

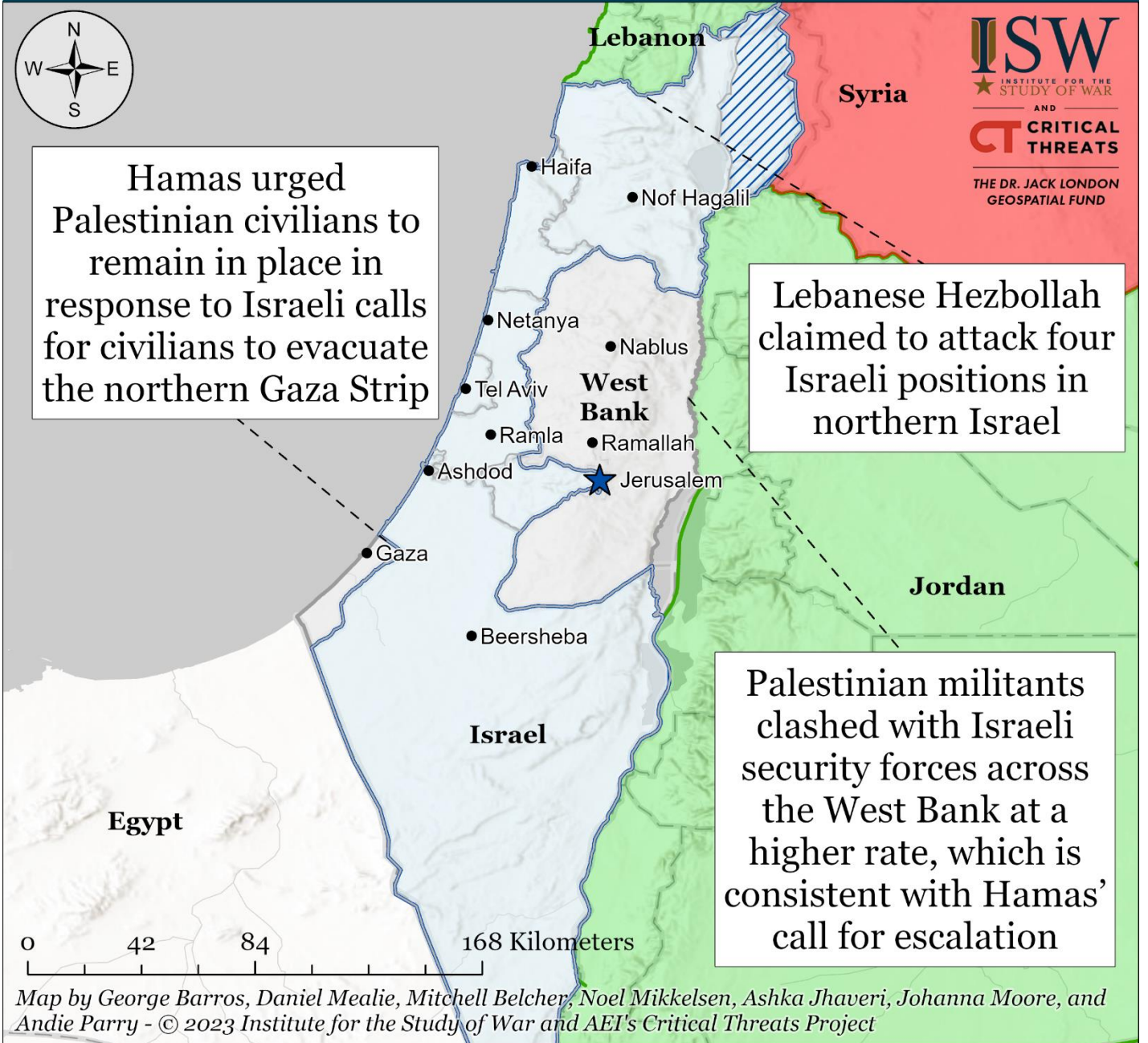
Iran Update, October 13, 2023

Ashka Jhaveri, Amin Soltani, and Nicholas Carl

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 and 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, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Israel-Hamas War as of October 13, 3:00 PM ET



