

Iran Update



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July 20, 2024, 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.

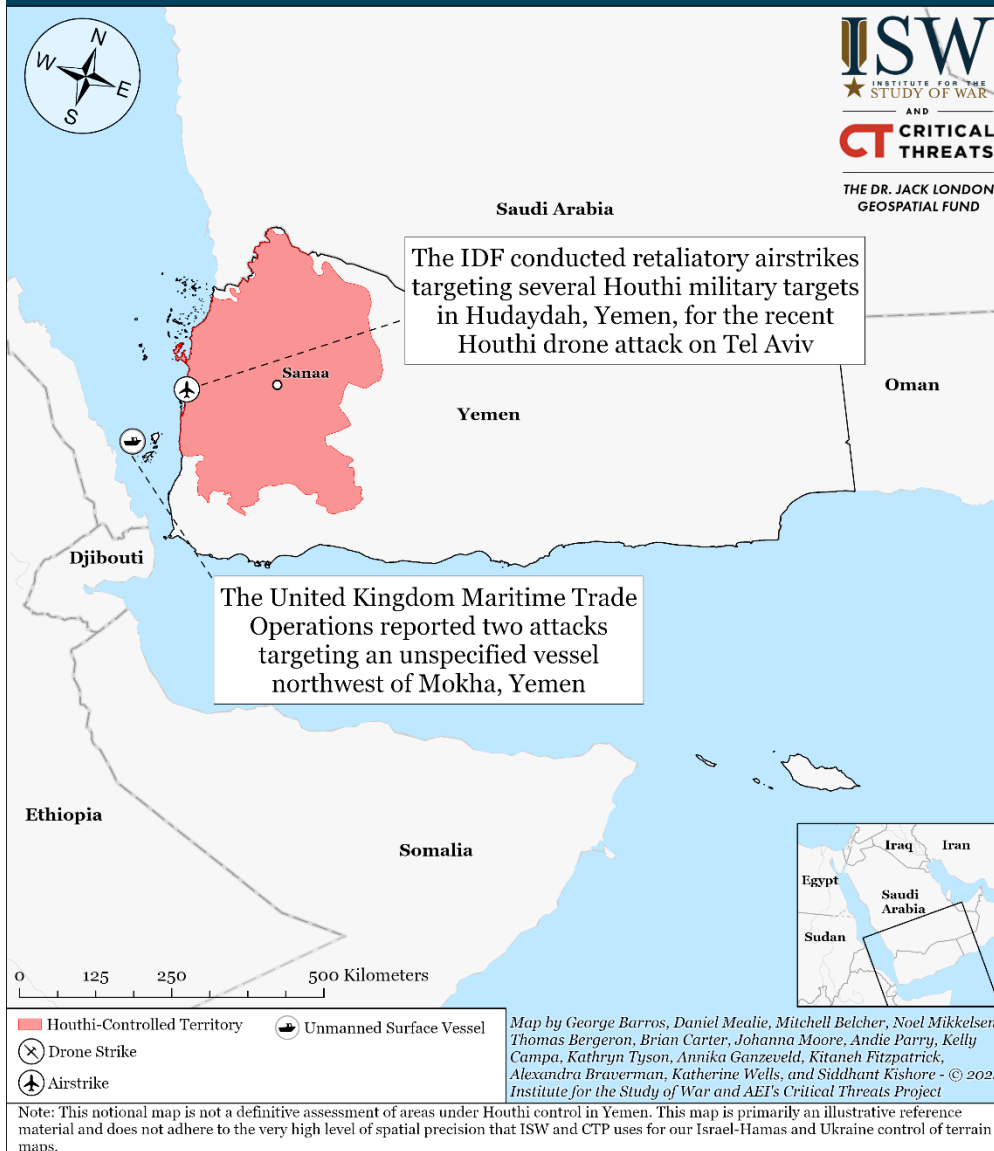
CTP-ISW defines the “Axis of Resistance” as the unconventional alliance that Iran has cultivated in the Middle East since the Islamic Republic came to power in 1979. This transnational coalition is comprised of state, semi-state, and non-state actors that cooperate to secure their collective interests. 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 IDF conducted an airstrike targeting several Houthi military targets in al Hudaydah, Yemen, on July 20 in retaliation for the July 18 Houthi drone attack targeting Tel Aviv.[1] The IDF stated that it conducted the strike “in response to the hundreds of [Houthi] attacks carried out against the state of Israel in recent months.”[2] A senior Israeli official told Axios that “the attack by the Houthis on Tel Aviv crossed all the red lines and that is why we responded to it after nine months of restraint.”[3] The IDF airstrike marks the first time Israel has directly struck Yemen since the Israel-Hamas war began.[4] A second unspecified Israeli official told Axios that Israel coordinated the attack with the United States and the international coalition that was established in December 2023 to counter Houthi attacks on international shipping.[5] Houthi media claimed that Israel targeted oil facilities and a power station in al Hudaydah.[6]

