Iran Update

Katherine Wells, Alexandra Braverman, Siddhant Kishore, Kelly Campa and Brian Carter

Information Cutoff: January 5, 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.

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.

Iran is likely taking a series of steps to prevent instability in Iraq after the fall of the Assad Regime. Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force Commander Esmail Ghaani arrived in Baghdad on January 5 for covert meetings with senior Iraqi officials and militia commanders to discuss "restructuring" an informed source told Iraqi media.[1] Ghaani will reportedly meet with the Iraqi prime minister, leaders in the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), and the Iraqi "armed forces commander." Ghaani and the IRGC very likely also discuss the fall of the Assad Regime with these key Iraqi leaders. The many militia elements that withdrew from Syria will presumably also need to be reorganized. IRGC Ground Forces Special Forces Brigade also recently conducted military exercises in the western Kermanshah province and the Iranian Artesh Ground Forces deployed several brigades in western Iran to confront hostile groups aimed to create instability on Iran's western border with Iraq, illustrating Iran's preoccupation with the threat posed by insecurity in Iraq.[2]
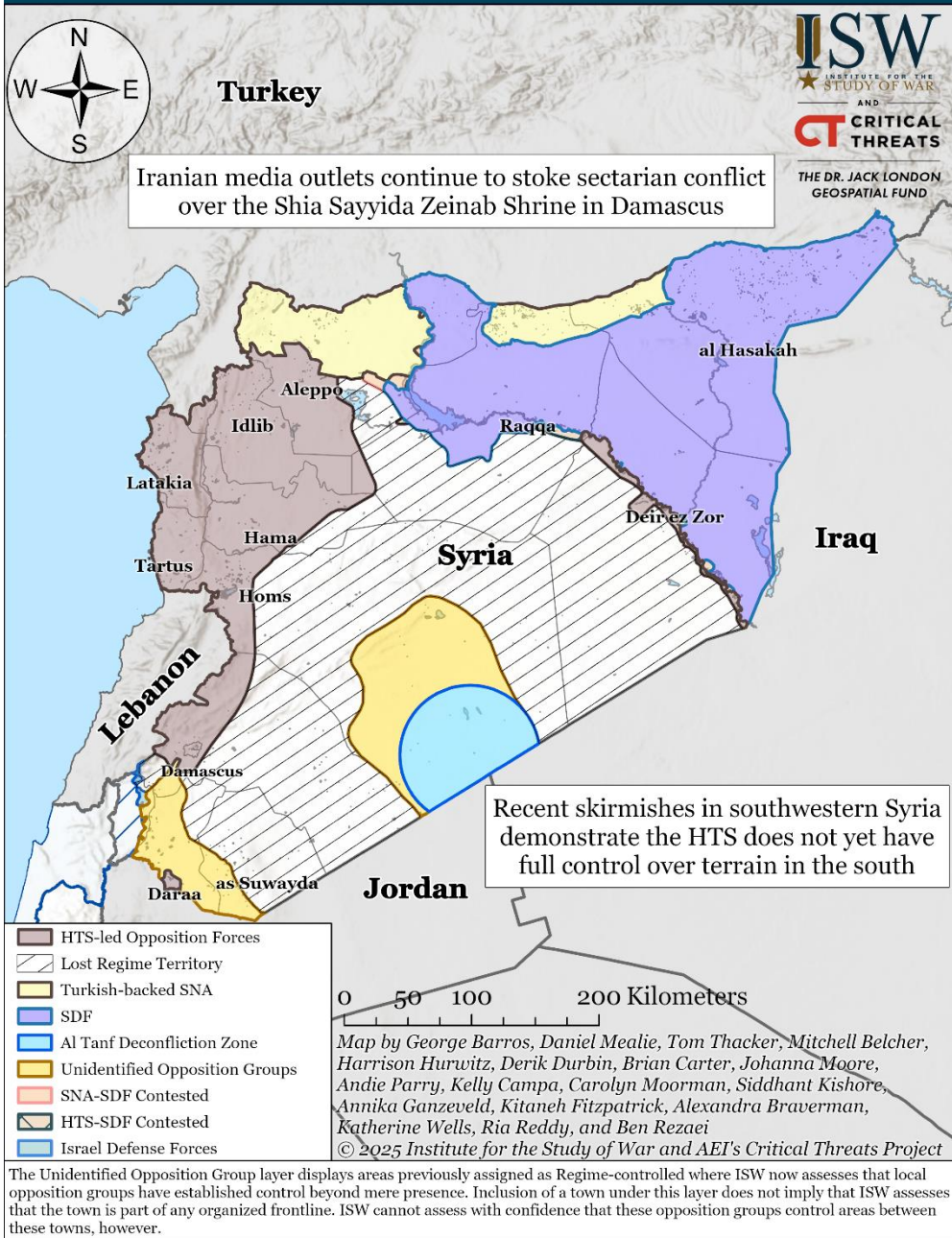
IRGC-affiliated media separately published an op-ed that highlights some of the probable concerns that Iran has after the fall of Syria. The op-ed claimed that political insecurity in Syria could be transported to Iraq by terrorists who assassinate key Iraqi officials to cause insecurity and destabilize the country. [3]Tasnim's Salman al Maliki claimed that other powers, such as the United States and Israel, would try to exploit a power vacuum in Iraq for their own interests. Iran regularly holds the United States and Israel responsible for the formation of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and could conclude that ISIS attacks targeting Iraqi military officers and officials are encouraged by the United States and Israel.[4] Maliki could also be referring to retaliatory Israeli or US strikes against militia targets in response to future attacks targeting Israel or US bases. Maliki urged Iraq to create a joint political and military council for addressing these security threats, sharing intelligence, and responding to terrorism in   the   op-ed.[5]

