# Iran Update



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## October 1, 2024, Information Cutoff: 2:00 pm ET

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. Click <a href="here">here</a> 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.

Iran launched a two-wave ballistic missile attack that targeted Israel from Iranian territory on October 1.[1] Iran claimed to launch this attack in response to Israel's killing of senior Axis of Resistance leaders including Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut, and Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.[2] Iran launched approximately 180 ballistic missiles, including Emad and Ghadr ballistic missiles, from Iranian territory.[3] Iran claimed to launch its domestically produced hypersonic medium-range "Fattah-2" ballistic missile for the first time in the October 1 attack.[4] The IRGC claimed it launched Fattah missiles to destroy Israel's Arrow 2 and Arrow 3 anti-ballistic missile interception systems.[5] The IRGC conducted the October 1 operation with the approval of the Supreme National Security Council and "with the knowledge of" the Armed Forces General Staff.[6] Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasir Zadeh claimed that Iran targeted Israeli "military,

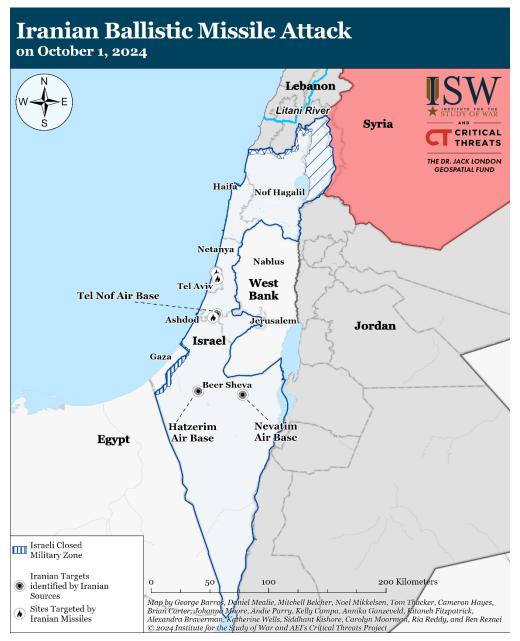
operational and intelligence" centers associated with the killing of Ismail Haniyeh, which occurred in Tehran, Iran in July 2023.[7] Iranian Armed Forces General Staff-affiliated media claimed that Iran targeted the following airbases.[8]

- The Nevatim Airbase, which houses Israeli F-35s, located outside of Beersheba, Israel.[9] Most of Israel's F-35s were presumably airborne at the time of the attack, given that most of Israel's aerial refuelers were airborne during the attack. This would have enabled Israel to keep most of its aircraft airborne during the strike both to prevent any damage to the aircraft and to intercept projectiles if needed and possible. Pro-Hezbollah media claimed this base was used in the Israeli killing of Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah.[10] Geolocated footage showed impacts to the base from missiles.[11]
- The Hatzerim Airbase in the Negev Desert.[12]
- The Tel Nof Airbase 20 kilometers south of Tel Aviv.[13] Geolocated footage showed missiles impacting at or near the Tel Nof Airbase.[14]

Geolocated footage also showed Iranian ballistic missiles impacting in at least three other locations:

- An area south of Herzliya, Israel.[15] The geolocated footage depicts an area located near the IDF Glilot Intelligence Base, which houses IDF Unit 8200, which is the IDF's signals collection unit, and the Mossaf Headquarters.[16] Israel evacuated the Glilot Intelligence base before the attack.[17]
- A school in Gedera, Israel, located near the Tel Nof Airbase.[20]
- An area near the Ayalon Mall, Ramat Gan, Israel.[18] Ayalon Mall is immediately west of Yarkon Park, where Shin Bet is headquartered.[19]

The Iranian attack killed one Palestinian near Jericho in the West Bank, and shrapnel lightly injured two Israelis in Tel Aviv.[21]



