

# Iran Update



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**Information Cutoff: September 21, 2024, 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.*

**Israel has issued new security protocols for some of its northern communities in anticipation of intensifying conflict with Lebanese Hezbollah.** Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari announced the new measures for residents on September 21 in response to indications that Hezbollah is preparing to launch rocket attacks into Israel.[1] Hagari said that residents should limit gatherings outside to 30 individuals and inside to 300 individuals. Educational and workplace activities should occur near protected areas, such as shelters, according to Hagari. The new measures apply specifically to residents in Galilee and the Jordan Valley. IDF Air Force Commander Major General Tomer Bar separately reported that the Air Force is maintaining a high level of readiness.[2] Israel has closed its airspace north of Hadera, northern Israel, to civilian flights in order to avoid accidental engagement with Israeli air defenses.[3]

**An Israeli military correspondent reported that the IDF exploited an “operational opportunity” in conducting its airstrike that killed 12 Hezbollah Radwan commanders in Beirut on September 20.**<sup>[4]</sup> The correspondent said that the planning and execution of the airstrike occurred within a “few hours.”<sup>[5]</sup> The IDF received intelligence that the Radwan commanders were gathering in an underground operations center in southern Beirut and quickly developed plans to attack. IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi was visiting forces in northern Israel when the IDF received this intelligence and presented the plan to political leaders for approval. This reporting is consistent with CTP-ISW’s observation that the IDF appears to be exploiting disarray in Hezbollah in order to inflict further damage upon the group.<sup>[6]</sup> Israel detonating Hezbollah pagers and personal radios disrupted the group’s internal communications and may have prompted the group to begin using less secure methods of communication that Israel could then intercept and exploit.

**Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have continued to threaten intervene in an Israel-Hezbollah war. The militias likely seek to deter a major Israeli offensive into Lebanon by threatening to expand the war. These militias could follow through with these threats in the event of intensifying conflict.** Kataib Sarkhat al Quds—formerly known as Ashab al Kahf—announced on September 20 that it is prepared to send “hundreds or even thousands” of militants to Lebanon to support Hezbollah against Israel.<sup>[7]</sup> Kataib Sarkhat al Quds also threatened to strike the Institute for Biological Research south of Tel Aviv.<sup>[8]</sup> Kataib Sarkhat al Quds is a member of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which is a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias and has tried repeatedly to conduct drone and missile attacks into Israel since January 2024.<sup>[9]</sup>

**The Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) and Iraqi Red Crescent Society sent two plans of aid to Beirut on September 21.**<sup>[10]</sup> The delivery includes medical supplies. The PMF stated that the supplies will be delivered to Lebanese hospitals to treat individuals wounded by Israeli airstrikes.

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Lebanon:** Israel has issued new security protocols for some of its northern communities in anticipation of intensifying conflict with Lebanese Hezbollah. The new measures are in response to indications that Hezbollah was preparing to launch rockets into areas.
- **Lebanon:** The IDF reportedly exploited an “operational opportunity” in conducting its airstrike targeting the Hezbollah Radwan commanders in southern Beirut. CTP-ISW has previously observed that Israel appears to be exploiting disarray in Hezbollah in order to inflict further damage on the group.
- **Iraq:** Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have continued to threaten to intervene in an Israel-Hezbollah war. The militias likely seek to deter a major Israeli offensive into Lebanon but could still follow through on their threats in the event of intensifying conflict.

# Key Takeaways in the Israel-Hamas War

As of September 21, 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

**The IDF announced on September 21 that it killed Hamas fighter Mohammad Mansour in an unspecified location in the Gaza Strip.[11]** The IDF stated that Mansour played a significant role in Hamas' military intelligence as a technology expert. The IDF also stated that it eliminated multiple Hamas fighters who had directed attacks on Israeli forces.[12]

**The IDF Air Force struck a Hamas command-and-control site in Gaza City on September 21.[13]** The IDF reported that the site was based in the former al Falah school and was used to plan and conduct attacks on Israeli forces and into Israeli territory.[14] The IDF added that it took steps to minimize civilian casualties in the airstrike.[15]

