



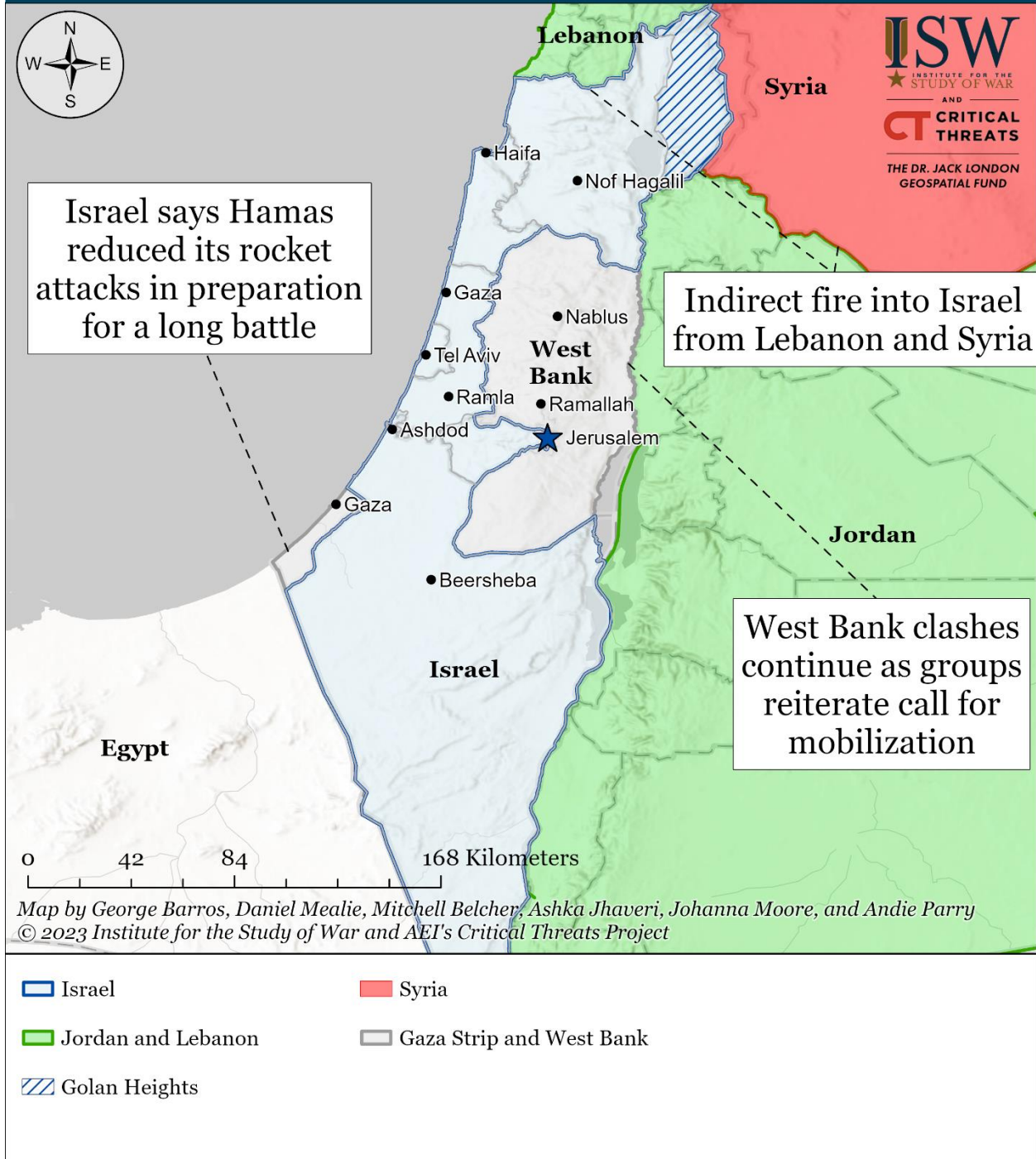
Iran Update, October 12, 2023

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Information Cutoff: 3:00 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 war in Israel. 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.