Iran likely intended to inflict significant damage on Israel by oversaturating Israeli air defenses, particularly in central Israel. Iran launched approximately 180 ballistic missiles targeting Israel on October 1, compared to the approximately 120 ballistic missiles it fired at Israel in April 2024.[22] The April attack focused on Israeli positions in northern and southern Israel, with several ballistic missiles striking Nevatim Airbase.[23] This attack focused on at least three possible targets between Rehovot, south of Tel Aviv, and Herzliya, north of Tel Aviv. Rehovot and Tel Aviv are 29km apart. Some portion of the strike package focused on Nevatim and Hatzerim Airbases in southern Israel, but a large number of missiles targeted a very small geographic area in densely populated central Israel. All missiles in this area would presumably need to be intercepted because the IDF will only intercept missiles that fall in populated areas. This is not the case in Nevatim and Hatzerim, which are surrounded by relatively unpopulated deserts. The increase in ballistic missiles may have been designed

to overwhelm the Israeli Arrow ballistic missile defense system by saturating it with large numbers of systems in relatively small and densely populated areas. The large quantity of ballistic missiles also represents a significant Iranian investment that Iran is unlikely to willingly forfeit in an attack for show.

The IDF reported that Israel and its allies intercepted the "majority" of the Iranian ballistic missiles launched at Israel. IDF Spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari stated that the missiles impacted some areas in central and southern Israel, but that the IDF and the US-led defensive coalition intercepted the majority of projectiles.[24] United States National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan separately described the Iranian attack as "defeated and ineffective."[25] An unspecified US defense official stated that US destroyers stationed in the eastern Mediterranean Sea helped intercept the Iranian ballistic missiles.[26] The USS Arleigh Burke, USS Cole, and USS Bulkeley are currently deployed to the eastern Mediterranean region.[27] The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) claimed that 90 percent of the missiles hit their intended targets without providing any evidence for these claims.[28]

Israel vowed to retaliate against Iran for the October 1 attack. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated at the beginning of the Israeli cabinet meeting that Iran "made a big mistake and will pay."[29] Netanyahu reiterated that Israel would attack anyone who attacks them. IDF Spokesperson Daniel Hagari stated that Israel's operational plans are ready and vowed that Israel will respond "wherever, whenever, and however we choose."[30] Israel previously conducted retaliatory airstrikes targeting an Artesh Air Force base in Esfahan, Iran, on April 18 in response to Iran's April 13 drone and missile attack targeting Israel.[31] The IRGC warned on October 1 that it would conduct further attacks on Israel if Israel retaliates against Iran for its ballistic missile attack.[32]

The IDF began the initial phase of its ground operation in southern Lebanon. The IDF 98th Division began a "focused activity" on October 1 in what the IDF described would be a "targeted and delimited" operation in southern Lebanon.[33] The IDF said that a special operations brigade, a paratrooper brigade, and an armored brigade subordinate to the 98th Division have been preparing in recent weeks for the ground operation.[34] These units previously fought under the 98th Division for months in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli security cabinet approved the "targeted ground entry" on the evening of September 30.[35]

It is not immediately clear where the 98th Division began operations in southern Lebanon. The IDF did not specify where its forces began operations. The IDF created closed military zones over the Metula area on September 30 and over the Dovev, Tzvi'on, and Malkia areas on October 1.[36] An unspecified UNIFIL source told Western media that the Israeli forces have staged "sporadic raids" into Lebanon but have not "remained on Lebanese soil." [37] Lebanese sources reported that Israeli artillery units continued to bombard border towns, particularly targeting Kafr Kila, Tal al Nahhas, and areas near Khiam.[38] Artillery units serve the primary role of providing indirect fire support to ground forces' maneuvers.[39] Lebanese sources also reported that the IDF fired illumination rounds over Rmeish and Aita al Shaab.[40]