Houthi Attacks in the Red Sea

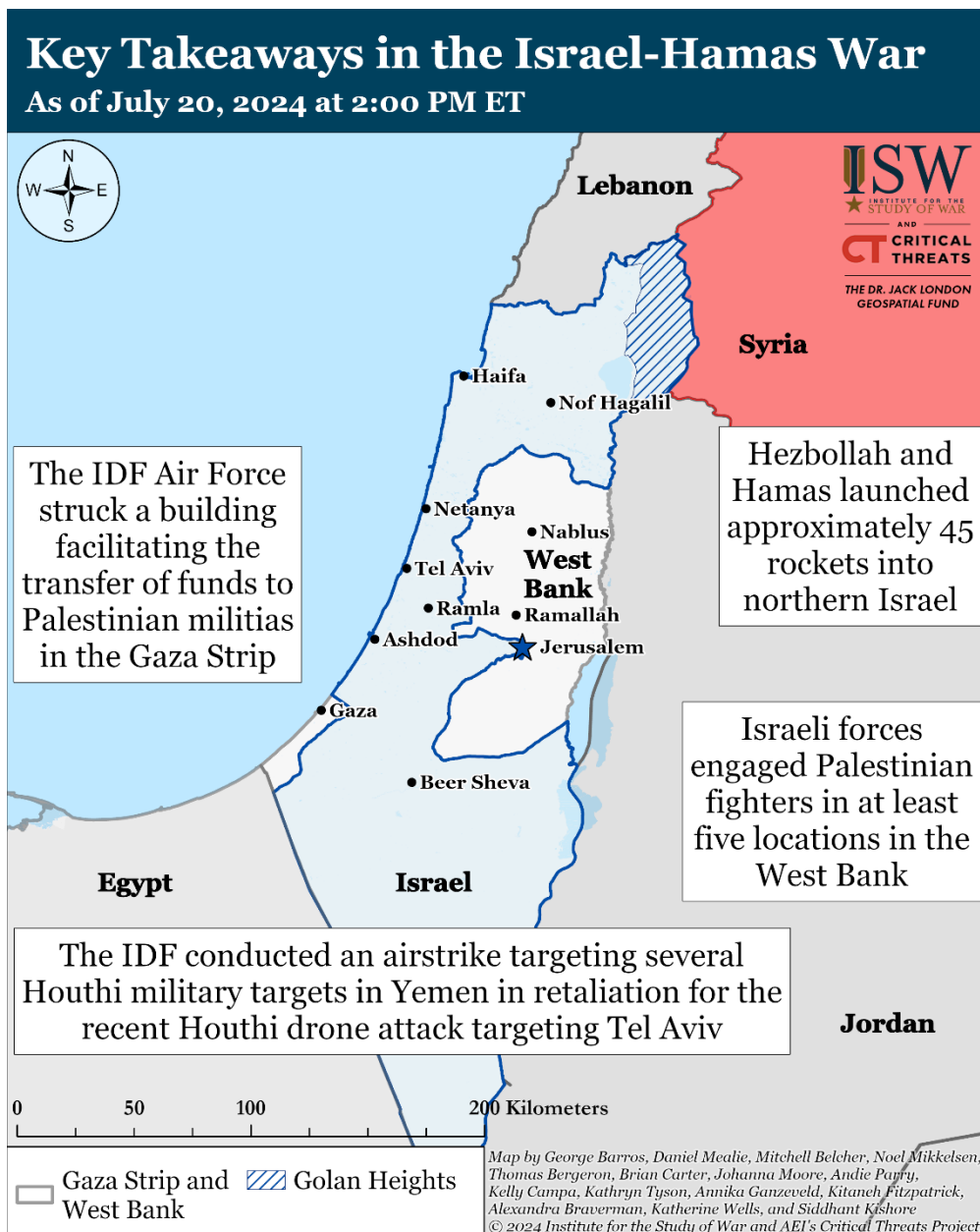
As of July 20, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



