

Iran Update



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September 29, 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.

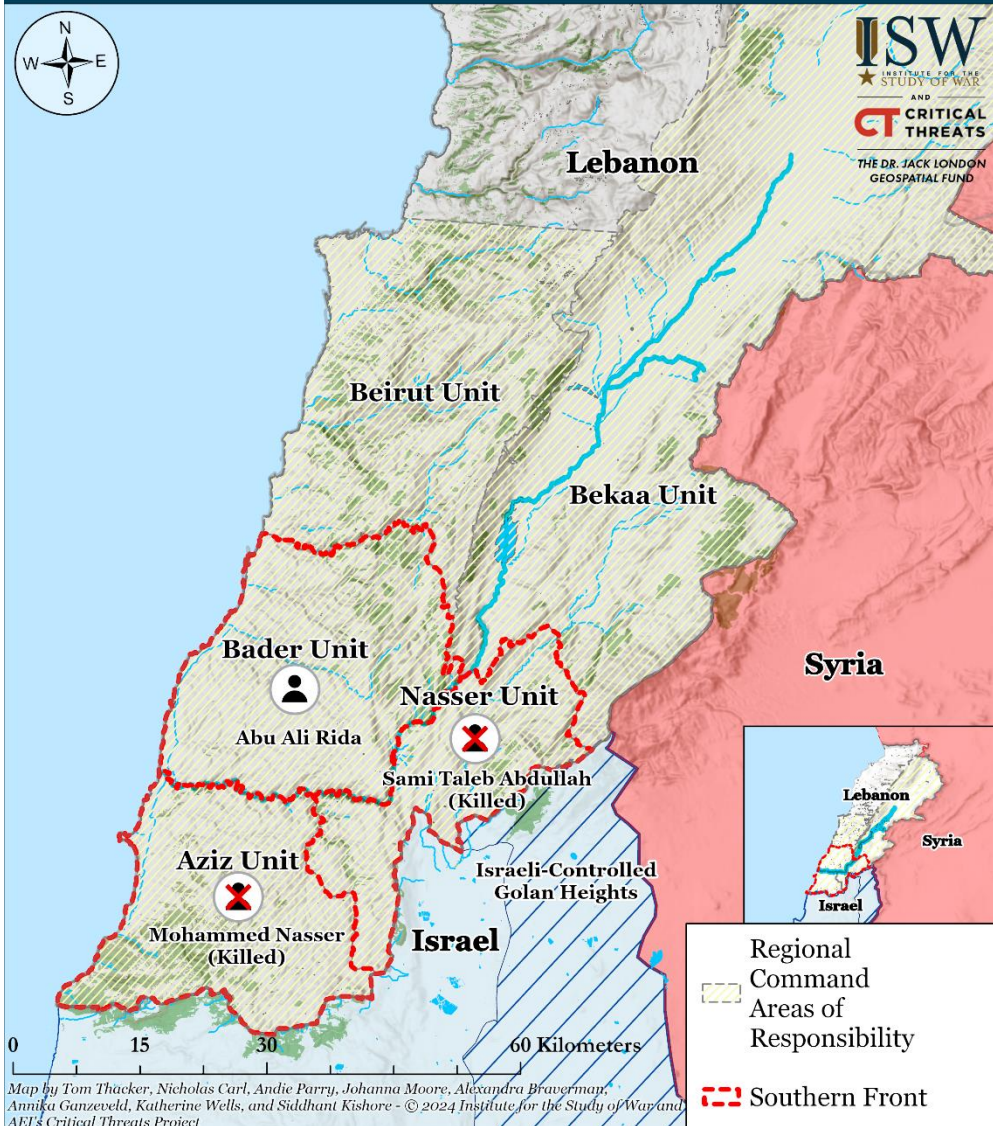
The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) is trying to help Lebanese Hezbollah recover from the severe disruption that Israel has imposed upon it. Two anonymous IRGC officials told the *New York Times* that Tehran is trying to help Hezbollah establish a secure communications network, name a new secretary general, and rebuild its command structure.[1] The sources also said that a senior IRGC Quds Force officer will travel to Beirut to support this recovery.[2] This report comes after CTP-ISW assessed that Israeli military operations have generated internal disarray in Hezbollah and severely disrupted its strategic- and operational-level military leadership. IRGC Quds Force Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani met with the Hezbollah representative to Iran, Abdullah Safi ed Din, in Tehran on September 29, which is consistent with the *New York Times* article.[3] Abdullah Safi ed Din is the brother of Hashem Safi ed Din, who is speculated to be one of the top contenders to succeed Hassan Nasrallah as Hezbollah secretary general.[4] Iranian state media widely circulated Ghaani's meeting likely to reaffirm the close coordination between Iran and

Hezbollah.[5]

The Iranian security establishment is likely preoccupied managing the crises that it faces over planning an immediate retaliatory strike to avenge Nasrallah. On one hand, Israeli operations have severely degraded and in some cases defeated Hamas units in the Gaza Strip.[6] On the other hand, Hezbollah appears to be suffering from temporary organizational paralysis.[7] Iranian military leadership needs to urgently address the mounting questions about in what form Hezbollah will emerge from the war. Some Iranian officials who are not engaged in managing these military emergencies, such as Massoud Pezeshkian and Saeed Jalili, have meanwhile focused on debate over how to respond to the killing of Nasrallah, according to the *New York Times*.[8]