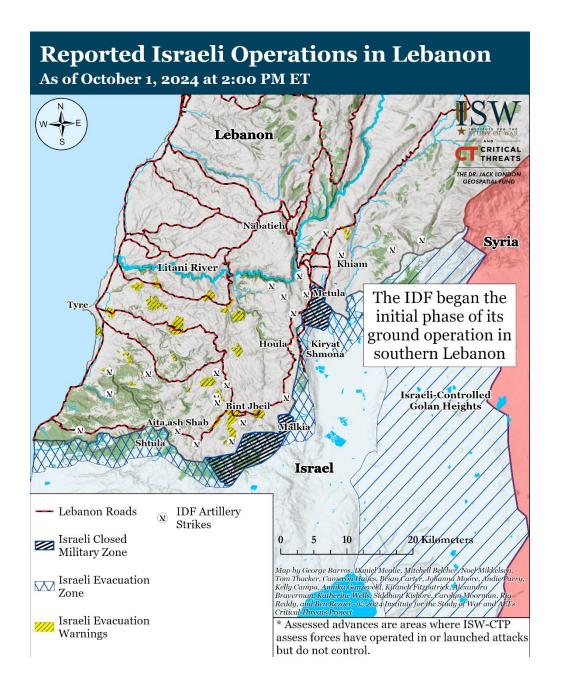
Hezbollah has not yet engaged IDF units in Lebanon as of the time of writing. Hezbollah may not engage Israeli forces while Israeli forces are only staging "sporadic raids" that do not remain in Lebanon. Unspecified security officials confirmed to Western media that Hezbollah has not yet engaged IDF units.[41] An unspecified soldier from the 98th Division told

the *Wall Street Journal* that Hezbollah has not yet engaged Israeli forces but that one Israeli unit spotted Hezbollah observers and directed artillery units to push them back.[42] Hezbollah, however, claimed at least six attacks targeting Israeli forces concentrated along the Israel-Lebanon border but inside Israel.[43] A correspondent from the Hezbollah-affiliated channel Al Manar reported that Hezbollah units attempted to confront Israeli attempts to penetrate the border by targeting gatherings of Israeli soldiers on the Israeli side of the border.[44]

**Israeli officials maintained on October 1 that the IDF's ground operation will remain** "**limited.**" [45] An unspecified senior Israeli official told Israeli Army Radio that the "limited ground operation" will remove threats near or along the Israel-Lebanon border. [46] Israeli forces are expected to operate about three miles deep into Lebanese territory, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. [47] Three miles would encompass many border villages, including those that the IDF fought in in 2006. The IDF Arabic spokesperson issued a call to residents of 27 southern Lebanese towns on October 1 and asked residents to "evacuate [their] homes immediately." [48] The spokesperson asked residents to immediately travel north of the Awali River, which is 30 miles north of the Litani River the spokesperson told residents to leave. [49] An unspecified security official told Western media that there is currently no thought of operations moving up to Beirut, however. [50] Evacuating up to the Awali would, however, move these individuals out of areas targeted in IDF strikes designed to interdict Hezbollah reinforcements or resupplies. The IDF also mobilized four additional reserve brigades and unspecified other forces for "operational tasks" in Lebanon on October 1. [51]

The current IDF ground operation is a continuation of a year-long, previously undisclosed Israeli special operations campaign that sought to destroy Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon.[52] The IDF announced on October 1 that Israeli forces destroyed about 700 Hezbollah targets in cross-border raids since October 2023, including underground compounds, military targets, weapons warehouses, explosives, and headquarters. The IDF's cross-border operations, often led by the Egoz Unit, sometimes lasted multiple days and focused on destroying infrastructure belonging to Radwan forces located close to Israel.[53] The Egoz Unit was originally established in the 1990s as a raiding force specifically trained for operations in Lebanon against Hezbollah.[54] Unspecified Israeli officials said that the IDF's current ground incursion into southern Lebanon will be "an extension of the previous" raids with more units deployed to destroy infrastructure that smaller special forces could not.[55]

Hezbollah began its cross-border firing campaign in support of Palestinians in Gaza in October 2023. Israeli Army Radio reported that over 3,000 of Hezbollah's Radwan special operations forces deployed along the Israel-Lebanon border following the October 7 attacks to conduct a long-planned ground infiltration into northern Israel.[56] Hezbollah pioneered the idea of ground attacks into Israel, and it developed the Radwan Force to this end.[57]

