

Iran Update



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December 3, 2024, Information Cutoff: 2:00 pm ET

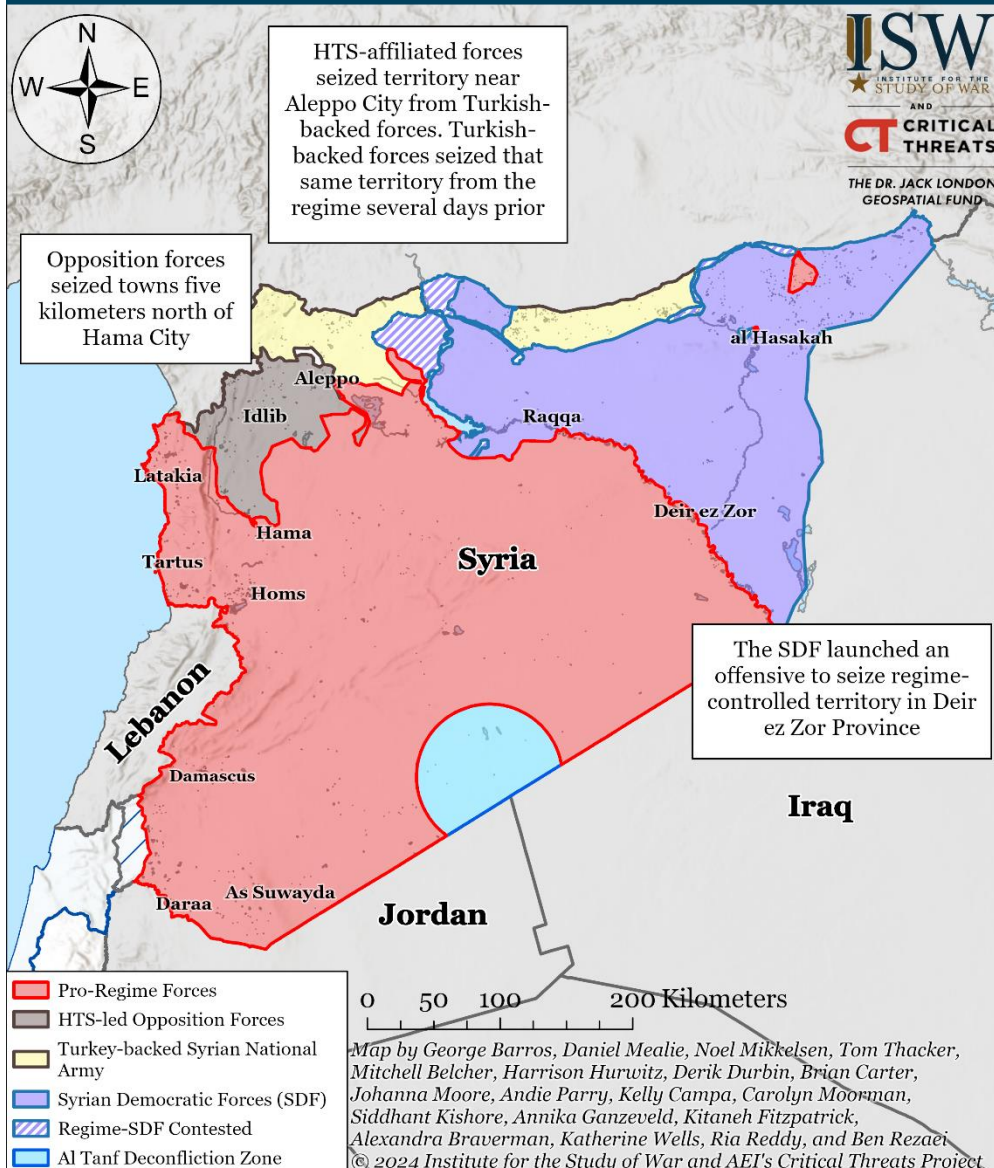
The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) publish the Iran Update, which provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. Click here to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

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.

Syrian opposition forces have continued to advance rapidly and pushed through regime defensive lines in the northern Hama countryside on December 3. Opposition forces—led by Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS)—advanced through the northern Hama countryside and seized numerous towns that regime force previously secured only two days ago.[1] Opposition forces captured Halfaya, northwest of Hama City, after advancing over the Orontes River possibly using the Mahrada dam. Opposition forces also seized Tayybat al Imam, Souran, and Maardis from regime control in their advance toward Hama City.[2] The opposition seized SAA tanks in at least one of these towns, suggesting that regime forces withdrew in a disorderly fashion.[3] Russian forces conducted several airstrikes targeting the al Ghab plain, about 25 kilometers northeast of Hama City, possibly to interdict reinforcements as opposition forces advanced south and seized towns.[4] Regime and Russian forces continued airstrikes in opposition-controlled areas of northwest Syria on December 3.[5]

Syrian Civil War

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



Opposition forces have advanced within five kilometers of Hama City and likely seized key defensive terrain in the area.[6] Regime forces withdrew from Qomhana—a village immediately north of Hama City—and Zine al Abdine hill, which overlooks Hama City.[7] The SAA previously established a first line of defense for Hama City on Zine al Abdine hill, which opposition forces then targeted with drone strikes.[8] The withdrawal of regime forces will almost certainly cede this hill to opposition forces. Opposition forces announced that they also captured the second hill overlooking Hama City, Jabal Kafra.[9] Opposition forces appear to remain outside Hama City at the time of this writing. Opposition forces fired drones targeting SAA tanks near the northern entrance to

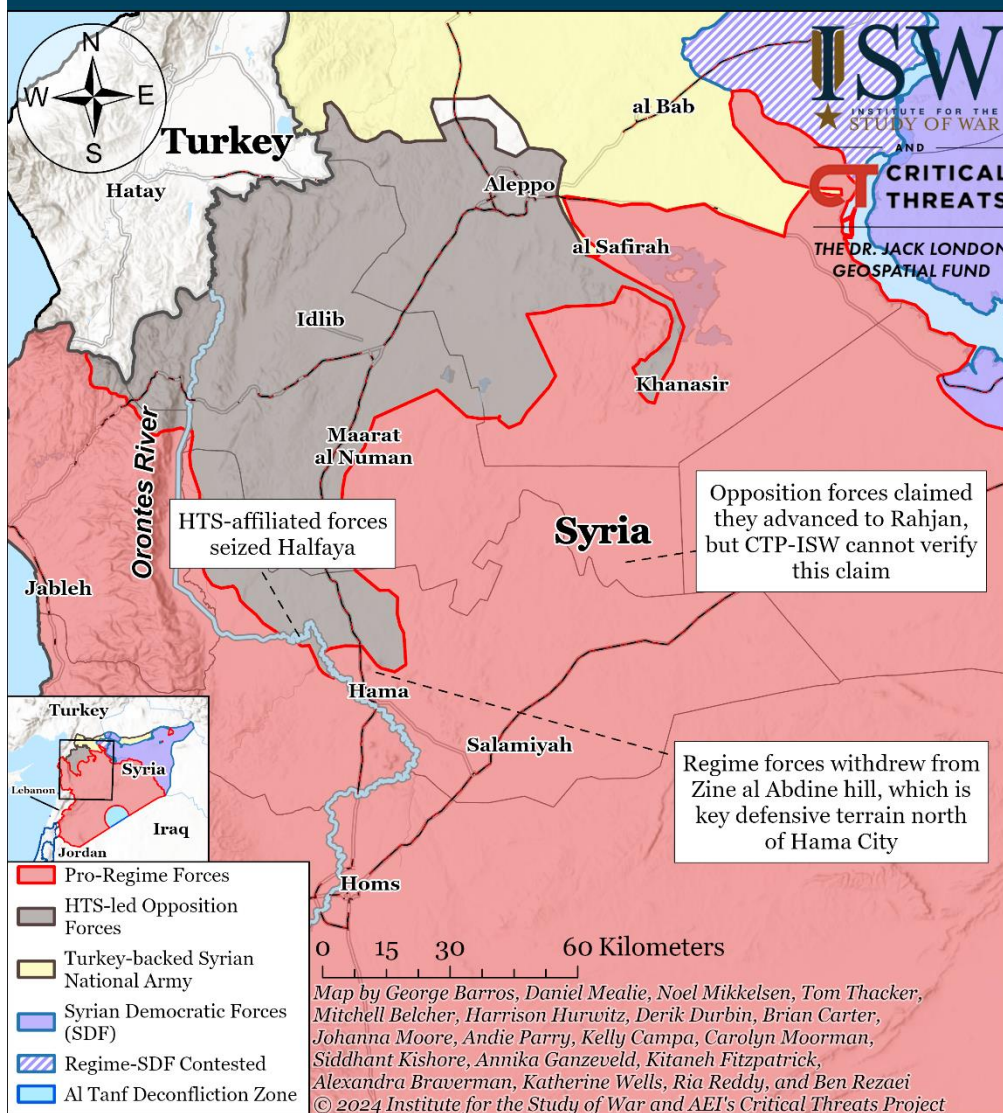
the city, however.[10] The Syrian Defense Ministry claimed on December 3 that it sent “large reinforcements” to Hama City to counter the expected attack on the city.[11]