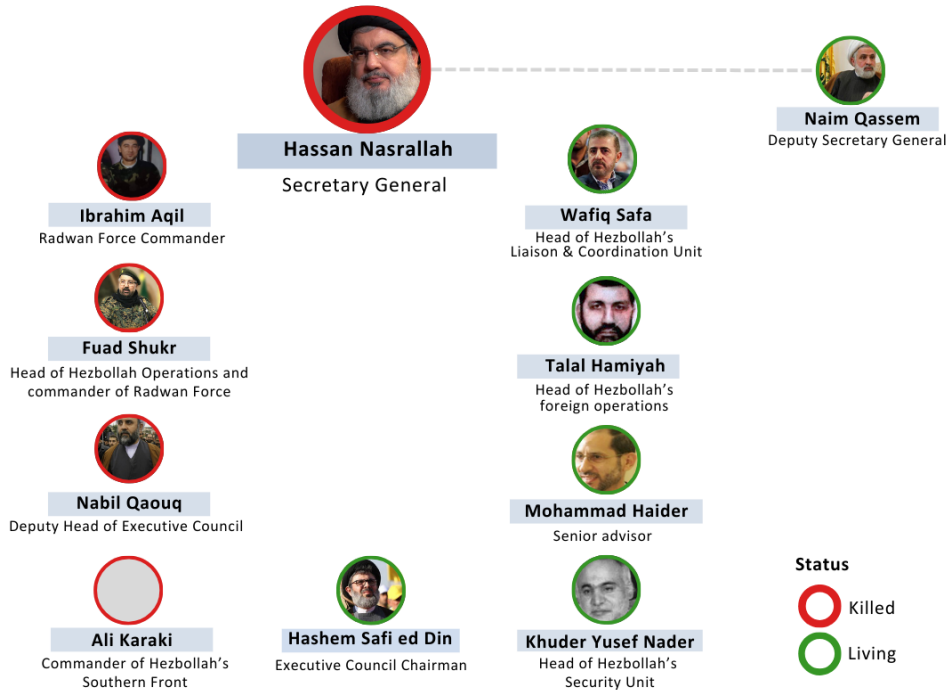
The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) continued its decapitation campaign against Hezbollah. The IDF has sustained airstrikes targeting and killing senior and mid-tier Hezbollah commanders, such as Nasrallah, in recent days.[9] The IDF confirmed that over 20 Hezbollah officers died in the airstrike that killed Nasrallah.[10] These officers included Ali Karaki, who was a member of the Hezbollah Jihad Council and commanded the southern axis against Israel. These officers also included senior advisers to Nasrallah and the head of his personal security detail.[11] The IDF more recently killed Nabil Qaouk, who was the deputy chairman of the Hezbollah Executive Council and possibly a member of the Hezbollah Jihad Council, in an airstrike on September 28.[12] Israeli Army Radio reported that Qaouk was expected to participate in Hezbollah leadership the “day after Nasrallah.”[13] Israeli media lastly reported that the IDF conducted a strike targeting Abu Ali Reda, the commander of the Hezbollah Badr unit, in Beirut on September 29.[14] Hezbollah denied the reports that Reda had been killed.[15]