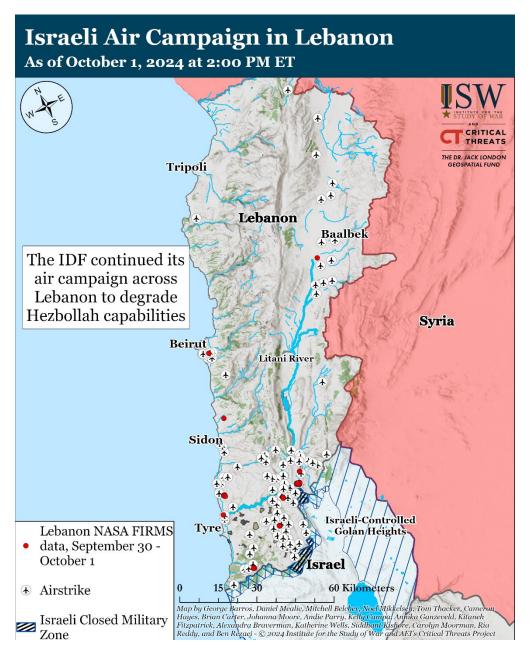


The IDF Air Force continued its air campaign to degrade Hezbollah's leadership and capabilities on October 1. The IDF continued to target Hezbollah weapons launchers, weapons storage facilities, and other military infrastructure across Lebanon.[58] The IDF's air campaign concentrated airstrikes primarily on southern Lebanon but also continued to target sites in the Bekaa Valley. The IDF targeted and killed Hezbollah Unit 4400 commander Mohammad Jaafar Qasir in an airstrike in Beirut on October 1.[59] The IDF said that Unit 4400 is responsible for transferring weapons from Iran and its proxies to Hezbollah in Lebanon.[60] Qasir was a senior Hezbollah member who had been in his position for 15 years and was one of the "most dominant" figures behind Iran's ground line of communication through Syria to Hezbollah.[61] The IDF also killed the commander of the Syria-based Imam Hussein Division al Faqar Hinawi in Beirut on October 1.[62] The IRGC formed

the Imam Hussein Division in 2016.[63] The IDF said that the Imam Hussein Division had moved its headquarters to southern Lebanon since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war and operates closely with Hezbollah's southern command units.[64]

The IDF Air Force likely struck multiple Syrian Arab Army (SAA) positions in southern Syria on October 1, possibly to suppress SAA air defenses.[65] The IDF also struck multiple locations in eastern Daraa and western Suwayda on October 1.[66] Syrian sources reported that the IDF targeted and eliminated the radar systems of five Syrian Arab Army (SAA) battalions, including those located at the al Thaala and al Khalkhala military airports in western Suwaida.[67] A Syrian outlet noted that the number of systems targeted, and Israel's use of drones differentiates these strikes from Israel's previous attacks targeting radar systems in southern Syria.[68]

The IDF has previously conducted airstrikes targeting SAA sites in southern Syria in response to SAA's cooperation with Lebanese Hezbollah.[69] The IDF has repeatedly targeted sites in Quneitra and Daraa provinces that Hezbollah fighters use as reconnaissance and observation points to observe the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights.[70] The IDF likely struck SAA sites in Suwayda and Daraa provinces on October 1 due to ongoing SAA-Hezbollah cooperation and possibly to continue to disrupt Hezbollah's ability to receive weapons from Syrian territory. Israel has previously conducted airstrikes in Rif Dimashq and near the Lebanon-Syria border for this purpose.[71]