Opposition forces’ capture of Hama City would facilitate successive campaigns, such as an effort to take Homs City. The fall of Hama would enable opposition forces to continue to move south into Homs Province. Syrian social media users have reported that pro-regime forces have begun establishing defensive lines in Homs City and forcibly conscripting youths into the SAA.[12] Maintaining regime control of Homs City is vital to Iranian-backed efforts to transport materiel from Iran and Iraq to Lebanese Hezbollah.

Hama City is also a critical node connecting Damascus and southern Syria to regime- and Russian-controlled coastal areas. Tartous and Latakia provinces are long-time Assad strongholds that risk being isolated from the rest of regime-held territory. The Russian evacuation of naval assets from Tartous and the reported deployment of additional Russian forces to Syria suggest that Moscow is worried that opposition forces may advance southward to Hama City and threaten the Tartous base.[13]

Opposition Advances in Northwest Syria

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



Opposition forces simultaneously claimed to seize terrain in as Saan District, located in the desert about 55 kilometers east of Hama City.[14] CTP-ISW cannot verify this advance. As Saan District is located along the 42 Highway, which is a critical ground line of communication reaching Aleppo City. The Syrian Defense Ministry claimed to conduct defensive activities along the nearby Athariya-Aleppo axis.[15]

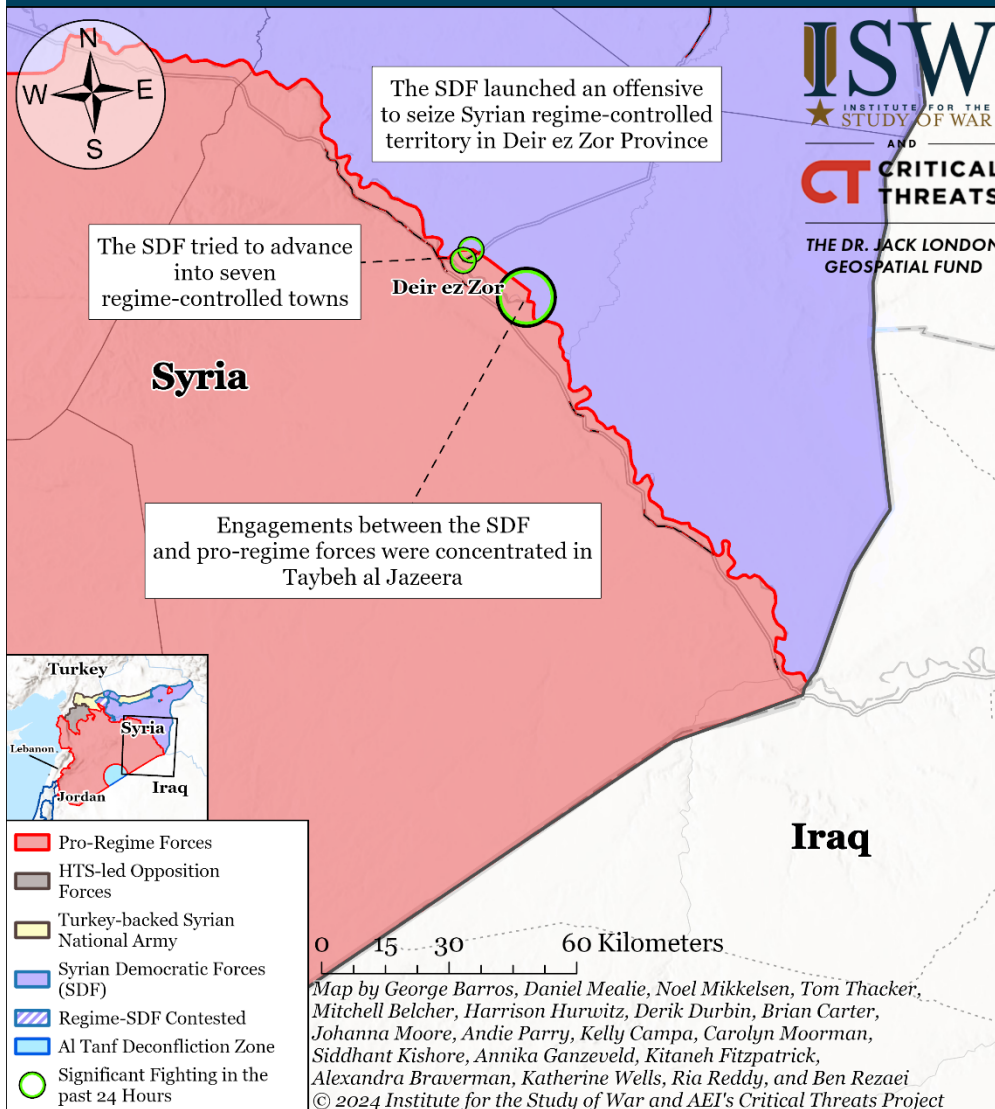
Opposition groups retained control of previously seized territory in Aleppo Province, including Aleppo City, on December 3. Geolocated footage and local reports posted on December 3 showed SDF elements evacuating Aleppo Province.[16] Opposition forces previously issued a statement on December 1 promising to allow all SDF units safe passage out Aleppo City toward northeastern Syria.[17]

The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) launched an offensive to seize Syrian regime-controlled territory in Deir ez Zor Province in eastern Syria. The Deir ez Zor Military Council—an Arab-majority militia in the SDF—mobilized locals from seven villages on the left bank of the Euphrates River on December 2 in an operation to re-claim and expel Iranian-backed militias from the towns.[18] These seven villages are the only areas east of the Euphrates River that the regime controls.[19] Iranian-backed militias and Russian forces maintain positions on behalf of the regime in these seven towns.[20] A Syrian Arab Army (SAA) officer told Reuters that the offensive intended to exploit pro-regime forces’ “weakness,” while Syrian opposition forces fought the regime in northwestern Syria.[21]