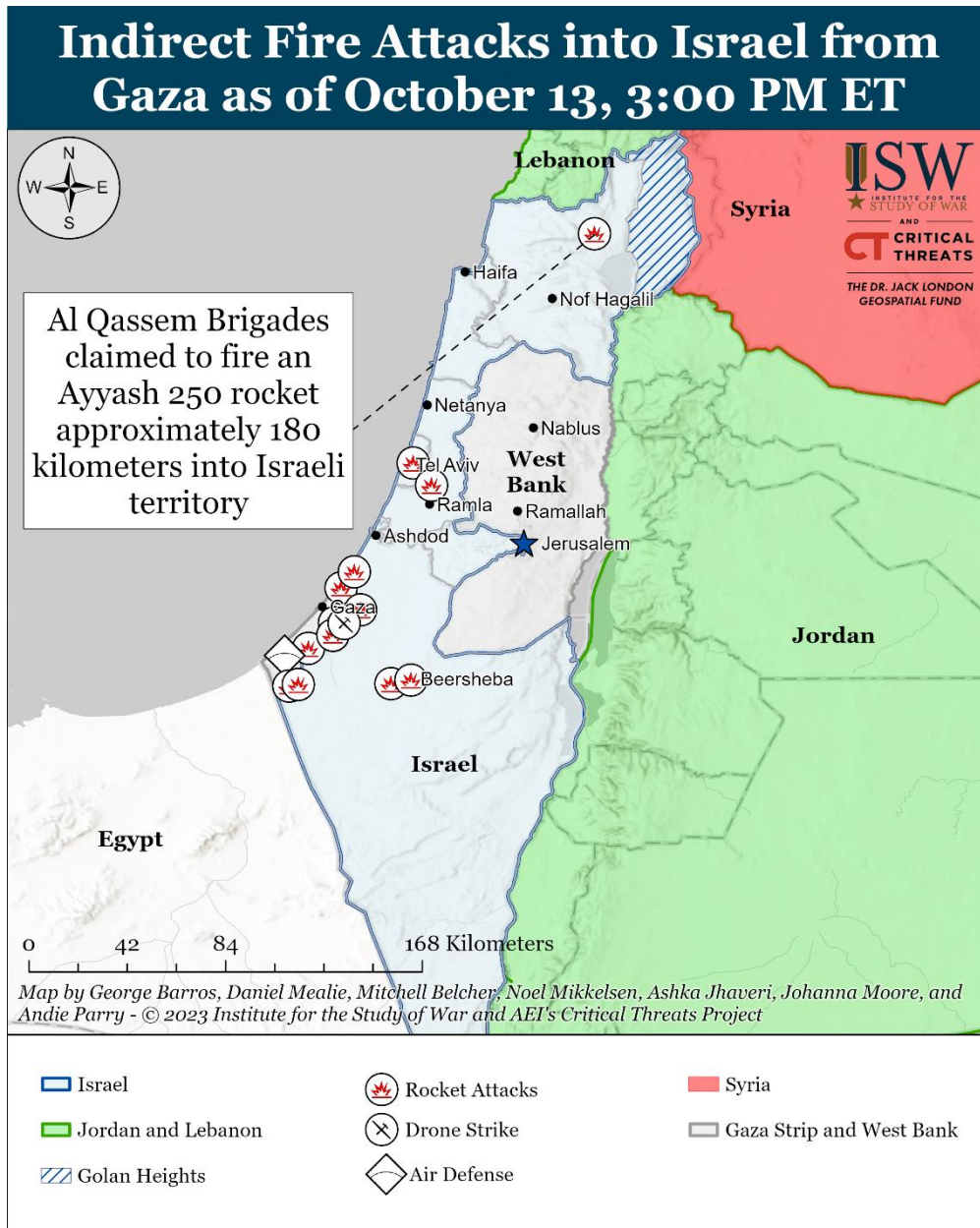
Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

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

Key Takeaways:

- Hamas continued conducting rocket attacks into Israel at a lower rate of fire compared to previous days. The group also urged Palestinian civilians to remain in place in response to Israeli calls for civilians to evacuate the northern Gaza Strip.
- Palestinian militants clashed with Israeli security forces across the West Bank at a higher rate, which is consistent with Hamas' call for escalation.
- The Iranian regime is messaging that US and Israeli actions could expand the war beyond Israel and the Palestinian territories while trying to intensify violence against Israel in the West Bank.