Iranian media outlets continue to stoke sectarian conflict over the Shia Sayyida Zeinab Shrine in Damascus. Tabnak reported on January 4 that an HTS-linked commander entered the Sayyida Zeinab shrine in Damascus and repeated "sectarian and sarcastic sentences."[6] Tabnak claimed that the provocative video could lead the Shiites and Alawites in Syria to respond with "harsh actions." Tabnak has previously claimed that HTS fighters have threatened the security of the sacred Shia   shrine.[7]

Syrian Popular Resistance, which is a purportedly Syrian telegram channel espousing sectarian narratives, accused the HTS-led government of killing six Sayyida Zeinab Shrine workers after six dead bodies were reportedly found on January 5.[8] The channel provided no evidence of the deaths or whether the killings were motivated by sectarian violence. This is also the first time the channel has discussed Sayyida Zeinab, which is notable given that most of the claims about the shrine have come from the Iranian information space.

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Reported Control of Terrain in Syria
As of January 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST

Turkey

Iranian media outlets continue to stoke sectarian conflict over the Shia Sayyida Zeinab Shrine in Damascus

al Hasakah

Aleppo

Idlib

Raqqa

Latakia

Deir ez Zor

Hama

Syria

Iraq

Tartus

Homs

Lebanon

Damascus

Recent skirmishes in southwestern Syria demonstrate the HTS does not yet have full control over terrain in the south

as Suwayda

Daraa

Jordan

- HTS-led Opposition Forces
- Lost Regime Territory
- Turkish-backed SNA
- SDF
- Al Tanf Deconfliction Zone
- Unidentified Opposition Groups
- SNA-SDF Contested
- HTS-SDF Contested
- Israel Defense Forces

0   50   100   200 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Tom Thacker, Mitchell Belcher, Harrison Hurwitz, Derik Durbin, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Carolyn Moorman, Siddhant Kishore, Annika Ganzeveld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Alexandra Braverman, Katherine Wells, Ria Reddy, and Ben Rezaei
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The Unidentified Opposition Group layer displays areas previously assigned as Regime-controlled where ISW now assesses that local opposition groups have established control beyond mere presence. Inclusion of a town under this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the town is part of any organized frontline. ISW cannot assess with confidence that these opposition groups control areas between these towns, however.