Lebanese Hezbollah Regional Commands



HEZBOLLAH'S JIHAD COUNCIL

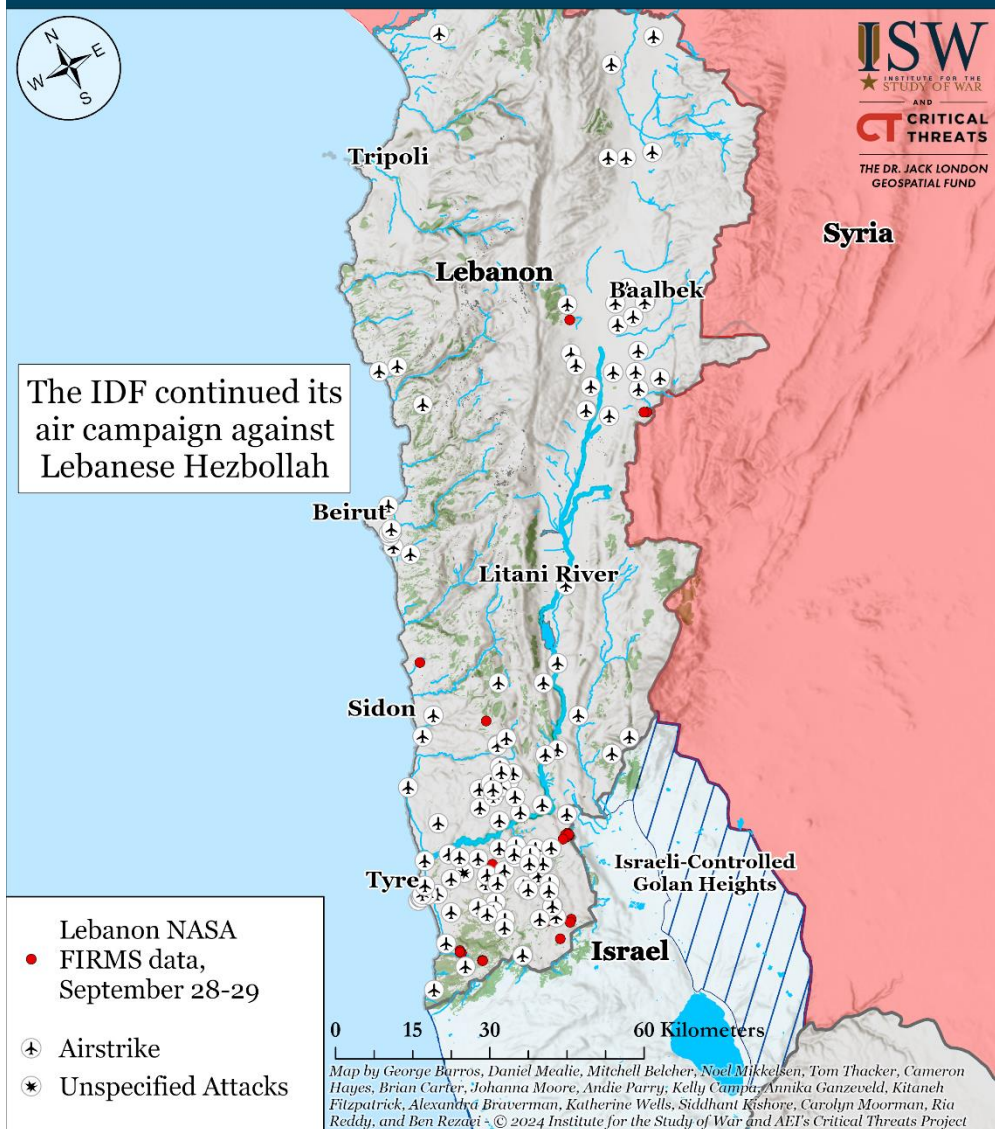
as of September 29, 2024



The IDF continued efforts to degrade Hezbollah capabilities and prevent weapons transfers from Syria into Lebanon. The IDF struck over 120 Hezbollah targets, including rocket launchers, weapons caches, and other military infrastructure, across southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley.[16] The IDF also struck targets tied to weapons smuggling in al Qusayr, Syria.[17] Local Syrian sources separately reported that Israel conducted an airstrike on an unspecified target near Yafour, a few kilometers away from the Lebanese border in southwestern Syria.

Israeli Air Campaign in Lebanon

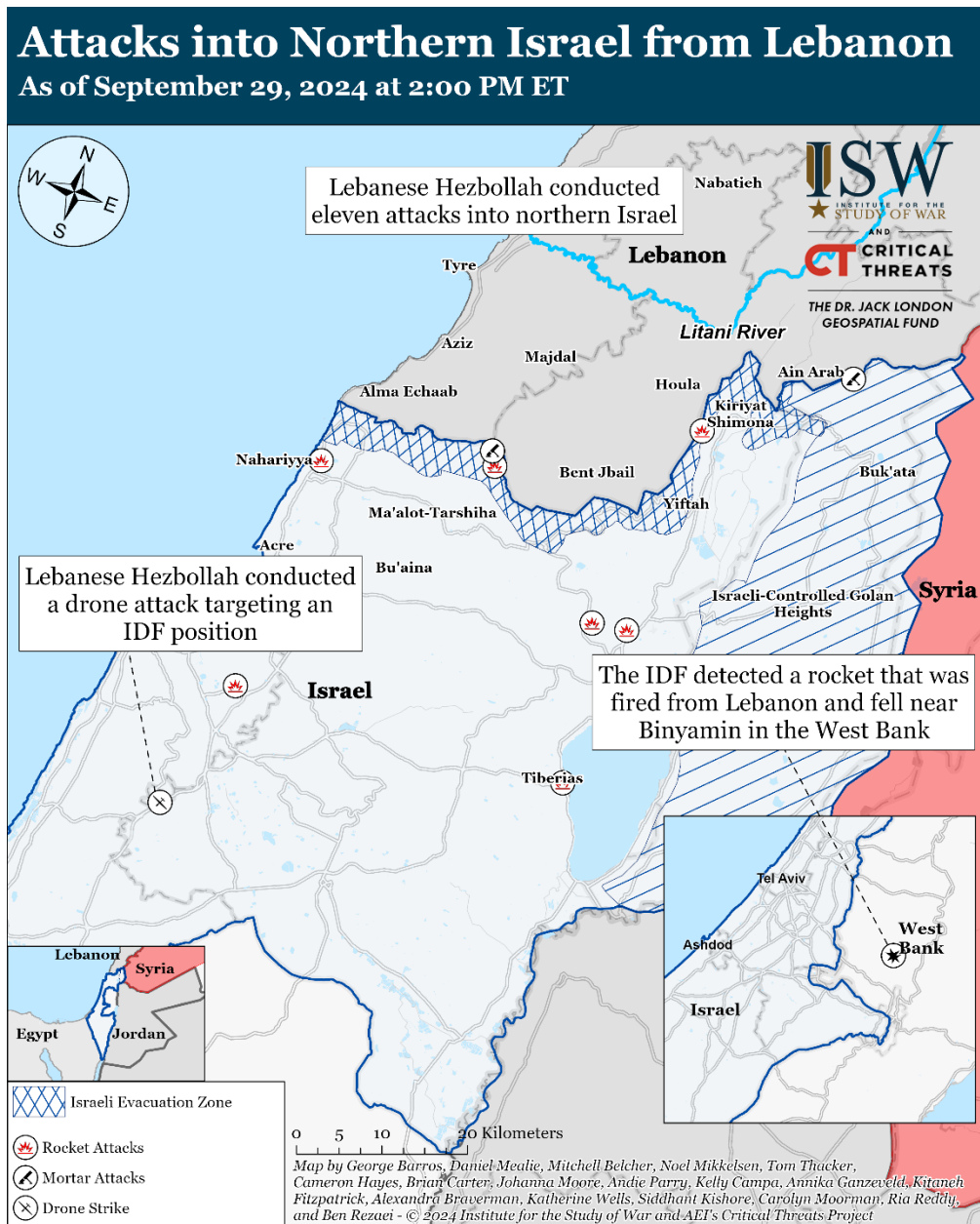
As of September 29, 2024 at 14:00 PM ET



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 28 to 2:00pm ET on September 29. This map is not exhaustive. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify the locations of Israeli strikes.

