

# Iran Update



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**Information Cutoff: February 14, 2025, 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, and [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of the ongoing opposition offensive in Syria. These maps are 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.*

**The Iraqi Christian Alliance, which is comprised of eight political parties, submitted a series of demands to the Iraqi parliament and Federal Supreme Court on February 14.[1]**

The parties called on the Iraqi federal government to remove “armed militias” from the Ninewa Plains and to transfer responsibility for security of the area to local Christians and Yazidis.[2] The Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) 30th and 50th brigades operate in the Ninewa Plains.[3] The PMF 30th Brigade is commanded by Sabah Salem al Shabaki and is affiliated with the Iranian-backed Badr Organization.[4] The brigade operates in Bartella, which is a historically Assyrian town that the 30th brigade took over after it liberated the town from ISIS.[5] The PMF 50th Brigade is affiliated with the Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Asaib Ahl al Haq.[6] The United States sanctioned the former PMF 30th and 50th brigade commanders in July 2019 for human rights abuses.[7]

The Christian Alliance also called on the Iraqi federal government to implement Article 140 of the Iraqi constitution, which calls for determining the status of disputed territories between the Iraqi federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).[8] The implementation of Article 140 is a long-standing Kurdish and Christian demand, and Kurdish parties have previously raised the issue of Article 140 during periods of heightened tensions between the Iraqi federal government and the KRG. The head of the Christian Alliance, Ano Jawhar Abdoka, serves as the KRG transport and communications minister.[9] Abdoka previously worked in the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) district committee in Ankawa, Erbil.[10] The KDP likely encouraged the Christian Alliance to raise the issue of Article 140 in its list of demands.

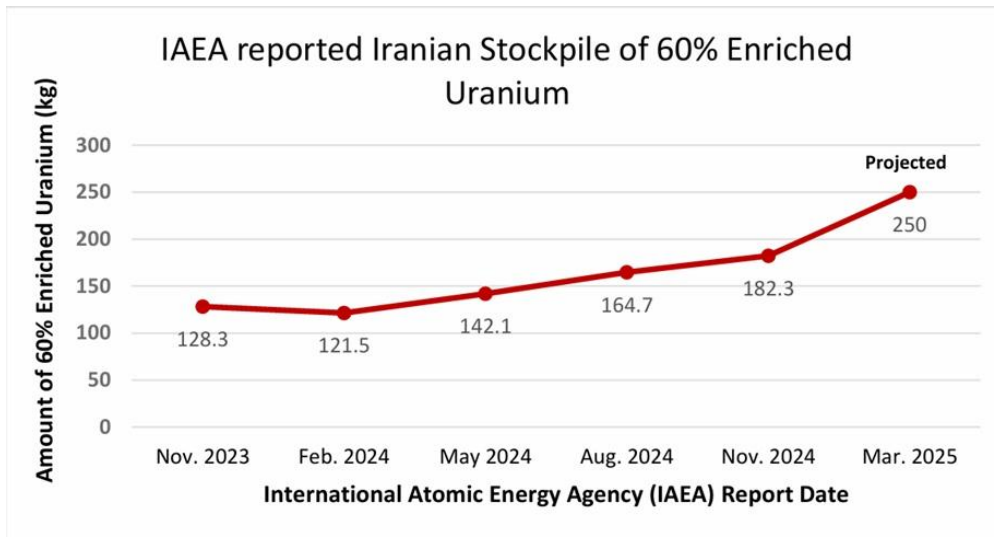
The Christian Alliance finally called for revising voting mechanisms for Ninewa Provincial Council elections and for legislating a personal status law for members of non-Muslim minority communities.[11] Jawhar accused armed groups of “hijacking” Christians’ political representation in the Iraqi federal government by “imposing themselves on the political scene” in the Ninewa Plains.[12]

