

Iran Update



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October 3, 2024, Information Cutoff: 2:00pm 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.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) continued advancing into southern Lebanon on October 3. Geolocated imagery indicates Israeli troop movements around the western axis of advance, specifically around Aitaroun and Yaroun.[1] The IDF Golani Brigade (36th Division) coordinated with the IDF Air Force to strike Hezbollah militants in nearby buildings.[2] Hezbollah claimed that it engaged Israeli forces as they advanced.[3] Hezbollah claimed that it detonated improvised explosive devices (IED) targeting the IDF around Maroun al Ras and that it detonated a “barrel bomb” targeting the IDF around Yaroun.[4] A Hezbollah-affiliated reporter claimed that Hezbollah prepared ambushes beforehand.[5] The IDF previously announced on October 1 that it would soon operate in this general area to clear it of Hezbollah militants and infrastructure and asked civilians to evacuate.[6] Hezbollah-affiliated sources separately reported that the IDF is operating around Kfar Kila around the eastern axis

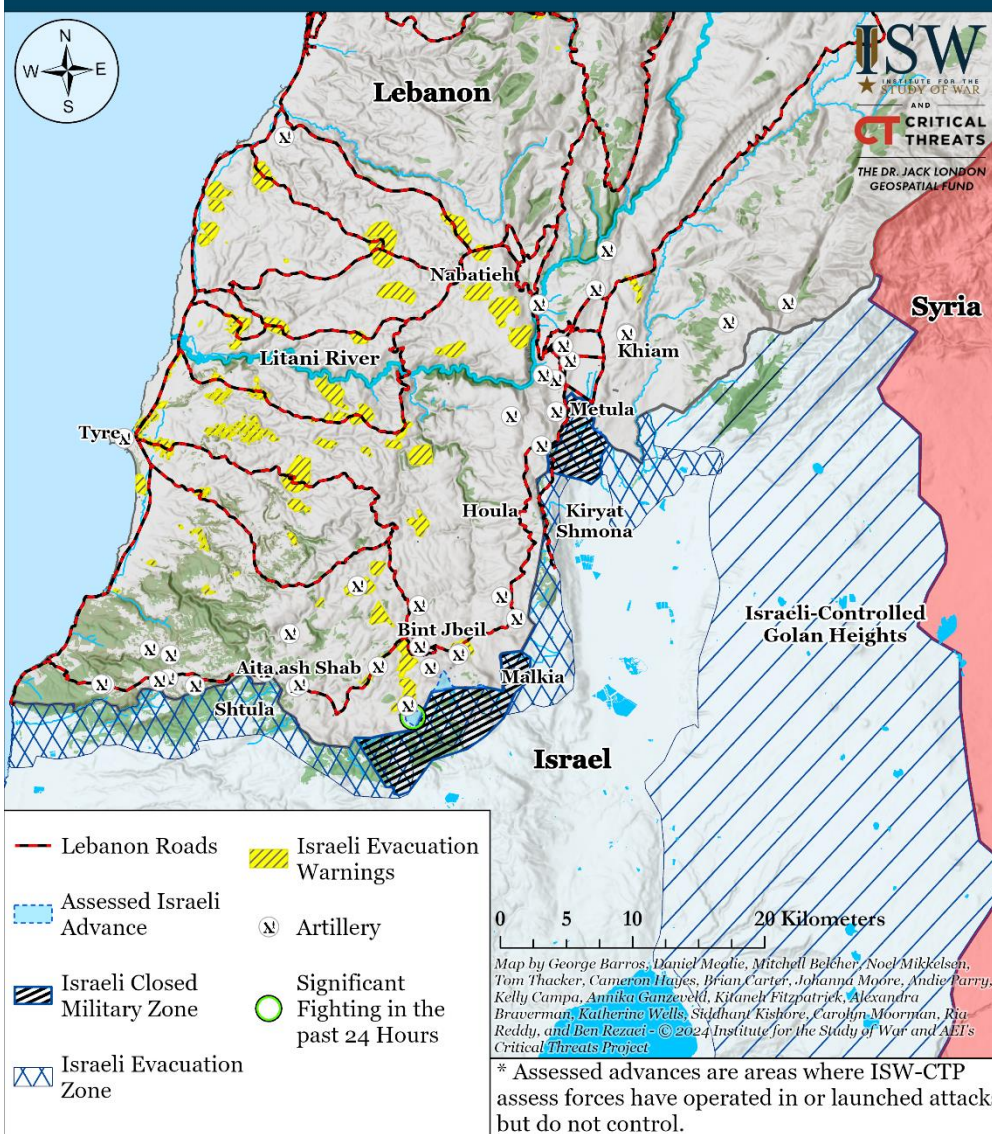
of advance.[7] The IDF reportedly estimated that it has killed over 100 Hezbollah militants since launching ground operations into Lebanon on October 1.[8] Hezbollah appears to have stopped posting obituaries for its militants in this time.[9] IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzl Halevi visited the Israeli forces on the Israel-Lebanon border and vowed to continue efforts against Hezbollah.[10]

