

# Iran Update



**Alexandra Braverman, Johanna Moore, Katherine Wells, and Nicholas Carl**

**August 3, 2024, Information Cutoff: 2:00 pm 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) issued a statement on August 3 claiming that Israel killed Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran using a short-range projectile equipped with an explosive warhead.[1]** The statement claimed that the projectile was fired from outside the guesthouse where Haniyeh was staying in northern Tehran. The IRGC also claimed that the projectile was equipped with a “seven-kilogram warhead.” The IRGC vowed to retaliate severely against Israel at the “appropriate time and place” for the killing of Haniyeh.

The statement follows an August 1 *New York Times* report that stated, citing seven anonymous Middle Eastern officials, that Israel killed Haniyeh by remotely detonating an explosive device covertly smuggled into the Tehran guesthouse months in advance.[2] The report stated that Haniyeh had stayed at that guesthouse multiple times previously. United Kingdom-based outlet

the *Telegraph* similarly reported on August 2 that the Israeli Mossad hired Iranian security agents from the IRGC Ansar ol Mehdi Protection Corps to plant explosives in three separate rooms in the guesthouse.[3] The *Telegraph* also reported that Israel originally planned to detonate the explosives targeting Haniyeh during former Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's funeral in May 2024. The report stated that this original plan did not go ahead due to large crowds inside the building. The report stated that the agents then fled Iran and detonated the explosive devices from abroad. The IRGC is responsible for securing and maintaining the guesthouse.[4] The IRGC may have claimed that a projectile killed Haniyeh to deflect blame for allowing Mossad to infiltrate its security forces.

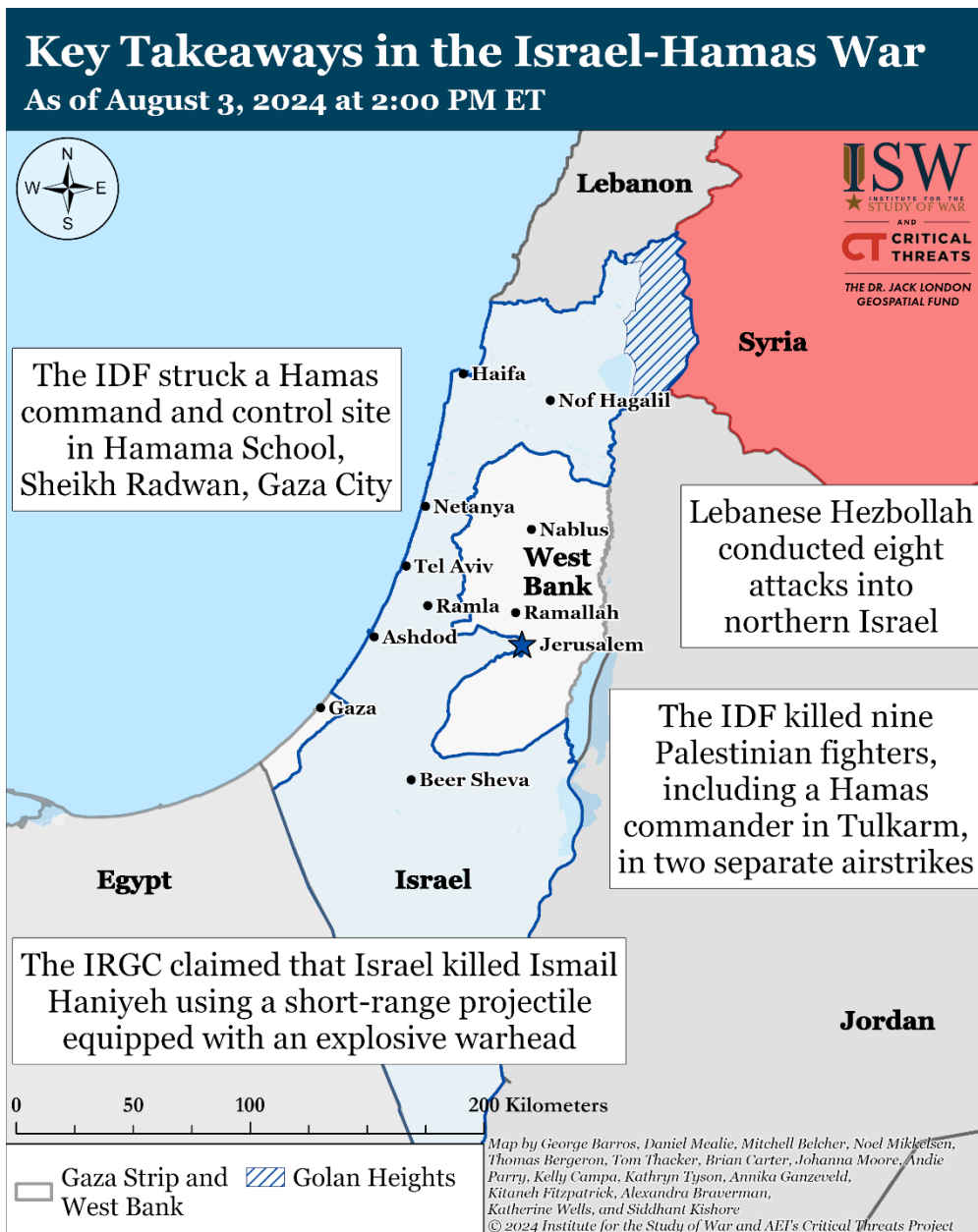
The *New York Times* reported on August 3 that Iran has arrested over twenty-four individuals, including senior intelligence officers, military officers, and staff at the guesthouse, in connection to the security failure that led to the killing of Haniyeh.[5] Israel has not claimed responsibility for killing Haniyeh at the time of this writing.

**Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah have refused to speak with US and Arab diplomats trying to deescalate between Israel and Iran, according to the *Wall Street Journal* on August 3.**[6] The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the United States and Israel are preparing for an “unpredictable,” broader, and more complex attack than Iran's April 2024 drone and missile strike on Israel. Iranian officials warned Israel of their plans ahead of the attack in April 2024, providing the United States and Israel with time to prepare. Former White House Middle East director Andrew Tabler told the *Wall Street Journal* that “less telegraphing means potential to misjudge the next step on the escalatory ladder.” The US Department of Defense announced on August 2 that it will “take steps” to support the defense of Israel and to “mitigate the possibility of regional escalation.”[7] The department also reported that air and sea-based cruise missile defenses, ballistic missile defense-capable cruisers and destroyers, and a squadron of F-22s will deploy to the Middle East. The USS Abraham Lincoln will replace the USS Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group.[8]

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Iran:** The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) issued a statement on August 3 claiming that Israel killed Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran using a short-range projectile equipped with an explosive warhead. The *New York Times* reported on August 3 that Iran has arrested over twenty-four individuals, including senior intelligence officers, military officers, and staff at the guesthouse, in connection to the security failure that led to the killing of Haniyeh.
- **Iran and Hezbollah:** Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah have refused to speak with US and Arab diplomats trying to deescalate between Israel and Iran, according to the *Wall Street Journal* on August 3. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the United States and Israel are preparing for an “unpredictable,” broader, and more complex attack than Iran's April 2024 drone and missile strike on Israel.
- **Gaza:** The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) struck a Hamas command and control site in Hamama School, Sheikh Radwan, Gaza City on August 3. Hamas used the site to plan attacks on Israeli forces, manufacture and store weapons, and train fighters.
- **West Bank:** The IDF killed nine Palestinian fighters, including a Hamas commander in Tulkarm, in two separate airstrikes on August 3.

- **Southern Lebanon and the Golan Heights:** Lebanese Hezbollah has conducted at least eight attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on August 2.
- **Yemen:** The United Kingdom Maritime Transit Organization (UKMTO) reported a small explosion in close proximity to merchant vessel *M/V Groton* around 170 nautical miles east of Aden, Yemen.
- **Syria:** The IDF reportedly struck a weapons convoy on August 3 west of Qusayir, Syria on route to the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon.