Hezbollah continued attacking civilian and military locations in Israel. Hezbollah fired several rocket barrages targeting IDF positions, including “Camp Ofek,” marking the first time that Hezbollah has attacked this location in the war.[18] Hezbollah claimed that it attacked the IDF position in response to the “Israeli violation” of civilians in Lebanon.[19] The IDF also detected a rocket that was launched from Lebanon and fell near al Binyamin, north of Ramallah, in the West Bank.[20] No actor has claimed the attack at the time of this writing. Hezbollah previously fired long-range rockets targeting Israeli settlements in the West Bank on September 23.[21] Hezbollah also fired drones targeting Israeli forces at Eliakim camp.[22] Israeli air defenses intercepted two drones over Israeli

These consistent but relatively low-level attacks suggest that Hezbollah may be unable to wage a sophisticated strike campaign into Israel at this time. CTP-ISW has observed that Hezbollah appears to be suffering from temporary organizational paralysis, as it has not responded to Israel in any meaningful way and has failed to stop Israel from targeting its key leadership or take necessary steps to protect that leadership.[24] The disruption caused by the Israeli air campaign is a temporary effect, however. Any organized military will reconstitute its leadership and communications if given time and space to do so. CTP-ISW is not prepared to assess the combat effectiveness of Hezbollah’s tactical-level units, although they are likely degraded to various degrees due to Israeli airstrikes.

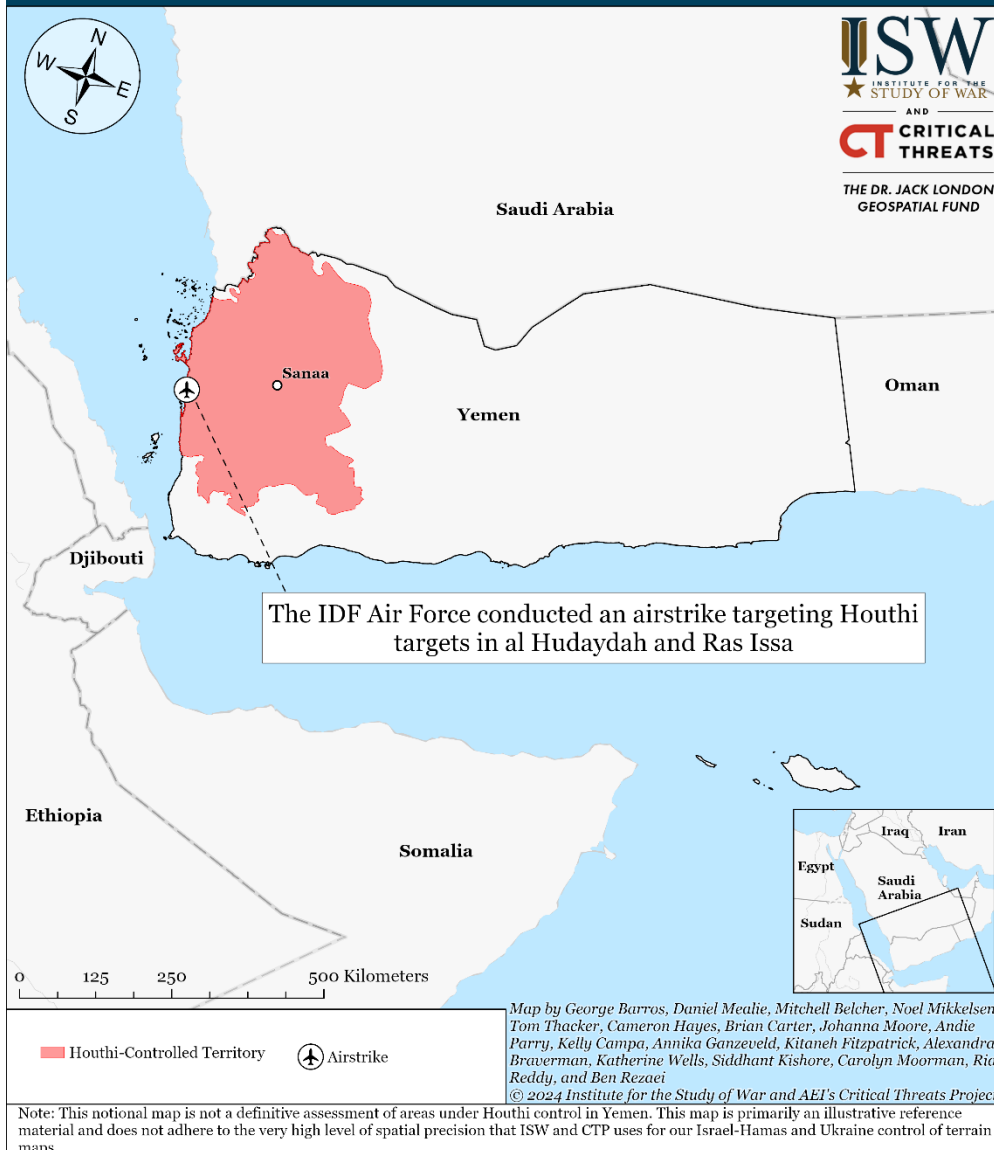


The Jordanian Army reported that a Grad rocket launched from southern Lebanon fell in an “uninhabited desert area” southeast of Amman, Jordan, on September 29.[25] The rocket fell in al Muwaqqar, which is around 160 kilometers from the Lebanese border.[26] Al Muwaqqar is also around 22 kilometers from the Marka civil airport, which is used by US forces in Jordan.[27] No actor has claimed responsibility for firing the rocket at the time of this writing. Hezbollah may have misfired a rocket aimed at Israel or the West Bank. Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, including Kataib Hezbollah, have signaled in recent days their intention to conduct attacks into Jordan, although there is no evidence at this time to suggest that an Iranian-backed Iraqi militia fired the rocket into
Jordan.[28]

