

Iran Update, September 26, 2024

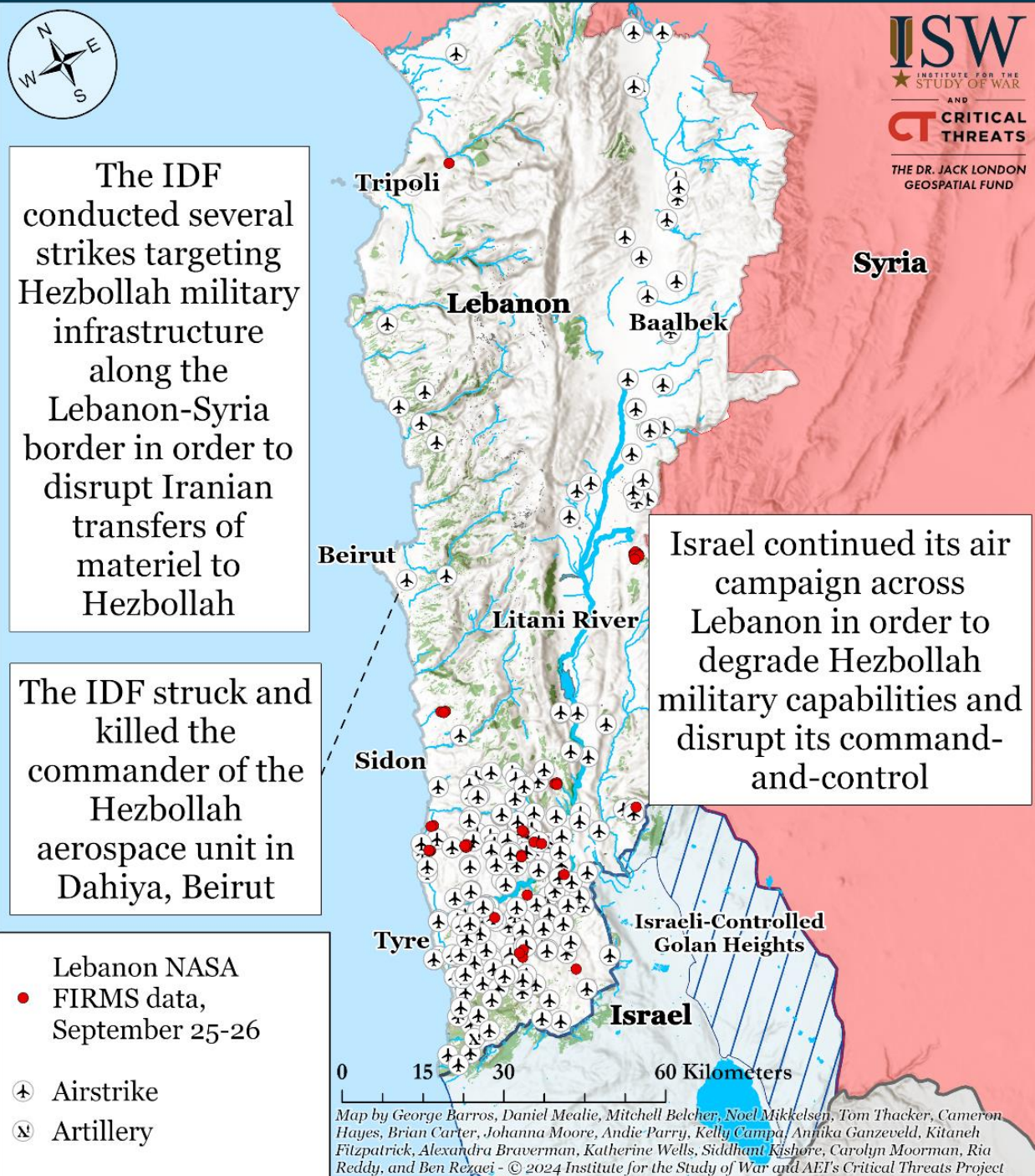
Johanna Moore, Siddhant Kishore, Annika Ganzeveld, Carolyn Moorman, Ben Rezaei, Katherine Wells, Ria Reddy, Kelly Campa, and Nicholas Carl

Information Cutoff: 2:00pm ET

Israeli sources provided additional details on some military effects that Israel is trying to achieve in Lebanon. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi said on September 26 that the IDF is currently working to degrade Hezbollah military capabilities, deny Hezbollah the ability to receive external weapons transfers, and kill senior Hezbollah officials.[1] The IDF Air Force has conducted a large-scale air campaign into Lebanon in recent days to this end.[2] The IDF Air Force most recently struck around seven border crossings between Lebanon and Syria on September 26 as part of Israeli efforts to prevent weapons transfers to Hezbollah.[3] An Israeli journalist separately reported that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seeks ultimately to push Hezbollah forces north of the Litani river in southern Lebanon.[4] This objective is consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which requires Hezbollah forces to remain north of the Litani river. Israeli officials have repeatedly said since at least December 2023 that they are pursuing diplomatic efforts and will use military force if necessary to get Hezbollah to comply with the UN Security Council resolution. Israeli military operations in Lebanon are meant to achieve the stated Israeli war aim of safely returning displaced civilians to their homes in northern Israel. Hezbollah has conducted almost daily drone, missile, and rocket attacks into Israel since October 2023, which has compelled Israeli civilians to evacuate their homes.