The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) said that an Israeli strike killed an LAF soldier in southern Lebanon on October 3.[11] The LAF said that Lebanese soldiers returned fire after the strike.[12] A Lebanese security source told Reuters that this incident marked the first time that the LAF has fired at Israeli forces in the war.[13]

The IDF Arabic-language spokesperson called on civilians to evacuate immediately from 25 towns in southern Lebanon.[14] The spokesperson told residents that they should head north of the Awali River, which is 30 miles north of the Litani River.[15] The 25 towns that the IDF identified are all north of the Litani River.[16] The IDF conducted several airstrikes in at least two of the specified towns on October 3.[17]

Reported Israeli Operations in Lebanon

As of October 3, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



The IDF continued its air campaign targeting Hezbollah capabilities, infrastructure, and leadership across Lebanon on October 3.[18] The IDF Air Force struck over 200 Hezbollah targets, including Hezbollah militants and infrastructure, including observation posts and weapons depots.[19] The IDF 210th Division directed an airstrike that targeted and killed the local Hezbollah commander for the Shebaa Farms and Mount Hermon area.[20] The IDF said the commander was responsible for the Hezbollah attack that killed 12 children in the Golan Heights in July 2024.[21] The commander also oversaw hundreds of rocket and anti-tank guided missile attacks targeting IDF positions on Mount Dov, Mount Hermon, and the northern Golan Heights.[22]

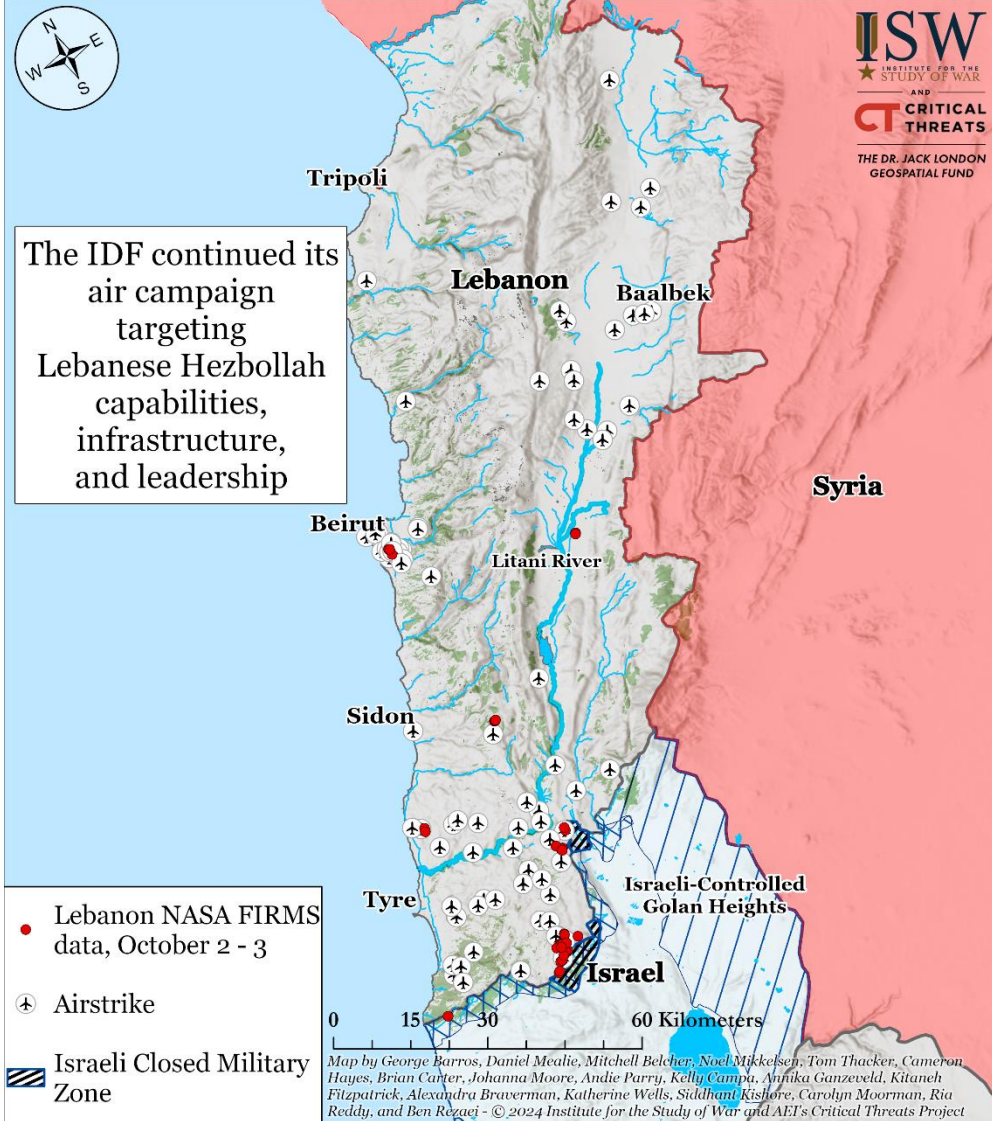
The IDF conducted numerous strikes targeting Hezbollah infrastructure and intelligence networks in Beirut on October 3. The IDF Arabic-language spokesperson asked residents of the Haret Hreik, Burj al Barajneh, and Hadath West neighborhoods to evacuate at least 500 meters from