Key Takeaways:

- **Yemen:** The IDF conducted an airstrike targeting several Houthi military targets in al Hudaydah, Yemen, on July 20 in retaliation for the July 18 Houthi drone attack targeting Tel Aviv.
- **Gaza Strip:** The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) 99th Division operated in Gaza City over the past week and seized weapons in buildings surrounding UNWRA headquarters in Tal al Hawa.
- **West Bank:** Israeli forces have engaged Palestinian fighters in at least five locations in the West Bank since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on July 19.

- **Lebanon:** Iranian-backed militias, including Lebanese Hezbollah, have conducted at least eight attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on July 19.



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) 99th Division operated in Gaza City over the past week and seized weapons in buildings surrounding UNWRA headquarters in Tal al Hawa.^[7] The IDF raided apartment buildings where Hamas fighters were residing in the neighborhood surrounding UNRWA.^[8] Israeli forces seized weapons caches from apartments that included small arms, rocket propelled grenade (RPG) launchers, ammunition, and explosives. Forces also located equipment for Hamas' naval forces.^[9] Israeli forces also located a weapons manufacturing site in the area surrounding Hamas' base at UNRWA headquarters.^[10]

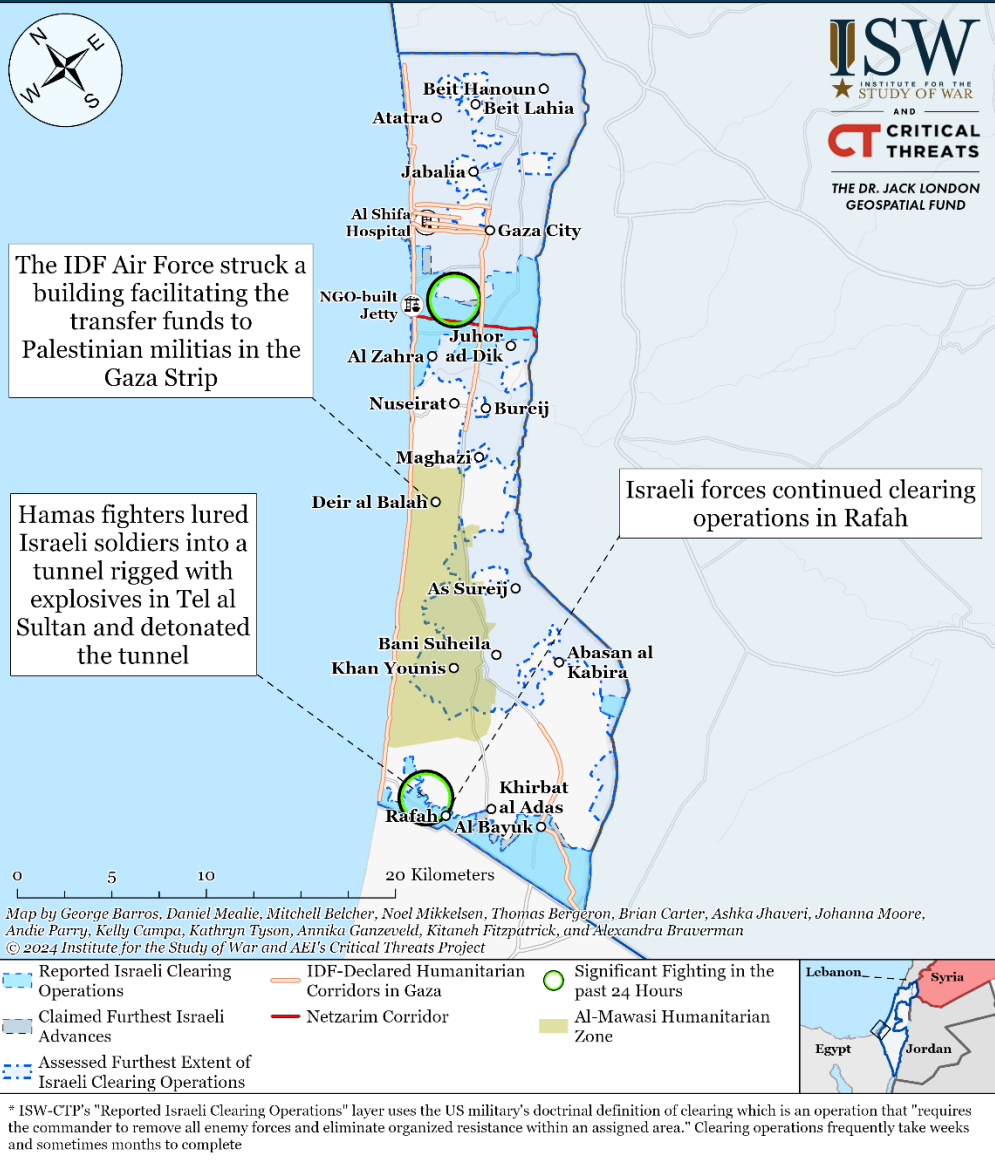
The 3rd Alexandroni Infantry Brigade (Res.) (99th Division) continued clearing operations along the Netzarim Corridor on July 20.^[11] Israeli forces raided militia infrastructure along the corridor and directed an airstrike on a building where Palestinian fighters were located.^[12] The Mujahideen Movement and the Ansar Brigades—the militant wing of the Palestinian Freedom Movement—launched rockets at Israeli forces located along the Netzarim Corridor.^[13]

