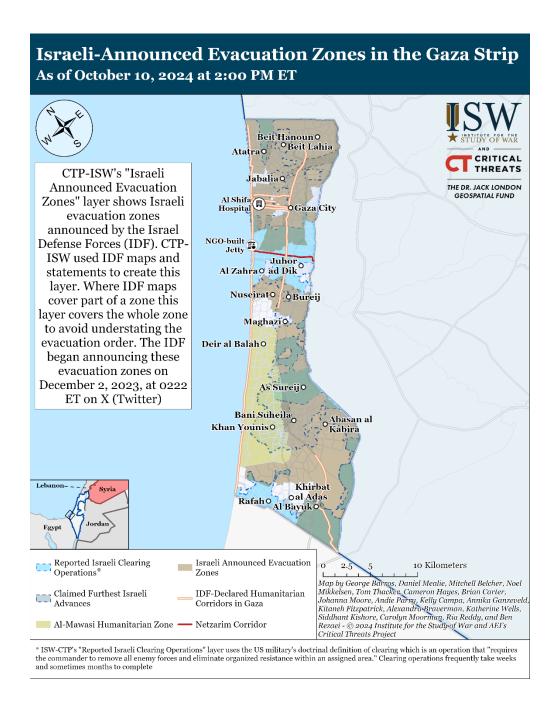
The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the National Resistance Brigades launched mortar attacks targeting Israeli forces in Jabalia refugee camp.[34] Hamas fired tandem-charge RPGs at two Israeli tanks east of Jabalia camp and detonated an explosively formed penetrator (EFP) targeting an Israeli rapid response force.[35] PIJ fired anti-tank munitions and engaged Israeli forces near the Riyad Salihin Mosque in central Jabalia refugee camp.[36]

Hamas conducted a complex attack on October 10 targeting a logistics convoy from the 460th Armored Brigade east of Jabalia refugee camp.[37] Hamas stated that it detonated an EFP targeting a truck carrying Israeli soldiers and launched anti-tank weapons at two other vehicles in the convoy.[38] Hamas fighters then converged on the vehicles firing small arms targeting the Israeli forces in the convoy. Hamas claimed that it killed and wounded Israeli soldiers in the attack. The IDF confirmed that three Israeli soldiers died in the Hamas attack.[39]

The IDF 252nd Division continued clearing operations in unspecified areas of the central Gaza Strip on October 10.[40] Israeli forces engaged Palestinian fighters, located weapons, and destroyed militia infrastructure.

The Nahal Brigade (162nd Division) continued clearing operations in Rafah on October 10. The IDF reported that Israeli forces have destroyed rocket launchers, weapons, and underground tunnel shafts over the past day.[41] The IDF reported that the Nahal Brigade recently raided and destroyed a Hamas training complex.[42] Israeli forces also discovered an underground complex with shafts and a dummy IDF tank for training exercises.[43]





The IDF intercepted a one-way attack drone on October 10 that crossed from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory.[44]

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 four locations in the West Bank since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on October 9.[45] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades fired small arms and detonated IEDs targeting Israeli forces in Nablus, Tubas, and Tulkarm.[46] PIJ detonated IEDs targeting Israeli forces in Nour Shams refugee camp, Tulkarm, and Ababta.[47] PIJ

also fired small arms targeting Israeli forces in Tulkarm.[48] PIJ claimed its fired a sniper at multiple Israeli snipers in a house in Nour Shams refugee camp.[49]



Northern Israel and Lebanon

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

The IDF 98th Division continued clearing operations in several unspecified villages in southeastern Lebanon on October 10. Hezbollah conducted rocket attacks targeting Israeli forces

advancing west of Manara and near Mays al Jabal. [50] Hezbollah-affiliated sources reported several engagements between Hezbollah and Israeli soldiers between Mays al Jabal and Mhaibib. [51]

The IDF 36th Division continued clearing Hezbollah infrastructure in southeastern Lebanon. Geolocated footage showed the 36th Division demolishing Hezbollah infrastructure south of Aitaroun on October 9.[52] Hezbollah fired rockets targeting Israeli forces in Yaroun.[53] Israeli Army Radio reported that the IDF Golani Brigade finished its first mission in southern Lebanon and is "preparing for the next battle." [54] The Golani Brigade has operated in southeastern Lebanon since October 3, and Israeli forces have engaged Hezbollah fighters and located weapons and underground infrastructure, including a tunnel shaft leading to an underground route.[55] The underground route was later destroyed.[56] The IDF said on October 9 that the Golani Brigade had pushed Hezbollah Radwan special operations forces from northern Israeli away towns.[57]