Gaza Strip

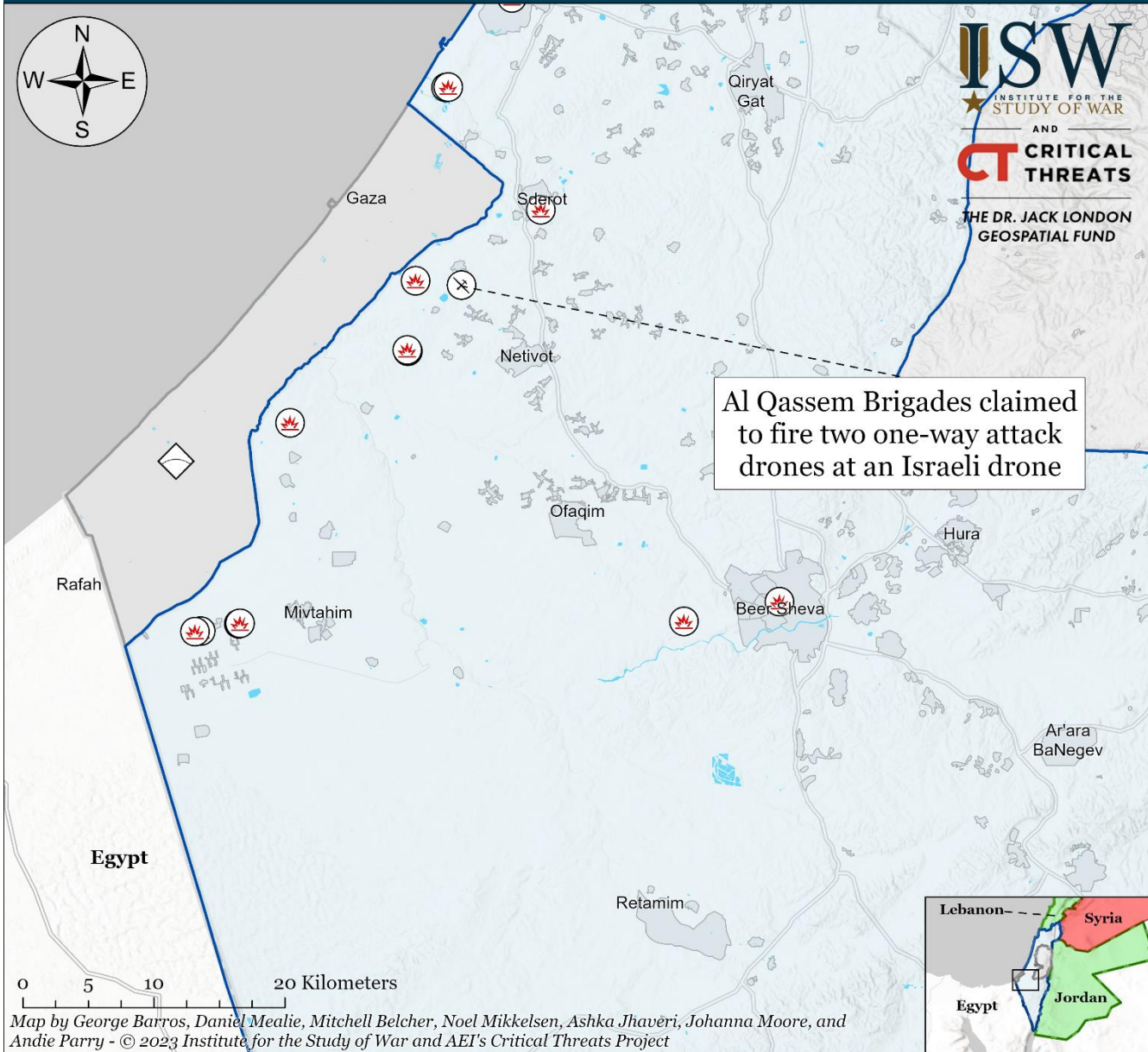


Recorded reports of rocket fire; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