### 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 Israel Defense Forces (IDF) struck a Hamas command and control site in Hamama School, Sheikh Radwan, Gaza City on August 3.[9]** Hamas used the site to plan attacks on Israeli forces, manufacture and store weapons, and train fighters.[10] A Palestinian journalist reported that the school was being used to house displaced Palestinians.[11] The IDF reported that it used precision munitions and intelligence to minimize civilian casualties.[12]

**The IDF 252nd Division continued clearing operations around the Netzarim Corridor on August 3.[13]** The Jerusalem and Harel brigades directed airstrikes targeting a Hamas warehouse and other militia buildings. One of the buildings that the IDF Air Force destroyed was used by Hamas fighters to launch anti-tank missiles at Israeli forces in the area. Hamas and the Popular Resistance Committees conducted separate mortar attacks targeting Israeli forces along the Netzarim Corridor.[14]

**The IDF 162nd Division continued clearing operations in Rafah and Tal al Sultan on August 3.[15]** The Nahal Brigade directed an airstrike targeting a building from which Palestinian fighters exited a tunnel shaft.[16] The IDF 215th Artillery Brigade directed an airstrike targeting a separate building from which Palestinian fighters had fired anti-tank missiles at Israeli forces in the area.[17] A Hamas sniper claimed to shoot an Israeli soldier near the Eastern Cemetery, east of Rafah City.[18]

# Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

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



The IDF struck a Hamas command and control site in Hamama School, Sheikh Radwan, Gaza City



The Jerusalem and Harel brigades directed airstrikes targeting a Hamas warehouse and other militia buildings

Nahal Brigade directed an airstrike targeting a building from which Palestinian fighters exited a tunnel shaft

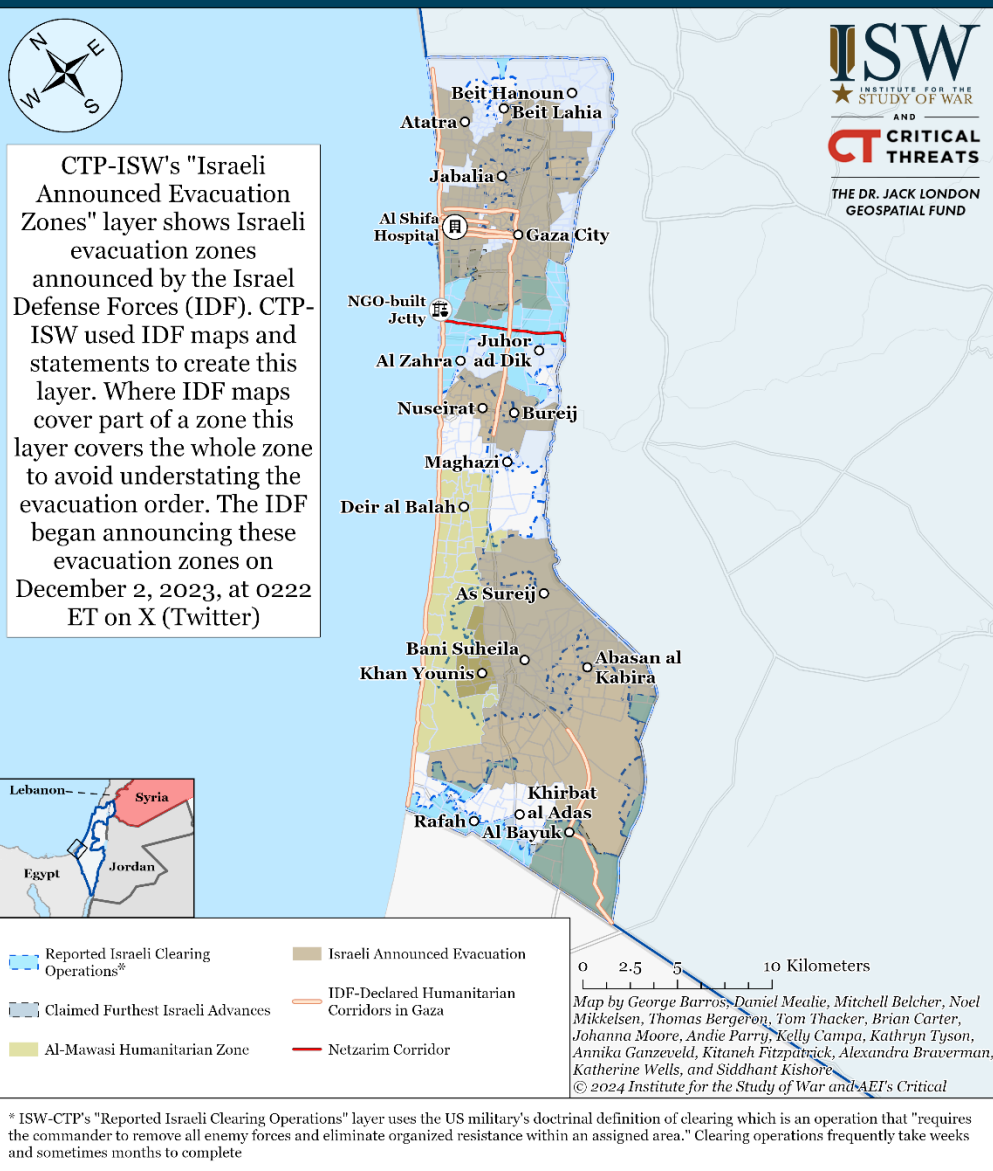
0 5 10 20 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Tom Thacker, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Kathryn Tyson, Annika Ganzeveld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Alexandra Braverman, Katherine Wells, and Siddhant Kishore - © 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