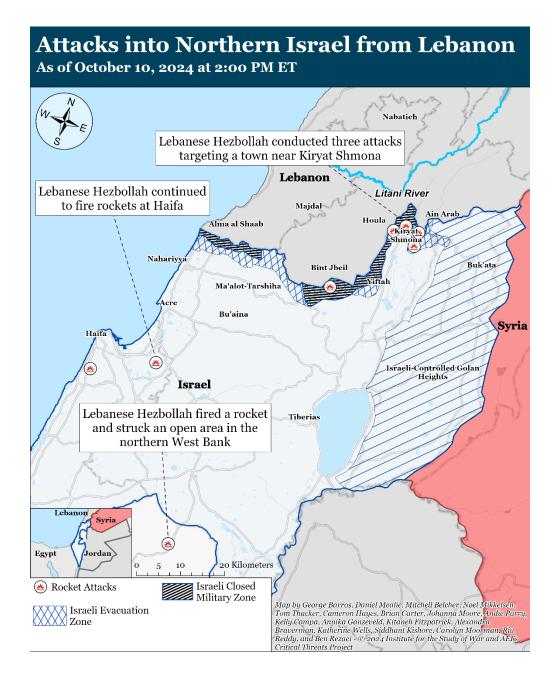
The IDF 91st Division conducted clearing operations in several areas of southern Lebanon. The 3rd Alexandroni (Res.) Brigade located hundreds of weapons, including grenades, explosives, Kalashnikov rifles, in addition to over 800 military vests. [58] The 8th Armored (Res.) Brigade located numerous weapons in civilian structures, including long-range Kornet anti-tank guided missile launch sites with dozens of munitions aimed at northern Israel. [59] The 91st Division began operations in southern Lebanon with three reserve brigades on October 7. [60]

The IDF engaged Hezbollah forces in southwestern Lebanon on October 10. Hezbollah affiliated sources reported several engagements between Hezbollah fighters and advancing IDF infantry and tanks near Ras al Naqoura. [61] Hezbollah fired anti-tank guided missiles targeting an Israeli tank and then fired four successive barrages of rockets targeting Israeli rescue forces as they attempted to recover casualties from the damaged vehicle. [62] The IDF 146th Division began operating in southwest Lebanon on October 8. [63]

UNIFIL said that Israeli forces fired on two UNIFIL positions in southwestern Lebanon and injured two UN peacekeepers on October 10. UNIFIL said that an Israeli tank fired at an observation tower at UNIFIL's Naqoura headquarters, damaging the tower and causing it to collapse. [64] Two UN peacekeepers from Indonesia were injured. [65] UNIFIL said that IDF soldiers also fired at the entrance to UNP 1-31's bunker, where peacekeepers were sheltering. [66] The attack damaged vehicles and communications system. UNIFIL reported that it observed an IDF drone flying "inside the UN position up to the bunker entrance." An unspecified UN spokesperson told Israeli media that UNIFIL recently rejected an Israeli request to evacuate UN outposts along the border. [67] UNIFIL maintains a presence along the Blue Line under UNSC 1701 to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in establishing an area "free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons" between the Israel-Lebanon border and the Litani River. [68]

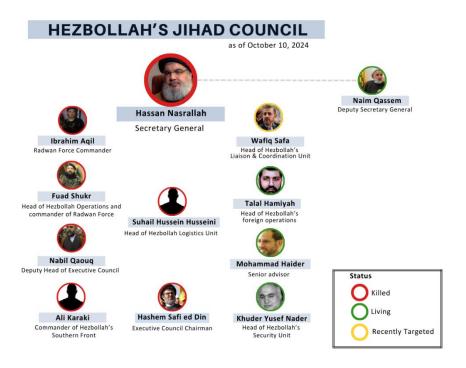


Hezbollah has conducted at least 12 attacks into northern and central Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on October 9.[69] Hezbollah fired a rocket barrage at Haifa.[70] Hezbollah also launched over 40 rockets targeting Kiryat Shmona, some of which impacted a house in the town.[71] Two Israeli civilians were slightly injured by the impacts.[72] Hezbollah continued to attack Israeli soldiers concentrated along the Israel-Lebanon border. Hezbollah fired rockets targeting Israeli troops in Kfar Giladi three times.[73] A Hezbollah rocket impacted near Jenin in the West Bank as well.[74]