**Iran received a large shipment of a chemical precursor for solid missile propellant from China on February 13.**[13] Western media reported on January 22 that two Iranian cargo vessels, *Golbon* and *Jairan*, carrying over 1100 tons of sodium perchlorate, will travel from China to Iran over the “next few weeks.”[14] The *Golbon* arrived at Bandar Abbas port, Hormozgan Province, on February 13 with “most” of the total shipment, according to two unspecified European intelligence sources.[15] The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Procurement Department of the Self Sufficiency Jihad Organization (SSJO) reportedly received the shipment. The SSJO is partially responsible for Iran's ballistic missile research and development and was sanctioned by the United States in 2017 for contributing to the proliferation and delivery of weapons of mass destruction.[16]

One thousand one hundred tons of sodium perchlorate can be converted to slightly over 1000 tons of ammonium perchlorate, which is the main component for solid propellant for missiles. Unspecified Western officials estimated that 1000 tons of ammonium perchlorate can—if converted to solid fuel propellant—fuel up to 260 mid-range Iranian ballistic missiles.[17] These officials may be referring to medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBM), which have a range of between 1,000km and 3,000km. Iran used MRBMs to target Israel in April and October 2024. That amount of ammonium perchlorate can also produce larger quantities of other types of smaller munitions that require less solid fuel, including shorter-range ballistic missiles. It is unclear when the second vessel, *Jairan*, will depart from China.

**International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Raphael Grossi stated that Iran will likely have 250kg of uranium enriched up to 60% by the next IAEA report in March 2025. This marks a significant increase in Iran’s stockpile of 60 percent enriched uranium since the IAEA’s last report in November 2024.**[18] The IAEA reported in November 2024 that Iran had 182.3 kg of enriched uranium, up to 60 percent.[19] 250 kg of enriched uranium up to 60 percent is equivalent to 6 significant quantities, marking over a 1.5 increase in significant quantities since the IAEA's last report.[20] The IAEA defines a significant quantity as the “approximate amount of nuclear material for which the possibility of manufacturing a nuclear explosive device cannot be excluded.”[21] Grossi also told Reuters that the IAEA would likely delay issuing a comprehensive report on Iran’s nuclear activities beyond March, when the IAEA initially intended to release the report.[22]

The IAEA passed an E3 (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany) censure resolution against Iran in November 2024 that requires the IAEA to produce a "comprehensive report" on Iranian nuclear activities by spring 2025.[23] CTP-ISW previously assessed that the report would almost certainly confirm Iranian noncompliance with the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and lay the foundation for further action against Iran’s nuclear program.[24]



**Iranian efforts to compel Lebanon to allow Iranian aircraft transporting funds for Hezbollah to land in Beirut are tantamount to an Iranian effort to compel Lebanon to violate the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire.** Iran blocked Lebanese planes in Tehran from returning stranded Lebanese citizens, likely to compel Lebanon to resume Mahan Air flights to Beirut's Rafic Hariri International Airport.[25] Lebanese authorities prevented a Mahan Air flight from landing at Rafic Hariri International Airport on February 13.[26] Iran's demand for Lebanon to allow Mahan Air flights to land violates the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire because these flights reportedly deliver cash to Hezbollah.[27] The ceasefire requires the Lebanese government to prevent these transfers. Rafic Hariri International Airport security searched a Mahan Air flight in early January over suspicions it transferred funds to Hezbollah.[28]

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Iraq:** The Iraqi Christian Alliance, which is comprised of eight political parties, submitted a series of demands to the Iraqi parliament and Federal Supreme Court on February 14. The demands included the removal of armed militias from the Ninewa Plains and determining the status of disputed territories between Baghdad and Erbil.
- **Iranian Ballistic Missiles:** Iran received a large shipment of a chemical precursor for solid missile propellant from China on February 13. Western officials estimated that this shipment could be used to fuel up to 260 mid-range ballistic missiles.
- **Iranian Nuclear Program:** International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Raphael Grossi stated that Iran will likely have 250kg of uranium enriched up to 60% by the next IAEA report in March 2025. This marks a significant increase in Iran's stockpile of 60 percent enriched uranium since the IAEA's last report in November 2024.
- **Iranian Influence in Lebanon:** Iranian efforts to compel Lebanon to allow Iranian aircraft transporting funds for Hezbollah to land in Beirut are tantamount to an Iranian effort to compel Lebanon to violate the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire.