The IDF Air Force struck a building on used by the al Khara Company to facilitate the transfer of funds to Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip since CTP-ISW's last data cut off on July 18.^[14] The building was in a humanitarian zone in Deir al Balah.^[15] The IDF evacuated the area surrounding the building and used precision guided munitions to minimize civilian casualties. The IDF killed a member of the al Khara Company on July 19 who helped transfer funds for Hamas through the organization.^[16]

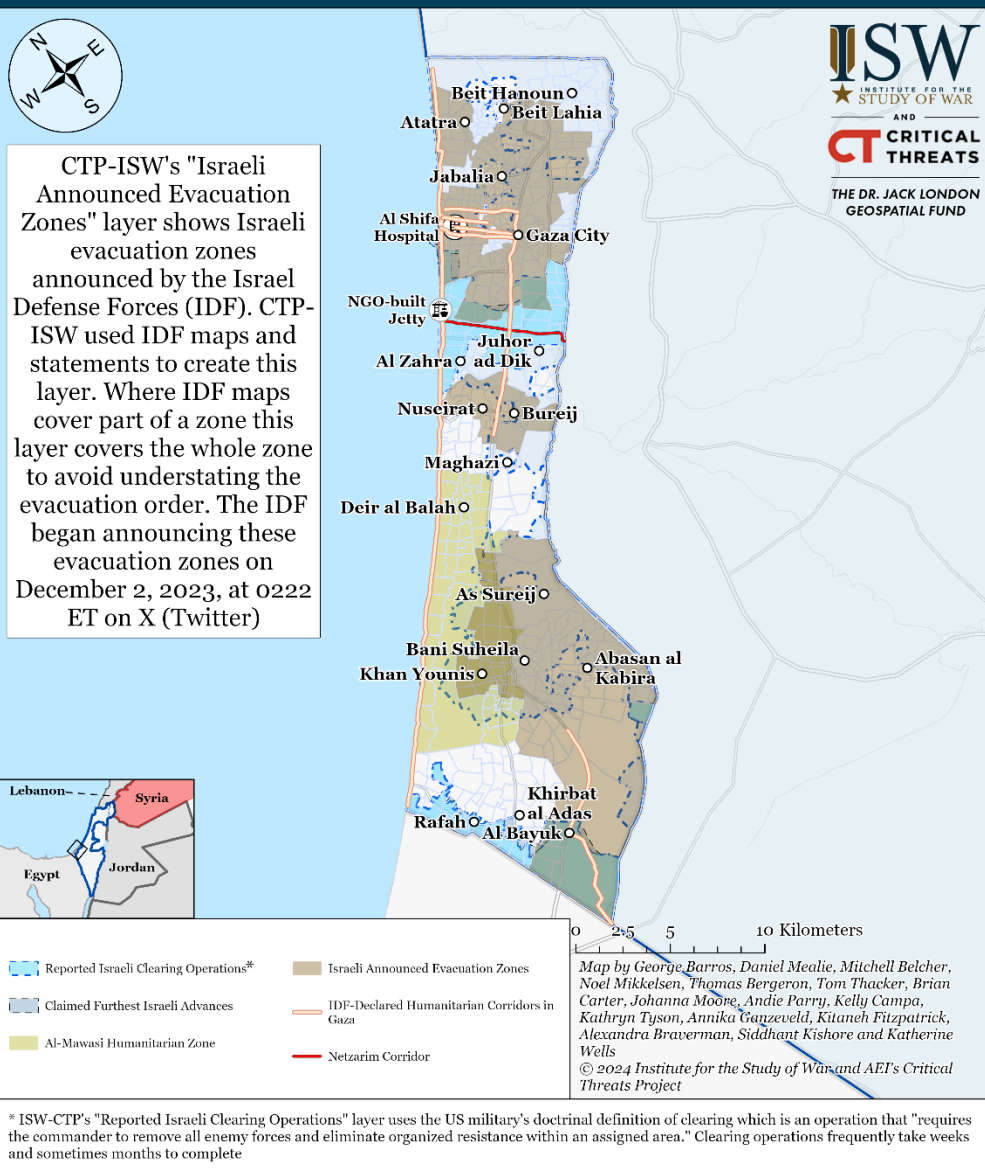
The 162nd Division continued clearing operations in Rafah since CTP-ISW's last data cut off on July 19.^[17] The Givati Brigade engaged Palestinian fighters in unspecified areas of Rafah during clearing operations. The 401st Brigade cleared militia infrastructure and targeted Palestinian fighters in Tal al Sultan. Hamas fighters lured Israeli soldiers into a tunnel rigged with explosives in Tel al Sultan and detonated the tunnel.^[18] Hamas claimed the explosion killed and wounded the Israeli soldiers inside.^[19] Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) conducted a combined RPG attack on an Israeli Merkava tank operating in Shaboura refugee camp, western Rafah City on July 19.^[20] The National Resistance Brigades fired an RPG at an armored personnel carrier (APC) operating in Laffat Badr intersection, Tal al Sultan.^[21]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