specific buildings that the IDF identified as “Hezbollah facilities.”[23] Local sources reported that the IDF then conducted strikes targeting across several neighborhoods in southern Beirut.[24] The IDF also conducted a strike that targeted an apartment complex in Bachoura, Beirut, marking the second time that the IDF has struck a target within Beirut city limits.[25] The IDF said that it struck several targets affiliated with Hezbollah's intelligence branch in Beirut, including intelligence unit members, collection instruments, and other infrastructure.[26] The Lebanese Health Ministry reported that nine people were killed and 14 injured in Israeli strikes on Beirut.[27]

The IDF stated that Hezbollah has used a civilian border crossing near Damascus as its “main” route for receiving military equipment and weapons from Syria to deliver to southern Lebanon.[28] The IDF stated that the transfer of weapons through Masnaa border crossing follows the IDF airstrikes on seven border crossings along the Syria-Lebanon border on September 26.[29] The IDF urged the Lebanese government to conduct strict inspections of trucks passing through civilian crossings and to turn weapons carrying trucks back to Syria.[30] The Lebanese Transport Minister Ali Hamieh said that the Lebanese government will monitor all border crossings following the accusations.[31]

Israeli Air Campaign in Lebanon

As of October 3, 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 October 2 to 2:00pm ET on October 3. This map is not exhaustive. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify the locations of Israeli strikes.

A senior aide to Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei traveled to Beirut and met with Lebanese officials on October 3.[32] Mohsen Ghomi, who is the international relations deputy in the Office of the Supreme Leader, met with Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, among others, to discuss the war against Israel.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei will lead Friday prayers in Tehran on October 4, during which he will speak publicly on the war against Israel.[33] Khamenei is expected to honor Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah and Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)

Brigadier General Abbas Nilforoushan, both of whom died in the Israeli airstrike targeting the Hezbollah central military headquarters in Beirut on September 27. Khamenei will also commemorate the coming anniversary of Hamas' brutal attack into Israel on October 7, 2023. Khamenei very rarely leads Friday prayers and typically reserves this right for especially sensitive times for the Islamic Republic. The last time that Khamenei did so was shortly after the United States killed Qassem Soleimani in January 2020.[34] CTP-ISW will report on this event further in future updates.