**Syria**

**Co-founder and senior PKK leader Cemil Bayik said that the PKK would not disarm without imprisoned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan's release from prison.[29]** Turkey will reportedly release Ocalan after he makes a public call on the PKK to lay down its arms.[30] Bayik, who is based in the Qandil Mountains in Iraq, told PKK-affiliated media that he received a letter from Ocalan and that Ocalan seeks to "take the Kurdish issue out of the realm of war and into the realm of democratization." [31] Bayik suggested that the PKK would refuse to disarm without Ocalan's release, however.[32] PKK Executive Committee member Murat Karayilan also seemed to add additional conditions over the movement's disarmament, noting that the PKK must hold a conference to discuss disarmament before Ocalan can call on the PKK to disarm.[33] Bayik and Karayilan's statements directly conflict with Turkey's theory that the PKK would heed Ocalan's expected call for disarmament and lay down their arms.[34]

**Kurdistan Regional Government Prime Minister Masrour Barzani called on the Syrian interim government to negotiate with all Kurdish groups—not just the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)—during an interview with Saudi media on February 14.[35]** Barzani stated that the SDF represents "a portion," but not all, Kurds in Syria. Barzani's statement is consistent with the Kurdish Democratic Party's (KDP) efforts to pressure the SDF to work with minority Kurdish parties, particularly the Kurdish National Council (KNC).[36] The KNC is dominated by the Syrian wing of the KDP.[37]

**Turkey continued to target the SDF along the eastern banks of the Euphrates River on February 14.** Turkish aircraft struck several SDF positions near Zor Maghar and Shuyukh Tahtani, approximately 2.3 kilometers east of Jarabulus, on February 14.[38] Turkish aircraft also struck SDF positions near the Shuyoukh hills, approximately 6 kilometers south of Jarabulus.[39]