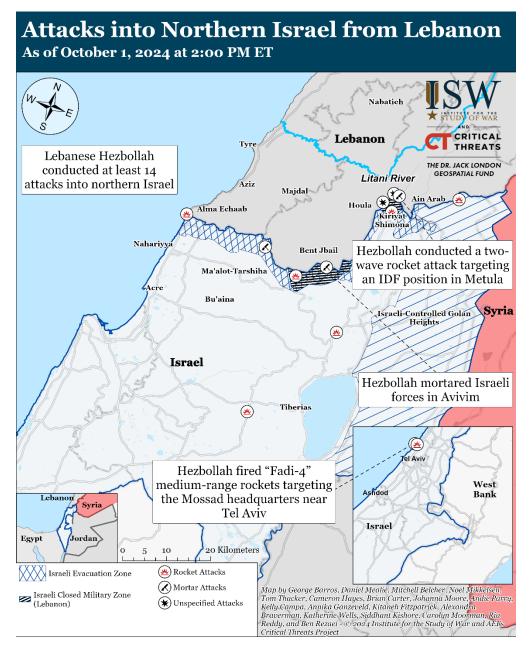


This map illustrates individual Israeli air and artillery strikes based on local Lebanese reporting. This map depicts strikes reported from 2:00pm ET on September 30 to 2:00pm ET on October 1. This map is not exhaustive. CTP-ISW cannot independently verify the locations of Israeli strikes.

**Hezbollah fired "Fadi-4" medium-range rockets targeting the Mossad headquarters near Tel Aviv on October 1**.[72] This is the second time that Hezbollah targeted Mossad Headquarters near Tel Aviv in the recent days.[73] Hezbollah also reported that it fired a Fadi-4 rocket targeting Unit 8200 headquarters near Tel Aviv for the first time on October 1.[74] Unit 8200 is an Israeli Intelligence Corps unit responsible for signals intelligence and similar activities.[75] Hezbollah separately claimed that it fired medium-range rockets targeting Sde Dov Airport, which closed in 2019, near Tel Aviv on October 1.[76] Hezbollah said that these attacks are part of "Operation Khaybar," which is Hezbollah's

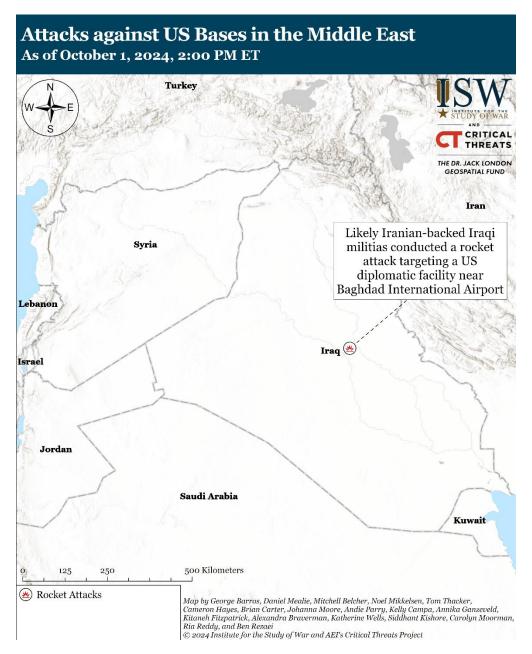
response to the Israeli airstrike that killed Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah on September 27.[77] The IDF has not commented on either attack at this time.

**Hezbollah continued its attack campaign targeting Israeli civilian and military sites in Israel on October 1.** Hezbollah conducted a two-wave rocket attack targeting an IDF position in Metula.[78] The IDF said that it detected several projectiles over Metula and intercepted some of them.[79] Hezbollah also mortared Israeli forces in Avivim on October 1.[80] The IDF said that it also identified individual projectiles that fell in open areas in Avivim.[81] Hezbollah claimed on October 1 that the latest attack campaign against Israel is in response to Israel's "invasion" of Lebanese towns and villages.[82]