The SDF attempted to advance into the Khasham pocket through from the north into al Husseinia, al Salihiya, and from the east from Jadeed Ekedat into Tabiyah al Jazeera, according to local sources.[22] Syrian sources reported mutual shelling between the SDF and pro-regime forces over the area, and Iranian-backed shelling from Hatla, north of the disputed area, reportedly killed a Syrian woman in al Jalamdeh village.[23] Iranian-backed militias engaged the SDF at the southern point of advance in Taybeh al Jazeera and reportedly fired missiles at an SDF tank advancing into the area from Jadeed Ekedat.[24] Syrian state media reported that the SAA joined Iranian-backed militias in defense of the territory.[25] Local authorities warned residents to stay in their homes in anticipation of further regime shelling over the area.[26] Regime-affiliated media reported that the SDF eventually withdrew from the areas into which it had advanced on December 3.[27]

Control of Terrain in Deir ez Zor, Syria

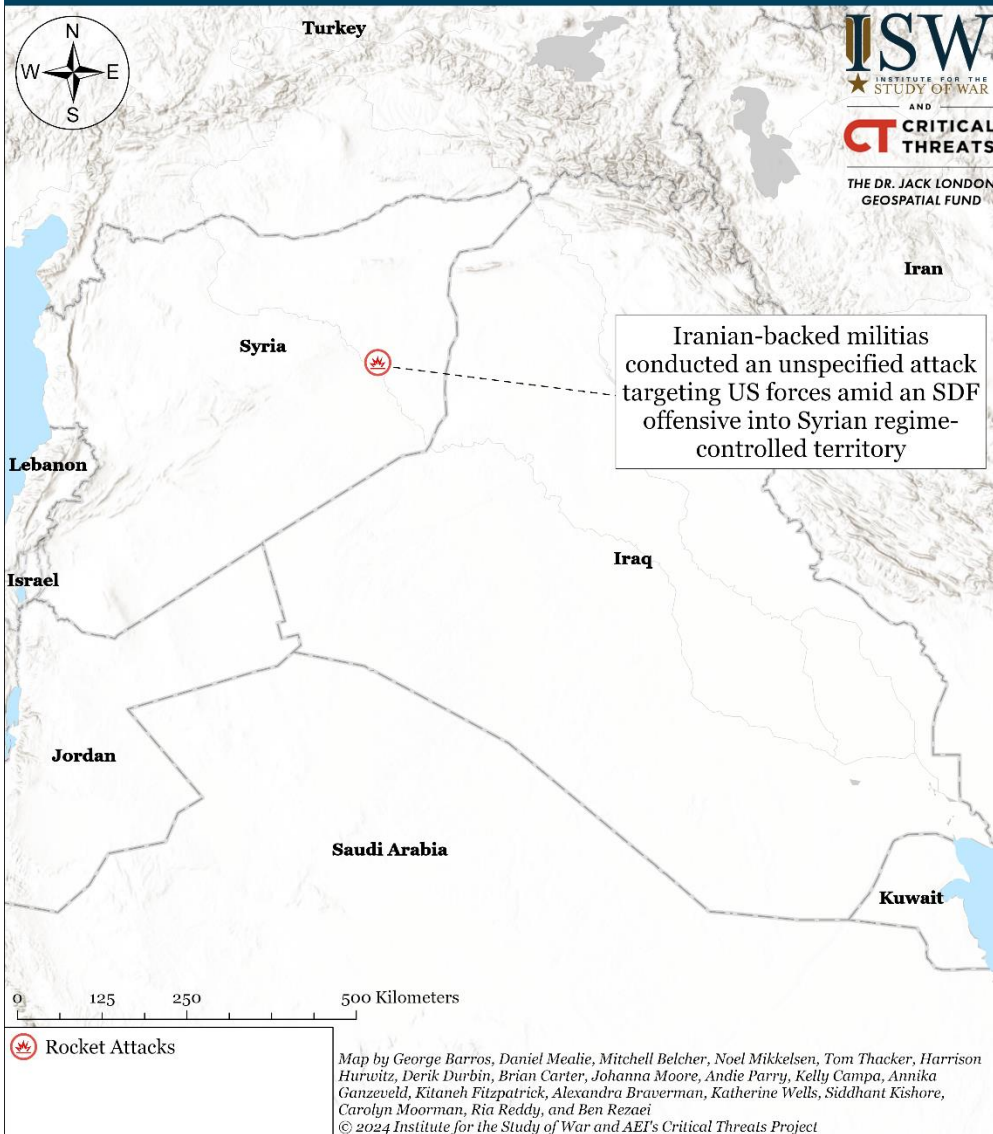
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The fighting in eastern Syria risks further drawing in US forces deployed in the area. Iranian-backed militias launched a rocket from the Khasham area targeting the US Conoco Mission Support Site during the fighting, according to Syrian sources.[28] Iranian-backed militias have repeatedly launched rockets from these seven villages targeting US forces nearby.[29] Syrian opposition sources reported that the United States responded by conducting airstrikes targeting Iranian-backed militias in al Husseiniya, al Salihya, and Tayibah al Jazeera.[30] Local sources reported that the US airstrikes destroyed a dirt bridge connecting Khasham to Iranian-backed militia-controlled territory on the other side of the Euphrates River.[31] An unspecified US official confirmed to Reuters that the United States conducted at least one self-defense strike overnight and that the strike was unrelated to the SDF offensive.[32]

Attacks against US Bases in the Middle East

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



Iran appears to be trying to coordinate with Iraq and Russia to support the Syrian regime against the Syrian opposition forces. Iranian Armed Forces General Staff Chief Major General Mohammad Bagheri held separate phone calls with Iraqi Army Chief of Staff General Abdul Amir Rashid Yarallah, Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov, and SAA Chief of Staff General Abdel Karim Mahmoud Ibrahim on December 3.[33] Bagheri said that Iraq and Russia agreed to provide “decisive support” for the Syrian regime and “take the necessary measures” to back the SAA. Bagheri claimed that the surprise opposition offensive was a “coordinated” US-Israeli effort to “weaken” the Axis of Resistance.