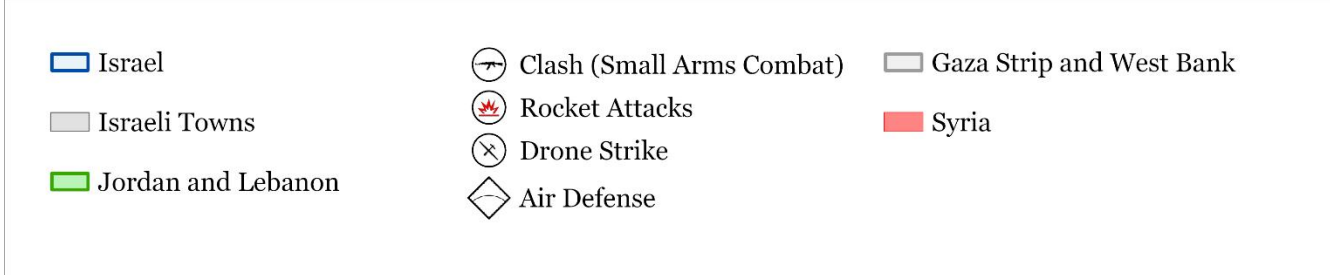
Hamas continued conducting rocket attacks into Israel at a lower rate of fire on October 13 compared to previous days. Hamas began reducing its rate of attacks on October 12 to conserve its rocket stockpile and prepare for a prolonged war, as CTP and ISW previously reported. Hamas targeted northern, central, and southern Israel on October 13. Hamas' military spokesman announced that the group fired 150 rockets at Ashkelon, 50 rockets at Sderot, and bombed the Ben Gurion Airport in central Israel.[1] Israeli civilians have evacuated the periphery areas of Gaza.[2] Hamas' al Qassem Brigades claimed that the rocket barrages are in response to Israel's displacement and targeting of civilians.[3] The IDF's operational update on October 13 notes that militants have launched 6,000 rockets from Gaza.[4] CTP-ISW previously reported that Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) have expended around 33 percent of their rocket arsenal since the war began.

- The IDF intercepted an Ayyash 250 rocket that Hamas launched from the Gaza Strip toward the IDF Northern Region Command headquarters in Safed. Safed is the furthest location that Hamas has targeted since the war began on October 7.[5]
- CTP-ISW also recorded several other rockets launches by PIJ and the al Qassem Brigades into Israel as of October 13, including the al Qassem Brigades launching two al Zouari one-way attack drones at IDF soldiers in Saad and a Mutabar 1 air defense missile at an Israeli drone flying over Gaza.[6]

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of October 13, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barrios, 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