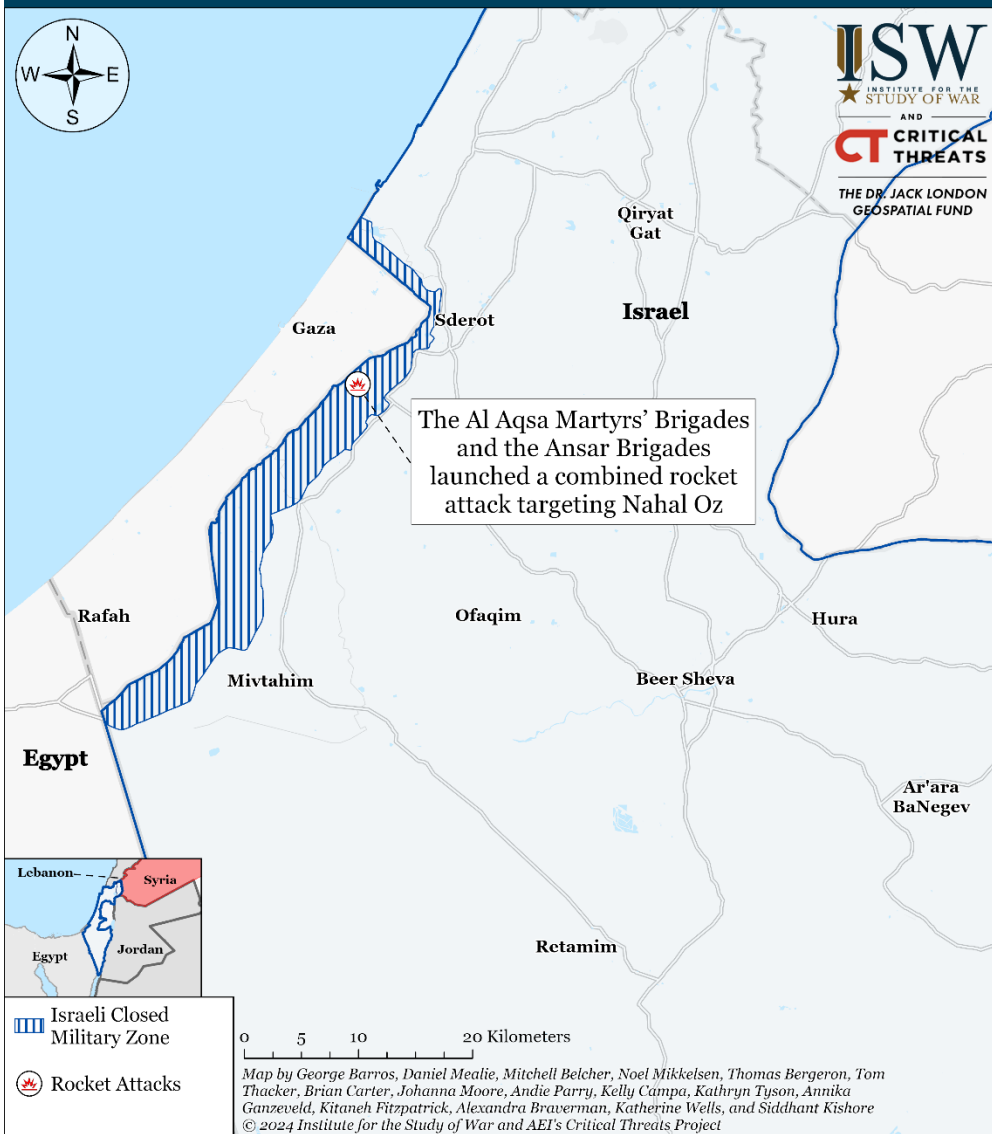
## Israeli-Announced Evacuation Zones in the Gaza Strip As of August 3, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



**The Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades—the self-proclaimed militant wing of Fatah—and the Ansar Brigades—the armed wing of the Palestinian Freedom Movement—launched a combined rocket attack targeting Nahal Oz on August 3.[19]**

# Attacks into Israel from the Gaza Strip

As of August 3, 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 have engaged Palestinian fighters in at least four locations in the West Bank since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on August 2.[20]** Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters clashed most heavily in Tulkarm.