War in Israel as of October 12, 3:00 PM ET



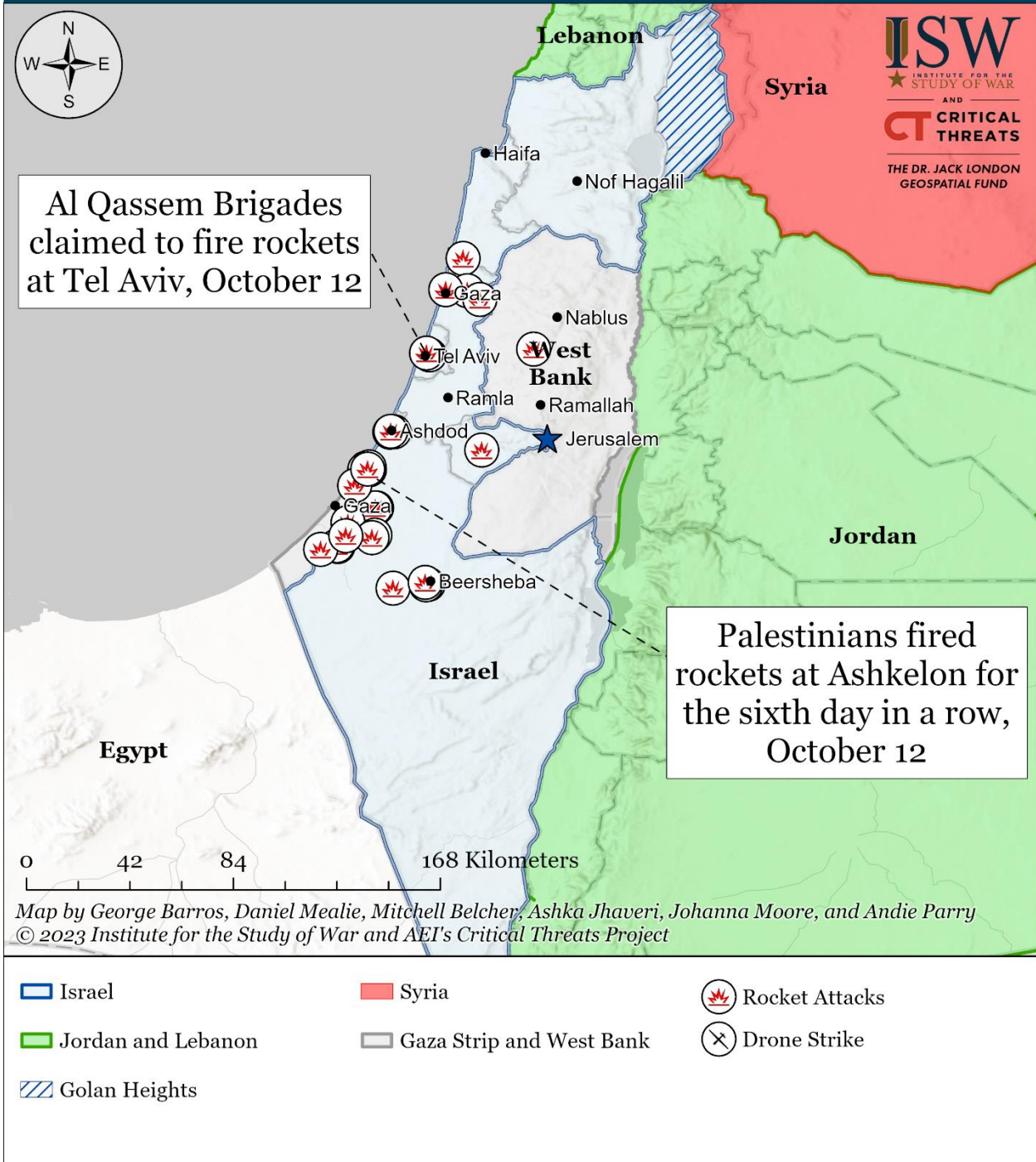
Key Takeaways:

1. Hamas continued rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel but reduced the rate of these attacks.

2. Small arms clashes between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces increased slightly across the West Bank, as Palestinian militias try to stoke conflict there.
3. CTP-ISW recorded three rocket strikes into Israeli territory from Lebanon.
4. Unidentified Iranian officials implicitly threatened to direct proxy attacks against US forces in Iraq and Syria if the United States re-freezes Iranian financial assets abroad.
5. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian is conducting a diplomatic tour to Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria, possibly to coordinate politically with senior leaders in the Axis of Resistance.
6. Iran is conducting a diplomatic campaign to unite Muslim countries against Israel.