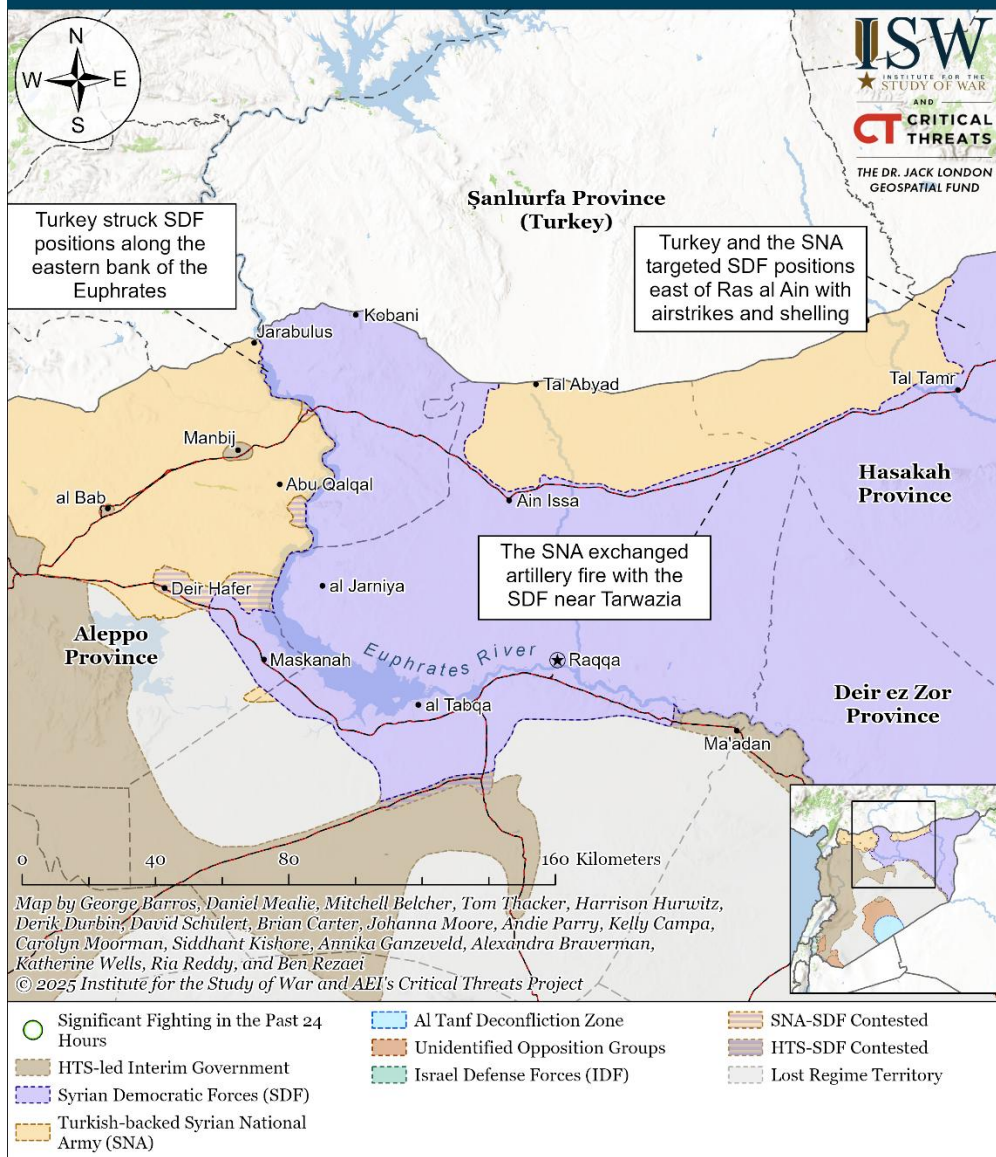
**The Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) continued to engage the SDF near the Tishreen Dam on February 13.[40]** The SNA also shelled SDF positions near the Dam, likely to isolate SDF units operating at the bridgehead.[41]

**Turkey and the SNA continued to target SDF positions along the Peace Spring frontlines on February 14.** Anti-SDF media claimed that the SNA conducted an artillery strike on an SDF position in Abu Rasin.[42] Anti-SDF media also reported that the SNA and SDF exchanged artillery fire north of Raqqa near the M4 highway.[43]

**The Turkish Defense Ministry announced on February 14 that it killed seven Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) members in Iraq and Syria.[44]** The ministry said that it killed three PKK members near Jabal Haft Tanin in Iraqi Kurdistan and four PKK members in Peace Spring territory in northern Syria.[45] Iraqi media separately reported that Turkey conducted airstrikes targeting several villages near Amedi District, Dohuk Province, on February 14.[46] The Turkish Defense Ministry said on February 13 that it had killed 56 PKK members in northern Syria and Iraq over the past week.[47]

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Northern Syria

February 14, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST



**US Ambassador and Chargé d’Affaires ad interim Dorothy Shea announced on February 12 during a UN Security Council Briefing on the political and humanitarian Situations in Syria that the United States intends to reduce its aid contribution to refugee camps in Syria.[48]** She stated that “the camps cannot remain a direct US financial responsibility” and that US assistance in managing and securing al Hol and Roj camps “cannot last forever.” Shea urged countries to “expeditiously” repatriate displaced and detained nationals who remain in the region. Shea’s calls to repatriate displaced and detained nationals are consistent with the Biden administration and the first Trump administration’s policy. The United States issued temporary waivers after US aid freezes for some programs responsible for securing al Hol camp on January 31, but other programs responsible for internal camp management may be forced to suspend operations, according to the *New York Times*.[49] Seven aid officials, local authorities, and diplomats cited by Reuters on February 14 reported