**The IDF killed nine Palestinian fighters, including a Hamas commander in Tulkarm, in two separate airstrikes on August 3.**[21] Israeli forces conducted a drone strike targeting five fighters in a vehicle on the outskirts of Tulkarm "on their way to carry out an attack." PIJ Tulkarm Battalion mourned Haitham Balidi, a field commander in the Tulkarm wing of Hamas, after the attack.[22] Israeli forces conducted a raid in Tulkarm following the drone strike.[23] Israeli forces conducted a second drone strike targeting Palestinian fighters killed had shot at Israeli troops in Tulkarm. The second drone strike killed at least four additional fighters. PIJ later mourned four militia members in Tulkarm.[24] The IDF separately confiscated weapons, including small arms, in Tulkarm.[25]



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

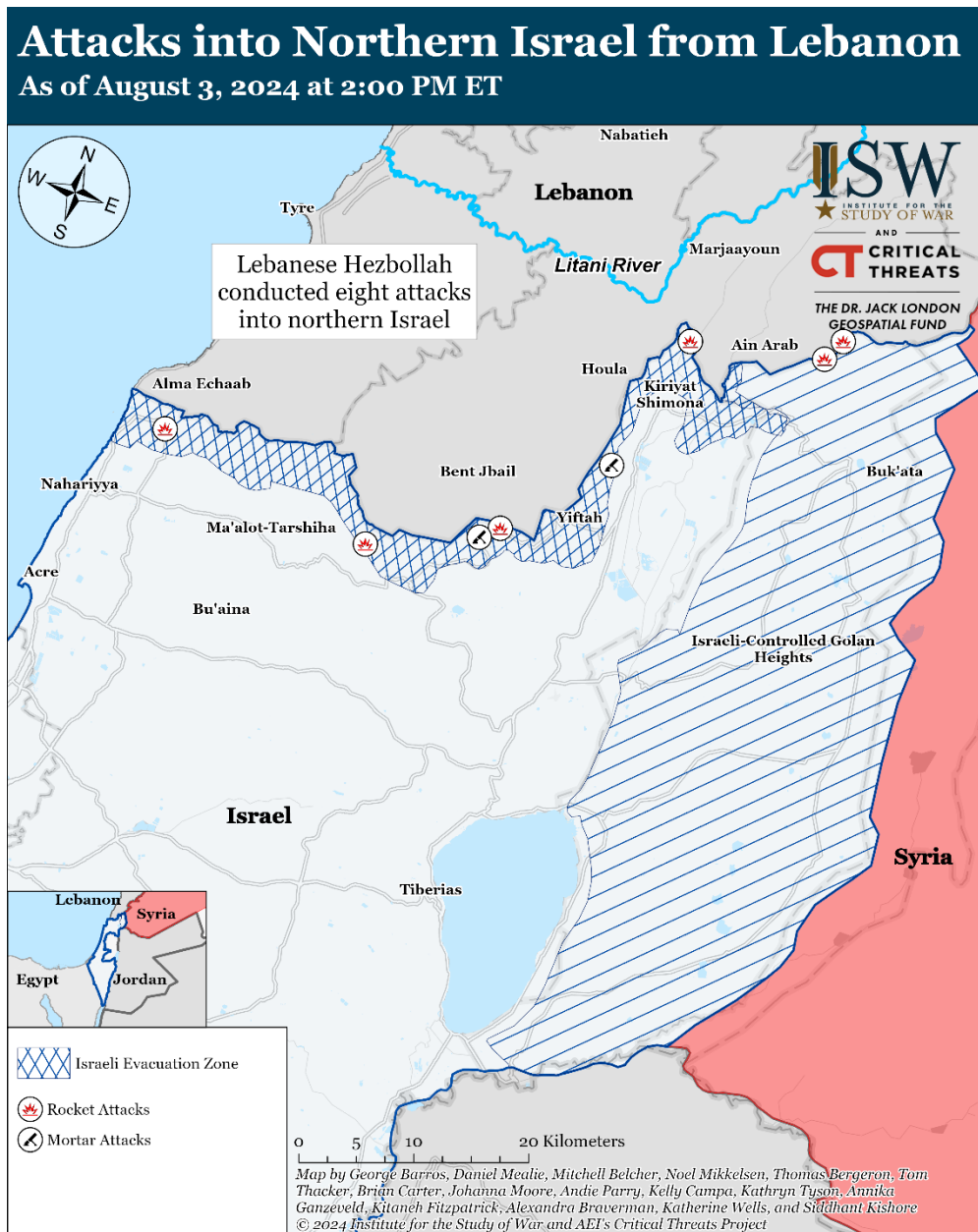


## Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

### 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

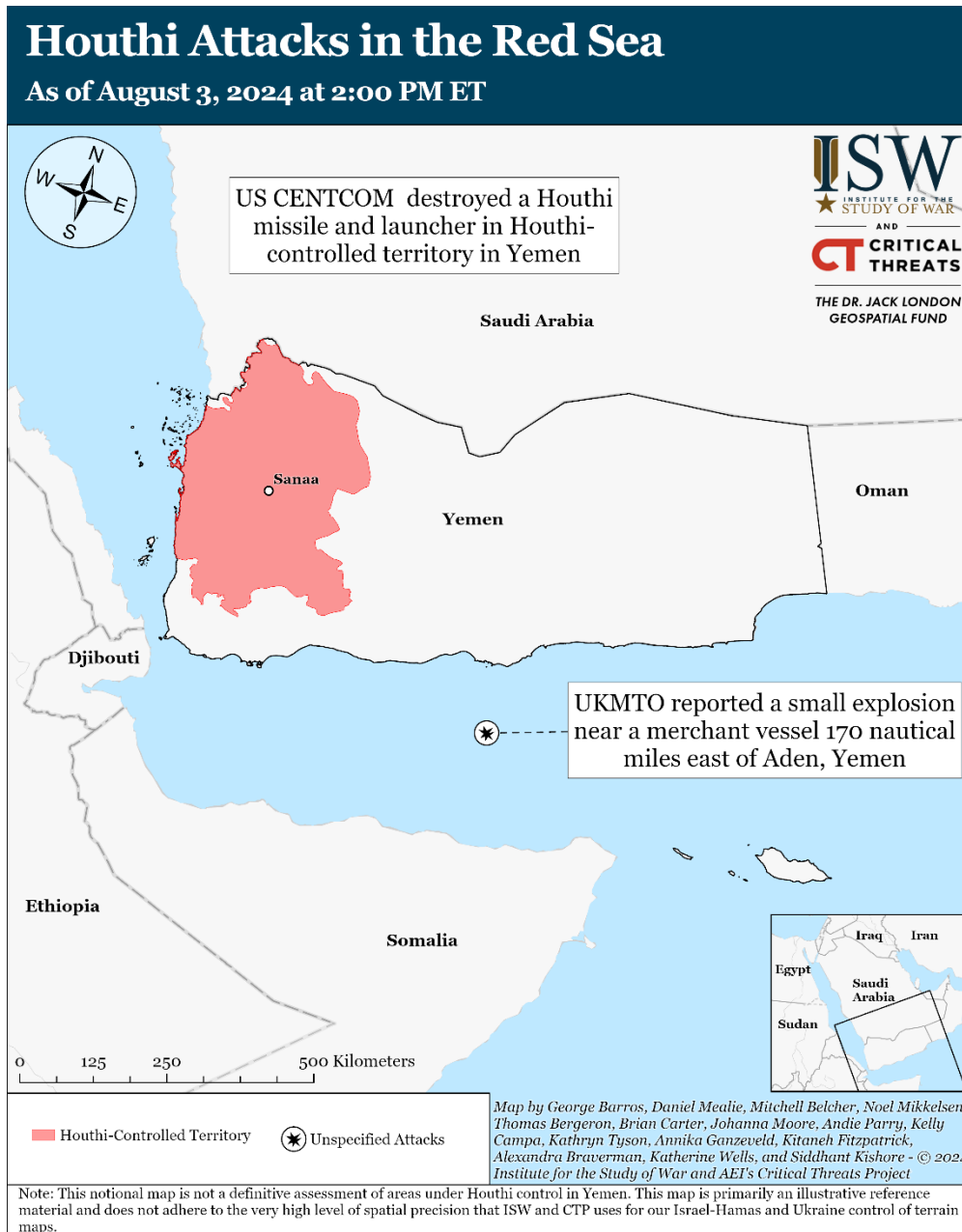
**Lebanese Hezbollah has conducted at least eight attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on August 2.[26]**