Gaza Strip

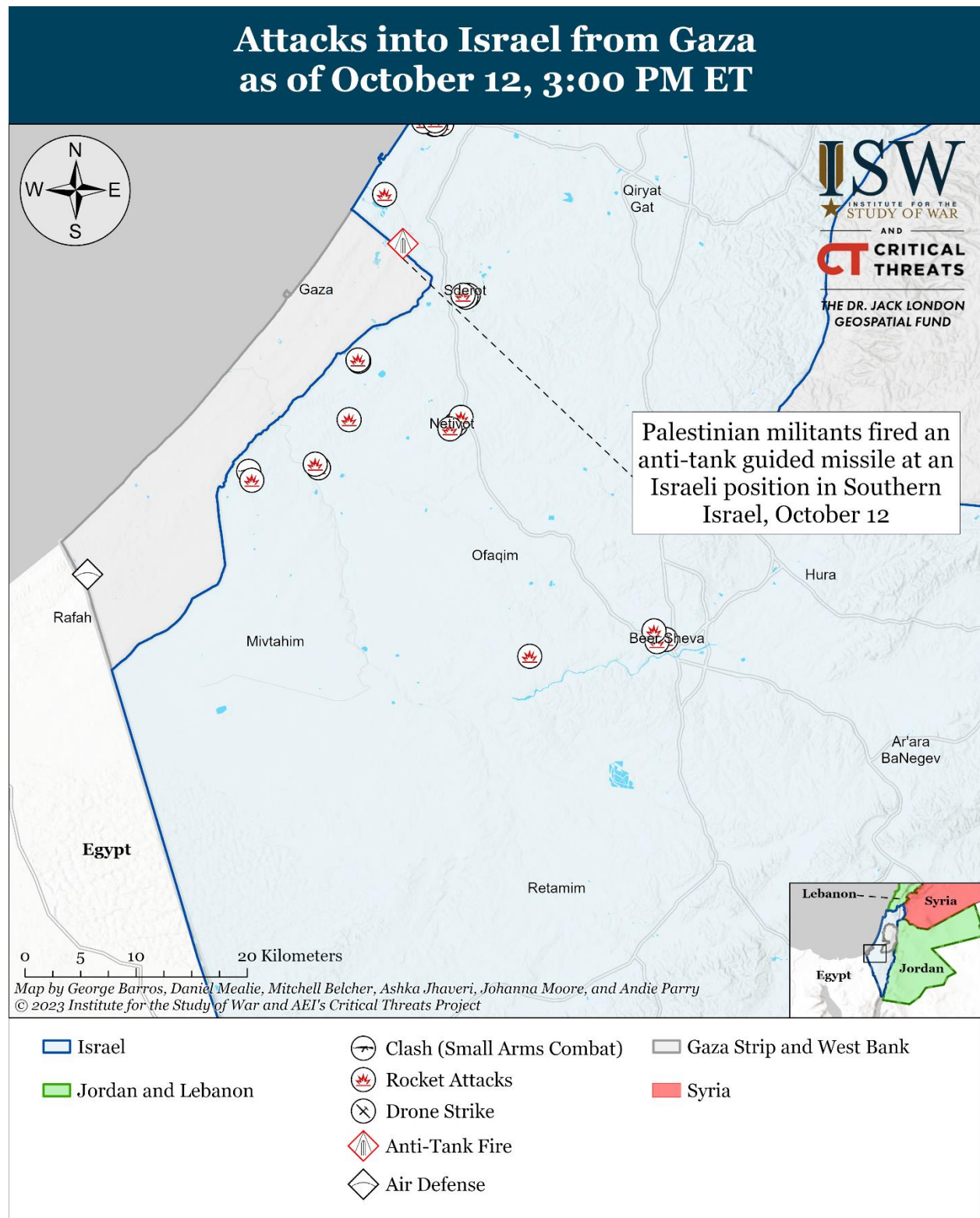
Indirect Fire Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of October 12, 3:00 PM ET



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

Hamas continued rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel but reduced the rate of these attacks on October 13.¹ An IDF commander stated that Hamas is trying to conserve its rocket stockpile

and prepare for a prolonged war.² Israel estimates that Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) have expended around 33 percent of their rocket arsenal since the war began on October 7.³