The IDF Air Force conducted an airstrike targeting Houthi sites in al Hudaydah and Ras Issa, Yemen, on September 29 in order to retaliate for previous Houthi attacks and to restore deterrence vis-a-vis te Houthis.[29] The Houthis most recently claimed a Palestine-2 ballistic missile attack targeting Ben Gurion International Airport on September 28.[30] The IDF stated that it targeted infrastructure used by the Houthis to import oil and smuggle Iranian weapons into Yemen. The IDF noted that the Houthis have cooperated with Iranian-backed Iraqi militias in the past year in order to attack Israel.[31] CTP-ISW previously reported on increased cooperation between the Houthis and Iranian-backed Iraqi groups, including the Houthis sending a drone expert to Iraq to train Iraqi militia members.[32] The IDF Air Force previously struck Houthi military targets in al Hudaydah in July 2024 following a Houthi drone attack targeting Tel Aviv.[33]

Houthi Attacks in the Red Sea

As of September 29, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—has claimed seven attacks into Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 28. The claims included the following:

- Three drone attacks targeting unspecified “vital target[s]” in Eilat[34]
- Two drone attacks targeting unspecified locations in Israel[35]
- Two al Arqab cruise missile attacks targeting unspecified locations in Israel[36]

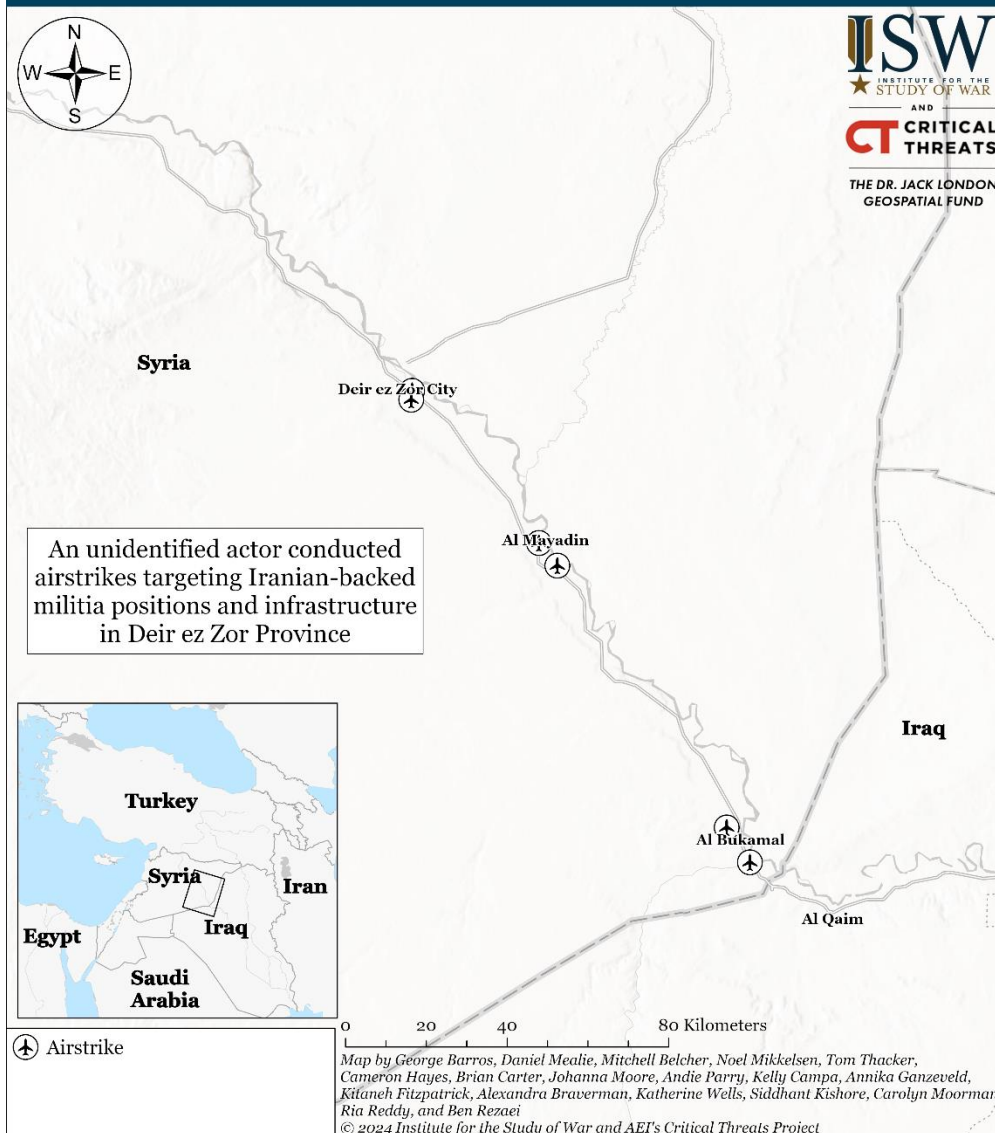
The IDF intercepted a drone that was headed toward Israeli territory over the Red Sea on September 29.[37]