Iranian state media outlet al Alam reported that Brigadier General Javad Ghaffari traveled to Damascus with a team of Iranian military advisers to support the Assad regime against the opposition forces. Ghaffari has a long history of supporting pro-regime forces

in Syria and had for a time served as the overall Iranian commander in the country. Ghaffari is known as the ‘Butcher of Aleppo’ for his role in the pro-regime campaign to retake Aleppo City in 2016.[34] Syrian President Bashar al Assad expelled Ghaffari in 2021 for his alleged involvement in attacks on US forces as well as deploying Iranian weapons in “unapproved places.”[35] Ghaffari returned to Tehran to head the IRGC Intelligence Organization’s Special Operations division, where he had served until his latest deployment back to Syria.[36]

Senior Iranian officials and state media criticized Turkish policy in Syria amid the ongoing Syrian opposition offensive. Turkey maintains ties with and has historically supported some opposition groups against the Bashar al Assad regime. This dynamic has created tensions between Iran and Turkey throughout the Syrian civil war. Iranian Supreme Leader International Affairs Adviser Ali Akbar Velayati accused Turkey of betraying its Islamic roots and siding with the United States and Israel.[37] Velayati claimed that “anti-Islamic” elements in the Turkish government are “committing acts that desecrate Islam.”[38] Media affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) separately warned that Iranian trust in Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan could decrease if the Syrian opposition weakens the Axis of Resistance.[39] The IRGC-affiliated outlet proceeded to suggest that Iran might in turn refrain from supporting Erdogan during future crises.[40] Iranian media also circulated images of Iranians protesting in front of the Turkish Embassy in Tehran on December 1.[41] These statements and reports follow Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi’s visit to Turkey on December 2, where he held “frank” discussions with his Turkish counterpart.[42]

Hamas and Fatah agreed to form an independent civilian committee to manage post-war governance in the Gaza Strip.[43] The Fatah-led Palestinian Authority (PA) will head the committee and thus manage civilian affairs in the Gaza Strip. The committee will appoint 10 to 15 “technocrats,” who are unaffiliated with any Palestinian militia or political group, according to Israeli media.[44] This agreement comes after a Hamas delegation traveled to Cairo on November 29 to discuss post-war governance and ceasefire-hostage negotiations with Egyptian officials.[45] Hamas will almost certainly try to infiltrate or subvert whatever civilian government emerges to manage the post-war Gaza Strip.

The IDF stated that it will conclude its clearing operations in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip in the coming weeks.[46] The IDF 84th Infantry Brigade (162nd Division) commander told Israeli media on December 3 that the IDF has detained and killed around 2,000 Palestinian fighters in Jabalia beginning of clearing operations there in early October 2024.[47] The IDF stated that Hamas in Jabalia maintains a presence of 100 to 200 fighters, who operate in small cells equipped with explosive devices and rocket-propelled grenades (RPG).[48] The IDF clearing operation in the Jabalia is designed to pressure Hamas to return Israeli hostages, destroy Hamas infrastructure, and prevent Hamas from reconstituting and rearming there, according to the IDF 84th Infantry Brigade commander.[49] The IDF stated that Palestinian militias have killed at least 30 Israeli soldiers in the northern Gaza Strip since early October 2024.[50]

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has conducted over a dozen airstrikes across Lebanon since CTP-ISW's last data cut off on December 2. The IDF is responding to a Lebanese Hezbollah rocket attack into Israeli-controlled Shebaa Farms.[51] Hezbollah fired two rockets targeting an IDF border site in Shebaa Farms area on December 2 in response to what

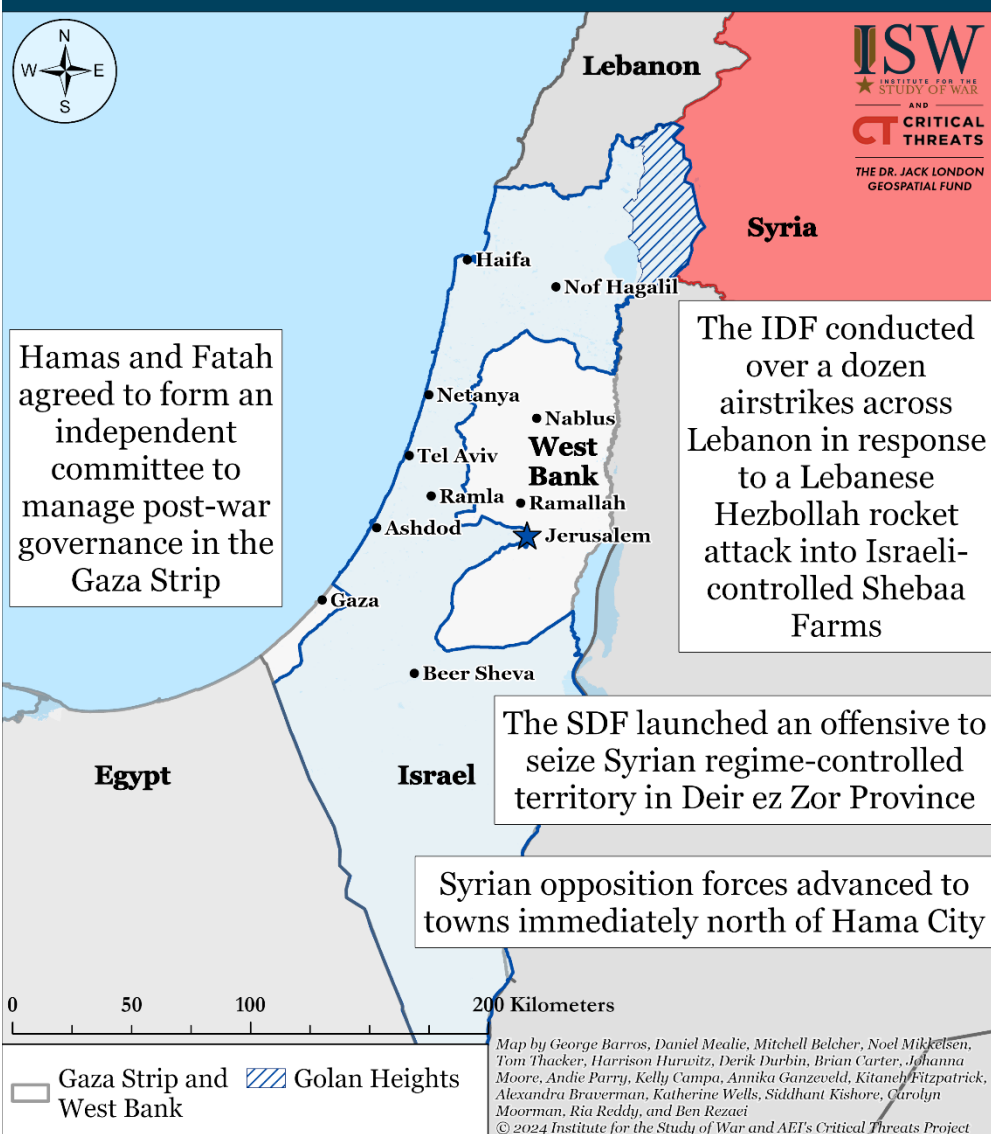
Hezbollah described as Israeli ceasefire violations.[52] The IDF Air Force responded by striking Hezbollah military infrastructure, including the rocket launch site used for the December 2 rocket attack.[53] Israeli media reported that senior US and French officials, including US Special Envoy Amos Hochstein, told their Israeli counterparts that Israel was violating the ceasefire by conducting military activities in Lebanon and failing to report them to the designated oversight mechanism.[54] Israeli public news outlet Kann reported that Israel will inform the international enforcement mechanism of Hezbollah violations but asserted that it retains the right to unilaterally take action against Hezbollah activity south of the Litani River.[55] Israel retains the “inherent right to self-defense” under the current ceasefire and Israel has justified its military activity in Lebanon since the ceasefire as a response to Hezbollah threats to Israel.[56] Israel and Lebanon both told the White House on December 2 that they are committed to the ceasefire agreement despite recent flare ups, according to unspecified sources cited by Axios.[57]

Key Takeaways:

- **Northwestern Syria:** Syrian opposition forces have continued to advance rapidly and pushed through regime defensive lines in the northern Hama countryside. Opposition forces have advanced within five kilometers of Hama City and likely seized key defensive terrain in the area.
- **Eastern Syria:** The US-backed SDF launched an offensive to seize regime-controlled territory in Deir ez Zor Province. The fighting in the area risks drawing in the US forces deployed in the area to fighting the Islamic State.
- **Iran:** Iran appears to be trying to coordinate with Iraq and Russia to support the Syrian regime against Syrian opposition forces. The most senior Iranian military officer, Mohammad Bagheri, held separate phone calls with Iraqi and Russian officials to discuss supporting Bashar al Assad.
- **Gaza Strip:** Hamas and Fatah agreed to form an independent civilian committee to manage post-war governance in the Gaza Strip. Hamas will almost certainly try to infiltrate or subvert whatever non-Hamas government emerges in the strip in order to ultimately control it.
- **Lebanon:** The IDF conducted over a dozen airstrikes across Lebanon in response to Lebanese Hezbollah firing rockets into Israeli-controlled Shebaa Farms. Israel and Hezbollah have accused one another of violating the ceasefire.