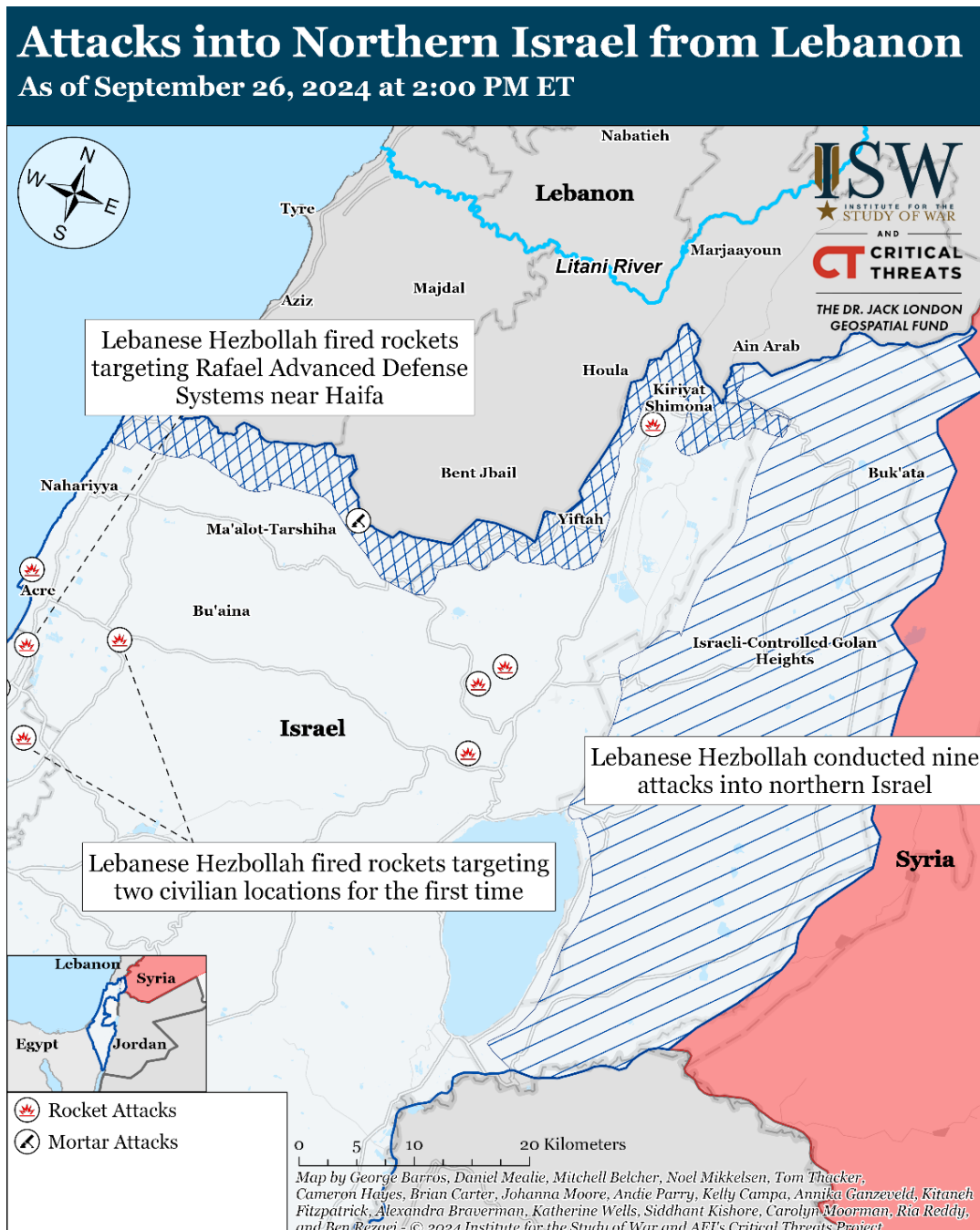
Israeli Air Campaign in Lebanon

As of September 26, 2024 at 14:00 PM ET

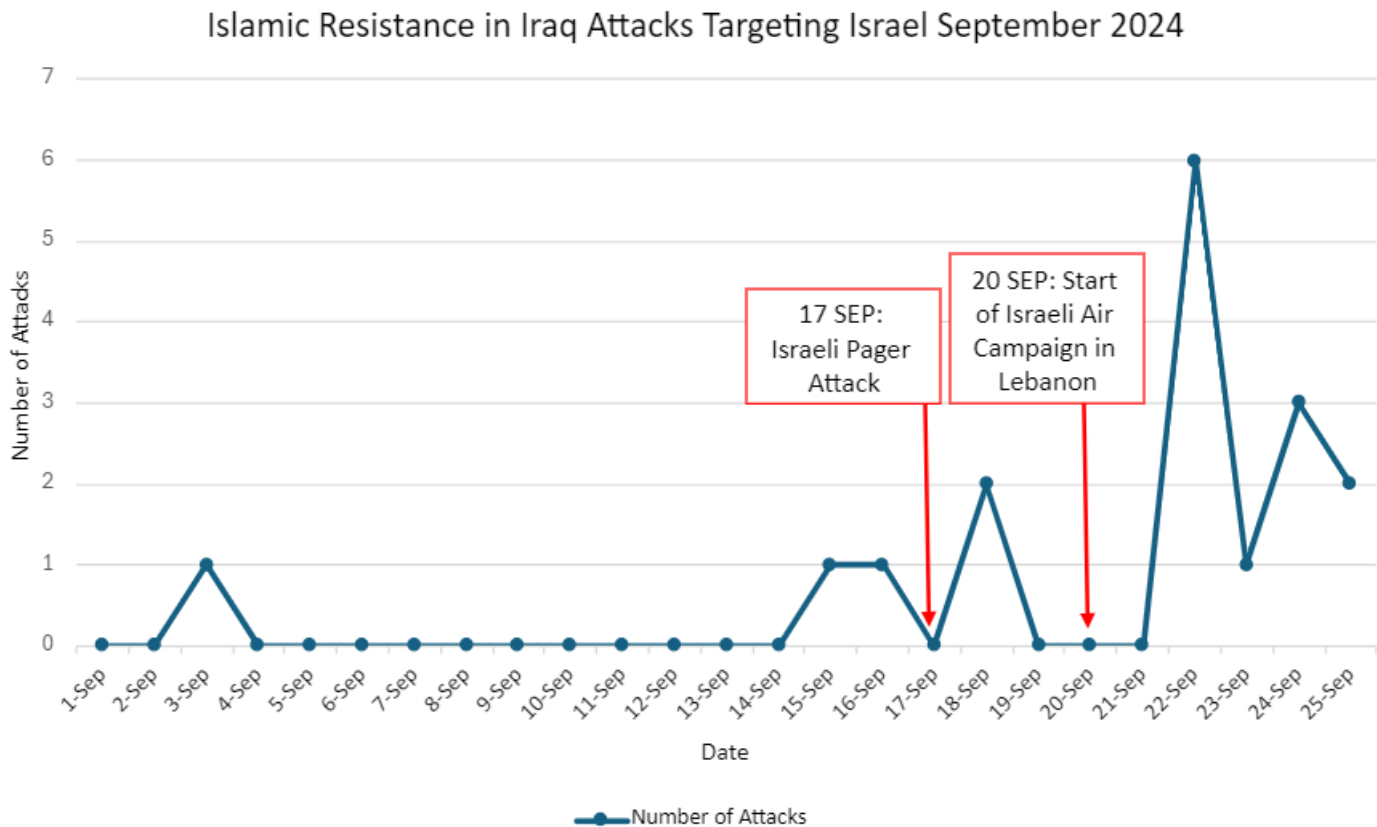


This map illustrates individual Israeli air and artillery strikes based on local Lebanese reporting. This map depicts strikes reported from 2:00pm ET on September 25 to 2:00pm ET on September 26. This map is not exhaustive. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify the locations of Israeli strikes.

Hezbollah continued to fire rockets targeting Israeli civilian and military locations in northern Israel on September 26. Hezbollah launched rockets targeting Rafael Advanced Defense Systems near Haifa for the third time in recent days.[5] Hezbollah also fired rockets targeting four civilian centers in northern Israel, including Ahihud and Kiryat Ata, for the first time.[6] Targeting the relatively mobile and well-hidden Hezbollah drone, missile, and rocket array is a difficult undertaking, even for an air force as tactically proficient as the IDF Air Force. The 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War taught the IDF the lesson that airstrikes alone cannot stop Hezbollah rocket barrages, even when such an air campaign is effectively designed and executed on a tactical level.[7]



Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah outlined on September 25 how it will purportedly support Lebanese Hezbollah against Israel. Kataib Hezbollah called on Iranian-backed Iraqi militias to increase the “level and size” of attacks targeting Israel.[8] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which is a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, has increased its rate of attacks targeting Israel in recent days. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed six attacks targeting Israel on September 22 and three attacks targeting Israel on September 24, for example.[9] An Israeli Army Radio correspondent reported on September 25 that the IDF is aware of the threat posed by Iranian-backed Iraqi militias to Israel and “will do whatever is necessary to deal with this matter.”[10] Kataib Hezbollah separately claimed that it has observed “intense” US and Israeli activity in Iraqi airspace, possibly setting informational conditions to resume attacks targeting US forces.[11] Kataib Hezbollah warned that it will confront “all aspects of the American presence.”[12] The Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee, which is a coordinating body for Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, similarly threatened in June 2024 to target US interests in Iraq and across the Middle East if Israel launched a major military offensive into Lebanon.[13]



Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Sarkhat al Quds—formerly known as Ashab al Kahf—published a video on September 26 threatening to attack Israeli military sites.[14] The video showed satellite imagery of the Israeli Defense Ministry building and an intelligence site in Tel Aviv as well as the town of Yodfat in northern Israel.[15] Kataib Sarkhat al Quds claimed that Israel assembles nuclear weapons at an underground facility in Yodfat.[16] Kataib Sarkhat al Quds has

published several videos highlighting potential targets in Israel in recent weeks, including videos in August and September 2024 showing satellite imagery of the Israeli Soreq Nuclear Research Center, an Israeli military industrial site near Tel Aviv, and the Israeli Biological Research Institute.[17]

Key Takeaways:

- **Lebanon:** Israeli sources provided additional details on some military effects that Israel is trying to achieve in Lebanon. Lebanese Hezbollah continued to fire rockets targeting Israeli civilian and military locations in northern Israel.
- **Iraq:** Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah called on other Iraqi militias to increase the “level and size” of their attacks on Israel. Iraqi militias have conducted regular drone and missile attacks targeting Israel in recent months.

Key Takeaways in the Israel-Hamas War

As of September 26, 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 fired rockets targeting Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip on September 26. The IDF intercepted some of the rockets and others fell within the Gaza Strip.[18] No Palestinian militia has claimed the attack as of this writing.

The IDF Air Force struck and killed several Hamas fighters, who participated in the October 7 attack into Israel, in the Gaza Strip in the past week.[19] The IDF killed Hamas fighter Suleiman Abu Lafi, who smuggled weapons into the Gaza Strip and directed attacks in the West Bank from the Gaza Strip.[20] The airstrike also killed Lafi's brother and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) fighter Abdullah Abu Lafi.[21] A separate strike killed an unidentified Hamas Nukhba unit commander. The Nukhba units are Hamas' special operations forces that participated in the October 7 attack.[22]

The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades fired a tandem-charged rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) targeting an Israeli tank near Beit Lahiya north of Gaza City on September 26.[23]

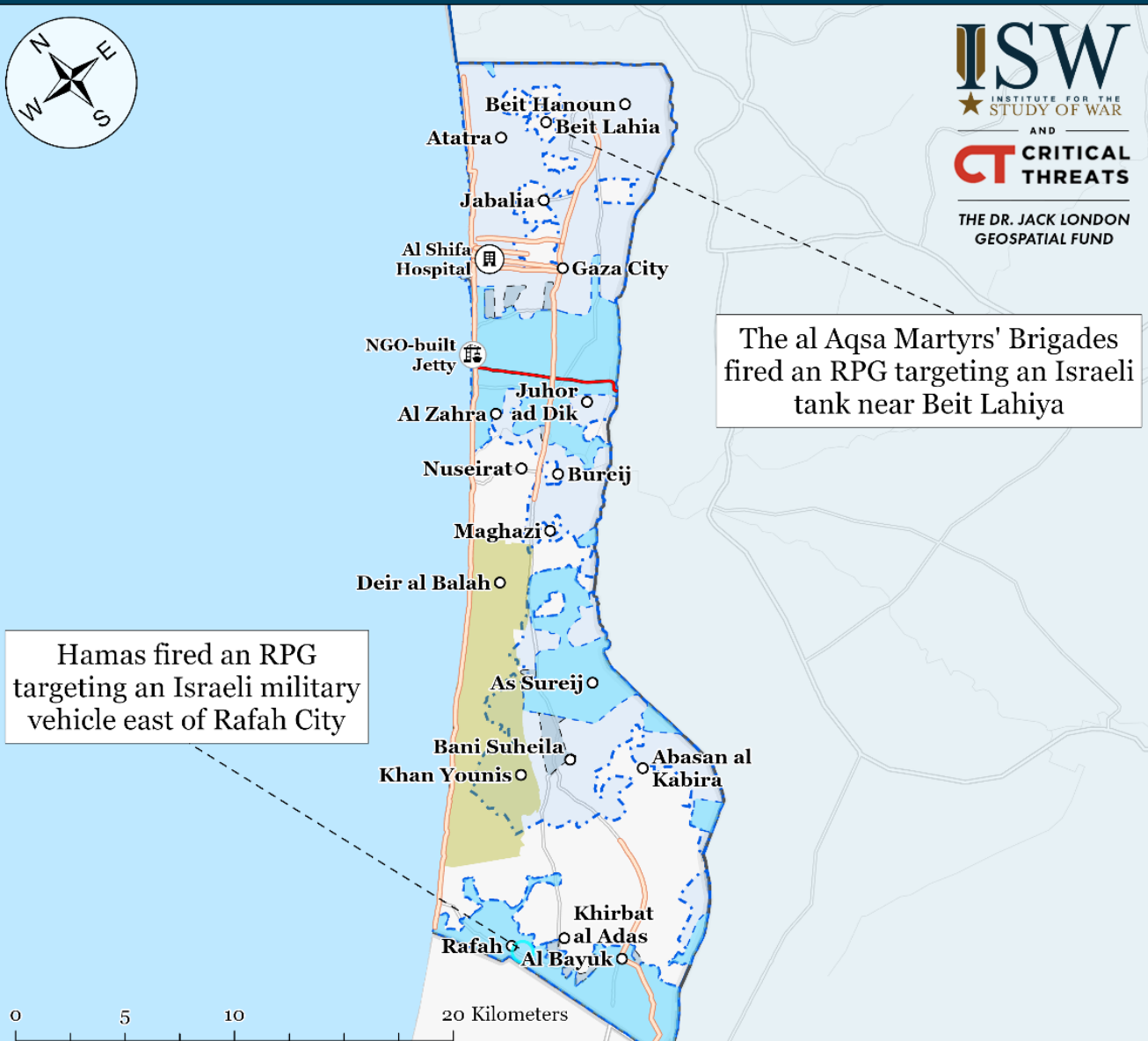
The IDF Air Force struck a Hamas command-and-control site in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip on September 26.[24] The IDF reported that the site was based in the former al Fallujah school and that Hamas fighters used the site to plan and conduct attacks on Israeli forces and into Israeli territory.[25] The IDF added that it took steps to minimize civilian casualties in the airstrike.[26]