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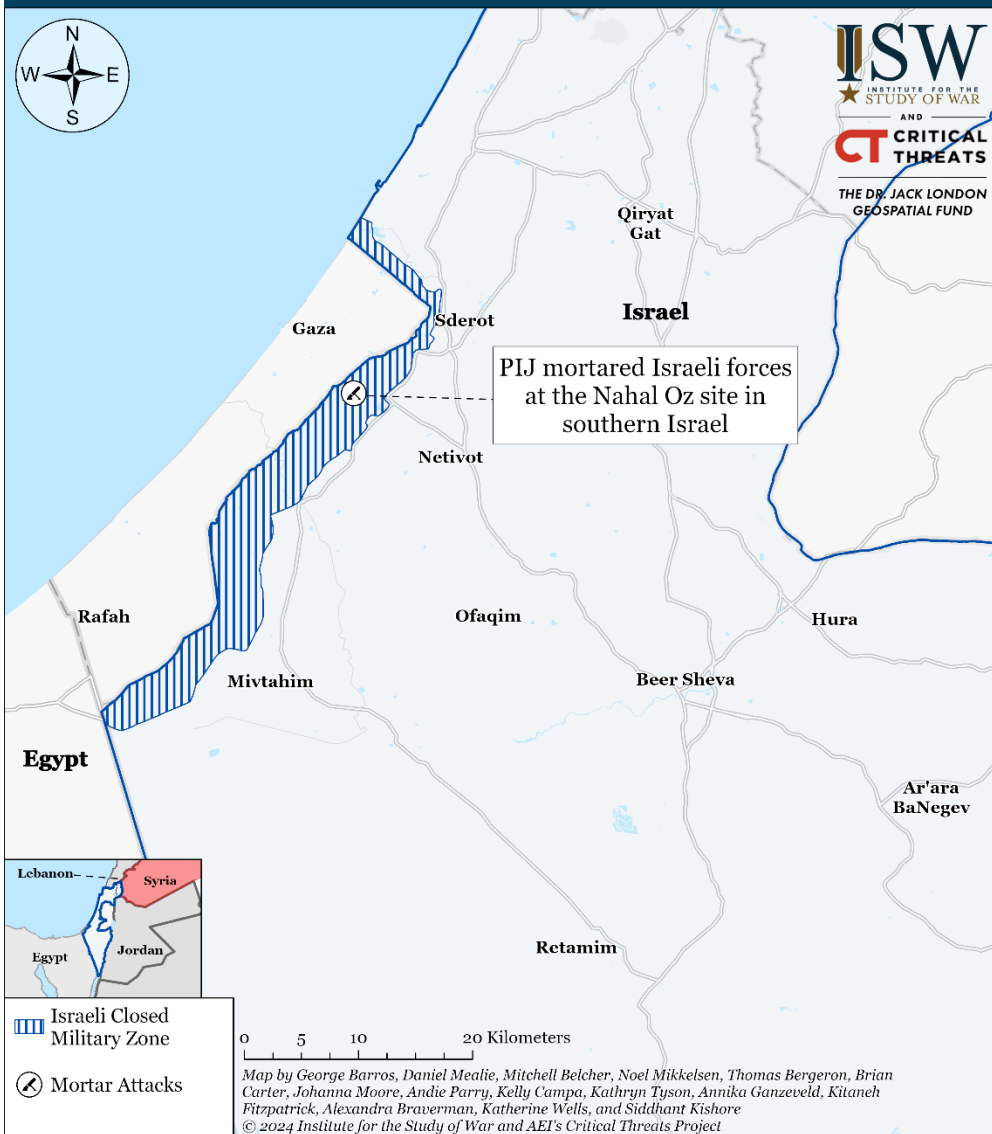
Israeli-Announced Evacuation Zones in the Gaza Strip As of July 20, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