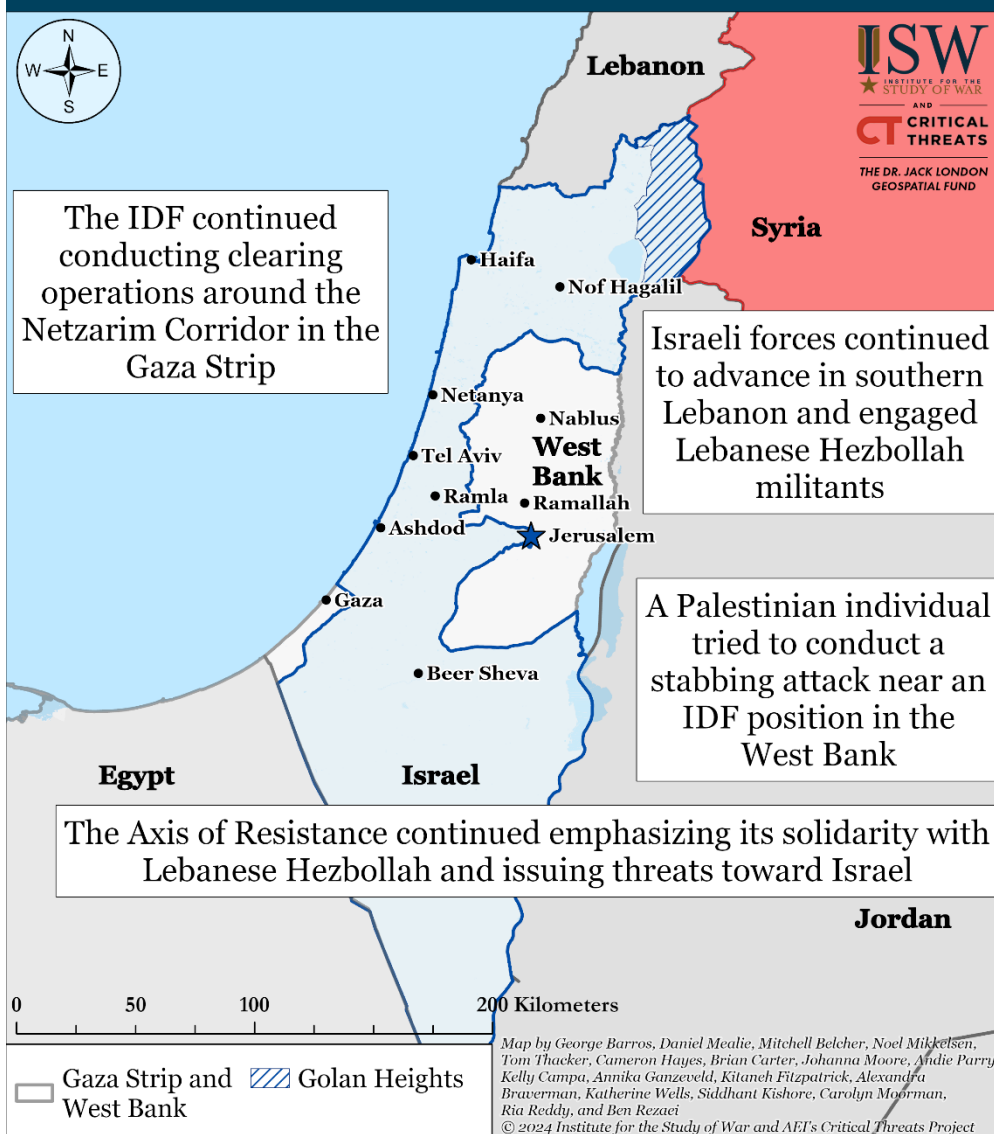
The Axis of Resistance has continued to signal its solidarity with Hezbollah and readiness to escalate further against Israel. An Iranian-backed Iraqi militia source claimed that there is an Iranian-backed Iraqi "combat reserve" that is near Lebanon and ready to support Hezbollah once given approval to do so.[35] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—separately fired an "advanced" drone targeting an unspecified location in southern Israel on October 3[36] The IDF intercepted the drone.[37] Houthi spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Sarea claimed the Houthis fired multiple Jaffa drones targeting Tel Aviv on October 3.[38] Houthi Supreme Leader Abdulmalik separately vowed to continue attacks in retaliation for US and Israeli airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen.[39]

Key Takeaways:

- **Lebanon:** The IDF continued advancing into southern Lebanon. The IDF reportedly estimates that it has killed over 100 Lebanese Hezbollah militants during its ground operation. The IDF also issued calls for further evacuations.
- **Lebanon:** The IDF continued its air campaign targeting Lebanese Hezbollah capabilities, infrastructure, and leadership. The IDF conducted several strikes in Beirut specifically targeting the Hezbollah intelligence apparatus.
- **Iran:** Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei will lead Friday prayers in Tehran on October 4, during which he will speak publicly on the war against Israel. Khamenei very rarely leads Friday prayers and reserves the right for especially sensitive times for the Islamic Republic.

Key Takeaways in the Israel-Hamas War

As of October 3, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



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

Palestinian fighters claimed no attacks targeting Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip on October 3.