Senior Israeli officials indicated on January 5 that the IDF will likely extend its deployment in southern Lebanon if the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire agreement conditions are not met by January 26. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz stated that if the first condition of the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire agreement–the complete withdrawal of Hezbollah and dismantling of Hezbollah weapons and infrastructure by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)–is not met, Israel will be "forced to act on its own."[9] Katz specified that if Hezbollah does not withdraw there is "no agreement." The outgoing IDF 91st Division Commander Brigadier General Shai Klepper similarly stated in an
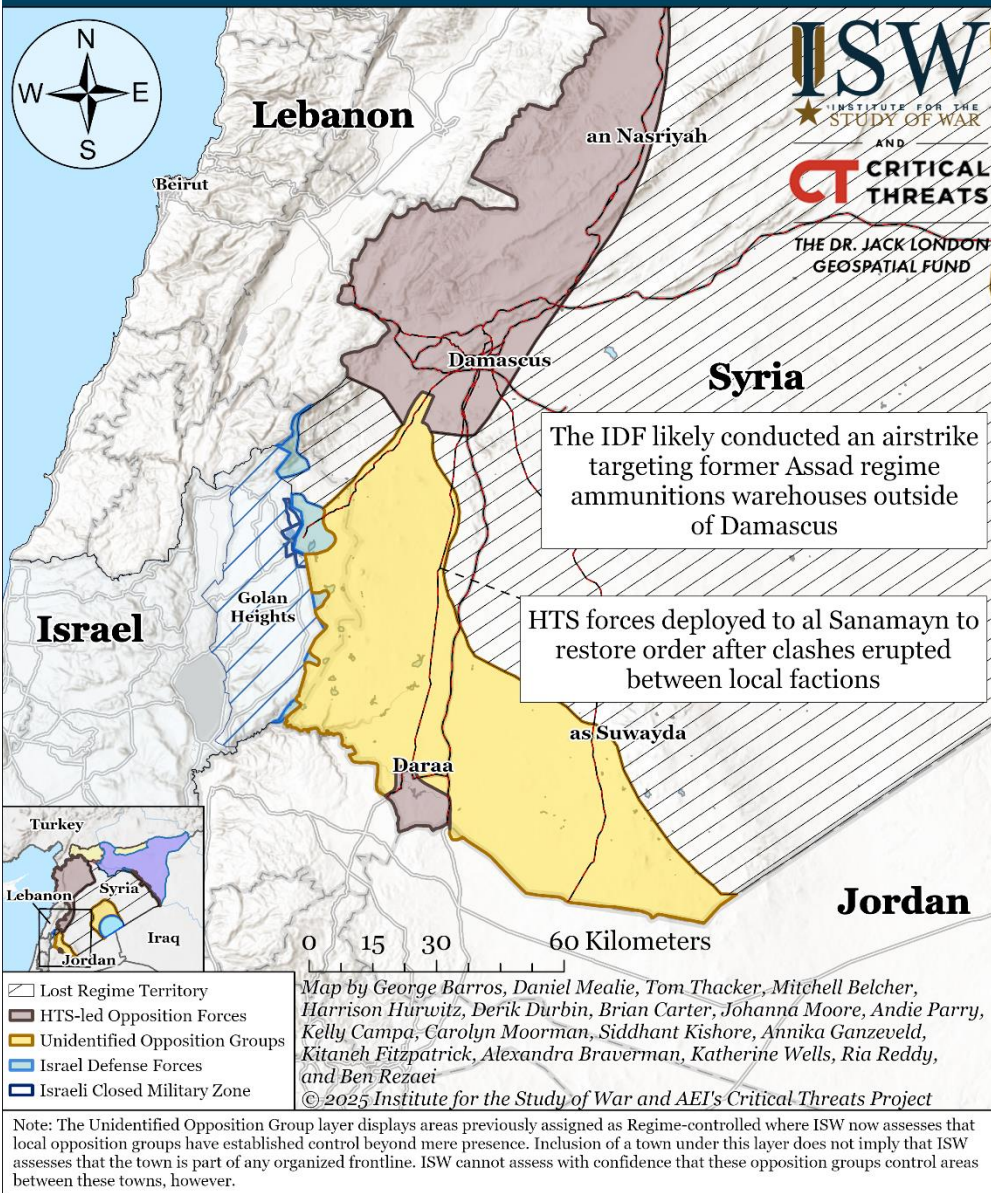
interview published on January 5 that the IDF is "not expected" to leave southern Lebanon after the 60-day ceasefire period concludes if the IDF's objectives are not fulfilled.[10] The 91st Division is responsible for Israel's northern border with Lebanon. Israeli media reported that the United States and Israel are making unspecified efforts to extend the 60-day ceasefire with Hezbollah to prevent a "premature withdrawal" or a return to full-scale war between Israel and Hezbollah.[11]

The LAF likely does not have the organizational capability or willingness to meet the conditions of the ceasefire by January 26. Israeli media reported the IDF still controls most of the Lebanese territory as it did in November 2024, when the ceasefire deal was signed.[12] The *Washington Post* similarly reported that the IDF has withdrawn and allowed the LAF to backfill in only two of the over 60 IDF-controlled areas in southern Lebanon.[13] Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz stated that Hezbollah fighters and weapons have not yet moved north of the Litani River, as required by the deal.[14] CTP-ISW has previously noted that it is extremely unlikely that the LAF or UNIFIL would be willing to enforce Hezbollah's disarmament in the south, given their failure to enforce UNSCR 1701 in southern Lebanon since 2006.[15]

Recent skirmishes in southwestern Syria demonstrate the HTS does not yet have full control over terrain in the south. A reportedly former regime-affiliated militia led by Mohsen al Haymad engaged other local factions with rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) and small arms in al Sanamayn City, northern Daraa Province, on January 4.[16] Syrian sources suggested that Haymad's faction clashed with local groups affiliated with the Southern Operations Room, but it is not clear what started the fighting.[17] Haymad's faction has operated in al Sanamayn since at least 2018 when the group reconciled with the Assad regime and began collaborating with regime Military Intelligence, according to Syrian opposition media.[18] Many Southern Operations Room commanders—including Ahmed al Awda, a key commander in the group—were also former opposition groups that reconciled with the regime in 2018 under a Russian reconciliation plan.[19] The HTS-led Department of Military Operations deployed reinforcements to al Sanamayn City and convened the factions to negotiate a ceasefire.[20] Haymad's group and other unspecified local factions agreed to a ceasefire and to hand over heavy weapons to HTS forces.[21] HTS reportedly allowed the local groups to retain their individual weapons, however, which contradicts HTS's policy of requiring the disarmament of all armed groups within Syria.[22] Short-term arrangements to ensure temporary security in al Sanamyan may present problems in the future as HTS continues its mission to disarm and dissolve armed factions into the Syrian Defense Ministry. This incident also highlights that the Southern Operation Room has not yet been fully folded into HTS's forces. HTS-controlled forces will remain in al Sanamayn to set up checkpoints and maintain security within the city.[23] The necessity of HTS forces and checkpoints in the city underscores HTS's lack of control over armed factions in the Daraa and other southern provinces, which regularly sees fighting between local groups.