PIJ mortared Israeli forces at the Nahal Oz site, bordering the Gaza Strip on July 20.[22]

Attacks into Israel from the Gaza Strip

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Recorded reports of attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

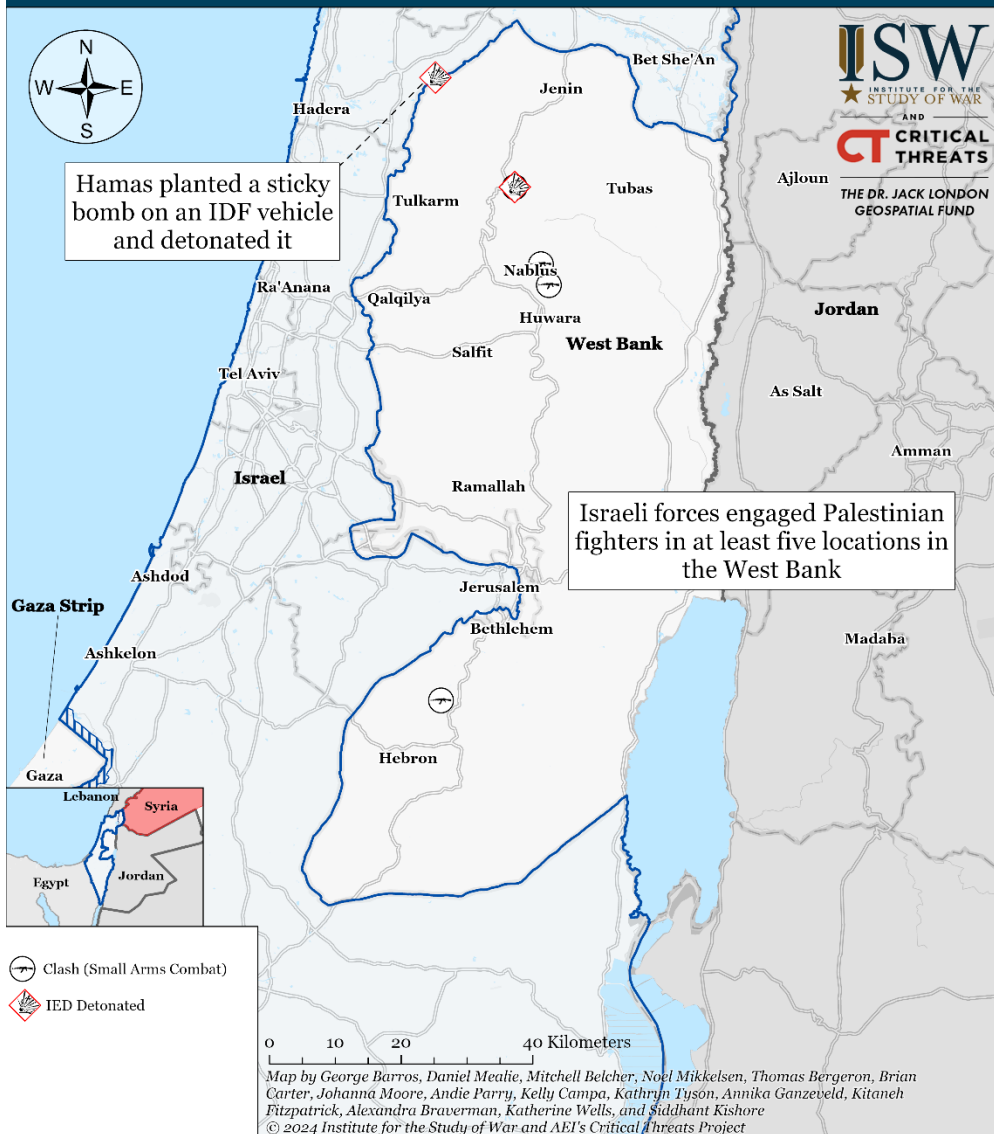
Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