Unspecified sources in the Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—told Lebanese outlet al Akhbar on September 29 that it will target US and Israeli interests to avenge Hassan Nasrallah.[38] The sources added that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq will fire missiles at Tel Aviv to “be able to kill [Israeli Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu.[39] Al Akhbar also reported that the Islamic Resistance of Iraq has ordered a “general mobilization” to prepare for a “comprehensive war” with Israel, although the outlet did not provide sources for this claim.[40] Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have previously vowed to send fighters to help defend Hezbollah if Israel launches a ground operation into Lebanon.[41]

Syrian opposition media reported that an unspecified actor conducted airstrikes targeting Iranian-backed militia positions and infrastructure in Deir ez Zor Province, Syria, on September 28.[42] The airstrikes targeted bridges, militia positions, and a recently installed radar system around Albu Kamal and Deir ez Zor City.[43] Several militia members were killed or injured in the airstrikes, according to opposition reports.[44]

Significant Activity in Deir ez Zor Province, Syria

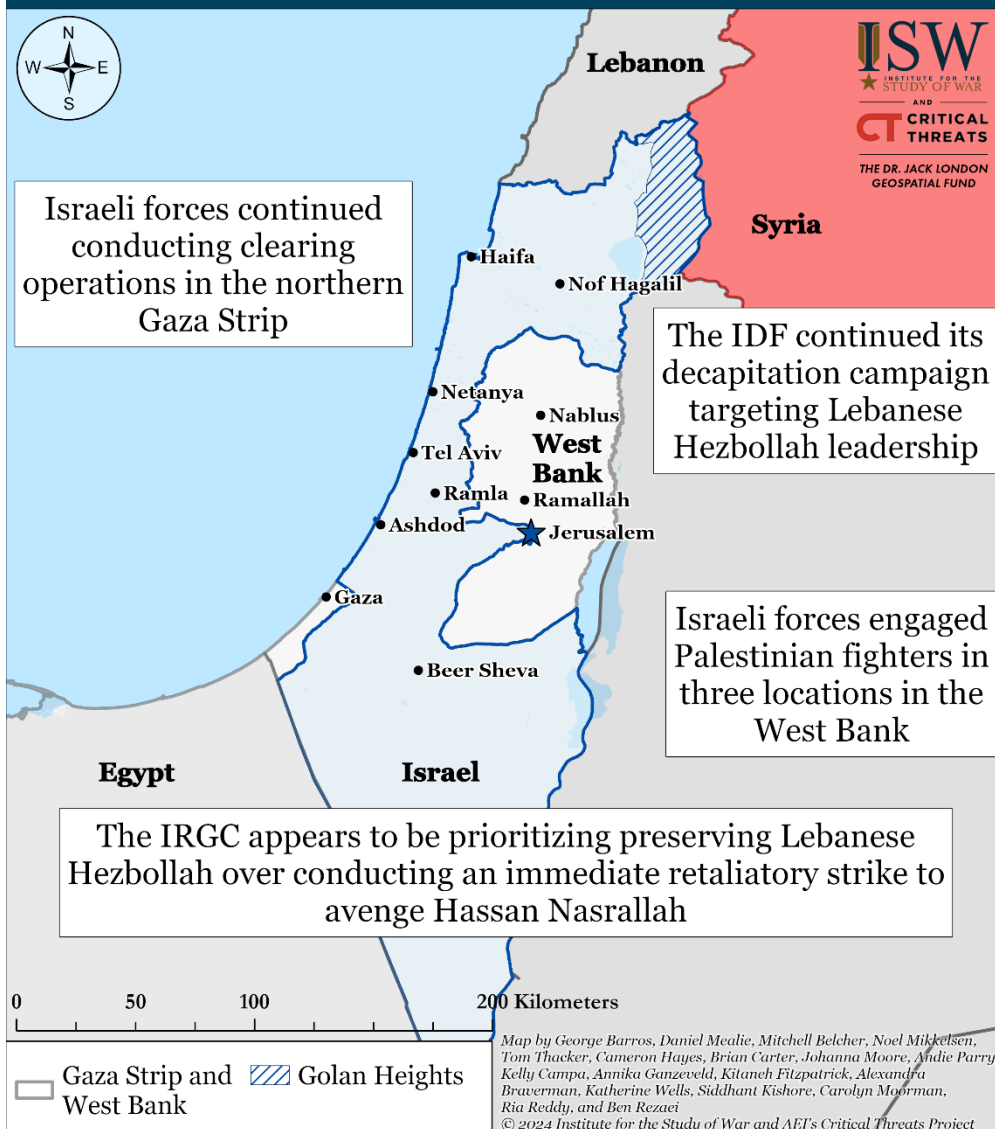
As of September 29, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



This map illustrates individual airstrikes based on local Syrian reporting. This map is not exhaustive. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify the locations of the strikes.

Key Takeaways in the Israel-Hamas War

As of September 29, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



Key Takeaways:

- **Iran:** The IRGC is trying to help Lebanese Hezbollah recover from the severe disruption that Israel has imposed upon it. Iranian military leadership is likely preoccupied managing crises over planning an immediate retaliatory to avenge Hassan Nasrallah.
- **Lebanon:** The IDF continued its campaign to degrade Hezbollah capabilities, kill Hezbollah leaders, and prevent weapons transfers to Lebanon. Hezbollah continued attacking civilian and military sites in Israel.
- **Yemen:** The IDF conducted an airstrike targeting Houthi sites in Yemen in retaliation for Houthi attacks on Israel and in order to restore deterrence vis-a-vis the Houthis.