Opposition Advances in Southwest Syria
As of January 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST

The IDF likely conducted an airstrike targeting former Assad regime ammunitions warehouses outside of Damascus

HTS forces deployed to al Sanamayn to restore order after clashes erupted between local factions

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Tom Thacker, Mitchell Belcher, Harrison Hurwitz, Derik Durbin, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Carolyn Moorman, Siddhant Kishore, Annika Ganzeveld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Alexandra Braverman, Katherine Wells, Ria Reddy, and Ben Rezaei
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Lost Regime Territory
HTS-led Opposition Forces
Unidentified Opposition Groups
Israel Defense Forces
Israeli Closed Military Zone

Note: The Unidentified Opposition Group layer displays areas previously assigned as Regime-controlled where ISW now assesses that local opposition groups have established control beyond mere presence. Inclusion of a town under this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the town is part of any organized frontline. ISW cannot assess with confidence that these opposition groups control areas between these towns, however.

Key Takeaways:

- **Iranian Regional Policy:** Iran is taking a series of steps to prevent instability in Iraq after the fall of the Assad Regime. Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force Commander Esmail Ghaani arrived in Baghdad on January 5.

- **Iranian Information Space:** Iranian media outlets continue to stoke sectarian conflict over the Shia Sayyida Zeinab Shrine in Damascus.

- **Lebanon:** Senior Israeli officials indicated on January 5 that the IDF will likely extend its deployment in southern Lebanon if the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire agreement conditions are not

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met by January 26. The Lebanese Armed Forces likely do not have the organizational capability or willingness to meet the conditions of the ceasefire by January 26.

- **Southwestern Syria:** Recent skirmishes in southwestern Syria demonstrate the HTS does not yet have full control over terrain in the south.

Syria

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Reestablish ground lines of communication from Syria to Lebanon
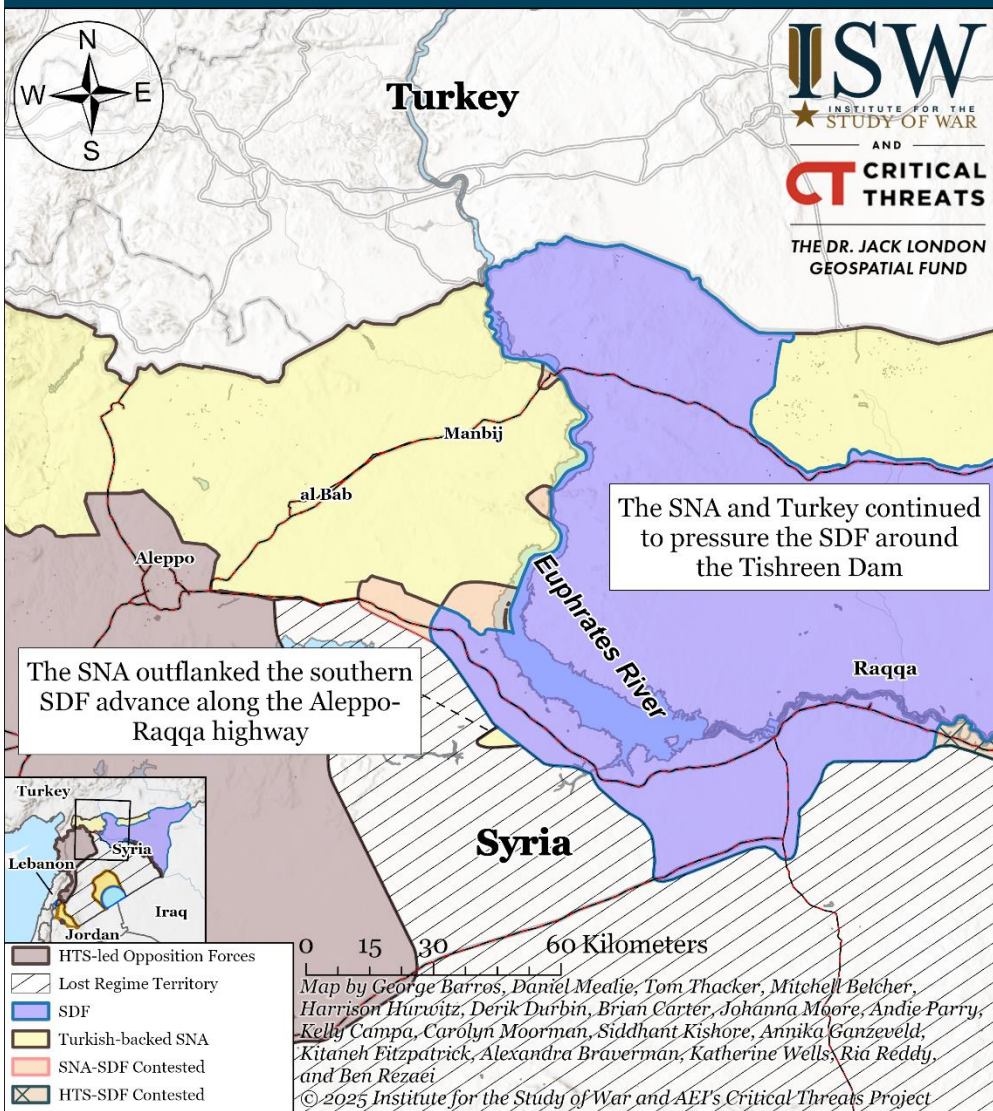
- Reestablish Iranian influence in Syria

The Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) outflanked the southern advance of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) along the Aleppo-Raqqa highway. Several anti-SDF media outlets and users reported that the SNA seized control of several villages in the desert south of Maskanah and advanced up to the train tracks south of the city.[24] This would place SNA forces within about five kilometers of Maskanah. Anti-SDF media posted a photo of SNA fighters observing Maskanah from a position in the desert.[25] Maskanah sits along the Aleppo-Raqqa highway and its capture would cut off the westernmost SDF advances along the Aleppo-Raqqa highway from Raqqa and Tabqa cities to the east. The SDF previously seized Maskanah during its southern advance towards Deir Hafer and Khafseh between December 23 and 24.[26] An anti-SDF social media user claimed that the SDF remains in Deir Hafer as of January 5.[27] Anti-SDF media reported that the SDF prepared defenses in Maskanah on January 5 ahead of a potential SNA assault on the city.[28]

The SNA's advance threatens the SDF's control of the Aleppo-Raqqa highway and its ability to provide reinforcements and logistical support to SDF fighters deployed in Deir Hafer and along the Khafseh axis. A potential SNA capture of Maskanah would make the SDF counteroffensive much more difficult, if not impossible. Capturing Maskanah would also threaten SDF strongholds Tabqa and Raqqa, located further east along the Aleppo-Raqqa highway. Threats to Tabqa and Raqqa would force the SDF to decide between prioritizing the Euphrates River crossings or Raqqa City.

The SNA and Turkey continued to pressure the SDF's ability to sustain operations west of Tishreen Dam through air and artillery on January 5.[29] The SDF said it continued to repel SNA attacks supported by Turkish air support in the Manbij countryside and near the Tishreen Dam on January 4.[30] Local media reported that Turkey conducted several airstrikes targeting SDF positions near the Dam and along supply lines from Raqqa to the frontlines, including on SDF logistics in al Jarniya District and an SDF position near Sarrin.[31] The SNA also reportedly shelled the entrances to Tishreen Dam and an SDF position in Ain Issa.[32] The SDF announced the death of 12 of its fighters on January 5.[33]

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Control of Terrain in North Syria
As of January 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST

Turkey

Manbij

al-Bab

Aleppo

The SNA and Turkey continued
to pressure the SDF around
the Tishreen Dam

Euphrates River

The SNA outflanked the southern
SDF advance along the Aleppo-
Raqqa highway

Raqqa

Syria

Turkey

Syria

Lebanon

Iraq

Jordan

0 15 30 60 Kilometers

HTS-led Opposition Forces
Lost Regime Territory
SDF
Turkish-backed SNA
SNA-SDF Contested
HTS-SDF Contested

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Tom Thacker, Mitchell Belcher,
Harrison Hurwitz, Derik Durbin, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry,
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Syrian interim government officials traveled to Doha, Qatar, on January 5 in Doha, Qatar, on January 5.[34] Syrian Interim Foreign Affairs Minister Asad al Shaibani, Interim Defense Minister Marhaf Abu Qasra, and Interim Intelligence head Anas Khattab met with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad al Thani and Qatari Minister of State Mohammed bin Abdulaziz al Khulaifi.[35] Shaibani thanked al Thani for providing humanitarian aid to Syria.[36] Shaibani said that the delegation discussed "all basic and strategic issues" with al Thani.[37] Shaibani and interim head of government Ahmed al Shara previously met with Khulaifi to discuss Syria's impending "broad strategic cooperation" with Qatar, particularly in the energy sector and in rebuilding Syrian ports in Damascus on December 23.[38] Qatar, which never normalized relations with the Assad regime, was among the first states to open contact with HTS after the fall of Assad.

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The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reported on January 5 that the IDF 810th Mountain Brigade (210th Division) completed a brigade-level operation in the Syrian Mt. Hermon area in recent weeks.[39] The IDF seized the Syrian side of Mt. Hermon on December 8 following the fall of the Assad regime.[40] The 810th Brigade raided "control points" and searched military buildings in the Mt. Hermon area.[41] The brigade destroyed intelligence equipment and weapons including anti-tank missiles, rockets, launchers, and IEDs.

The IDF likely conducted an airstrike targeting former Assad regime ammunition warehouses near Damascus on January 5. Syrian media posted footage purportedly showing explosions in former Syrian Arab Army (SAA) 58th Brigade weapons warehouses that contained rockets and other unspecified ammunition in Sahia village, Rif Dimashq Province.[42] A separate Syrian outlet posted footage to X (Twitter) showing explosions in a weapons storage facility for an SAA air defense battalion near al Kiswah, south of Damascus.[43]