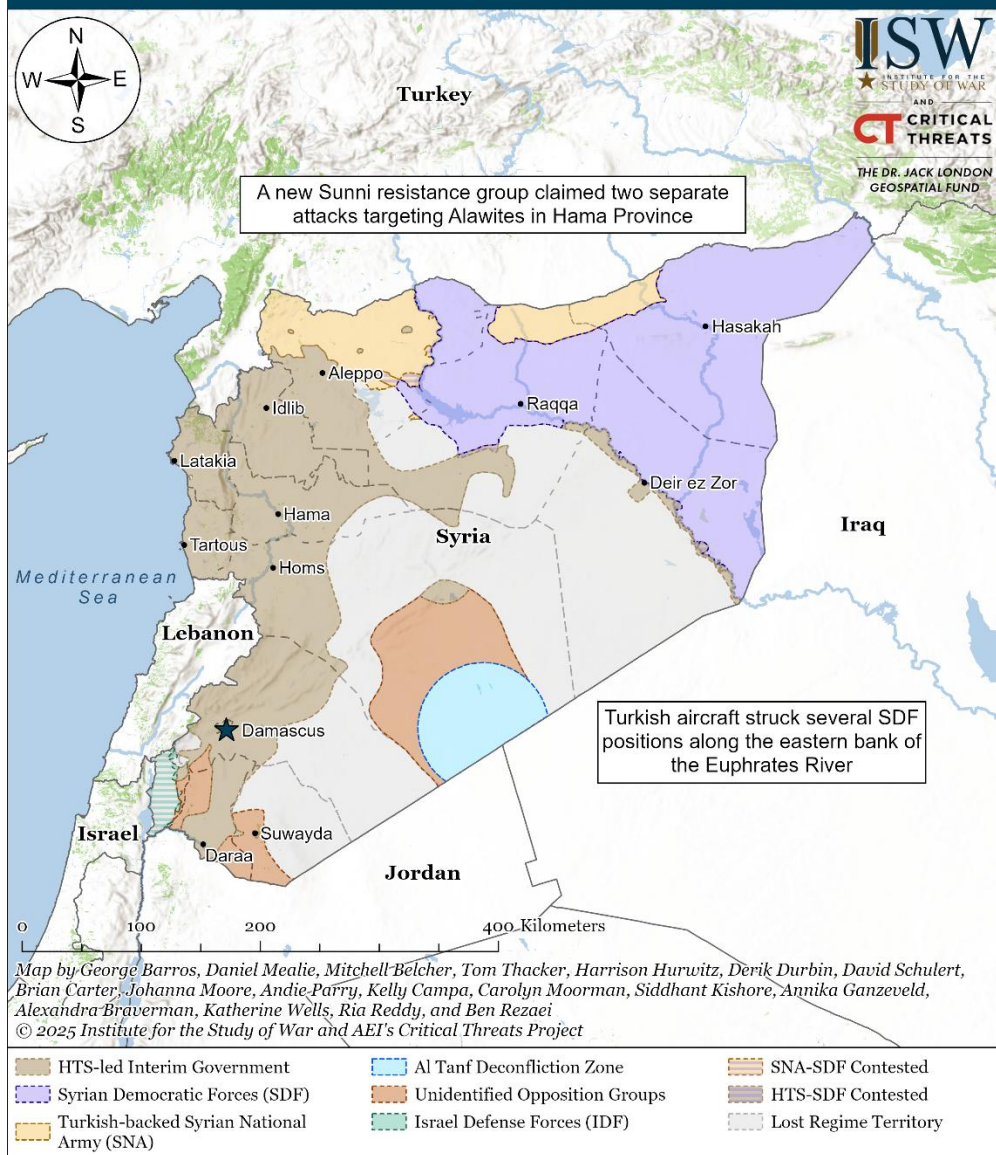
that funding freezes have disrupted aid distribution and other services.[50] Two senior humanitarian sources warned that changes to funding had prompted camp officials to develop contingency plans for the spread of disease, riots, and IS breakout attempts. A Roj camp resident cited by Reuters claimed that mass riots and breakout attempts are expected if funding for internal camp management is not reinstated. Camp security will very likely struggle to address internal camp unrest even if security forces continue to receive funding.