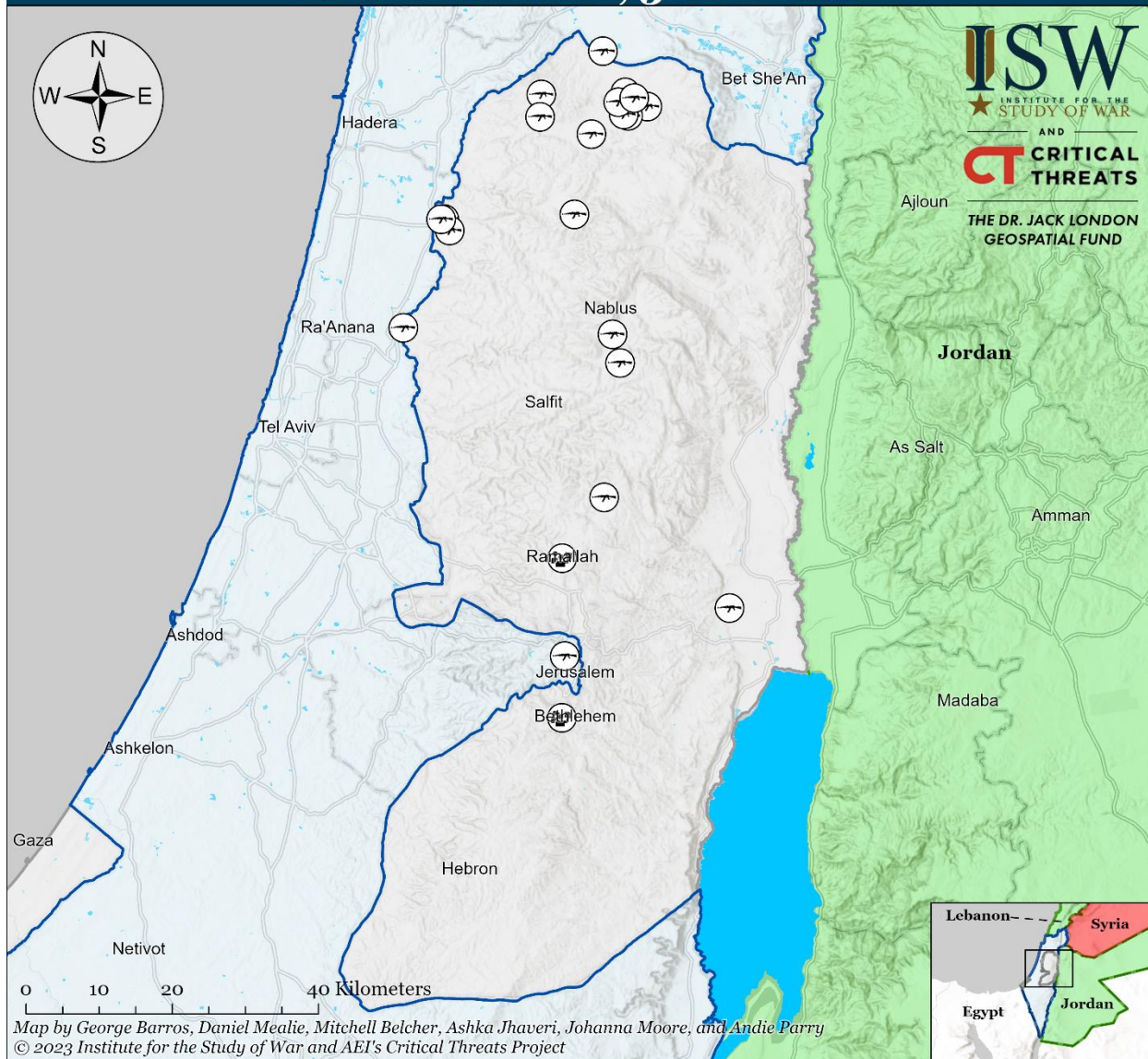
Recorded reports of rocket fire; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Hamas appeared to reduce the rate of its infiltrations into Israeli territory as well. CTP-ISW recorded one small arms clash between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces along the border of the Gaza Strip on October 12—a decrease from the six clashes that ISW recorded across October 10 and 11.⁴

Hamas spokesperson Abu Ubaida released a video statement on October 12 describing the planning and objectives of the al Aqsa Flood operation.⁵ Ubaida claimed that Hamas began planning the operation in 2022 and conducted extensive analysis of Israeli forces and the terrain throughout the planning process. IRGC-affiliated *Tasnim News Agency* recirculated reporting that the Palestinian resistance has prepared itself for a long-term battle, including offensive operations in Israeli territory.⁶ Ubaida stated that the objective of the operation was to destroy the IDF Gaza Division and facilitate further attacks into southern Israel.⁷ Hamas' militant wing has continued attacks on Israeli territory as far north as the Haifa District and has called on Palestinian militants in the West Bank to mobilize.