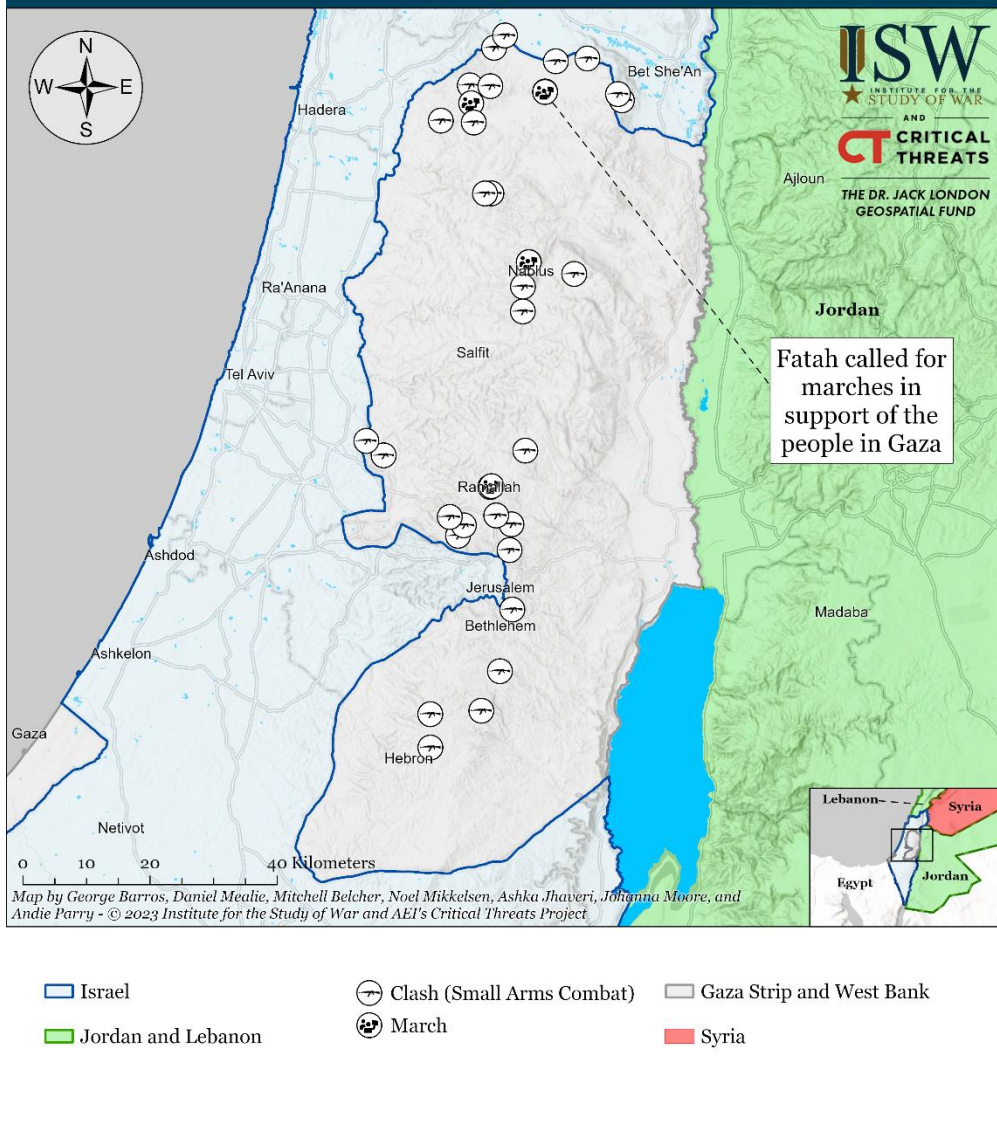


Recorded reports of rocket fire; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

CTP-ISW recorded one clash between Palestinian militants and Israeli security forces in Israeli territory on October 12. This reflects a decrease compared to the first few days of the war, when Hamas militants engaged in fierce fighting across southern Israel.^[7]

Hamas urged Palestinian civilians to remain in place in response to Israeli calls for civilians to evacuate the northern Gaza Strip on October 13.^[8] The IDF informed the UN on October 12 that the 1.1 million residents in northern Gaza should relocate within the next 24 hours.^[9] The IDF said in the coming days it is expected to continue to operate significantly in Gaza City and wants to avoid harming civilians.^[10] Hamas spokesperson Abu Ubaida described the call as “psychological warfare” against Palestinians and urged locals to stay.^[11] Hamas continues to use civilians as human shields, which intentionally puts these civilians in harm's way, to protect Hamas' military infrastructure and weapons.^[12] Civilians leaving the northern Gaza Strip en masse would risk depriving Hamas of the ability to use regular civilian activity to mask its military activities. The UN reported that 423,000 out of 2.3 million people in Gaza are now internally displaced.^[13]