**A new Sunni resistance group claimed two attacks in Hama Province on February 1.[51]** Saraya Ansar al Sunnah claimed its fighters attacked Arza and killed 12 Alawites.[52] Saraya Ansar al Sunnah claimed its fighters attacked Tell Dahab and killed five former Assad regime security members.[53] Saraya Ansar al Sunnah stated that it would continue its attacks until the Alawites and Shia were “eliminated” or displaced from the region.[54] The group used sectarian, derogatory terms for Alawites and Shia that are also used by Salafi-jihadi groups like al Qaeda and the Islamic State.[55] Saraya Ansar al Sunnah rejected the interim government’s efforts to pardon former Assad regime members.[56] Saraya Ansar al Sunnah stated that the group is decentralized with no formal headquarters.[57] It is not clear who formed Saraya Ansar al Sunnah. The group appears to be a Salafi-jihadi organization, but it is not clear if it formed from Islamic State or al Qaeda affiliate Hurras al Din splinters. Hurras al Din officially dissolved on January 29.[58]

**US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference on February 14.[59]** Rubio called for close cooperation to support a stable and unified Syria that is not a threat to the United States, Turkey, or the region.[60]



## Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria February 14, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST



**Russia delivered local Syrian currency to the Syrian central bank on February 14.[61]** An unspecified source at the bank reported that Russia transferred 300 billion Syrian pounds as a part of a contract signed between the former Assad regime and Russia.[62] Russia will reportedly send a second payment later. Syrian officials told a Reuters journalist that Russia had already printed the money and prepared it to ship to Syria when the Assad regime collapsed.[63] The Syrian interim government confirmed the shipment but did not clarify its size and quantity.[64] Interim Syrian President Ahmed al Shara and Russian President Vladimir Putin may have discussed the shipments during their phone call on February 12.[65]

**Iraqi Foreign Affairs Minister Fuad Hussein attended the international conference on Syria in Paris on February 14.[66]** Hussein called on the Syrian interim government to ensure a peaceful transfer of power and hold a national dialogue with “all components” of Syrian society. Hussein

stated that Iraq will invite Syrian Interim President Ahmed al Shara to the Arab Summit in Baghdad in May 2025.[67] An unspecified Iraqi government source told Iraqi media on February 14 that Syrian Interim Foreign Affairs Minister Asaad al Shaibani will visit Iraq next week.[68]

**The Syrian interim government continued to take steps to consolidate and reform the state security sector on February 14.** The Syrian Defense Ministry announced a ban on the transfer and sale of military assets, including weapons, ammunition, equipment, and technical equipment.[69] This ban would be consistent with the Defense Ministry’s efforts to dissolve all armed groups in Syria into the Syrian defense apparatus and keep weapons in state hands. The Syrian Interior Ministry announced the Public Security forces will be known as the “Internal Security Force.”[70] Public Security forces have deployed in Syrian interim government-controlled territory across Syria to maintain security and arrest suspected criminals or regime remnants since the fall of the regime.[71]

## **Iraq**

### **Axis of Resistance objectives:**

- Strengthen Iranian and Axis of Resistance influence over the Iraqi state and society
- Harden the Iraqi government against internal dissent

**The Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) 30th Brigade conducted a “large-scale security operation” along the Iraq-Syria border on February 14.**[72] The PMF 30th Brigade is commanded by Sabah Salem al Shabaki and affiliated with the Iranian-backed Badr Organization.[73] The PMF 30th Brigade is based in Bartella, east of Mosul.[74]