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

Nothing significant to report.
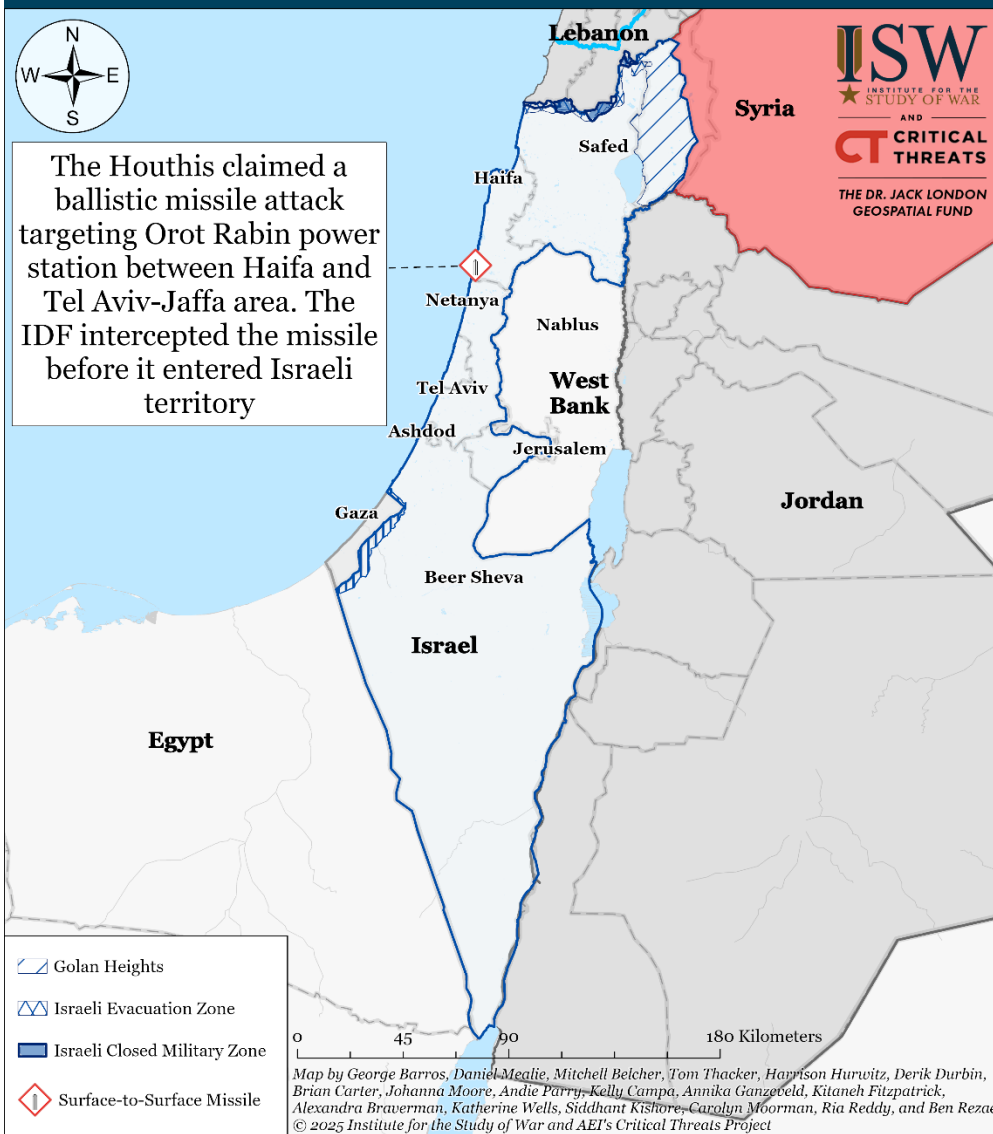
Arabian Peninsula

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Harden the Houthi regime against internal dissent in Houthi-controlled areas

- Destroy the anti-Houthi opposition in order to control all of Yemen

- Erode Israeli will to continue the war in the Gaza Strip

The Houthis launched a ballistic missile attack targeting the Orot Rabin power station in Hadera, central Israel on January 5. [xlvi] The IDF intercepted the missile before it entered Israeli territory on January 4. [xlvii]

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Houthi Attacks in Israel
As of January 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST

The Houthis claimed a ballistic missile attack targeting Orot Rabin power station between Haifa and Tel Aviv-Jaffa area. The IDF intercepted the missile before it entered Israeli territory

Legend:
- Golan Heights
- Israeli Evacuation Zone
- Israeli Closed Military Zone
- Surface-to-Surface Missile

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, 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
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Houthi media reported that the United States and United Kingdom conducted three airstrikes east of Saada City, northern Yemen, on January 4. [xlviii]

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

The IDF 900th Infantry Brigade (99th Division) concluded its deployment in the northern Gaza Strip on January 5.[44] The 900th Infantry Brigade conducted clearing operations in Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahia, and Jabalia refugee camps during its two-month-long deployment in the northern Gaza Strip. Palestinian militias killed 13 Israeli soldiers from the 900th Infantry Brigade during this time, according to an Israeli Army Radio correspondent.[45] There are three IDF maneuver brigades active in the Gaza Strip.

The IDF 84th Infantry Brigade (162nd Division) killed a PIJ rocket unit commander in the northern Gaza Strip last week.[46] Footage posted by the IDF showed the PIJ commander and his subordinate attempting to approach the Israeli forces.[47] The IDF encircled them, killed the commander, and detained his subordinate.[48] The IDF said that the PIJ commander participated in the October 7 attacks and conducted attacks targeting Israeli forces conducting operations in Beit Lahia.