The IDF 252nd Division continues to conduct "targeted raids" around the Netzarim Corridor.[40] The IDF stated that the 252nd Division forces have killed over 450 Palestinian fighters in airstrikes and close combat over the past three months.[41] Israeli forces have also destroyed hundreds of militia infrastructure sites in the central Gaza Strip, including a "branching" eight-kilometer-long tunnel.[42]

The IDF confirmed that it killed high-level Hamas Political Bureau member Rouhi Mushtaha in an airstrike in the northern Gaza Strip in July 2024.[43] The IDF struck Mushtaha in a well-equipped underground compound that helped Hamas leaders to maintain command and control over their fighters.[44] The IDF said that Mushtaha led the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip after the Hamas attack into Israel on October 7, 2023.[45] Mushtaha helped found Hamas' general security apparatus and was Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar's "right hand man" after they spent time in Israeli detention together.[46] The IDF also killed the security portfolio head in the Hamas Political Bureau and Executive Committee, Sameh al Saraj, and commander of Hamas' general security apparatus, Sami Odeh, in the strike.[47] The IDF said that Hamas did not publicize these leaders' deaths to "prevent morale and functional damage" to Hamas forces.[48]

The IDF Air Force struck and killed Hamas fighter Abd al Aziz Salha, whom Israel released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange in 2011, in Deir al Balah. Salha killed two Israeli reservists in Ramallah in 2000 and was sentenced to life in prison before the exchange.[49] The IDF stated that Salha continued to direct militia activity in the West Bank after his release into the Gaza Strip.[50] The IDF noted that it would continue to target "past and present" Hamas fighters and "anyone who threatens" Israelis.[51]

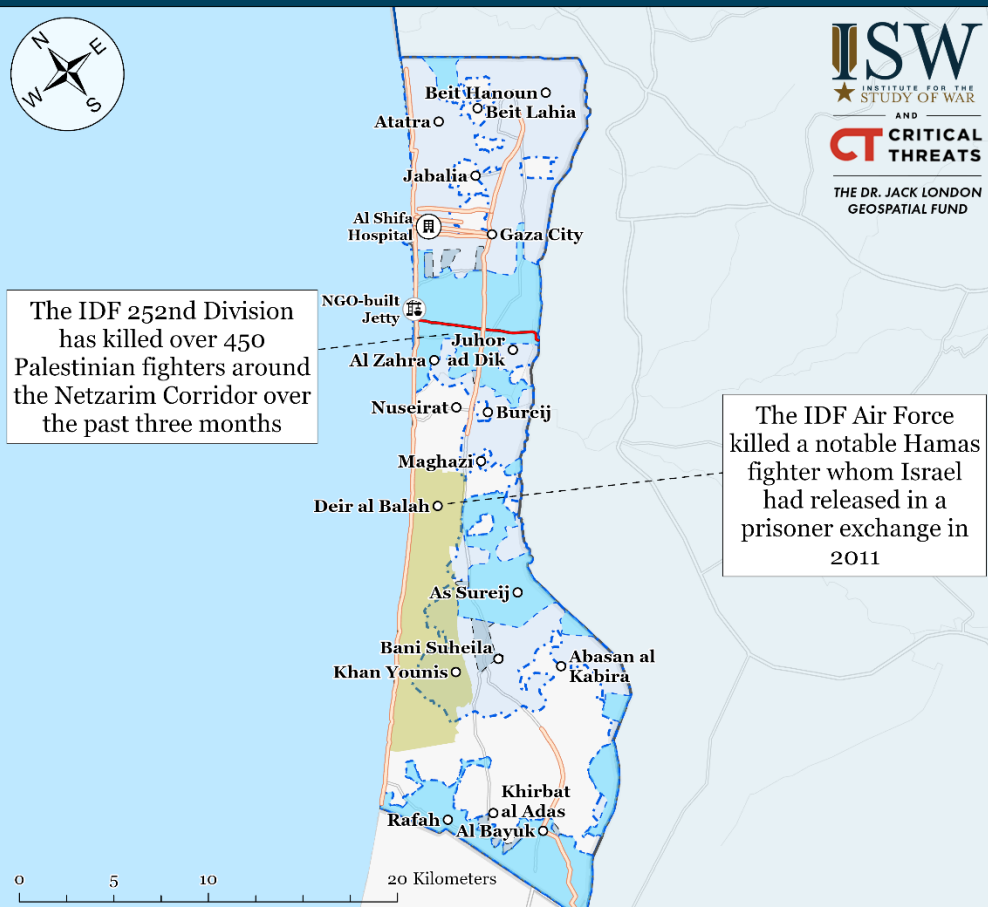
Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

As of October 3, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



The IDF 252nd Division has killed over 450 Palestinian fighters around the Netzarim Corridor over the past three months

The IDF Air Force killed a notable Hamas fighter whom Israel had released in a prisoner exchange in 2011