Key Takeaways in the October 7 War

As of December 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

The IDF continued clearing operations in the northern Gaza Strip on December 3. A Palestinian journalist reported gunfire from Israeli vehicles in Beit Lahia, Jabalia, and Saftawi.[58] Commercially available satellite imagery captured on December 3 shows that the IDF marginally expanded clearing operations southeast of Jabalia refugee camp. The IDF dropped leaflets over Beit

Lahia urging civilians to move south toward the Salah al Din Road.[59] The IDF has intensified clearing operations in Beit Lahia in recent days.[60] Hamas claimed that a Hamas sniper shot IDF personnel in eastern Jabalia City on December 3.[61]

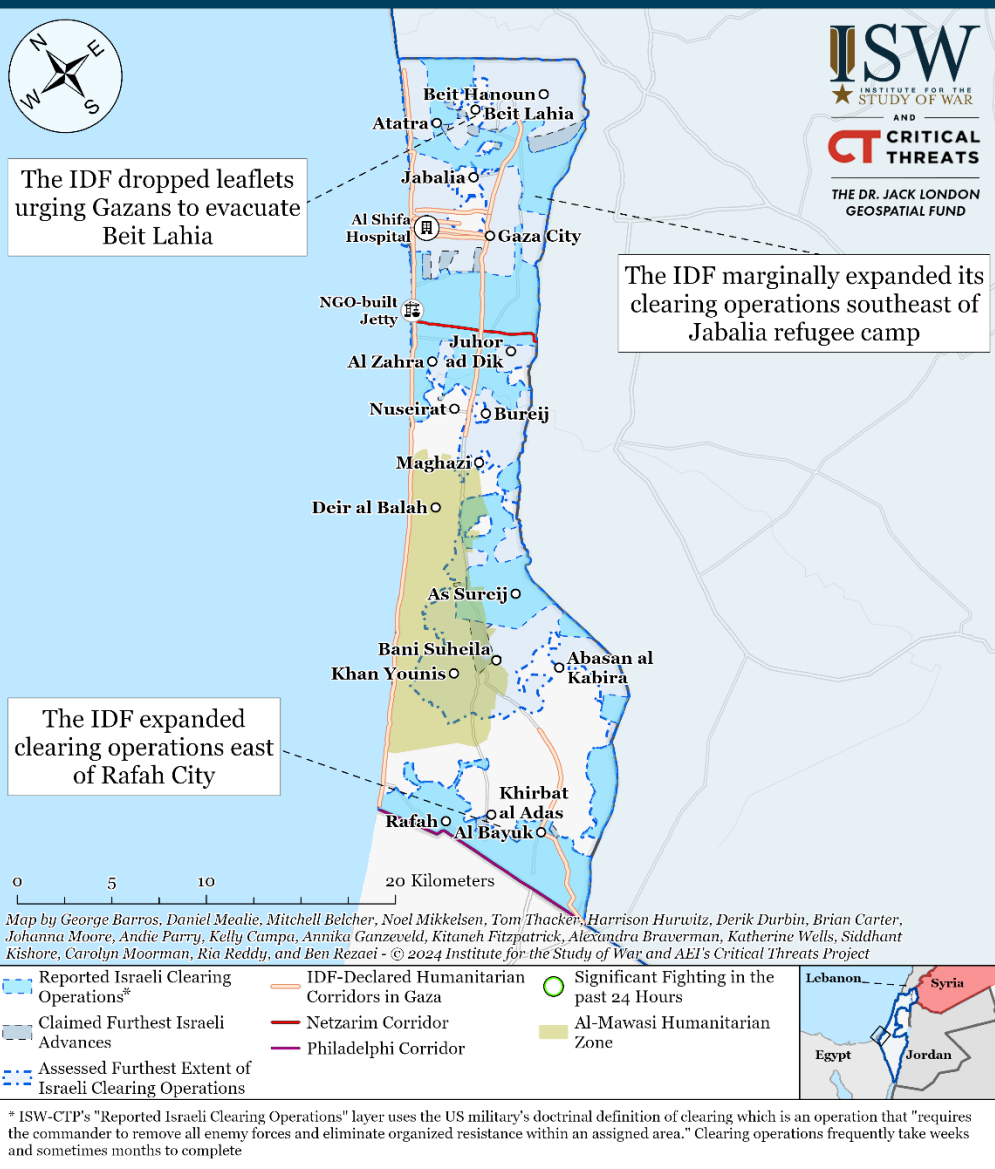
The IDF 99th Division operated in the central Gaza Strip on December 3. A Palestinian journalist reported gunfire from Israeli vehicles near the Maghazi, Bureij, and Nuseirat refugee camps.[62] The IDF reported on December 3 that the 990th Artillery Brigade has killed several Hamas fighters over the past two weeks, including members of Hamas' elite Nukhba Forces who participated in the October 7 attacks on Israel.[63] The IDF 99th Division also conducted targeted raids and destroyed Hamas infrastructure, including observation and sniper posts, along the Netzarim Corridor.[64] The 99th Division has conducted clearing operations along the Netzarim Corridor since its deployment there in early November 2024.[65]

The IDF conducted clearing operations in the southern Gaza Strip on December 3. A Palestinian journalist reported gunfire from Israeli vehicles in western Rafah City.[66] Commercially available satellite imagery captured on December 3 shows that Israeli forces expanded clearing operations east of Rafah City.