- **Iraq:** The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed seven drone and missile attacks targeting Israel. The IDF intercepted a drone that was headed toward Israel over the Red Sea.
- **Syria:** Syrian opposition media reported that an unidentified actor conducted airstrikes targeting Iranian-backed militia positions and infrastructure in eastern Syria.

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

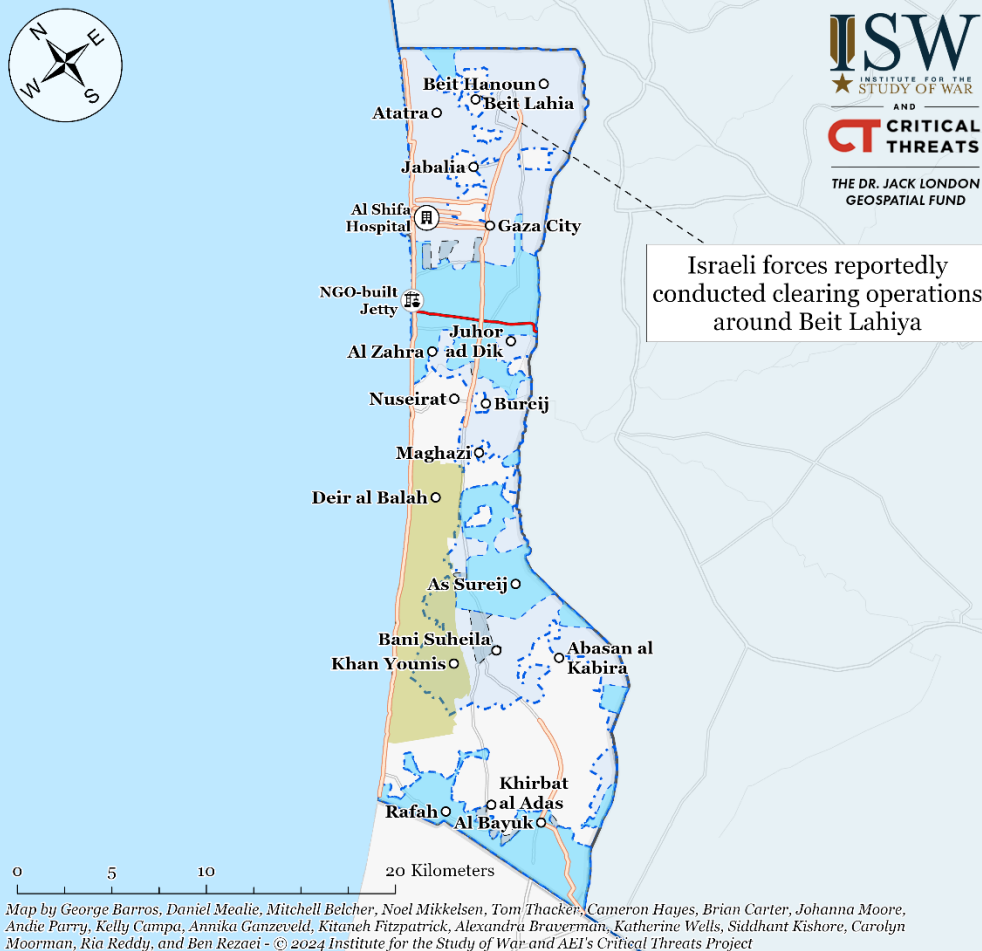
Israeli forces reportedly continued operating near Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip on September 29.[45] A Palestinian journalist reported gunfire from Israeli vehicles northwest of Beit Lahiya on September 29.[46] This reporting is consistent with the IDF launch of a precision operation in Beit Lahiya in order to destroy Hamas infrastructure on September 25.[47] Commercially available satellite imagery captured on September 27 shows flattened terrain and destroyed buildings west of Al Shafei Strawberry Farm in Beit Lahiya, indicating that Israeli tanks or bulldozers operated east of Beit Lahiya.

The IDF Air Force struck a Hamas command-and-control site in al Salaten in the northern Gaza Strip on September 29.[48] The IDF reported that the site was based in the former Um al Fahm school and that Hamas fighters used the site to plan and conduct attacks targeting Israeli forces and into Israeli territory.[49] The IDF added that it took steps to minimize civilian casualties in the airstrike.[50]

The IDF 252nd Division continued clearing operations in the central Gaza Strip on September 29.[51] The IDF said that the IDF 5th Brigade located, investigated, and destroyed a one-kilometer underground tunnel north of the Netzarim Corridor during the “past few weeks”.[52] The IDF identified several rooms, facilities, and weapons used by Hamas within the tunnel.[53] A Palestinian journalist also reported Israeli military vehicle presence in neighborhoods north and south of the Netzarim Corridor on September 28 and 29.[54]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