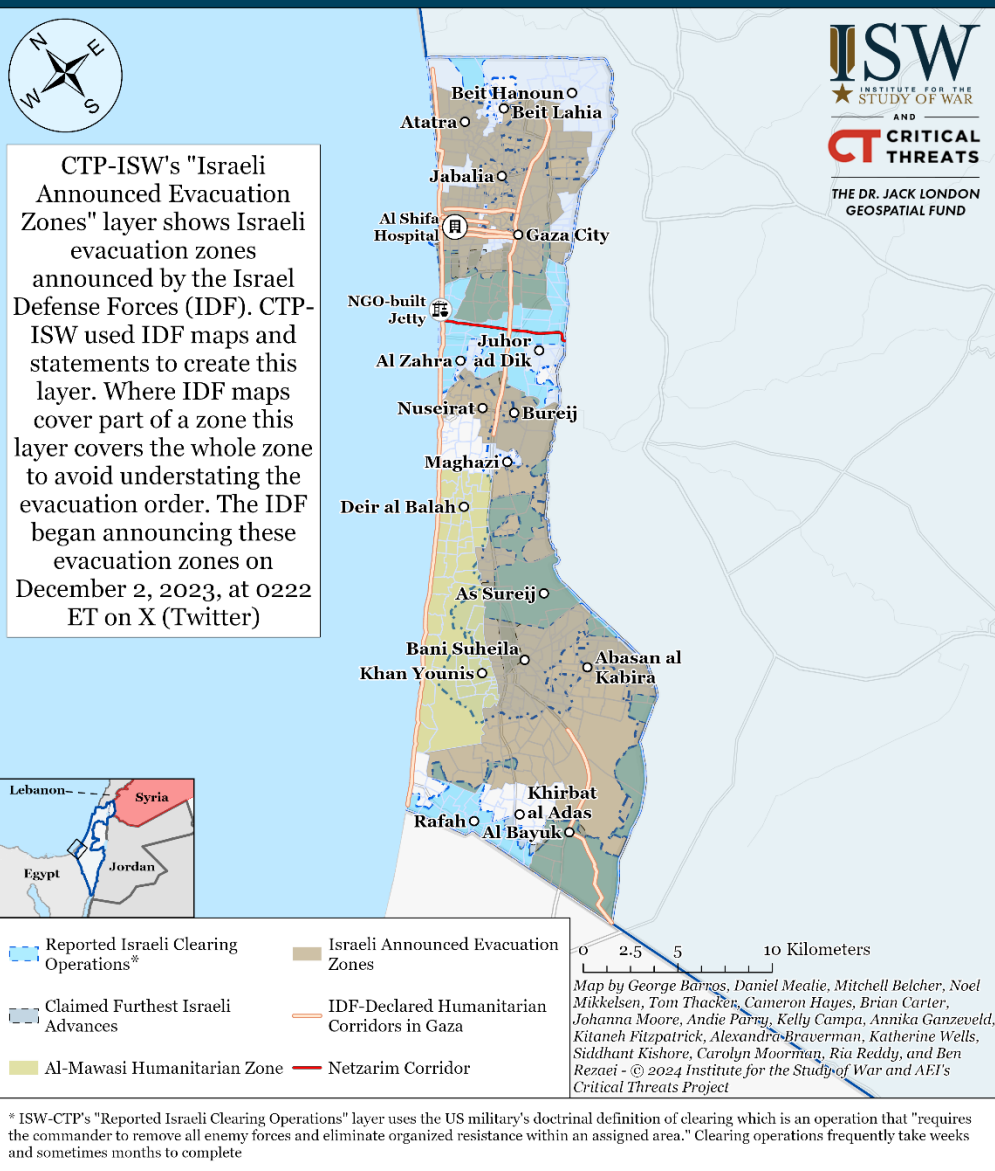


Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Tom Thacker, Cameron Hayes, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Annika Ganzeveld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Alexandra Braverman, Katherine Wells, Siddhant Kishore, Carolyn Moorman, Ria Reddy, and Ben Rezaei - © 2024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

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Reported Israeli Clearing Operations* | IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridors in Gaza | Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours | |
| Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances | Netzarim Corridor | Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone | |
| Assessed Furthest Extent of Israeli Clearing Operations | | | |

* 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

Israeli-Announced Evacuation Zones in the Gaza Strip As of October 3, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