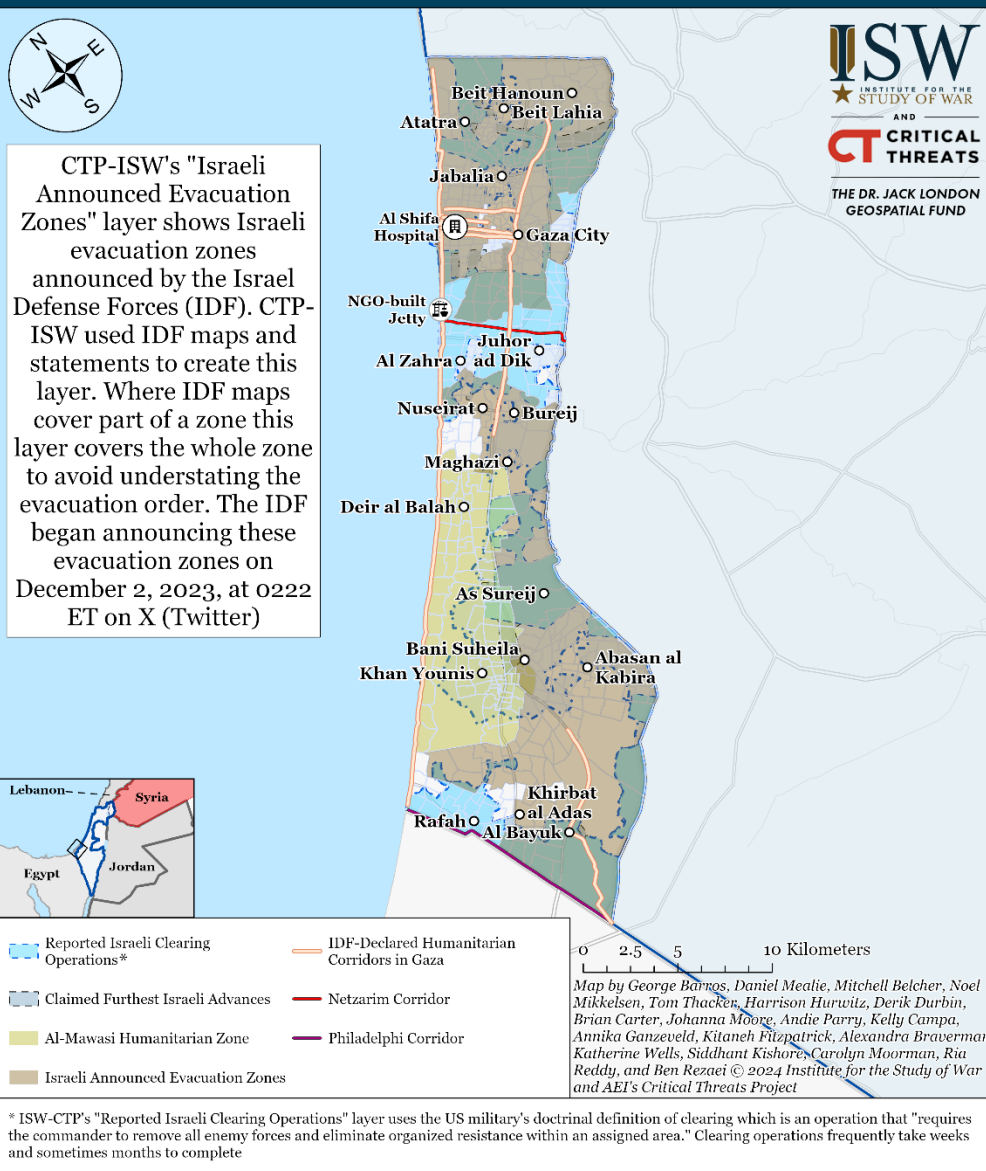
The IDF intercepted an unspecified projectile launched from the Gaza Strip toward southern Israel on December 3.[67]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

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



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



The Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) reported that 138 humanitarian aid trucks entered the Gaza Strip on December 2.[68]

West Bank

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

The IDF conducted a drone strike targeting a militia cell near Aqaba, Tubas Governorate, in the Jordan Valley on December 3.[69] Israeli media reported that the cell was planning an “imminent” attack.[70] The Palestinian Authority Health Ministry reported that the strike killed two

individuals and moderately wounded another.[71] No Palestinian militia has published mourning posts for the killed fighters at the time of this writing. The strike is noteworthy given that the IDF rarely conducts drone strikes in the Jordan Valley.

Hamas and the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades clashed with Israeli forces that arrived at the Turkish Hospital in Tubas Governorate on December 3.[72]

Northern Israel and Lebanon

Lebanese Hezbollah objectives:

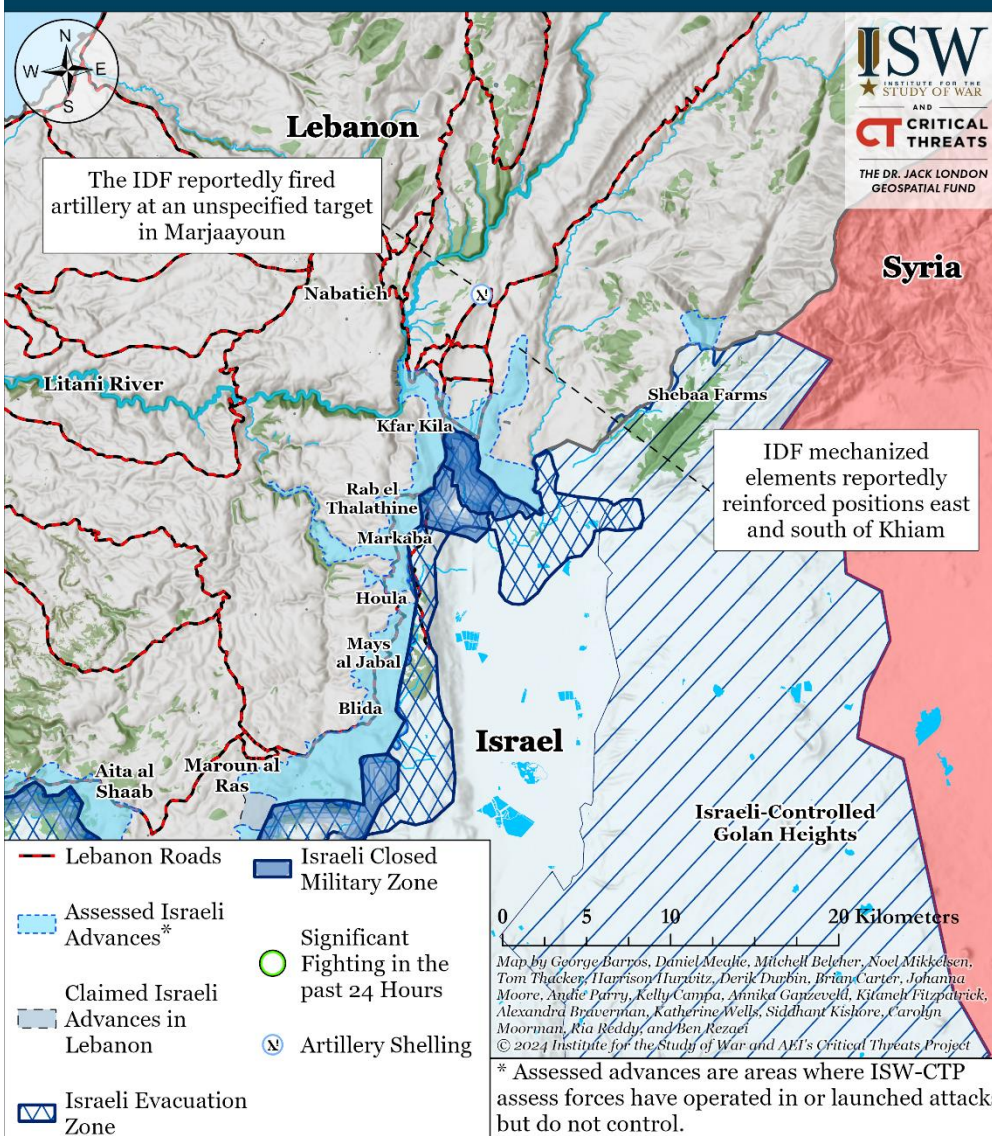
- End Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip
- Survive the October 7 War as a capable political and military organization with control over Lebanon

Lebanese media reported that Israeli armor reinforced the IDF in the southern and eastern outskirts of Khiam.[73] Lebanese media reported that an Israeli tank approached Khiam from the direction of Kfar Kila.[74] Israeli forces have operated in Khiam since early November 2024 and have reportedly continued operations there since the ceasefire began.[75] Lebanese media also reported that the IDF fired artillery at an unspecified target in Marjaayoun, north of Khaim, on December 3.[76]