Hamas conducted a mortar attack targeting Israeli forces east of Khan Younis City on September 26.[27]

The IDF 162nd Division continued clearing operations in Rafah on September 25.[28] The IDF stated its 162nd Division killed at least 15 Palestinian fighters.[29] Hamas fired an RPG targeting an Israeli vehicle near a supply line, east of Rafah city. [30]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

As of September 26, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades fired an RPG targeting an Israeli tank near Beit Lahiya

Hamas fired an RPG targeting an Israeli military vehicle east of Rafah City

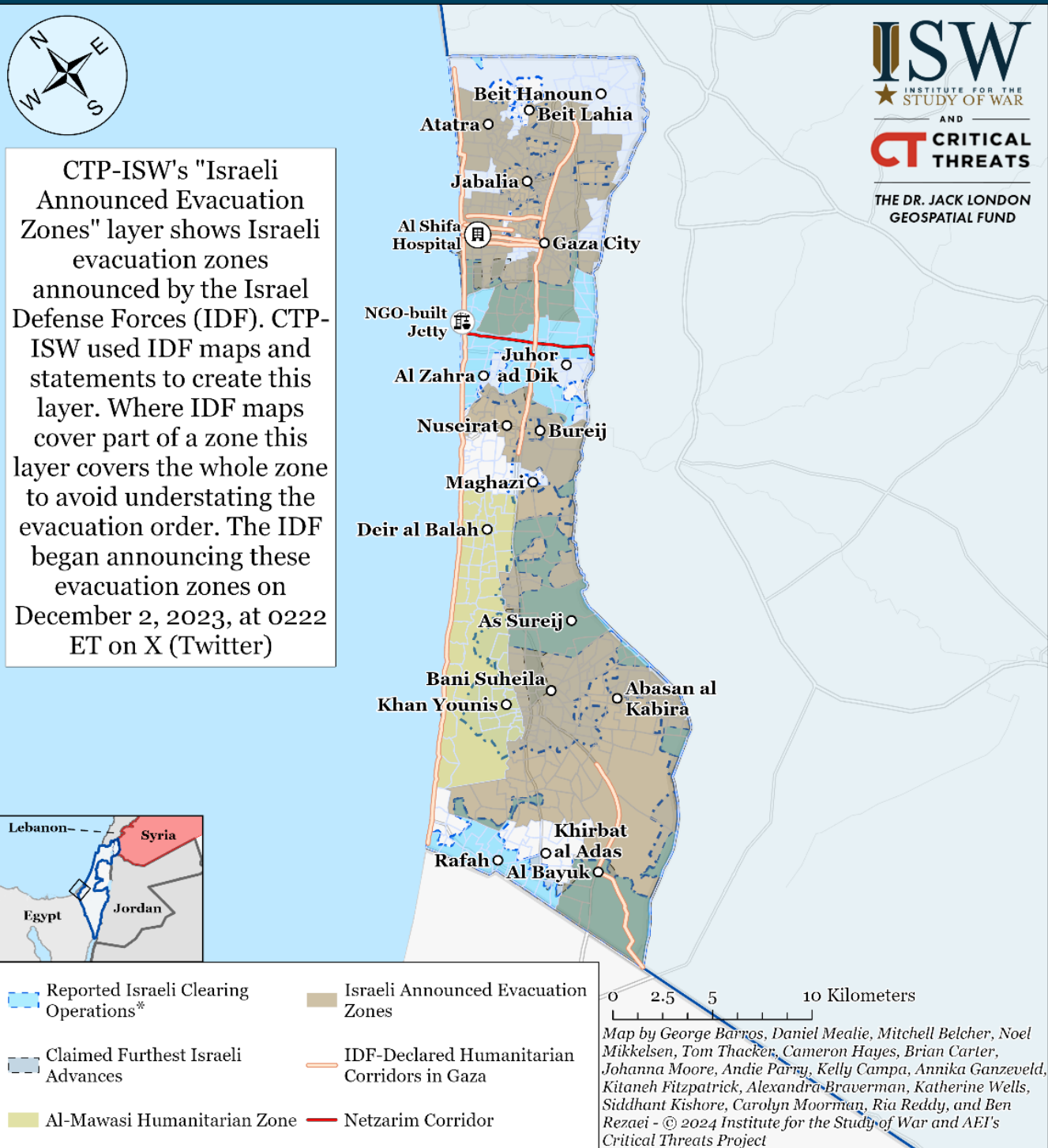
Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Tom Thacker, Cameron Hayes, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Annika Ganzeveld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Alexandra Braverman, Katherine Wells, Siddhant Kishore, Carolyn Moorman, Ria Reddy, and Ben Rezaei - © 2024 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 September 26, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET

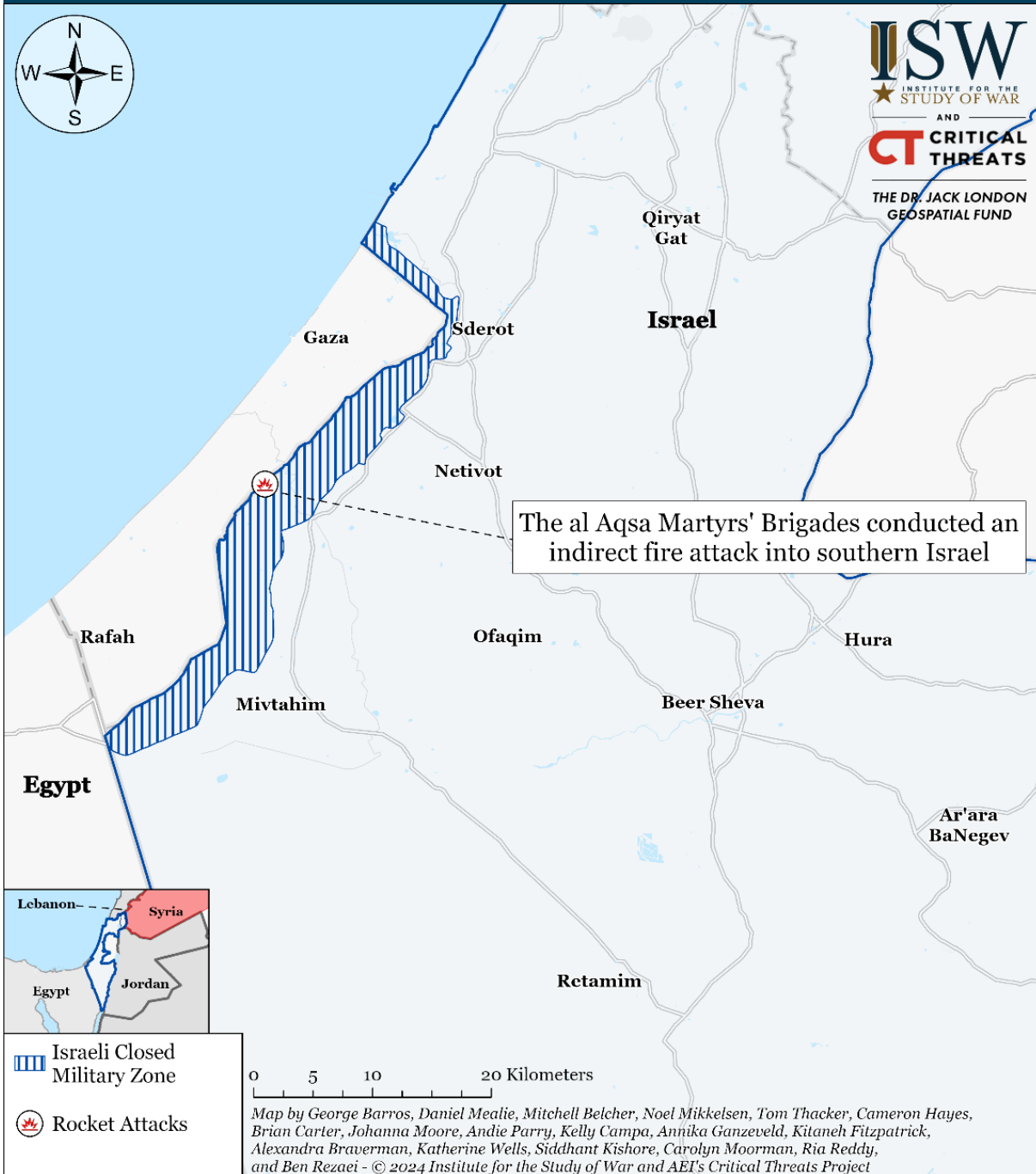


* ISW-CTP's "Reported Israeli Clearing Operations" layer uses the US military's doctrinal definition of clearing which is an operation that "requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area." Clearing operations frequently take weeks and sometimes months to complete