West Bank

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

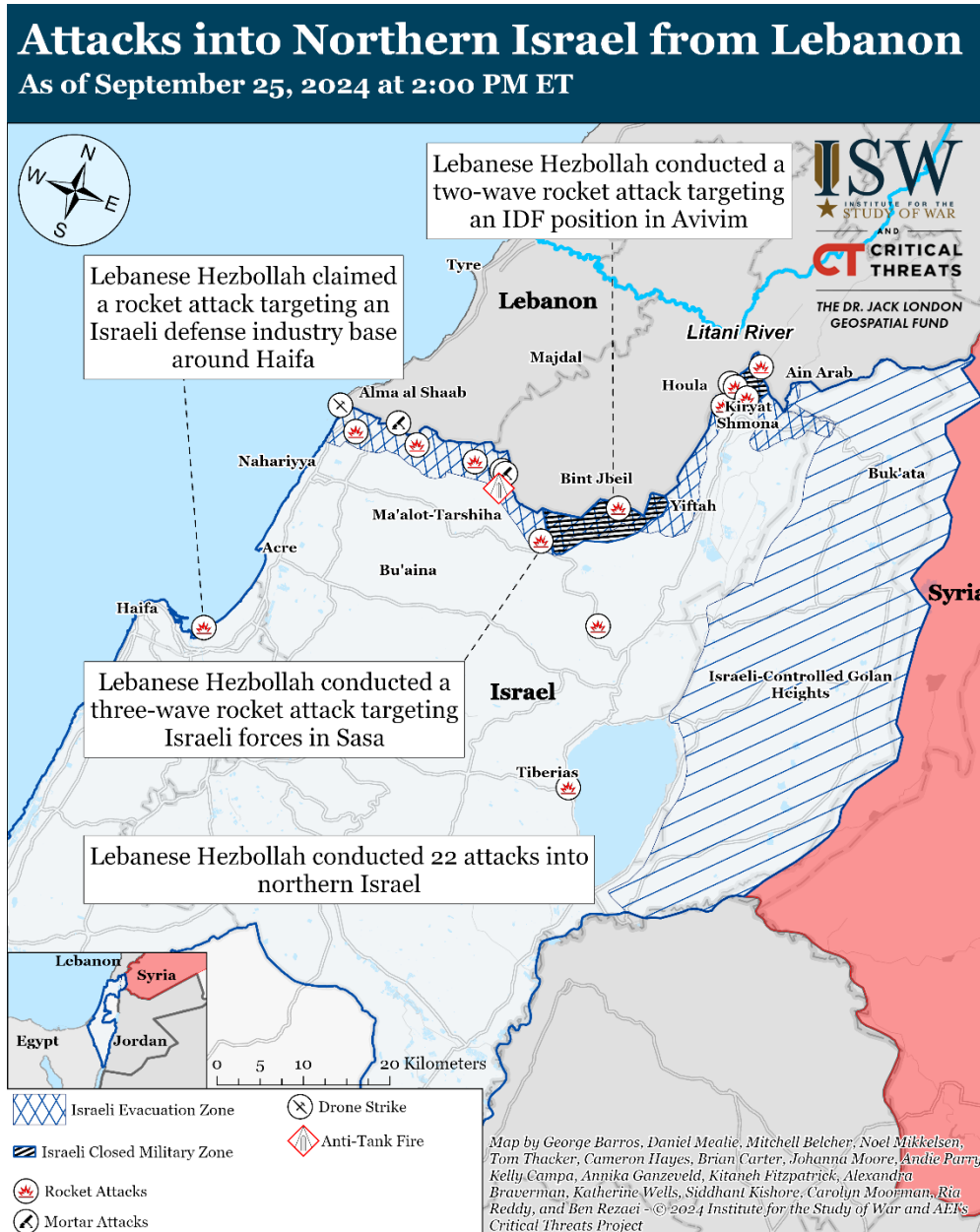
A Palestinian individual tried to conduct a stabbing attack near an IDF position in Hebron, in the West Bank on October 2.[52] An IDF Home Front Command member shot and killed the attacker.[53] The IDF reported no casualties from the attempted attack.[54]

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

Lebanese Hezbollah conducted at least 22 attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on October 2.[55] See the topline section for more information.



Iran and the Axis of Resistance

Likely Iranian-backed militants launched rockets targeting US forces at al Shaddadi base in northeastern Syria on October 3.[56] A Syrian regime-affiliated outlet reported that one rocket fell in a part of the base housing US service members.[57] A Syrian opposition outlet reported that a rocket fell near the US position.[58] Iranian-backed militants last attacked US forces at al Shaddadi on September 22.[59]

Syrian media reported that the IDF conducted an airstrike on a weapons depot in Jableh, near Russia's Hmeimim airbase, in Syria on October 3.[60] Syrian media also reported that Russian and Syria air defenses intercepted some of the munitions used with the ones that landed causing a fire and secondary detonations.[61] CTP-ISW cannot confirm the actor responsible for the strike. The IDF was also reportedly responsible for an airstrike targeting an Iranian weapons shipment near Jableh in July 2024.[62]