Geolocated imagery posted on December 3 shows a newly established Israeli outpost on a hilltop overlooking Kfar Kila.[77] The outpost will likely enable Israeli forces to observe nearby Hezbollah activity as the IDF monitors Hezbollah compliance with the Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire agreement. Israeli forces have operated near Kafr Kila since late September 2024.[78]

Lebanese media reported that Israeli forces advanced from Blida and Mhaibib in southeastern Lebanon to Wadi Saluki in Nabatieh District.[79] Israeli forces reportedly detonated buildings while advancing from Mhaibib.[80]

Reported Israeli Operations in the Eastern Sector As of December 3, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



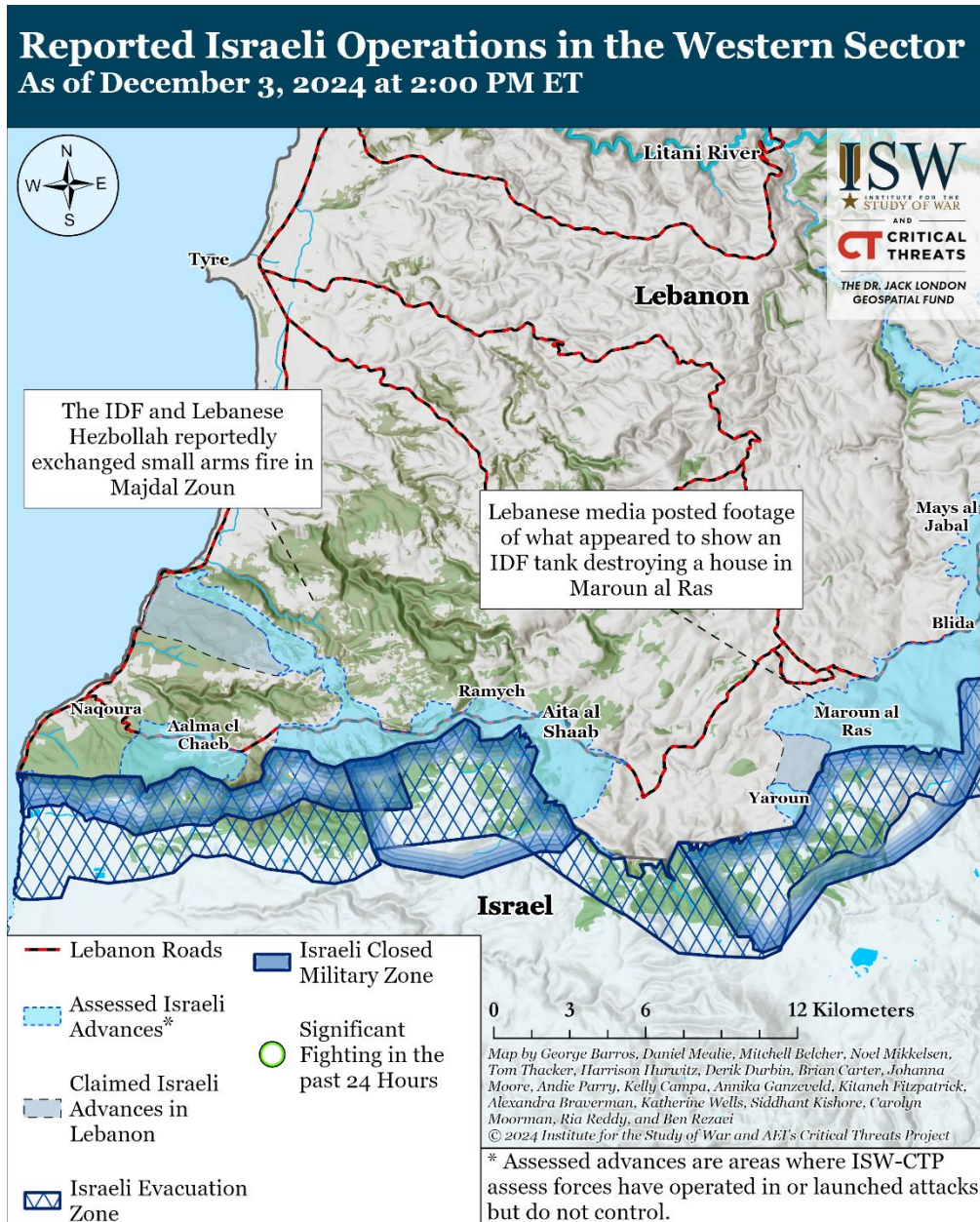
Israeli forces continue to operate near Maroun al Ras in southwestern Lebanon.

Hezbollah media released footage of an IDF bulldozer destroying a building near Maroun al Ras on December 3.[81] Lebanese media reported on December 3 that Israeli forces fired at an unspecified target in the direction of Bint Jbeil.[82] Lebanese media last reported Israeli forces firing from Maroun al Ras toward Hezbollah positions in Bint Jbeil on November 30.[83] Israeli forces stationed in Yaroun also reportedly fired at unspecified targets in Bint Jbeil on December 3.[84]

Lebanese media reported gunfire near Majdal Zoun, southwestern Lebanon, on December 3.[85]

CTP-ISW previously assessed that Hezbollah would likely experience command-and-control challenges and struggle to immediately enforce widespread compliance with a full ceasefire, withdrawal, and disarmament among its rank-and-file members.[86] The reports of gunfire near Majdal Zoun could reflect those command-and-control challenges rather than Hezbollah leaders'