The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades fired rockets targeting an IDF position in southern Israel on September 25.[31]

Attacks into Israel from the Gaza Strip

As of September 26, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



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

West Bank

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

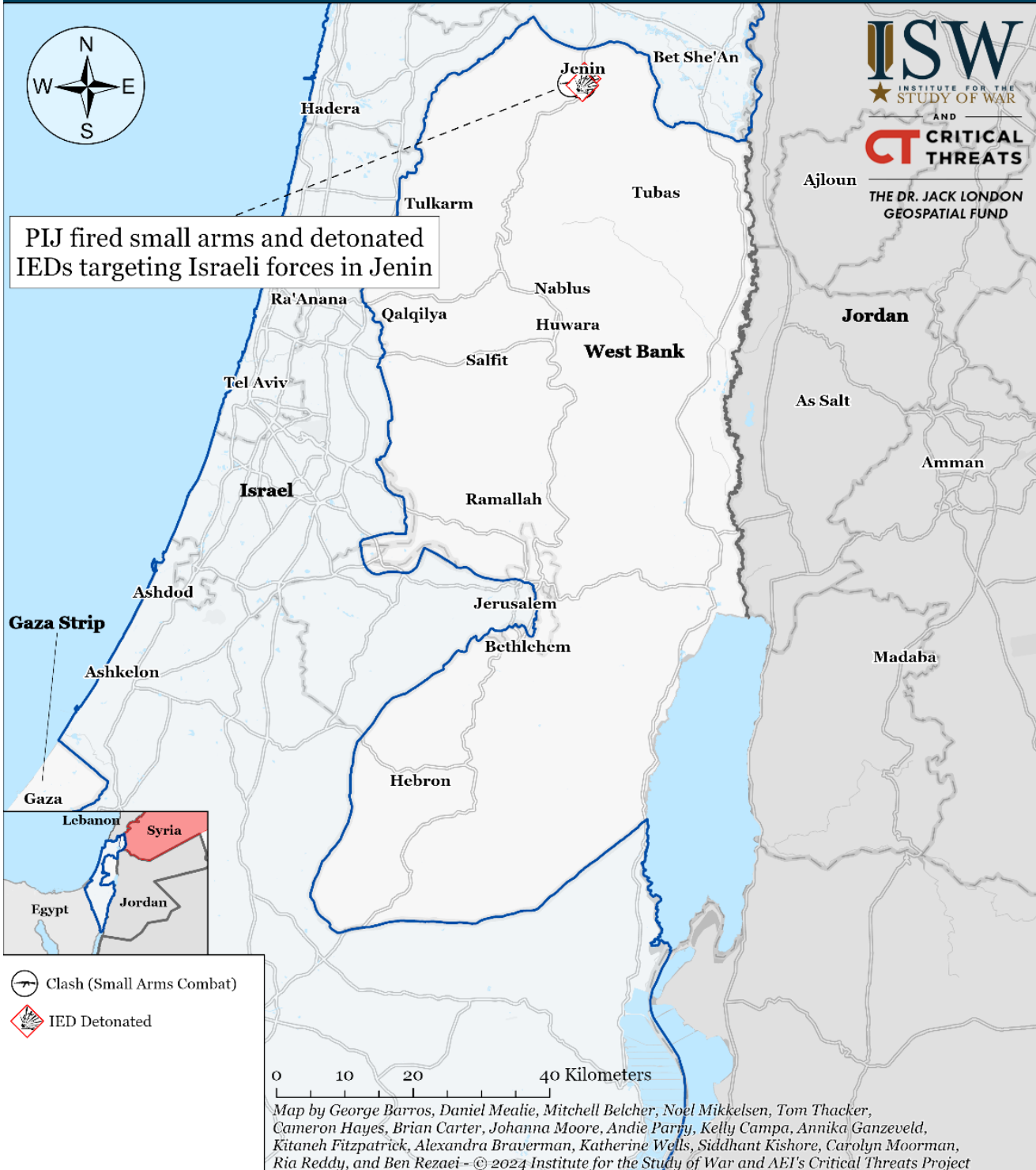
Israeli forces conducted a situational assessment in the West Bank on September 26 to review how to prevent Palestinian militia attacks ahead of upcoming Jewish holidays.[32] IDF Central Command Commander Avi Bluth met with senior Israeli security officials, including the commanders of the IDF West Bank Division and West Bank Border Police, to discuss the security situation and review Israeli forces' readiness in the West Bank.[33] The upcoming Jewish holidays are a period in which Axis of Resistance members and Palestinian militias have historically attacked Israeli targets.[34]