West Bank

West Bank Clashes Continue as Hamas, Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, and PIJ Call to Mobilize as of October 12, 3:00 PM ET



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

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

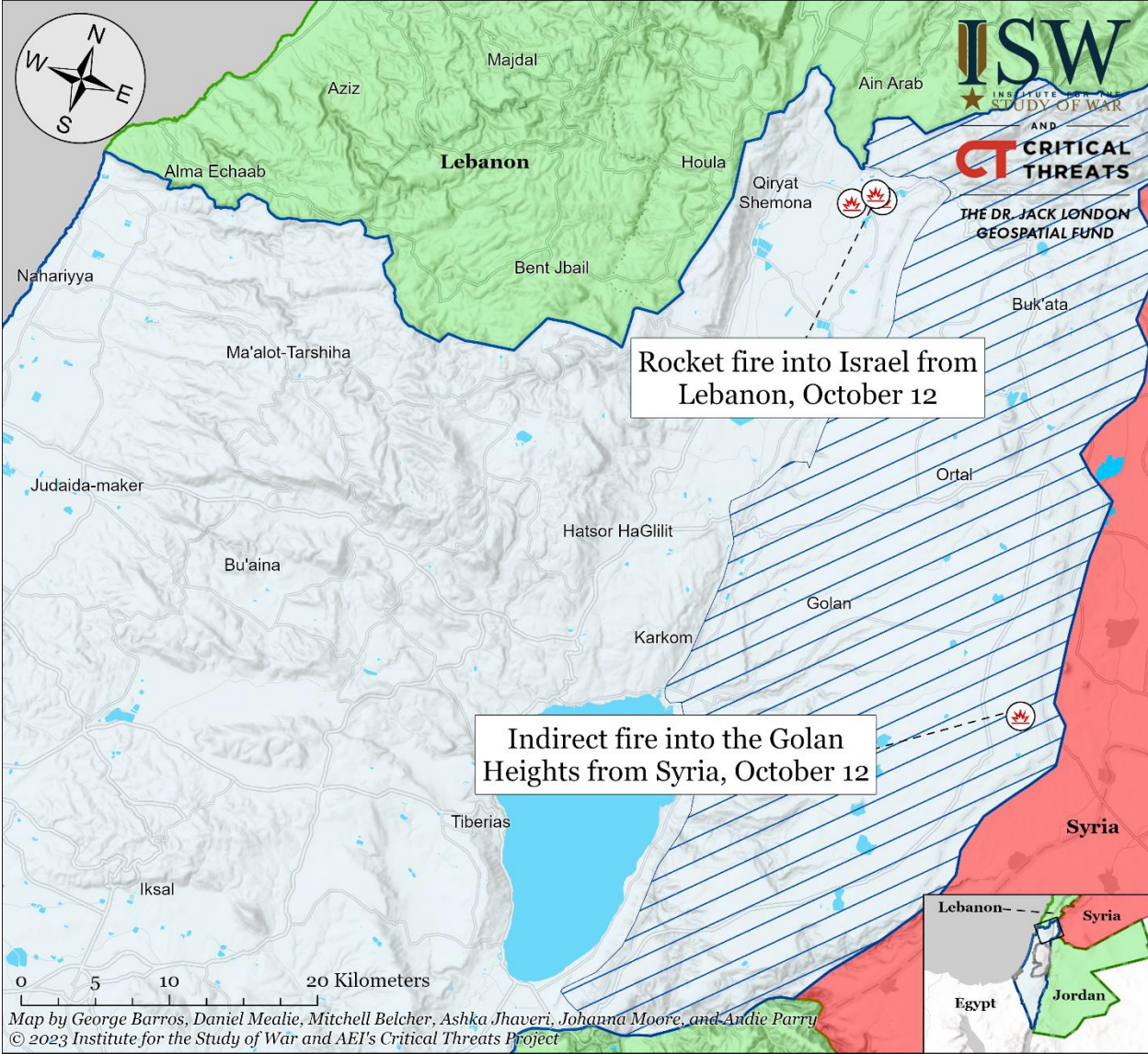
Small arms clashes between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces increased slightly across the West Bank on October 12, as Palestinian militias try to stoke conflict there.⁸ Clashes occurred in around 21

locations.⁹ Leaders from Hamas, PIJ, and the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade separately issued calls on October 11 and 12 urging individuals in the West Bank to mobilize and join the fight against Israel, highlighting their desire to expand the war geographically to the West Bank.¹⁰ PIJ spokesperson Abu Hamza boasted that the West Bank has entered the fight and called for militants to increase the rate of attacks against Israeli forces.¹¹ Iranian state media recirculated these calls and celebrated the ongoing clashes.¹²