Clashes in the West Bank Following Calls to Mobilize as of October 13, 3:00 PM ET



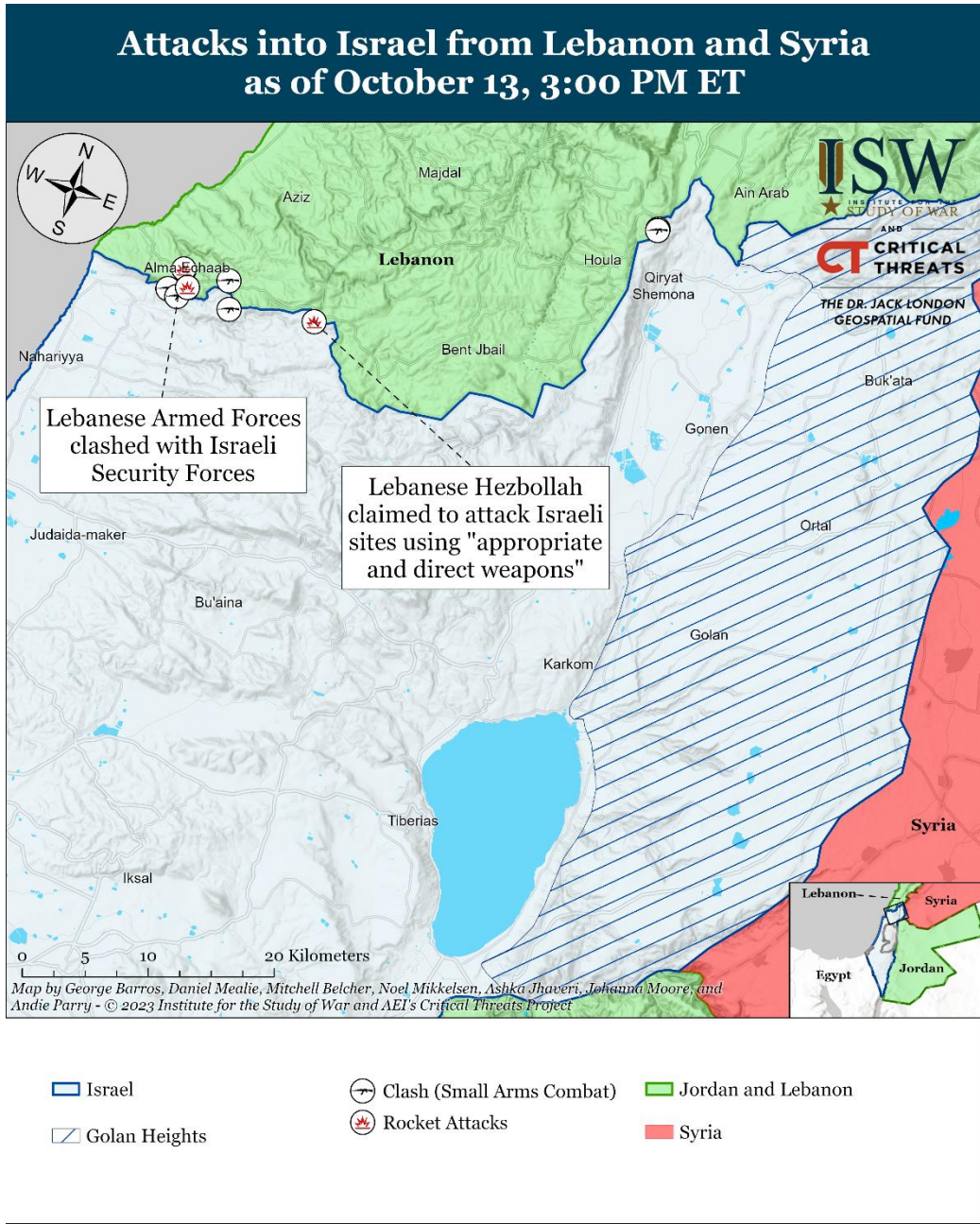
This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and marches in the West Bank.