**The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades conducted a rocket attack targeting Israeli forces east of the Netzarim Corridor.[16]**

**The IDF 5th Brigade (143rd Division) and 14th Brigade (252nd Division) directed airstrikes targeting Hamas buildings and engaged Palestinian fighters in unspecified areas of the central Gaza Strip on September 20.[17]**

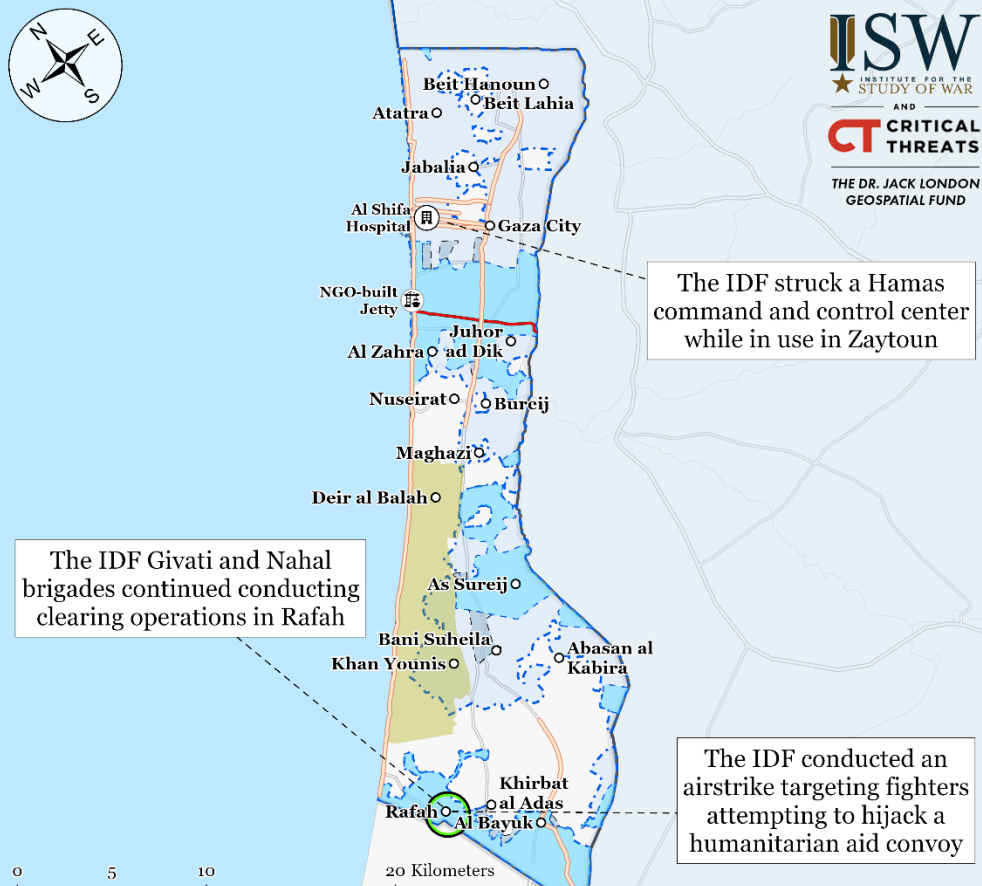
**The IDF 162nd Division continued clearing operations in Rafah on September 21.[18]** The Givati and Nahal Brigades killed several Palestinian fighters, located weapons, and destroyed militia infrastructure.[19] The Givati Brigade also directed an airstrike targeting multiple fighters who were trying to hijack a humanitarian aid convoy traveling in Rafah and loot its supplies.[20] Israeli Army Radio reported in April 2024 that Hamas frequently tries to seize humanitarian aid convoys in the Gaza Strip.[21]