Hamas has called for a surge in anti-Israel activity on Friday, October 13, which risks driving further clashes.¹³ The West Bank-based Lions' Den militia previously succeeded in mobilizing supporters to hold marchers and clash with Israeli forces on October 11, as CTP-ISW previously reported, suggesting that Hamas may see similar success.¹⁴ It is furthermore common for public participation in marches and protests in the Middle East to increase on Fridays, as such activities often follow Friday prayers.

South Lebanon and the Golan Heights

Attacks into Israel from Lebanon and Syria as of October 12, 3:00 PM ET



- Israel
- Golan Heights
- 🔥 Rocket Attacks
- Jordan and Lebanon
- Syria

* Israeli authorities issued warnings about attempted infiltrations of Israel to the towns of Admit, Elion, Aramsha, and Hanita on October 9.

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

CTP-ISW recorded three rocket strikes into Israeli territory from Lebanon on October 12.¹⁵ This level of rocket fire is consistent with previous days' levels of kinetic activity around Israel's northern border.¹⁶

The IDF conducted airstrikes on the Damascus and Aleppo international airports on October 12, disrupting critical nodes through which Iran funnels military equipment and personnel into the Levant.¹⁷

The IDF struck the airport runways. The Syrian Arab Army conducted a mortar strike into the Golan Heights after the attacks, possibly as symbolic retaliation.¹⁸ The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has long used commercial airliners affiliated with the Iranian regime for military transports to Syria throughout the civil war there.¹⁹

A Mahan Air flight was en route from Tehran to Damascus around the time of the IDF airstrikes and then changed course back to Iran.²⁰ The United States has sanctioned Mahan Air for transporting military personnel and materiel on behalf of the IRGC Quds Force to Syria to support the Iranians' efforts to defend the Bashar al Assad regime and entrench the Iranian military influence around the Levant.²¹

Iran and the Axis of Resistance

Unidentified Iranian officials implicitly threatened to direct proxy attacks against US forces in Iraq and Syria if the United States re-freezes Iranian financial assets abroad. These Iranian officials told UK-based *Amwaj Media* that the August 2023 prisoner swap deal between the United States and Iran involved a broader understanding in which Iran would pause proxy attacks against US positions in exchange for the United States allowing the release of \$6 billion worth of frozen Iranian financial assets in South Korean banks.²² Western media reported similar details on this broader understanding at the time.²³ South Korea has gradually transferred that money to Qatari banks for Iran to access since the agreement was reached. Western media has reported that the United States and Qatar have reached an agreement to refreeze the Iranian financial assets in response to the Hamas ground and air attack into Israel.²⁴ CTP-ISW is updating its chart on Axis of Resistance red lines based on these reports.

Axis of Resistance Red Lines

Members of Iran’s Axis of Resistance have articulated their thresholds for intervening in support of Hamas’ war in Israel



■ New Threat as of October 12

Actor	Threat	Stated Red Line
Iran	Conduct missile attacks into Israel from Iran, Lebanon, and Yemen and send fighters from Syria into Israel	Israel attacks Iran
	Direct its proxies to attack US positions in Iraq and Syria	United States refreezes \$6 billion to Iran
Lebanese Hezbollah	Enter the war	Israel conducts a ground operation into Gaza
Badr Organization	Attack US military positions	The United States intervenes in the war
Kataib Hezbollah	Attack US military positions	The United States intervenes in the war
Kataib Seyyed ol Shohada	Intervene in the war	The United States intervenes in the war
Houthi Movement	Conduct drone and missile strikes	The United States intervenes in the war