## **The Palestinian Territories and Lebanon**

### **Axis of Resistance objectives:**

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and the public to sustain clearing operations in the Gaza Strip
- Reestablish Hamas as the governing authority in the Gaza Strip
- Rebuild and reestablish Hezbollah in southern Lebanon
- Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

### **The Gaza Strip**

**Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan said on February 14 that negotiations for the second phase of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire-hostage agreement will begin on February 17 if Israel does not delay the delivery of humanitarian aid and heavy equipment to the Gaza Strip.**[75] The Israeli government has not yet confirmed that it will send a delegation to the negotiations. Israel and Hamas reached an agreement on February 13, under which the ceasefire’s first phase will continue. Hamas had previously jeopardized the ceasefire by refusing to release more Israeli hostages.[76] Senior Hamas political official Taher al Nono claimed that the Israeli government did not authorize its delegation to negotiate the second phase of the ceasefire during negotiations from



February 8 to 9.[77] Hamas had announced it would stop releasing hostages after these negotiations.[78]

**Hamas will release three Israeli hostages, and Israel will release 369 Palestinian prisoners on February 15.[79]**



# Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

As of February 14, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST



Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Tom Thacker, Harrison Hurwitz, Derik Durbin, 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 - © 2025 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

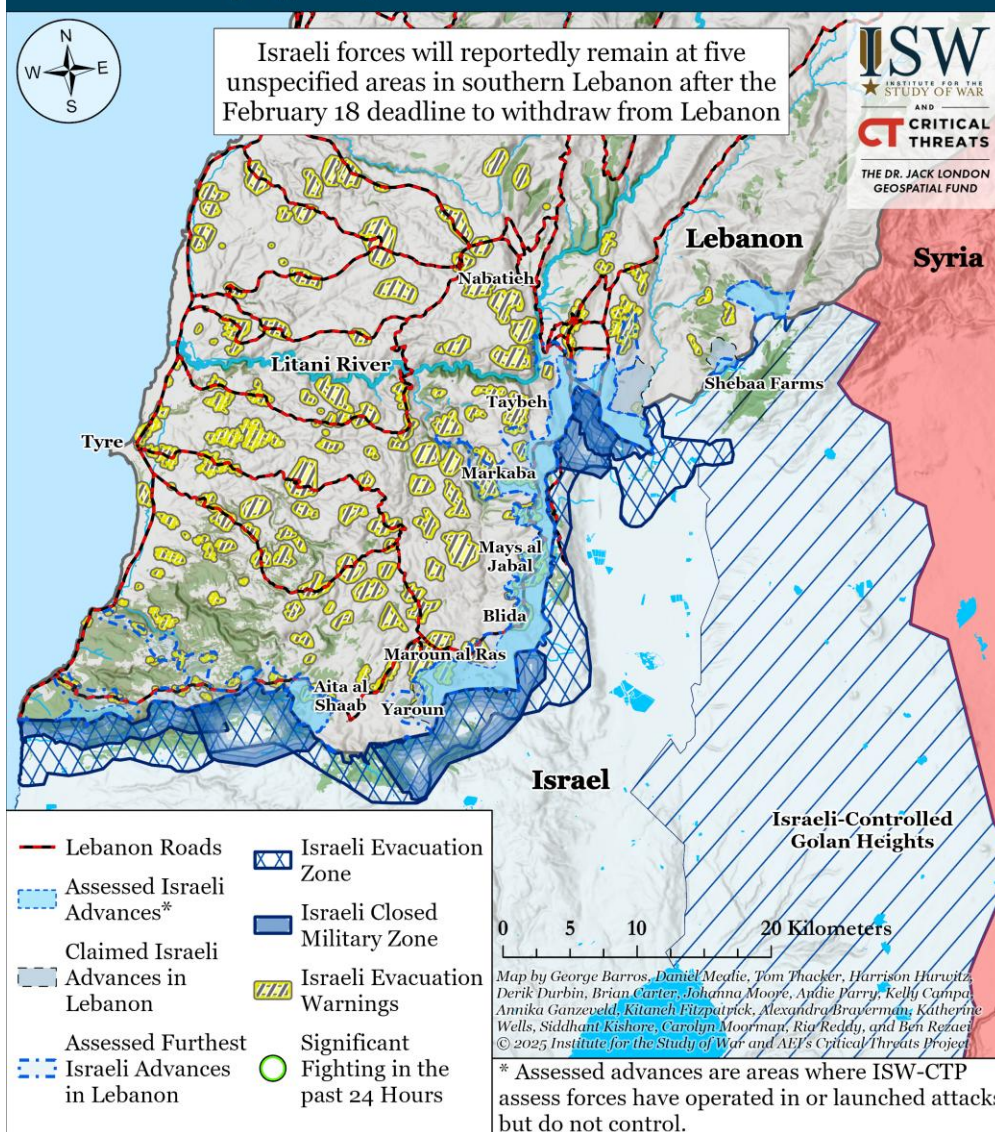
	Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*		IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridors in Gaza		Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
	Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances		Netzarim Corridor		Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone
	Assessed Furthest Extent of Israeli Clearing Operations		Philadelphi Corridor		