Israeli forces have engaged Palestinian fighters in at least five locations in the West Bank since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on July 19.^[23]

Significant Activity in the West Bank

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

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

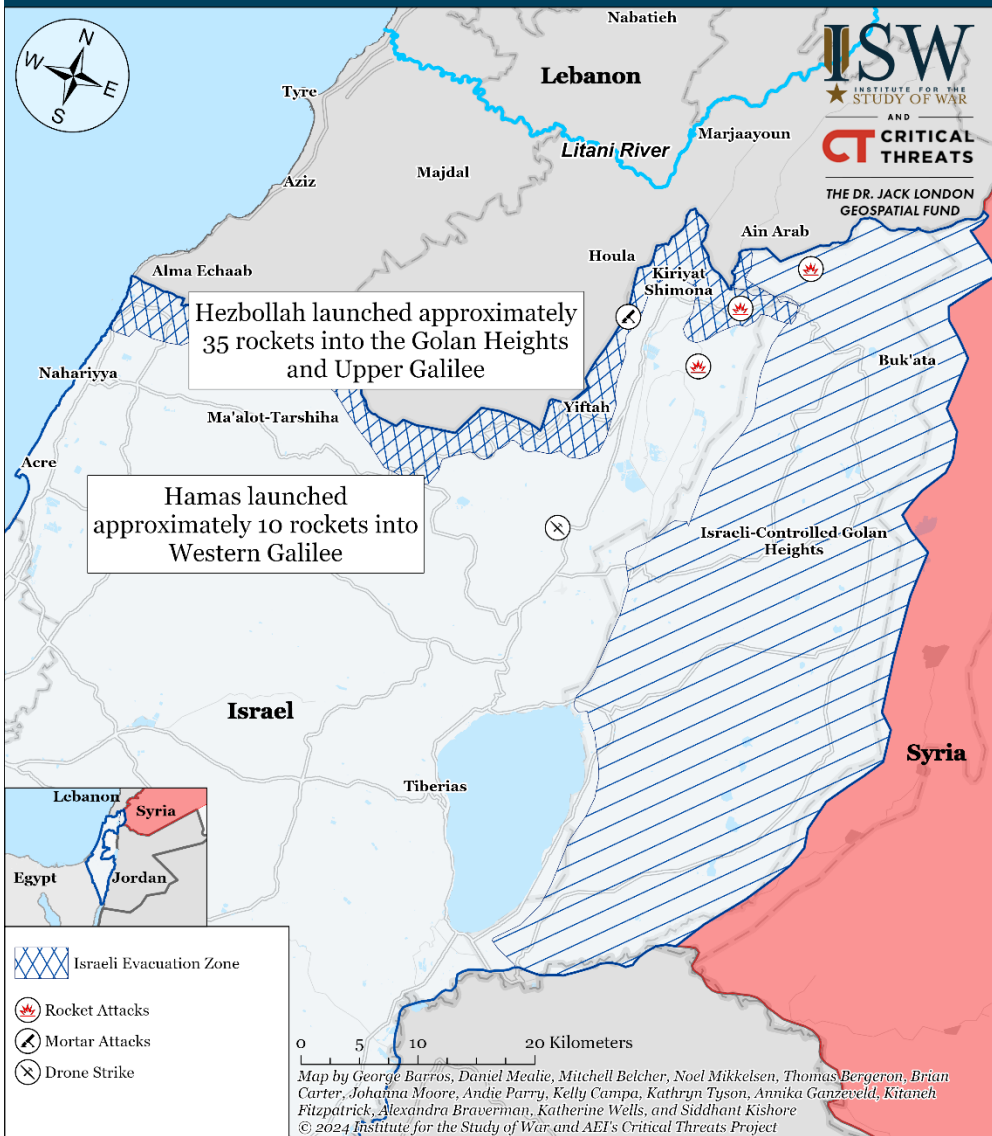
Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Deter Israel from conducting a ground operation into Lebanon
- Prepare for an expanded and protracted conflict with Israel in the near term
- Expel the United States from Syria