**The IDF announced on September 21 that Israeli forces killed two Hamas fighters in early September who may have been responsible for the murder of six Israeli hostages.[22]** IDF spokesperson Rear Admiral David Hagari said that the IDF 162nd Division shot and killed two Hamas fighters who had emerged from an underground tunnel near Tal Sultan a day after the hostages' deaths.[23] The IDF determined through DNA samples that the two Hamas fighters were near the Israeli hostages in the tunnels when the hostages were killed. The IDF recovered the bodies of the hostages from a tunnel in Rafah on September 1.[24] The IDF is investigating further the involvement of the Hamas fighters with the hostages' murders.[25]

**The IDF announced that its Air Force struck over 20 Hamas fighters and infrastructure targets throughout the Gaza Strip since September 20.[26]**

# Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

As of September 21, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



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

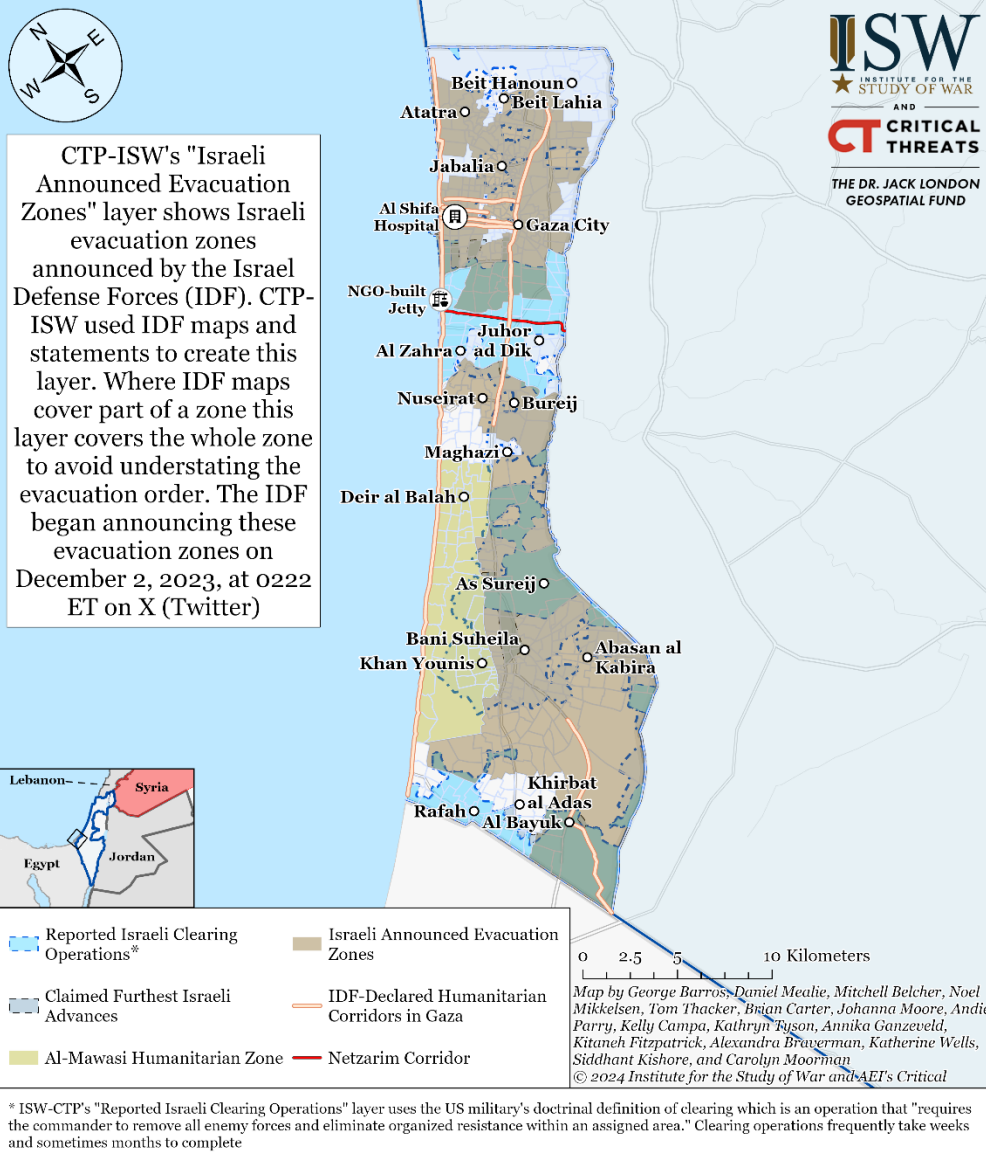
	Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*		IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridors in Gaza		Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
	Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances		Netzarim Corridor		Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone
	Assessed Furthest Extent of Israeli Clearing Operations				