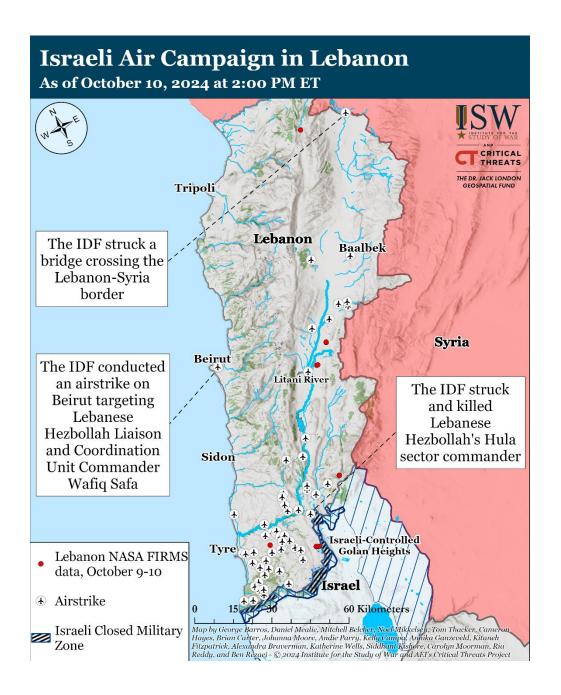


The IDF continued its air campaign targeting Hezbollah capabilities, leadership, and infrastructure in Lebanon. The IDF targeted Hezbollah Liaison and Coordination Unit head Wafiq Safa in central Beirut on October 10.[75] The IDF has not yet determined Safa's fate, but multiple security sources told Reuters that he survived.[76] Safa is a member of the Hezbollah Jihad Council, which oversees the group's military activity and operations.[77] Safa is one of the few surviving Jihad Council members. The IDF struck multiple tactical-level Hezbollah commanders in southern Lebanon on October 10.[78] The IDF Air Force killed the commander of the Hula sector, Ahmad Mustafa al Haj Ali. Ali organized hundreds of rocket attacks at the Kiryat Shmona area.[79] The IDF also killed the commander of the anti-tank system in Mays al Jabal in a separate strike.[80] The IDF Air Force struck over 110 Hezbollah targets in Lebanon to support ground forces over the past day.[81] The IDF struck Hezbollah weapons depots in Beirut and southern Lebanon.[82] A Syrian source reported that the IDF

struck a bridge crossing the Lebanon-Syria in northeast Lebanon that Hezbollah uses to smuggle weapons.[83]



This image depicts some of the damage recently done to Hezbollah's senior ranks. This chart is incomplete and not exhaustive, however. CTP-ISW will build upon this dataset in the coming days and weeks. Sources are available upon request.



This map illustrates individual Israeli air and artillery strikes based on local Lebanese reporting. This map depicts strikes reported from 2:00pm ET on October 9 to 2:00pm ET on October 10. This map is not exhaustive. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify the locations of Israeli strikes.

<u>Iran</u> and the Axis of Resistance

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—has claimed four attacks targeting Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on October 9. The claims include the following:

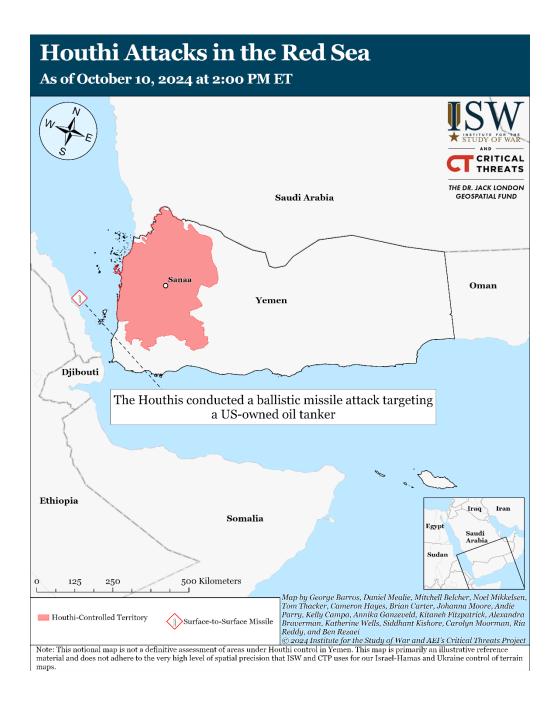
A drone attack targeting an unspecified "vital target" in the Golan Heights [84]