The IDF Air Force struck al Mezzeh, southwest of Damascus, and killed Hassan Nasrallah's son-in-law and Hezbollah member Hassan Jaafar Qasir on October 2.[63] Qasir was the brother of Hezbollah Unit 4400 Commander Mohammed Jaafar Qasir, who died in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut on October 1.[64] A Damascus-based outlet reported that the strike was near where the IDF Air Force five IRGC officers in an airstrike in January 2024.[65] IRGC officer Majid Divani separately died on October 3 from injuries sustained in an Israeli airstrike in al Mezzeh on October 1.[66]

The US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed new sanctions against one individual, one entity, two vessels, and three firms linked to a weapon smuggling and procurement network for the Houthis on October 2.[67] OFAC sanctioned the following:

- Iran-based individual **Hasan Ahmad Hasan Mohammad al Kuhlani** coordinated, concealed, and facilitated Houthi weapons smuggling operations. Al Kuhlani also transported Iranian "lethal aid" to the Houthis.
- PRC-based firm **Shenzhen Boyu Imports and Exports Co., Limited** is a logistics and international shipping company that facilitated the transport of dual-use and military-grade components to Houthis.
- PRC-based firms **Shenzhen Rion Technology Co. Ltd.** and **Shenzhen Jinghon Electronics Limited** allowed Houthis to source dual-use components for missiles and drones.
- Marshall Islands-based entity **Gemini Marine**, which has an interest in two vessels: (1) Cooks Island-flagged vessel **FRUNZE** was linked to transporting illicit Iranian and Russian oil and (2) Gabon-flagged vessel **IZUMO** was linked to transporting petroleum products for the Houthi financial official Said al Jamal and an affiliate of the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff front company Sepehr Energy Jahan Nama Pars (Sepehr Energy).

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian continued meeting with foreign officials during his official visit to Qatar on October 3. Pezeshkian met with a senior Hamas delegation, including Mohammad Ismail Darwish and Khaled Mashal.[68] Pezeshkian said during the meeting that any Israeli "mistake" would elicit a response from Iran that would be stronger than the recent Iranian

missile attack on Israel. Pezeshkian also reaffirmed Iranian commitment to improving relations with Saudi Arabia in a meeting with Saudi Foreign Affairs Minister Faisal bin Farhan.[69]

Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref announced after returning from a Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) summit in Armenia on October 3 that the EAEU approved Iran's observer membership.[70] Aref said that the EAEU will officially announce Iran's observer status in the next EAEU leaders meeting, which will be held in next few months.[71] Aref described the meetings with neighboring countries' delegations at the summit as good, specifically mentioning his meetings with Armenian and Uzbekistani officials.

Iranian security forces conducted a series of "intelligence measures" in Sistan and Balochistan Province on October 2 targeting Jaish al Adl networks.[72] Jaish al Adl is a Baloch Salafi-jihadi militia that has conducted repeated attacks in southeastern Iran over many years and increasingly in recent months. The security forces killed three Jaish al Adl fighters and arrested an unspecified number. The security forces also seized "a large number of weapons" and ammunition from the "terrorists' headquarters." These "intelligence measures" follow a dramatic uptick in Jaish al Adl attacks from September 28 to October 1.[73]

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[1] <https://x.com/TwistyCB/status/1841854501675778283>

[2] www.idf.il/236195

[3] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7528>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7545>, <https://t.me/mmirleb/7546>,
<https://t.me/mmirleb/7548>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7539>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7529>

[4] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7545>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7539>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7546>

[5] <https://t.me/Aitarounmediaplatform/48139>

[6] <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1841045108537294975/photo/1>

[7] <https://t.me/alichoeib1970/10632>

[8] <https://x.com/GLZRadio/status/1841832743400886498>

[9] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7417>

[10] <https://t.me/moriahdoron/15025>; www.idf.il/236198

[11] https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/in-first-since-beginning-of-war-lebanese-army-returns-fire-at-israeli-forces/

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- [26] <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1841830123252679062>
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- [30] <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1841756708084830371>
- [31] https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/lebanon-says-its-monitoring-border-crossings-after-israeli-accusation-of-arms-smugglin
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[35] <https://baghdadtoday dot news/259175-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%81%D8%B1-%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%AE%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86.html>

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<https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-september-29-2024>

[40] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1841798556757237946>

[41] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1841798556757237946>

[42] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1841798568488693989>

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