Palestinian militants clashed with Israeli security forces across the West Bank at a higher rate on October 13, which is consistent with Hamas' call for escalation. CTP-ISW recorded 32 instances of small armed combat between locals and Israeli security forces or Israeli settlers on October 13. A US-based research analyst similarly noted an increase in violence in the West Bank.^[14] Hamas released a statement on October 12 celebrating clashes with Israeli security forces in the West Bank and called for continuation and further escalation.^[15] PIJ released a statement announcing the launch of a campaign to conduct widespread attacks in Jenin, a Palestinian militant stronghold in the northern West Bank.^[16] PIJ has established several subunits, which operate in Tubas, Jenin, Nablus, and Tulkarm.^[17]

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in Jordan on October 13.^[18] Abbas called for an end to Israeli aggression and stated that the displacement of people from Gaza would constitute a "second catastrophe for our

people” in the meeting.[19] Lebanese Hezbollah-affiliated *Al Mayadeen* framed the meeting as “tense” and cited Palestinian leadership, who claimed Abbas told Blinken that the Israeli displacement in Gaza is a prelude to plans to displace residents in the West Bank.[20] ISW cannot corroborate the report. The report is consistent with Hamas’ stated objective for the Al Aqsa Flood operation to extend to the West Bank.[21]

South Lebanon and the Golan Heights



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

Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) claimed to attack four Israeli positions in northern Israel on October 13. LH said the attacks were in response to Israeli attacks on several southern Lebanese towns. The IDF responded by striking LH-affiliated targets with a drone.[22] CTP-ISW recorded two reports of unspecified militants approaching the border and clashing with Israeli security forces.[23] A

correspondent for *Al Jazeera* noted that the IDF shelling is more extensive than previous days and that Palestinian groups are believed to be behind the infiltration attempts.[24] The Lebanese Army also engaged in small arms combat and artillery fire with Israeli security forces along the Israel-Lebanon border. This level of attacks is a slight uptick from the previous days' levels of kinetic activity around Israel's northern border.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and LH deployed forces to the southwestern Syrian border on October 13. The IRGC transferred elements of its engineering units from Albu Kamal to the Golan Heights.[25] LH redeployed militants from Mayadin to Damascus, which is part of its effort to redeploy all members from the Syrian provinces to Quneitra and Damascus, according to a locally based opposition outlet.[26] The Iranian- and LH-directed deployments are consistent with the scenario in which the current conflict in Israel expands into a multi-front war surrounding Israel.

Iran and the Axis of Resistance

The Iranian regime is messaging that US and Israeli actions could expand the war beyond Israel and the Palestinian territories while trying to intensify violence against Israel in the West Bank. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian repeatedly emphasized that a continuation of the Israeli “war crimes” against Palestinians could expand the conflict to the region during several meetings with Lebanese and Lebanese Hezbollah officials on October 13.[27] He similarly argued that the expansion of the conflict to other fronts would depend on Israeli actions during his meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al Sudani in Baghdad on October 12.[28] Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and other regime officials emphasized that Iran had no role in the October 7 Hamas attack.[29]

- Abdollahian criticized the United States for supporting Israel to “kill Palestinians on the one hand” while calling for others to “exercise self-restraint on the other hand” during a press conference in Beirut on October 13.[30] Abdollahian warned that “any possibility is conceivable” were this situation to continue.[31] Abdollahian also stated that the United States must control Israel in order to avoid the outbreak of regional war during his meeting with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati in Beirut on October 13.[32]
- IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami emphasized the American role in “managing” Israeli operations against Gaza during his Friday prayer sermon in Tehran on October 13.[33] Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi similarly pointed to the American “complicity” in Israeli actions during a trip to Fars Province on October 13.[34]
- Iranian Intelligence and Security Minister Esmail Khatib and Interim Tehran Friday Prayer Leader Ahmad Khatami called for the “Palestinian resistance” to deliver greater responses to Israeli aggression on October 13.[35] IRGC-affiliated *Tasnim News Agency* recirculated calls from PIJ to expand the conflict beyond Gaza and “intensify” the resistance in the West Bank against Israeli “invaders” on October 12.[36]