Iranian-backed militias, including Lebanese Hezbollah, have conducted at least eight attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on July 19.[24]

Attacks into Northern Israel from Lebanon

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Recorded reports of attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Iran and Axis of Resistance

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported two attacks targeting an unspecified vessel approximately 64 nautical miles northwest of Mokha, Yemen, on July 20.[25] A drone exploded near the vessel, causing minor damage to the vessel. An uncrewed surface vessel (USV) later exploded near the vessel as well. Crewmembers reported further drone and missile sightings following the initial drone and USV explosions. UKMTO reported that both the vessel and the crew are safe.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed that it conducted an attack targeting an unspecified “military target” in Haifa using Arqab cruise missiles on July 19.^[26] An Israeli military correspondent reported on July 19 that the IDF intercepted a drone that was launched from Iraq outside of Israeli territory.^[27]

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[1] <https://x.com/idf/status/1814697261038788756?s=46&t=1sf9TeAuloX5cDCMsI9AAg> ;

<https://www.axios.com/2024/07/20/israel-yemen-houthis-tel-aviv-drone>

[2] <https://x.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/1814696773346033748> ;

<https://x.com/idf/status/1814697261038788756?s=46&t=1sf9TeAuloX5cDCMsI9AAg>

[3] <https://www.axios.com/2024/07/20/israel-yemen-houthis-tel-aviv-drone>

[4] <https://www.axios.com/2024/07/20/israel-yemen-houthis-tel-aviv-drone>

[5] <https://www.axios.com/2024/07/20/israel-yemen-houthis-tel-aviv-drone> ;

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/us-launches-international-task-force-counter-houthi-attacks/story?id=105788661>

[6] <https://x.com/TvAlmasirah/status/1814702953271365722>

[7] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1814646632392048763> ; <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1814646783080845367> ; <https://www.idf dot il/217625>

[8] <https://www.idf dot il/217625>

[9] <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1814646439231758493>

[10] <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1814646439231758493> ; <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1814646783080845367>

[11] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1814568227780825168>

[12] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1814568227780825168>

[13] <https://t.me/darebmojahden/4986> ; <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/cd1q2vpngozo>

[14] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1814617418515292222>

[15] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1814617421073760400>

[16] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1814617423661666525>

[17] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1814568224685527251>

[18] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2721> ; <https://t.me/hamza20300/271902>

[19] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2721> ; <https://t.me/hamza20300/271902>

[20] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2722> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/18351>

[21] https://t.me/kataeb_moqawma/4360

[22] <https://t.me/sarayaps/18352>

[23] <https://www.jpost dot com/breaking-news/article-811088> ; <https://www.haaretz dot com/israel-news/2024-07-20/ty-article-live/palestinian-reports-20-year-old-man-seriously-wounded-from-idf-fire-in-west-bank/00000190-cdf6-dcff-afd4->

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[24] <https://t.me/mmirleb/5570> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/5578> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/5579> ; <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1814658704752423090> ; <https://x.com/GLZRadio/status/1814656390931132696> ; <https://t.me/QudsN/437905> ; https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-07-20/ty-article-live/palestinian-reports-20-year-old-man-seriously-wounded-from-idf-fire-in-west-bank/00000190-cdf6-dcff-afd4-cfecf350000?liveBlogItemId=322568523&utm_source=site&utm_medium=button&utm_campaign=live_blog_item#322568523
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[25] https://x.com/UK_MTO/status/1814691804568023124
[26] <https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1226>
[27] <https://t.me/moriahdoron/11948>