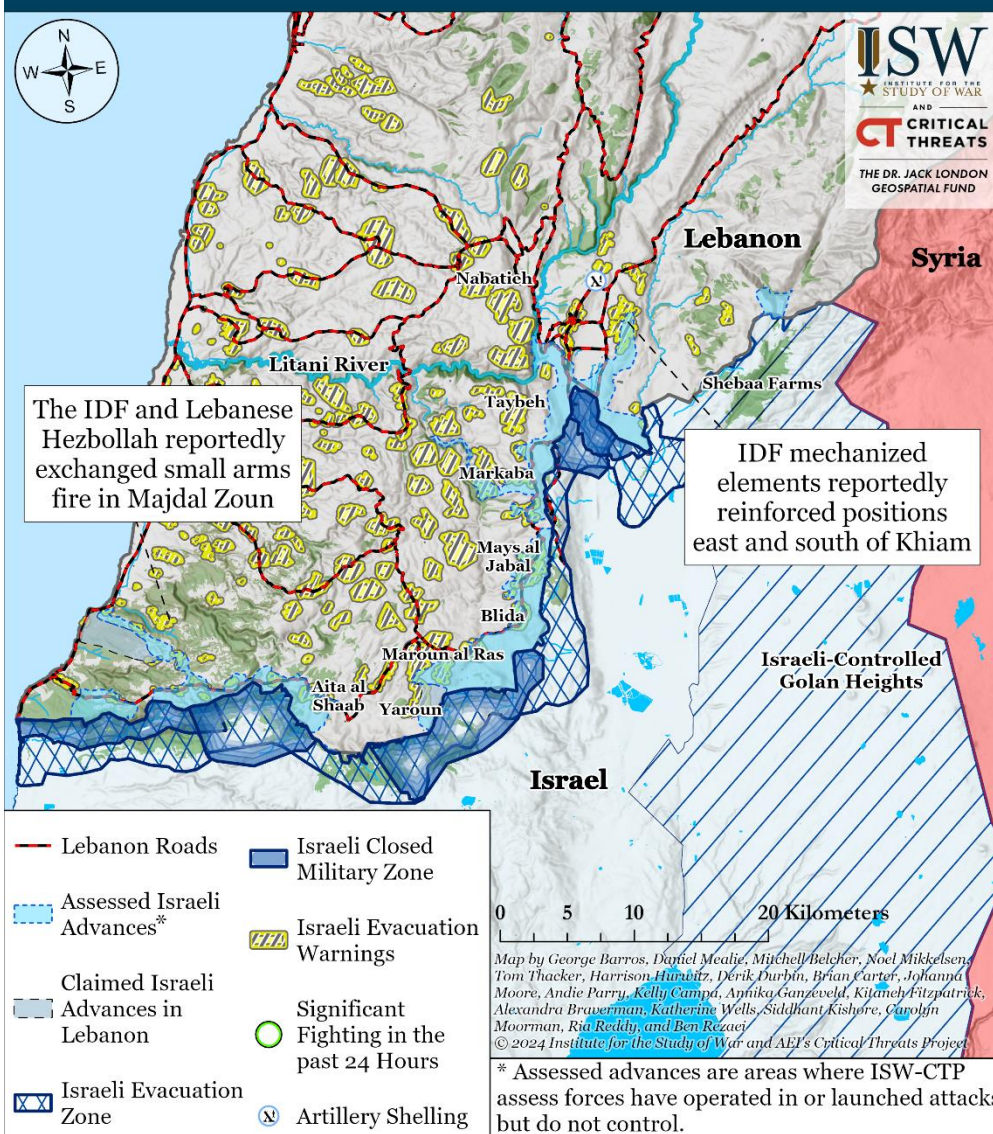
intent to violate the ceasefire. Israeli forces have operated south and west of Majdal Zoun in Chama and al Bayyada since November 15.[87]



The IDF Air Force killed Hezbollah’s liaison to the SAA in Damascus on December 3.[88] Syrian and Western media reported that the IDF targeted a car on the road leading to Damascus International Airport, killing Salman Nimr Jumaa.[89] The IDF said that Jumaa helped transfer Syrian weapons to Hezbollah and was in close contact with senior Syrian regime officials.[90]

Reported Israeli Operations in Lebanon

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



The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) continued to deploy to southern Lebanon on December 3. Lebanese media reported on December 3 that the LAF has deployed to Tyre and its surrounding areas.[91] The LAF is expected to advance from Tyre to southern Lebanese border villages. Lebanese Foreign Affairs Minister Abdallah Bou Habib said on November 26 that the LAF is prepared to deploy at least 5,000 troops to southern Lebanon.[92]

IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi conducted a situational assessment in southern Lebanon with Northern Command Commander Major General Ori Gordin and 91st Division Commander Brigadier General Shai Klepper on December 2.[93] Halevi stated that the IDF's mission is to ensure that Hezbollah does not rebuild "terrorist infrastructure" in the region. Halevi reiterated Israel's commitment to the ceasefire agreement with Hezbollah.[94]

The IDF established a new specialized unit in the Golan Heights on December 3.[95] The “Fara” unit, which is comprised of local soldiers from reconnaissance units and special reserve units, will operate under the 210th Division. The IDF created the unit to quickly respond to threats in the Golan Heights area and in response to Hamas’ October 7 attacks on Israel.[96] 210th Division Commander Lieutenant Colonel Yair Palai stated that the unit has fully mobilized and operated continuously over the past three months.[97]

Hezbollah has not claimed any attacks into Israel since CTP-ISW’s last data cutoff on December 2.

Iran and the Axis of Resistance

Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have emphasized that they will continue to “support” Palestinians in the Gaza Strip despite the Syrian opposition offensive. Kataib Hezbollah claimed on December 2 that it has “not yet decided [whether] to send fighters” to Syria, despite reports that Kataib Hezbollah fighters have already deployed to northern Syria to defend the Bashar al Assad regime.[98] Kataib Hezbollah called on the Iraqi federal government to send “official military forces” to Syria and emphasized that the Palestinian cause remains the group’s “first cause.”[99] Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba similarly emphasized on December 3 that it will not “abandon” Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.[100]

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani discussed the ongoing Syrian opposition offensive with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on December 3.[101] Sudani stressed that Iraq will not “stand idly by” and watch the “dangerous repercussions” taking place in Syria.[102] Sudani emphasized that the Iraqi federal government will not allow “extremist organizations” to threaten Iraqi security. The Iraqi Army has deployed forces to secure the Iraqi border with Syria in recent days.[103] Erdogan separately held a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin on December 3, in which Putin called on Turkey to help restore “stability and constitutional order” in Syria.[104]

Iran oversees an oil smuggling network in Iraq that generates around a billion dollars per year for Iran and its Axis of Resistance, according to unspecified sources speaking to Reuters on December 3.[105] Two unspecified sources stated that the network diverts between 3.4 and 5 million barrels of Iranian oil from Iraqi asphalt plants each month. Iran exports the diverted oil primarily to Asia. The network also blends Iranian oil with Iraqi fuel in order to evade US sanctions on Iranian energy exports. Unspecified entities and individuals from Iraq, Iran, and the Gulf states are involved in the operation, according to five unspecified sources and three Western intelligence reports. The sources stated that the operation has “flourished” since Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani took office in 2022, highlighting how Iran has been able to increase its economic influence in Iraq in recent years. One source noted that US officials discussed the oil smuggling operation with Sudani during his visit to the United States in September 2024.

The United States sanctioned 35 entities and vessels on December 3 that help facilitate illicit Iranian oil exports.[106] The US Treasury Department noted that Iranian oil revenues enable Iran to fund its nuclear program, develop advanced drones and missiles, and provide financial and material support to the Axis of Resistance.

Houthi military spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Sarea claimed on December 3 that the Houthis and the Islamic Resistance in Iraq conducted three combined drone attacks targeting Israel.[107] Sarea claimed that the Houthis launched several drones targeting an unspecified “vital target” in Eilat and two unspecified targets in northern Israel. The IDF Navy intercepted a drone launched “from the east” over the Red Sea on December 2.[108] The drone did not enter Israeli airspace. CTP-ISW cannot confirm whether the drone that the IDF intercepted was part of the claimed Houthi attack. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has not claimed a combined attack with the Houthis at the time of this writing.

Iran Air resumed flights between Mashhad, Iran, and Dammam, Saudi Arabia, on December 3, after a nine-year pause.[109] Dammam is in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, which is home to a large Shia population. The resumption of flights is part of Iranian and Saudi efforts to improve relations after the two countries restored diplomatic ties in March 2023.[110]

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi met with several Eurasian counterparts on the sidelines of an Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) meeting in Mashhad, northeastern Iran, on December 3.[111] The ECO is a Eurasian political and economic organization that aims to establish a single market for goods and services among member states.[112] ECO members include Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.[113] Araghchi held separate meetings with the foreign affairs ministers of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan.[114] These meetings focused on trade relations and cross-border exchanges, highlighting how the Pezeshkian administration is continuing former President Ebrahim Raisi’s “neighborhood policy.”[115] This economic policy is centered on building relations with regional and extra-regional states to undermine and mitigate the impact of international sanctions.

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.

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.



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