- Two drone attacks targeting unspecified "vital target[s]" in northern Israel[85]
- A drone attack targeting an unspecified "vital target" in Eilat[86]

The IDF Air Force intercepted a drone over the Red Sea that was launched from Iraq and en route to Eilat.[87]

The IDF reportedly continued to strike Axis of Resistance logistical networks in western Syria on October 9. The Syrian Defense Ministry stated that Israeli airstrikes targeted an unspecified military site in Hama Province and an industrial site in Hasiya Industrial City south of Homs.[88] Syrian state media and local sources reported the strike on Hasiya targeted an Iranian car assembly plant, while opposition sources claimed that the site was an ammunition depot.[89] The IDF last targeted Hasiya Industrial City on October 6.[90]

The Houthis have continued attacking commercial vessels. Houthis spokesperson Yahya Sarea claimed that the Houthis launched 11 ballistic missiles and two drones at Liberian-flagged, US-owned oil tanker *Olympic Spirit* on October 10.[91] Sarea also claimed the Houthis attacked another merchant vessel, *St John*, in the Indian Ocean.[92] The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) confirmed the attack on *Olympic Spirit*, reporting that a projectile hit the ship and that 3 more projectiles exploded nearby.[93] UKMTO added that *Olympic Spirit* sustained damage.



IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami during a televised interview on October 10 said that the United States would require a substantial force presence in the Middle East to wage war against Iran.[94] Salami added that such a presence would place US service members within the range of Iranian strike capabilities, exposing them to significant risk. Salami also boasted that Iran has demonstrated its capability to strike all US interests and military positions in the Middle East simultaneously and threatened that the United States could sustain a high rate of daily military casualties.[95]

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf traveled to Tajikistan for an official visit and met with Tajikistani National Assembly Chairman Rustam Emomali on

October 10.[96] Ghalibaf highlighted the nearly threefold increase in bilateral economic interactions in recent years and expressed hope for further cooperation in various sectors, including culture, security, and technology.[97] Ghalibaf also emphasized the importance of improving transportation ties with Tajikistan and appreciated the Tajikistani support for Iranian control of the islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb in the Persian Gulf.[98]

The Iranian Artesh continued combined joint military exercises with the Omani military.

The Artesh Navy and Omani Navy conducted a maritime search and rescue exercise with the support of the Omani Air Force and Maritime Security Center in Omani territorial waters on October 10.[99] An Iranian Artesh Ground Forces delegation headed by Artesh Ground Forces Commander Brigadier General Kiomars Heydari traveled to Muscat on October 10 to attend the closing ceremony of the first combined ground exercise between Iran and Oman.[100] The "Mountain Falcons 1" exercise began on September 30 in Jebel al Khader Province, Oman, and included counterterrorism drills with the support of the Royal Omani police.[101]



[1] https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/stop-israel-bombing-irans-oil-sites-gulf-states-urge-us-2024-10-10/

[2] https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-9-2024

[3] https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/stop-israel-bombing-irans-oil-sites-gulf-states-urge-us-2024-10-10/

[4] https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/stop-israel-bombing-irans-oil-sites-gulf-states-urge-us-2024-10-10/

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[7] https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2020/jan/22/iran-and-npt
https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/smoldering-iran-nuclear-crisis-risks-catching-fire-2023-05-05/

[8] https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10703; https://news.sky.com/story/what-is-hezbollah-how-powerful-is-its-military-and-will-it-play-a-role-in-war-breaking-out-in-the-middle-east-12999375

[9] <u>https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-lebanon-beirut-civil-wars-hassan-nasrallah-a3c10d99cca2ef1c3d58dae135297025</u>;

[10] Data available upon request.

[11] https://isw.pub/IranUpdate092224; <a href="https:/

[12] https://x.com/QalaatM/status/1843591707222298894

[13] https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1842619513008976329

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[15] https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-september-17-2024 https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-september-18-2024;

[16] www dot jpost.com/israel-news/article-824138; https://t.me/moriahdoron/15342; www dot timesofisrael.com/finally-on-the-offensive-idfs-91st-division-slices-through-hezbollahs-front-lines

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