[1] <https://t.me/Tura313/45466>

[2] <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/10/07/world/middleeast/israel-g...>

[3] <https://t.me/qassambrigades/28510>

[4] <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1712755037259071505>

[5] <https://t.me/qassambrigades/28513>;
<https://x.com/BarakRavid/status/1712809184129843486?s=20>;
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/05/13/faq-hamas-missiles/>

[6] <https://t.me/qassambrigades/28506>; <https://almayadeen dot net/news/politics/>-المقاومة-الفالسطينية-
الفالسطينية-تقصف-مطار-بن-غوريون-والمستوطنات-وقتل-ال <https://t.me/qassambrigades/28506>

[7] https://t.me/mihwar_almuqawama/34906; <https://almayadeen dot net/news/politics/>-المقاومة-
الفالسطينية-تقصف-مطار-بن-غوريون-والمستوطنات-وقتل-ال

[8] <https://telegram.me/s/hamasps>; <https://t.me/Tura313/45466>; <https://www.aljazeera dot com/news/liveblog/2023/10/8/israel-palestine-escalation-live-israeli-forces-bombard-gaza#:~:text=8%20Oct%202023%20Israel%20declares%20%E2%80%9Cstate%20of%20war%E2%80%9D,Israel%20says%20it%20has%20responded%20with%20artillery%20strikes>

[9] <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/israel-military-tells-united-nations-over-o...>

[10] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1712682700887240860>

[11] <https://telegram.me/s/hamasps>

[12] <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/4253185-israel-hamas-blinken...>

[13] <https://apnews.com/live/israel-hamas-war-live-updates#0000018b-2774-d853...>

[14] <https://twitter.com/JoeTruzman/status/1712824849360646572>

[15] <https://hamas.ps/ar/p/18266>

[16] <https://t.me/almanarnews/130370>

[17] <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2022/07/palestinian-islamic-jiha...>

[18] <https://www.state.gov/secretary-blinkens-meeting-with-palestinian-author...>

[19] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/13/israel-gaza-war-updates-...>

[20] <http://almayadeen dot net/news/politics/>-مصادر-رام-الله-للميادين--لقاء-عباس-وبلينكن-في-الأردن-كان-مشد

[21] <https://www dot israelhayom dot com/2022/10/16/minor-incidents-could-spark-widespread-unrest-defense-official-warns/>

[22] <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1712872276633239984>

[23] <https://twitter.com/ZeinakhodrAljaz/status/1712833987108835680>

[24] <https://twitter.com/ZeinakhodrAljaz/status/1712851397593457045>

[25] <https://deirezzor24.net/%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84-%D8%A3%D9%81/>

[26] <https://eyeofeuhrates.com/index.php/ar/news/2023/10/12/9893>

[27] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/21/2970908> ; <https://mfa.ir/portal/newsview/731386> ; <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/21/2970897> ; <https://almanar.com.lb/11045586> ; <https://mfa.ir/portal/newsview/731396> ; <https://www.iribnews.com/ir/fa/news/4014094> ; <https://www.irna.com/ir/news/85256843>

[28] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2023/10/13/2970847> ; <https://nournews.com/ir/Fa/News/152943>

[29] <https://www.leader.com/ir/fa/content/26703>

[30] <https://www.leader.com/ir/fa/content/26703>

[31] <https://www.leader.com/ir/fa/content/26703>

[32] <https://mfa.ir/portal/newsview/731386>

[33] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/21/2970927> ; <https://defapress.com/ir/fa/news/622823> ; <https://www.irna.com/ir/news/85256960>

[34] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/21/2970928> ; <https://president.com/ir/fa/147151> ; <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2023/10/13/2970982>

[35] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/20/2970814> ; <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/21/2970957>

[36] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/07/20/2970393>