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian is conducting a diplomatic tour to Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria, possibly to coordinate politically with senior leaders in the Axis of Resistance. Abdollahian traveled to Baghdad and met with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani and National Security Adviser Qassem al Araji on October 12.²⁵ Abdollahian stated that Israel cannot commit “war crimes” against Gaza civilians “without expecting a response” during his meeting with Araji.²⁶ Abdollahian additionally commented on the possibility of the opening of a new front against Israel during his meeting with Sudani, stating that “everything depends on [Israeli] actions in Gaza.”²⁷ Abdollahian will travel to Beirut and Damascus in the coming days. Abdollahian recently met with Syrian President Bashar al Assad in Damascus on August 31.²⁸ Abdollahian also met with Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) Secretary General Ziyad al Nakhalah, and Hamas Political Bureau Deputy Chairman Saleh al Arouri in Beirut on September 1.²⁹ Supreme Leader International Affairs Adviser Ali Akbar Velayati additionally held separate phone calls with Haniyeh and Nakhalah on October 11.³⁰ Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei commonly uses Velayati as his personal envoy abroad and especially to members of the Axis of Resistance and Palestinian groups.³¹

Iran is conducting a diplomatic campaign to unite Muslim countries against Israel. Senior Iranian officials conducted a flurry of phone calls to foreign leaders on October 11 and 12 to discuss the war in Israel. President Ebrahim Raisi held separate phone calls with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman and

Syrian President Bashar al Assad.³² The call with Mohammad bin Salman is particularly noteworthy given that it is the first call between them since Iran and Saudi Arabia normalized ties in March 2023. Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has held phone calls with his Emirati, Egyptian, Filipino, Hungarian, Iraqi, Omani, Qatari, Russian, and Turkish counterparts since October 7.³³ Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has held phone calls with his counterparts in Algeria, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Syria, Turkey, and the UAE.³⁴ Tehran has historically sought to rally Muslim countries against Israel and frame itself as a champion of the Palestinian cause. Iran conducted a similar diplomatic campaign to this end when tensions rose between Israel and the Palestinian militias in April 2023, which CTP previously reported.³⁵

¹ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-slow-rate-of-rocket-fire-suggests-hamas-readying-for-long-war

² https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/34752; <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1712354608717115418>

³ https://twitter.com/IsraelRadar_com/status/1712377982562562481

⁴ <https://twitter.com/IsraelReliefAid/status/1712534961075662993>;

<https://twitter.com/sentdefender/status/1712099042384044251>;

<https://twitter.com/JoeTruzman/status/1712113917332537610>; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/34568;

https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/34574; https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/34568;

https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/34626

⁵ https://t.me/spokesman_2020/47

⁶ <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/19/2969811>

⁷ <https://telegram.me/s/hamasps>

⁸ <https://t.me/Tura313/45338> ; <https://hamasdotps/ar/p/18260>

⁹ Data available upon request.

¹⁰ <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/20/2970393> ; <https://t.me/Tura313/45338> ; <https://hamasdotps/ar/p/18260>

¹¹ <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2023/10/12/2970690/islamic-jihad-says-resistance-operation-against-israel-could-expand-beyond-gaza>; <https://t.me/almanarnews/129983> www.presstv.com [dot](https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2023/10/12/712566/Palestine-Israel-Spokesman-al-Quds-Brigades-armed-wing-Islamic-Jihad-resistance--Abu-Hamza-Operation-al-Aqsa-Storm-Lebanon)

[ir/Detail/2023/10/12/712566/Palestine-Israel-Spokesman-al-Quds-Brigades-armed-wing-Islamic-Jihad-resistance--Abu-Hamza-Operation-al-Aqsa-Storm-Lebanon](https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2023/10/12/712566/Palestine-Israel-Spokesman-al-Quds-Brigades-armed-wing-Islamic-Jihad-resistance--Abu-Hamza-Operation-al-Aqsa-Storm-Lebanon)

¹² <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/20/2970393/%D8%B3%D8%AE%D9%86%DA%AF%D9%88%DB%8C-%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C-%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AF%D8%B3-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%86%D9%87-%D8%A2%D8%AA%D8%B4-%DA%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%AA%D8%B1-%D9%85%DB%8C-%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%AF-%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%B2%D9%88%D8%AF%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D9%85%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%AF%DB%8C%D9%86-%D8%AF%DB%8C%DA%AF%D8%B1-%DA%A9%D8%B4%DB%8C%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%AF-%D8%B4%D8%AF> ; <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/20/2970398/%DA%A9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%BA%D8%B2%D9%87-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D9%BE%D8%A7-%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D8%B1%D9%88%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%88%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%DB%8C%D9%86%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B5%D9%87%DB%8C%D9%88%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%B3%D8%AA>

¹³ https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/34461 ; <https://t.me/hamasps/16601> ; <https://t.me/hamasps/16608> ; <https://hamasdotps/ar/p/18260>

¹⁴ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-october-11-2023>

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1712470506451112030> ;
<https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1712470506451112030> ;
<https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1712470506451112030>