## Iran and the Axis of Resistance

**US Central Command (CENTCOM) destroyed a Houthi missile and launcher in Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen on August 2.[27]** CENTCOM determined that they presented an imminent threat to US and coalition forces and merchant vessels in the area.

**The United Kingdom Maritime Transit Organization (UKMTO) reported a small explosion in close proximity to merchant vessel *M/V Groton* around 170 nautical miles east of Aden, Yemen, on August 3.[28]** UKMTO reported that no damage occurred to the vessel.



**The IDF reportedly struck a weapons convoy on August 3 west of Qusayir, Syria on route to the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon.**[29] Al Qusayr is a stronghold for Lebanese Hezbollah and a frequent transit route for Iranian weapons shipments to Hezbollah in Lebanon.[30] The IDF also reportedly struck Dabaa military airport, Homs Governorate on August 2.[31] Dabaa airport also facilitates Iranian weapons shipments for Hezbollah.[32]

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[1] <https://sepahnews dot ir/fa/news/20413/>

[2] <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/01/world/middleeast/how-hamas-leader-haniyeh-killed-iran-bomb.html>

[3] <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/08/02/mossad-hired-iranian-agents-to-plant-bombs-haniyeh-rooms/>

[4] <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/01/world/middleeast/how-hamas-leader-haniyeh-killed-iran-bomb.html>

[5] <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/03/world/middleeast/iran-security-response-hamas-assassination.html>

[6] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-u-s-prepare-for-severe-iranian-retaliation-c721c0bf>

[7] <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3860557/deputy-pentagon-press-secretary-sabrina-singh-statement-on-force-posture-in-the/>

[8] <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3860557/deputy-pentagon-press-secretary-sabrina-singh-statement-on-force-posture-in-the/>

[9] <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1819739000845807680> ; <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1819740011996041719>

[10] <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1819740011996041719>

[11] <https://t.me/hamza20300/278113>

[12] <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1819739000845807680> ; <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1819740011996041719>

[13] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1819618075584446950>

[14] <https://t.me/alwya2000/6574> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/18424>

[15] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1819618069267861919>

[16] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1819618072921072078>

- [17] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1819618072921072078>
- [18] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2840>
- [19] [https://t.me/elaqsa\\_1965/6957](https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6957)
- [20] [https://t.me/elaqsa\\_1965/6950](https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6950) ; [https://t.me/elaqsa\\_1965/6952](https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6952) ; [https://t.me/elaqsa\\_1965/6955](https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6955) ; [https://t.me/elaqsa\\_1965/6958](https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6958)
- [21] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-commander-eight-other-gunmen-killed-in-idf-drone-strikes-near-tulkarem/>
- [22] <https://t.me/sarayatulkarm/536>
- [23] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-commander-eight-other-gunmen-killed-in-idf-drone-strikes-near-tulkarem/>
- [24] <https://t.me/sarayatulkarm/537>
- [25] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1819711431249383725>
- [26] <https://t.me/mmirleb/5830> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/5833> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/5835> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/5841> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/5843> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/5845> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/5848> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/5851>
- [27] <https://x.com/CENTCOM/status/1819786992881697138>
- [28] [https://x.com/UK\\_MTO/status/1819777087558881751](https://x.com/UK_MTO/status/1819777087558881751); [https://x.com/UK\\_MTO/status/1819783013602939134](https://x.com/UK_MTO/status/1819783013602939134)
- [29] <https://x.com/obretix/status/1819757606971359238>
- [30] <https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-conflict-hezbollah-syria>
- [31] <https://x.com/OALD24/status/1819448887851286708>
- [32] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-april-3-2023> ; [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/new-lebanese-reports-say-alleged-israeli-strike-targeted-syrias-dabaa-airport-in-known-hezbollah-smuggling-area/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/new-lebanese-reports-say-alleged-israeli-strike-targeted-syrias-dabaa-airport-in-known-hezbollah-smuggling-area/)