\* 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

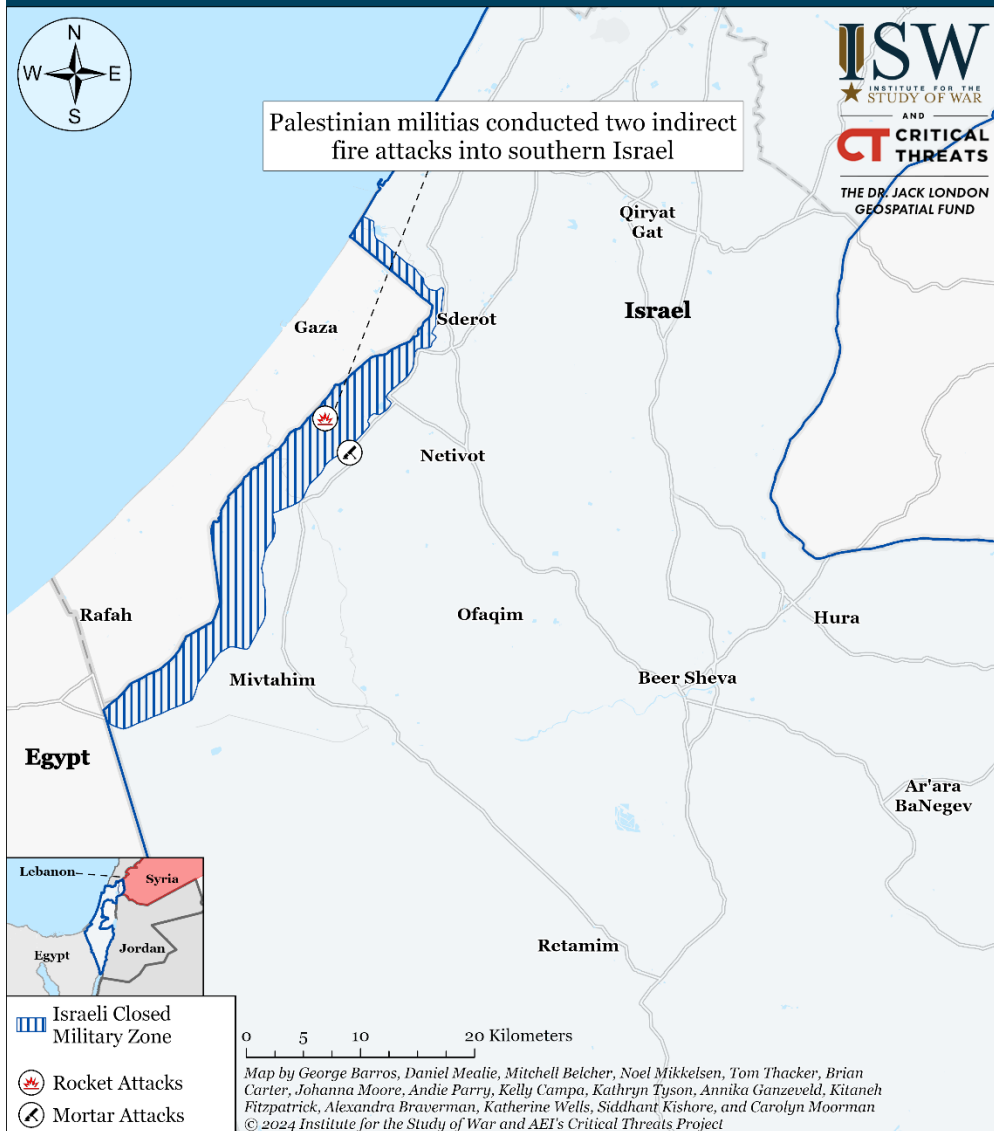
As of September 21, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