Palestinian militias claimed three attacks targeting Israeli forces in the northern Gaza Strip on January 5.[49] Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) claimed that they fired small arms and three hand grenades at IDF infantry in western Beit Lahia.[50] PIJ and the Palestinian Mujahideen Movement claimed two attacks targeting the IDF in the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip.[51] The IDF stated that Palestinian militia gunfire seriously injured an IDF soldier from the 84th Infantry Brigade in the northern Gaza Strip on January 5.[52]

The IDF conducted airstrikes targeting Palestinian militia infrastructure and fighters in the central and southern Gaza Strip on January 5.[53] The IDF conducted an airstrike that killed a PIJ fighter in the al Mawasi Humanitarian Zone in Deir al Balah, central Gaza Strip. [54] The IDF Air Force separately struck and destroyed a Hamas headquarters in the al Mawasi Humanitarian Zone in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip.[55] The IDF Air Force struck more than 100 Palestinian militia targets across the Gaza Strip on January 3 and 4.[56] The IDF stated that it took steps to reduce the risk of civilian casualties by using precision munitions and analyzing aerial imagery before these airstrikes.[57]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip
As of January 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST

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THE DR. JACK LONDON GEOSPATIAL FUND

Beit Hanoun
Beit Lahia
Atatra
Jabalia
Al Shifa Hospital
Gaza City
NGO-built Jetty
Juhor ad Dik
Al Zahra
Nuseirat
Bureij
Maghazi
Deir al Balah
As Sureij
Bani Suheila
Khan Younis
Abasan al Kabira
Khirbat al Adas
Rafah
Al Bayuk

Palestinian militias claimed three attacks targeting Israeli forces in the northern Gaza Strip

The IDF conducted an airstrike that killed a PIJ fighter in the al Mawasi Humanitarian Zone in Deir al Balah

The IDF Air Force struck and destroyed a Hamas headquarters in the al Mawasi Humanitarian Zone in Khan Younis
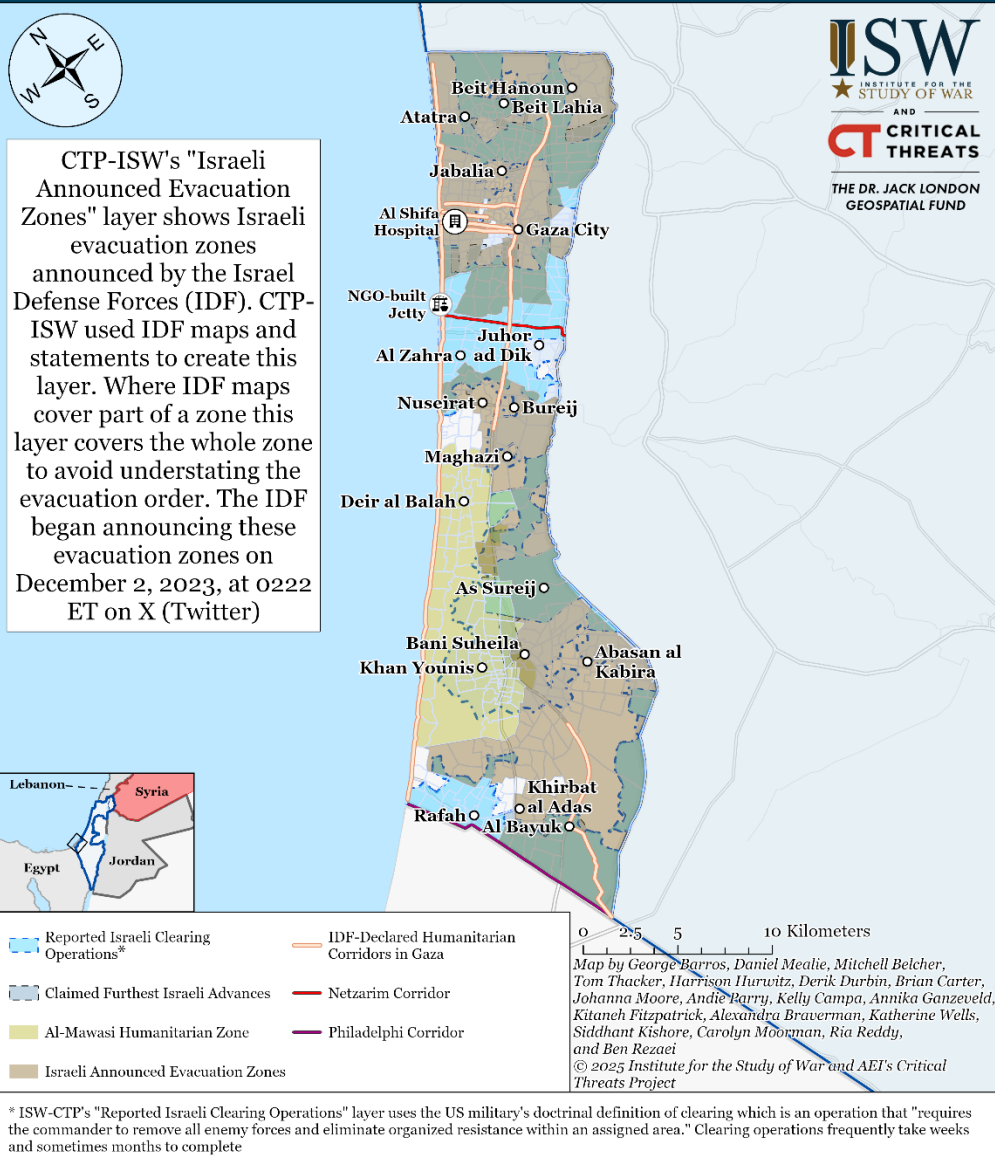
| 0 | 5 | 10 | 20 Kilometers |