\* 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

## Lebanon

# Reported Israeli Operations in Lebanon

As of February 14, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST



**Israeli Army Radio reported on February 14 that Israel intends to extend the deployment of Israeli forces at five unspecified locations in southern Lebanon after the February 18 withdrawal date.[80]**

**Ceasefire Implementation Mechanism Chairman US Army Major General Jasper Jeffers said on February 14 that he is confident that the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) will control “all population centers in the southern Litani area” by February 18.[81]** The Ceasefire Implementation Mechanism met in Naqoura, Lebanon, on February 14.

**Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji and French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot called for a complete Israel Defense Forces (IDF) withdrawal from Lebanon by the February 18 deadline.[82]** Diplomatic sources told Saudi outlet al Arabiya that the United States



rejected a French proposal to replace Israeli forces in southern Lebanon with United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) troops.[83]

### **Iranian Decision-Making, Internal Dynamics, and Foreign Policy**

**Iranian students at the University of Tehran protested on February 14 after two unknown individuals killed a student in a robbery near campus.**[84] Students clashed with security forces as protests continued into the night.[85] Students called for accountability for the lack of safety and heavy security presence on campus.[86] Iranian authorities reportedly deployed additional security and detained several students.[87] The protest started over a local incident but could increase anti-regime sentiment and raise concerns about Iran’s internal stability.

**An informed Iranian source reported on February 13 that Iranian security forces installed advanced Chinese-made Hikvision cameras under pedestrian bridges in Tehran. These cameras enable simultaneous license plate and facial recognition.**[88] The network reportedly spans key areas in central Tehran. Iranian officials increasingly fear potential unrest as the Iranian currency continues to lose value daily, and energy shortages worsen public frustration.[89] The United States banned Hikvision in 2022 over national security concerns.[90]

**Unspecified fighters shot at Iranian border guards in western Iran’s Baneh, Kurdistan Province, on February 14 during a patrol near the border.**[91] Three guards reportedly sustained injuries, and medical teams transferred them to a local hospital.

*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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[1] <https://shafaq.com/ar/%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D8%AE%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A9-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7-%D9%88%D9%85%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9> dot

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<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-badr-organization>

[5] [https://50f3ad00-5b28-4016-898f-6130d301c97a.filesusr.com/ugd/6ae567\\_98f8f8912baa40949a18a3a0b717eaea.pdf](https://50f3ad00-5b28-4016-898f-6130d301c97a.filesusr.com/ugd/6ae567_98f8f8912baa40949a18a3a0b717eaea.pdf)

[6] <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-babiliyoun-50th-pmf-brigade>

[7] <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm735>

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