Israeli forces operated in Jenin for the second consecutive day on September 26 as a part of the large-scale counterterrorism operation that the IDF launched in late August 2024 in order to degrade Palestinian militias in the West Bank.[35] The IDF detained 22 wanted individuals across northern West bank, including four in Jenin.[36] The IDF also seized two militia surveillance vehicles with explosives inside them in Jenin.[37] The IDF stated that it destroyed 11 improvised explosive devices (IED) and confiscated several firearms while operating in the northern West Bank.[38]

Israeli forces have engaged Palestinian fighters in at least four locations across Jenin Governorate since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 25.[39] Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) fired small arms and detonated IEDs targeting Israeli forces in Jenin.[40]

Significant Activity in the West Bank

As of September 26, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



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 nine attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 25.[41] *See the topline for further information.*

Iran and the Axis of Resistance

Houthi Supreme Leader Abdulmalik claimed responsibility for the ballistic missile that the Houthis launched at Israel on September 14.[42] Abdulmalik said that the missile, which Israeli air defenses "partially intercepted," was part of the Houthis' fifth stage of escalation against Israel.[43] Abdulmalik announced on July 21 that the Houthis started their fifth phase of escalation, targeting Israel directly, after the Houthi launched a drone attack on Israel on July 18.[44]

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian met Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sabah al Khalid al Sabah, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on September 25.[45] Pezeshkian emphasized the need for stronger cooperation with neighboring countries to ensure lasting peace and security during a meeting with Khalid Al Sabah.[46] Pezeshkian reiterated Iran's commitment to enhancing cooperation, implementing agreements, and proposing a comprehensive transport network to improve regional connectivity in his discussions with Sharif.[47] Pezeshkian also expressed Iran's readiness to assist Lebanon during his meeting with Mikati.[48] Pezeshkian called for unity among Islamic countries and urged them to cut economic ties with Israel "to halt its crimes." He also emphasized the importance of strengthening regional ties.[49] Pezeshkian stressed in a separate meeting with Iranian expatriates that Iran is not a threat to any country and that its military buildup is purely for defense and deterrence rather than aggression. Pezeshkian criticized Western media's false portrayal of Iran, arguing that, while Iran faces challenges, the reality is different from what is depicted.[50]

The Pezeshkian administration is pursuing former Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's neighborhood policy of prioritizing the expansion of bilateral relations with regional states.[51] Pezeshkian announced on X (Twitter) on September 26 that Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref will travel to Pakistan and Armenia in coming days to discuss bilateral ties.[52] Pezeshkian added that Iranian Economic Affairs and Finance Minister Abdol Nasser Hemmati met with other regional officials, including Qatari Finance Minister Ali Ahmed al Kuwari, in Uzbekistan on September 26.[53] The Qatari minister invited Pezeshkian to Doha and called for establishing an Iran-Qatar financial exchange committee.[54] Hemmati also met with Uzbekistani Economy and Finance Minister Jamshid Kuchkarov to discuss bilateral trade and to develop transit routes.[55] Iranian Energy

Minister Abbas Ali Abadi separately proposed connecting Iran's electricity grid with the electricity grids of Russia, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, during a BRICS energy ministerial meeting in Moscow on September 26.[56]

Atomic Energy Organizaton of Iran (AEOI) Director Mohammad Eslami appointed Javad Owji as AEOI deputy director on September 26.[57] Owji is the former Oil minister under the Ebrahim Raisi administration. Owji replaces Pejman Shirmardi, who had held the position since November 2021.[58]



[1] <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1839311349991530657>

[2] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1838059965858062706> ;
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<https://x.com/idfonline/status/1838221453046534547> ;
<https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1837545376049451189>

[3] <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1839257619824812392> ; <https://t.me/moriahdoron/14447>

[4] <https://t.me/moriahdoron/14417>

[5] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7323> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-september-22-2024>

[6] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7335> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7345>

[7] <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1469&context=nwc-review>

[8] <https://t.me/centerkaf/4610>

[9] <https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1250> ;

<https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1251> ;

<https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1252> ;

<https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1254> ;

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- <https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1268>
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[28] <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1839268837440569587>

[29] <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1839268837440569587>

[30] <https://alqassam dot ps/arabic/%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85/20048/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84-355-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%B6-%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%AF-%D9%84-%D9%83%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1>

[31] https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/7562

[32] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1839290959525458263> ;
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[41] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7321> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7323> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7325> ;
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[42] <https://x.com/TvAlmasirah/status/1839302508696711460>;

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<https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-july-19-2024>
- [45] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1403/07/05/3165555>
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- [47] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1403/07/04/3165583>
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