As of September 29, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



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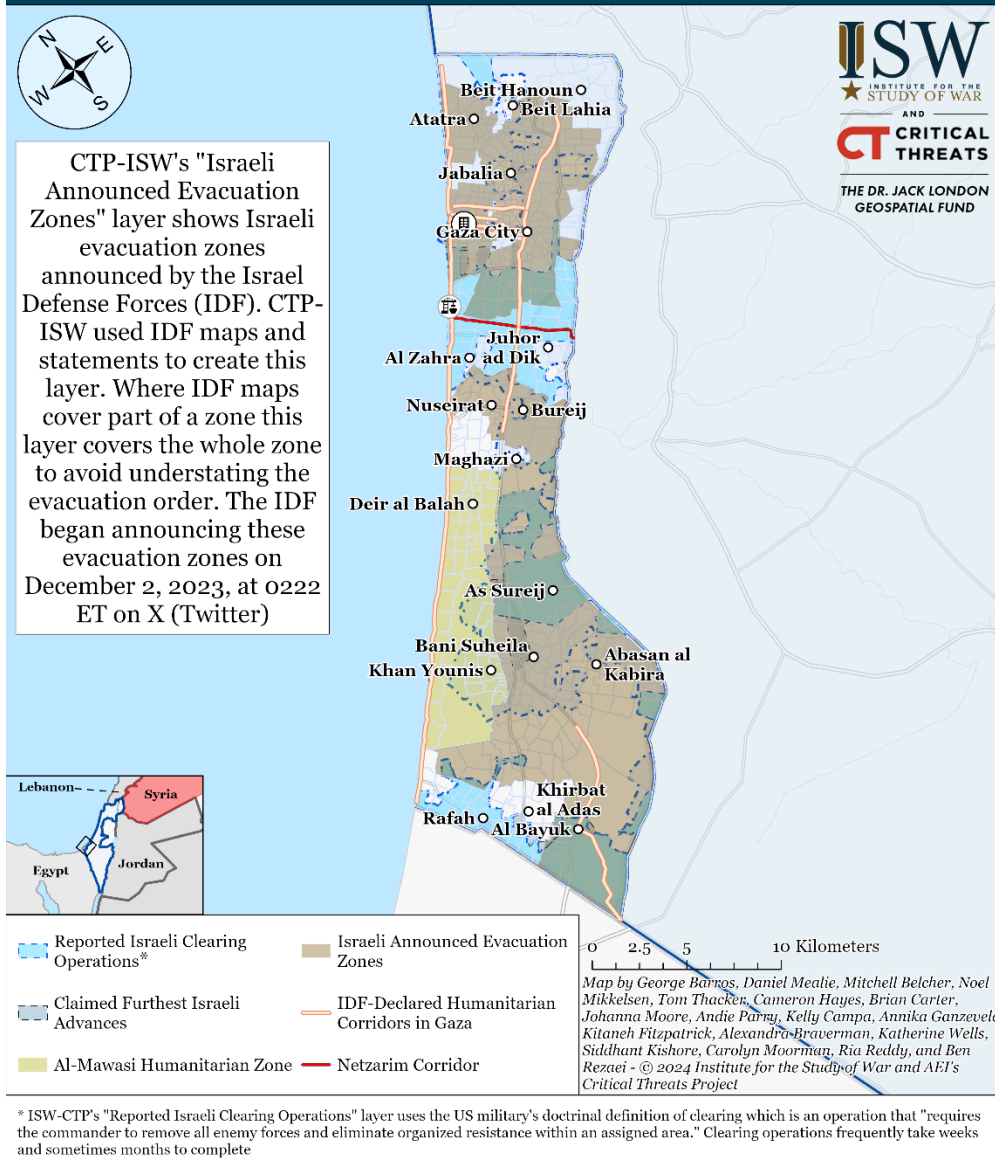
Israeli forces reportedly conducted clearing operations around Beit Lahiya

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 29, 2024 at 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 three locations in the West Bank since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 28.[55]

Significant Activity in the West Bank

As of September 29, 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

Iranian-backed militias, including Hezbollah, have conducted at least 14 attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 28.[56] *See the topline section for more information.*

The IDF Air Force struck and killed a senior Hamas official at an unspecified location in southern Syria on September 27.^[57] Ahmed Muhammad Fahd had directed rocket attacks targeting Israeli forces in the Golan Heights and was planning another attack when he was killed.^[58]

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- [1] <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/29/world/middleeast/iran-hezbollah-israel-nasrallah.html>
- [2] <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/29/world/middleeast/iran-hezbollah-israel-nasrallah.html>
- [3] <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1403/07/08/3168022> ;
<https://x.com/JasonMBrotsky/status/1840339796310249788>
- [4] <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/28/world/middleeast/why-israel-assassinate-nasrallah.html> ;
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- [5] <https://x.com/ifofgot/status/1818395335540015107>
- [6] <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-september-27-2024>
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- [8] <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/29/world/middleeast/iran-hezbollah-israel-nasrallah.html>
- [9] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7378>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7389>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7390>
- [10] [www dot idf.il/234734](http://www.idf.il/234734); <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/iran-update-september-28-2024>
- [11] [www dot idf.il/234734](http://www.idf.il/234734)
- [12] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1840307663738958003>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7390>
- [13] <https://t.me/moriahdoron/14677>
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- [15] <https://t.me/mmirleb/7391>
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- [17] <https://t.me/moriahdoron/14678>, <https://t.me/moriahdoron/14680>
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- [20] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1840111942364500127>
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- [28] <https://www.al-akhbar.com/Iraq/387419/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%B9%D9%89-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87%D8%A3%D9%86%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B0%D8%AC%D8%A7-%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7>
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- [34] <https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1289> ;
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- [36] <https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1295> ;
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https://t.me/C_Military1/60814 ; <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1840417315768189375> ;
<https://x.com/idfonline/status/1840419114659013087> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/7400> ;
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[57] https://www.timesofisrael dot com/liveblog_entry/idf-says-head-of-hamas-in-southern-syria-killed-in-airstrike/

[58] https://www.timesofisrael dot com/liveblog_entry/idf-says-head-of-hamas-in-southern-syria-killed-in-airstrike/