## The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claimed two indirect fire attacks into southern Israel on September 20.[27]

# Attacks into Israel from the Gaza Strip

As of September 21, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



## West Bank

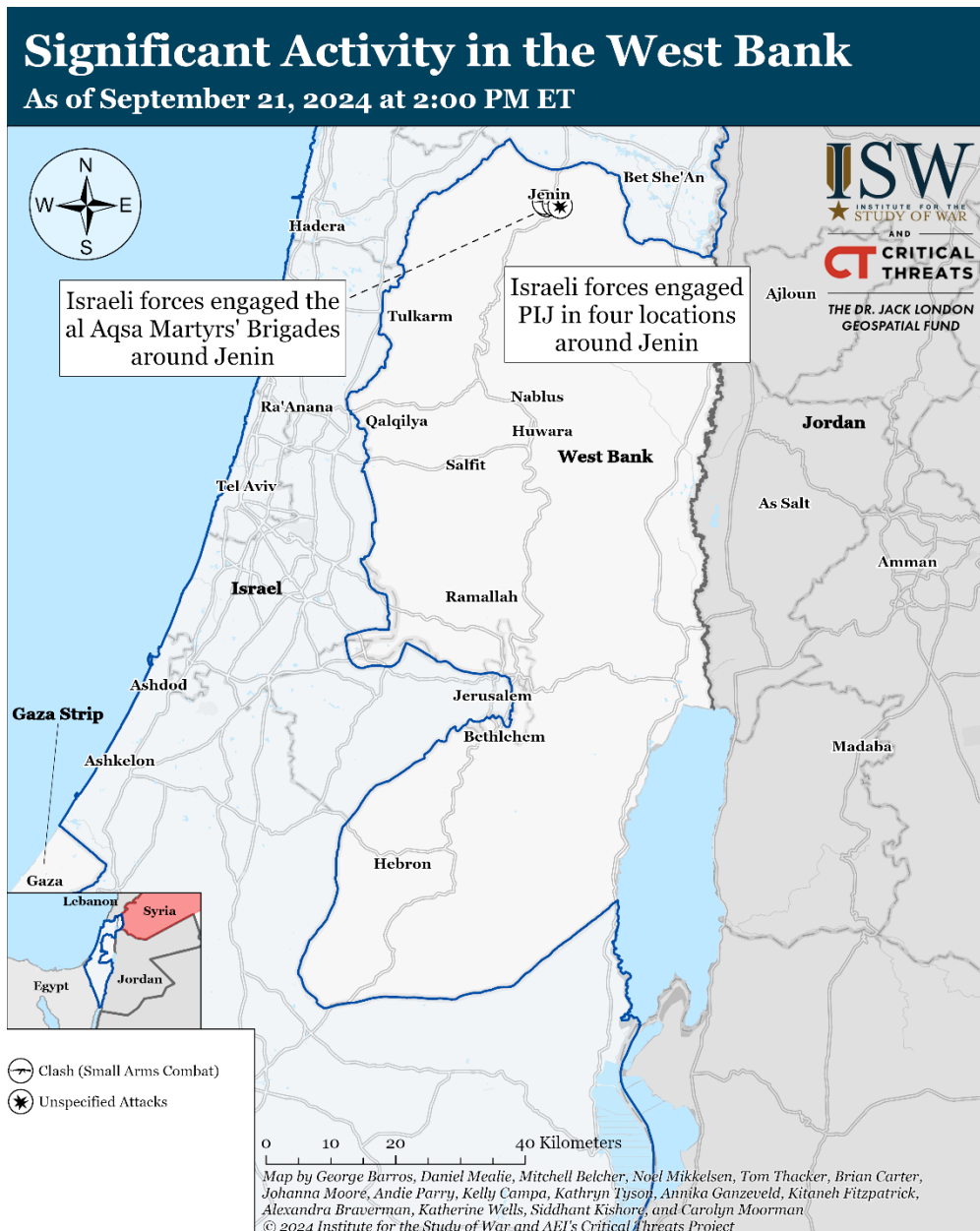
### Axis of Resistance objectives:

- 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 September 20.[28]** Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) fired small arms targeting Israeli forces in four locations in Jenin.[29] The al Asqa Martyrs' Brigades separately fired small arms targeting Israeli forces in Jenin.[30]



An IDF soldier was severely injured in an engagement with Palestinian militias in the northern West Bank on September 21.[31] The soldier is currently receiving medical treatment. The soldier was from the Haruv reconnaissance unit in the IDF Kfir Brigade but was operating under the Menashe Brigade at the time of their injury.[32] The Menashe Brigade operates within Jenin.[33] Palestinian media reported that an Israeli soldier was injured following a clash with Palestinian fighters near al Bayader in Jenin.[34] Both PIJ and the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claimed to engage Israeli forces in al Bayader.



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

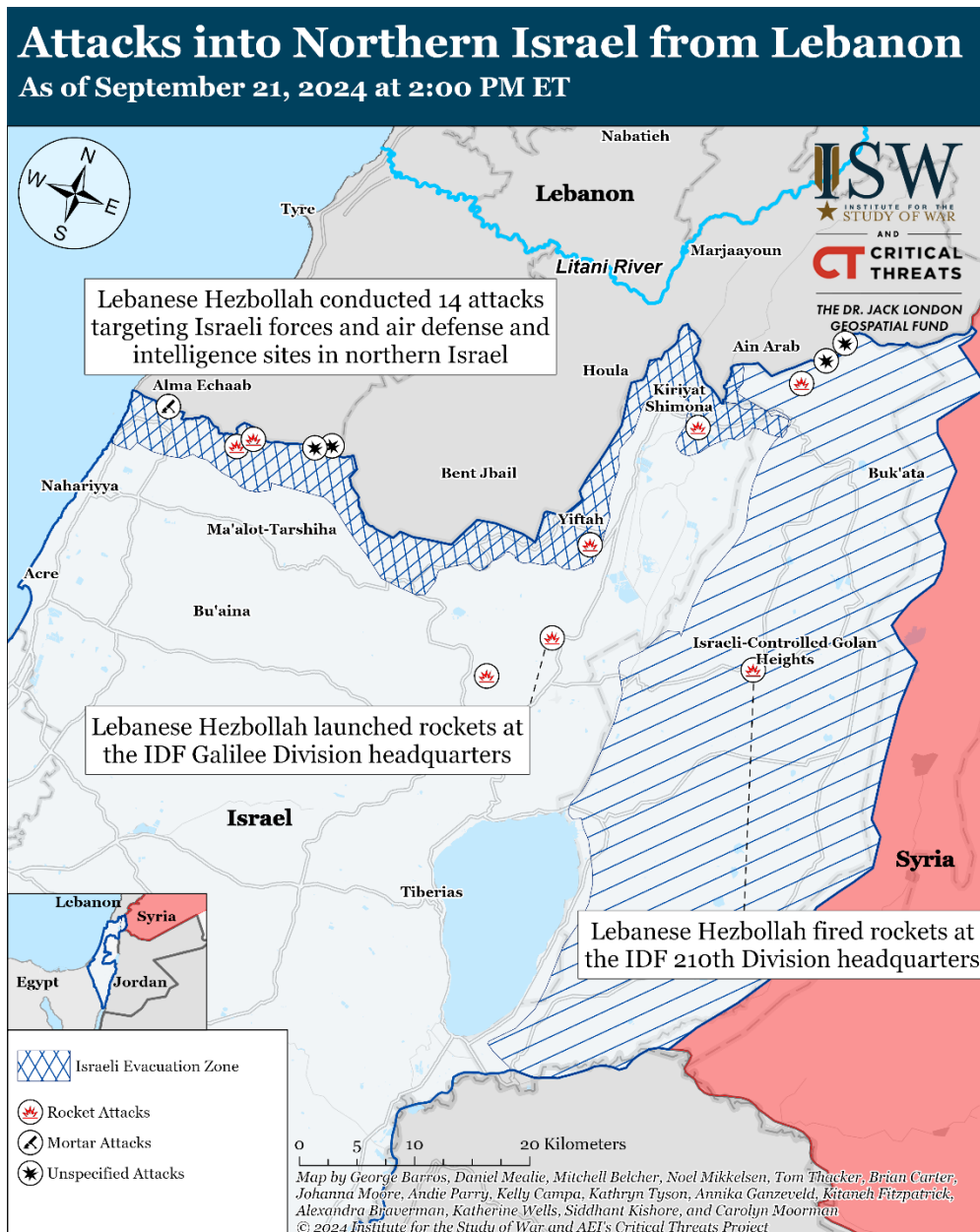
### Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights



## 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 has conducted at least 14 attacks into northern Israel, targeting Israeli forces and air defense and intelligence sites, since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 20.[36]**



## Iran and Axis of Resistance

**US Central Command (CENTCOM) intercepted a Houthi drone over the Red Sea on September 20.**<sup>[37]</sup> CENTCOM determined that the drone presented an imminent threat to US and coalition forces as well as merchant vessels in the area.

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- [1] <https://x.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1837547336895287674> ;  
<https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1837545675371745642>
- [2] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837501516006998270>
- [3] <https://x.com/GLZRadio/status/1837408898694689024> ; <https://t.me/moriahdoron/14068>
- [4] [https://x.com/Doron\\_Kadosh/status/1837179410799284281](https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1837179410799284281) ;  
<https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837472559249445037>
- [5] [https://x.com/Doron\\_Kadosh/status/1837179410799284281](https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1837179410799284281)
- [6] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-september-20-2024>
- [7] [https://t.me/aishab\\_alkahf/220](https://t.me/aishab_alkahf/220)
- [8] [https://t.me/aishab\\_alkahf/222](https://t.me/aishab_alkahf/222)
- [9] <https://t.me/elamharbi/244> ; <https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1248>
- [10] [https://t.me/teamsmediawar\\_1/105591](https://t.me/teamsmediawar_1/105591) ; [https://t.me/teamsmediawar\\_1/105583](https://t.me/teamsmediawar_1/105583)
- [11] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837394482502754525>
- [12] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837394482502754525>
- [13] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837420078964281828>
- [14] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837420078964281828> ;  
<https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837420081657135336>
- [15] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837420081657135336>
- [16] [https://t.me/elaqsa\\_1965/7537](https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/7537)
- [17] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837394506603266450>
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- [19] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837394499871383790>
- [20] <https://t.me/moriahdoron/14069>
- [21] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-april-3-2024>

- [22] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-it-killed-2-hamas-terrorists-who-likely-murdered-6-israeli-hostages-in-tunnel/>
- [23] <https://x.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1837551688900595737>
- [24] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/iran-update-september-1-2024>
- [25] <https://x.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1837551688900595737>
- [26] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837394511720300940>
- [27] [https://t.me/elaqsa\\_1965/7537](https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/7537)
- [28] [https://t.me/elaqsa\\_1965/7538](https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/7538) ; <https://t.me/sarayajneen/1598> ;  
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- [31] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837527522923118682>
- [32] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1837527522923118682>
- [33] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-to-reconfigure-jerusalem-area-brigades-to-streamline-counter-terror-efforts/>
- [34] <https://t.me/newpress1/90690>
- [35] [https://t.me/elaqsa\\_1965/7538](https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/7538) ; <https://t.me/sarayajneen/1600>
- [36] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7091>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7092>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7097>;  
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- [37] <https://x.com/CENTCOM/status/1837253974589952298>