¹⁶ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-october-11-2023>

¹⁷
[https://www.facebook.com/mod.gov.sy/posts/pfbid0WpU9dTfBpMVHbobWo4kwZEiVYx38qeFf6cu21G3Yx2YHw8VyevJ2JSedXEuU2AMkl?__cft__\[0\]=AZWQwikVfM6OPqazHUofkTgyF-pn_7SFfBGc0EET39_LwBiZKkeEMLE2BJU_HrUDXQcqf6dk-T_tYjMksTordv9kLBxPJcptR7bAxTEPwBiLNuhgFSypexcFvX3KYf5t-_galCvXHvKeVb9UmukPPIvQrnWMtXVI2DEcRW9iw4Otkz2-NWtdNqJ5ROdf8VJsr4&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R](https://www.facebook.com/mod.gov.sy/posts/pfbid0WpU9dTfBpMVHbobWo4kwZEiVYx38qeFf6cu21G3Yx2YHw8VyevJ2JSedXEuU2AMkl?__cft__[0]=AZWQwikVfM6OPqazHUofkTgyF-pn_7SFfBGc0EET39_LwBiZKkeEMLE2BJU_HrUDXQcqf6dk-T_tYjMksTordv9kLBxPJcptR7bAxTEPwBiLNuhgFSypexcFvX3KYf5t-_galCvXHvKeVb9UmukPPIvQrnWMtXVI2DEcRW9iw4Otkz2-NWtdNqJ5ROdf8VJsr4&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R) ;
https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/34798 ; <https://t.me/maymun5/52141> ;
<https://twitter.com/AuroraIntel/status/1712523324922667203>

¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/rien4djri/status/1712470496124797348> ;
<https://twitter.com/nourabohsn/status/1712511236187857080>

¹⁹ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/irans-airbridge-to-syria>

²⁰ <https://twitter.com/AuroraIntel/status/1712427349147312129>

²¹ <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1098#:~:text=On%20July%2023%2C%202019%2C%20OFAC,Iranian%20regime's%20support%20to%20proxy>

²² <https://amwaj dot media/article/inside-story-will-biden-join-trump-in-renegeing-on-us-deals-with-iran>

²³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/14/us/politics/biden-iran-nuclear-program.html> ;
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-launches-quiet-diplomatic-push-with-iran-to-cool-tensions-2f45af3> ;
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-slows-buildup-of-near-weapons-grade-enriched-uranium-492df473> ;
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/10/us/politics/iran-us-prisoners-nuclear-program.html>

²⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2023/10/12/iran-oil-fund-us-israel/> ;
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/mollybohannon/2023/10/12/iran-barred-from-accessing-6-billion-released-by-us-for-humanitarian-aid-report-says/?sh=63358e972cd4>

²⁵ <https://www.irna dot ir/news/85256316> ;
<https://www.irna dot ir/news/85256451> ;
<https://www.irna dot ir/news/85256416>

²⁶ <https://www.mashreghnews dot ir/news/1535405>

²⁷ <https://www.eghtesadnews dot com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%DB%8C-57/603624-%D9%87%D8%B4%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C%D8%B1%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87%DB%8C%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A2%D9%88%DB%8C%D9%88-%D9%87%D9%85%D9%87-%DA%86%DB%8C%D8%B2-%D8%A8%D8%B3%D8%AA%DA%AF%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%DB%8C%D9%84-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%BA%D8%B2%D9%87-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AF>

²⁸ <https://www.almanar dot com.lb/10909692>

²⁹ <https://www.almanar dot com.lb/10913597> ;
<https://www.almanar dot com.lb/10912673>

³⁰ <https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1402/07/19/2970346>

³¹ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-february-27-2023>

³² <https://president dot ir/fa/147086> ;
<https://president dot ir/fa/147088>

³³ <https://www.mehrnews dot com/news/5906400> ;
<https://www.dailysabah dot com/politics/diplomacy/fm-fidan-discusses-israel-palestine-tensions-with-counterparts> ;
<https://www.farsnews dot ir/en/news/14020717000297> ;
<https://www.irna dot ir/news/85253127> ;

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/17/2969142> ;

<https://en.isna.ir/news/1402071912863> ;

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/18/2969785> ;

<https://mfa.ir/portal/newsview/731261>

<https://mfa.ir/portal/newsview/731320>

³⁴ <https://www.irna.ir/news/85256286>

³⁵ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-april-7-2023>