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, 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*
Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances
Assessed Furthest Extent of Israeli Clearing Operations
IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridors in Gaza
Netzarim Corridor
Philadelphi Corridor
Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone

Lebanon
Syria
Egypt
Jordan

* 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

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Israeli-Announced Evacuation Zones in the Gaza Strip
As of January 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST

CTP-ISW's "Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones" layer shows Israeli evacuation zones announced by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). CTP-ISW used IDF maps and statements to create this layer. Where IDF maps cover part of a zone this layer covers the whole zone to avoid understating the evacuation order. The IDF began announcing these evacuation zones on December 2, 2023, at 0222 ET on X (Twitter)

Legend:
- Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*
- Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances
- Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone
- Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones
- IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridors in Gaza
- Netzarim Corridor
- Philadelphi Corridor

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, 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
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* 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

Senior Hezbollah official Wafiq Safa told reporters on January 5 that former Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah will be buried on January 25, which is the 60th day of the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire agreement, in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon.[58] Israel killed Nasrallah in an airstrike on September 27, 2024.

Israeli and Lebanese media reported on January 4 that the IDF conducted a controlled demolition of infrastructure in Taybeh, southeastern Lebanon, and Tyre Harfa, southwestern Lebanon.[59] An Israeli Army Radio correspondent noted that both these Lebanese towns are located in the "second line" of Lebanese towns, located several kilometers from the Israel-

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Lebanon border.[60] The "second line" of towns refers to towns located approximately 6-8 kilometers north of the Israel-Lebanon border which falls within the range that Hezbollah could use to launch drones and rockets at Israel.[61] The Israeli Army Radio correspondent noted that it is noteworthy that the IDF is still operating in this "second line" of towns and has not yet withdrawn to the first line which could indicate that the IDF does not intend to withdraw at the end of the month. The IDF would be required to withdraw if Hezbollah and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) uphold their end of the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire agreement.

Lebanese media separately reported on January 4 that the IDF fired artillery in Kfarchouba, southeastern Lebanon.[62] Lebanese media reported that an IDF mechanized infantry unit operated on the outskirts of Kfarchouba, on January 4.[63]

Lebanon Artillery map

West   Bank

The IDF conducted raids in the town of Meithalun in Jenin Governorate, northern West Bank, and killed a local al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades commander on January 5.[64] The IDF also confiscated weapons, destroyed an IED manufacturing facility, and seized tens of thousands of Israeli shekels in "terrorist funds" during the raids.[65] PIJ fired small arms targeting Israeli forces conducting   raids   in   Meithalun.[66]

Iranian   Decision-Making,   Internal   Dynamics,   and   Foreign   Policy

Nothing significant to report.

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.

[1] https://shafaq dot com/ar/%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%A8%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%B3%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%82%D8%A7-%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%84%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%87%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B5%D8%A7-%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A9

[2] https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-january-4-2025

[3] https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1403/10/16/3232253

[4] https://time.com/3720081/isis-iran-us-creation/

[5] https://www.tasnimnews dot com/fa/news/1403/10/16/3232253

[6] https://www.tabnak dot ir/fa/news/1281599 ; https://vista dot ir/n/arshehonline-151y7

[7] https://www.iswresearch.org/2024/12/iran-update-december-16-2024.html

[8] https://t.me/syria_mukawama/5119 ;

https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-december-31-2024

[9] https://news.walla dot co.il/item/3716991 ; https://www.timesofisrael dot com/full-text-the-israel-hezbollah-ceasefire-deal/

[10] https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1875829513868734835

[11] https://www.jpost dot com/middle-east/article-836212

[12] https://news.walla dot co.il/item/3716991

[13] https://wapo.st/3DJkQQL

[14] https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/01/05/israel-war-news-lebanon-syria-hamas-gaza-palestine/?pwapi_token=eyJoeXAiOiJKV1QiLCJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJyZWFzb24iOiJnaWZ0Iiwib

mJmIjoxNzM2MDUzMjAwLCJpc3MiOiJzdWJzY3JpcHRpb25zIiwiZXhwIjoxNzM3NDM1NTk5LCJp
YXQiOjE3MzYwNTMyMDAsImpoaSI6IjQ5YzJiMGVkLTg5NDQtNDhlNS1iMDFmLThjYmRmZTko
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