**Likely Iranian-backed Iraqi militias conducted a rocket attack targeting a US diplomatic facility near Baghdad International Airport on October 1.[83]** The US ambassador to Iraq announced that an attack took place at the Diplomatic Support Complex, which is a US State Department facility.[84] The attack occurred hours before the Iranian ballistic missile attack targeting Israel. Iraqi media reported that "elements outside the law" launched three Katyusha rockets from al Amiriya in Baghdad toward the complex.[85] Possible Iranian-backed Iraqi militants recently attacked the Baghdad Diplomatic Services Compound near Baghdad International Airport on September 10.[86]

A security source separately told Al Jazeera on October 1 that unspecified militants conducted a rocket attack targeting US forces at Ain al Asad airbase in Anbar Province, Iraq.[87] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—denied responsibility for the attack.[88] Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have threatened in recent days to resume attacks targeting US forces if Israel launched a ground campaign into Lebanon.[89] Iranian state media claimed on October 1 that the United States has "officially entered" the war and that all US bases in the region are "legitimate targets" for the Axis of Resistance.[90] The Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee, which is a coordinating body for Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, separately warned on October 1 that Iraqi militias will target "all US bases and interests" in the region if the United States attacks Iran or if Israel uses Iraqi airspace to attack Iran in retaliation for the Iranian attack on Israel.[91]



The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed three Arqab cruise missile attacks targeting unspecified locations in Israel on October 1.[92]

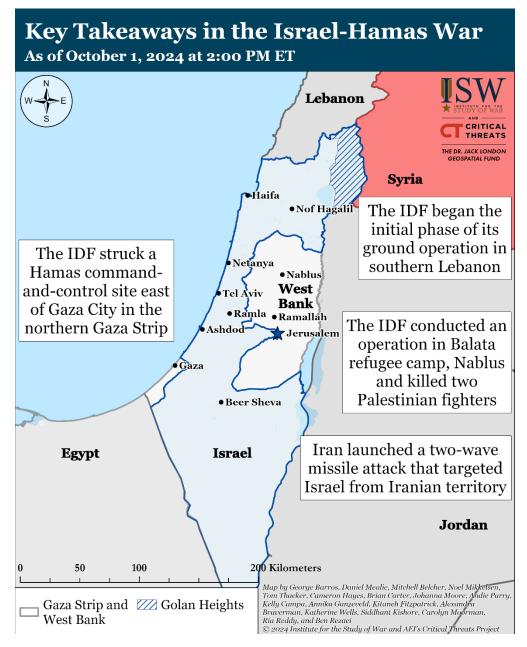
Houthi Spokesperson Yahya Sarea claimed that the Houthis launched one drone at Tel Aviv and four "Sammad 4" drones targeting unspecified sites in Eilat, Israel, on October 1, before Iran's ballistic missile attack on Israel.[93] Israeli media did not acknowledge the attack. CTP-ISW cannot verify if these attacks took place.

Two unidentified individuals shot and killed eight civilians in Jaffa, south of Tel Aviv, on October 1.[94] The gunmen also wounded seven other civilians before Israeli security forces killed both gunmen.[95] Palestinian militias including the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and Palestinian

Mujahideen Movement praised the attack, calling it a "natural response" to Israeli military operations in Gaza and the West Bank.[96] No Palestinian militias have taken responsibility for the shooting attack at the time of this writing, however.

## **Key Takeaways**:

- Iranian Ballistic Missile Attack in Israel: Iran launched a two-wave ballistic missile attack that targeted Israel from Iranian territory on October 1. Iran likely intended to inflict significant damage on Israel by oversaturating Israeli air defenses, particularly in central Israel.
- **Israeli Ground Operation in Lebanon:** The IDF began the initial phase of its ground operation in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah has not yet engaged IDF units in Lebanon as of the time of writing. Hezbollah may not engage Israeli forces while Israeli forces are only staging "sporadic raids" that do not remain in Lebanon.
- **Hezbollah Attacks Targeting Northern Israel:** Hezbollah fired "Fadi-4" medium-range rockets targeting the Mossad headquarters near Tel Aviv on October 1.
- **Iraq:** Likely Iranian-backed Iraqi militias conducted a rocket attack targeting a US diplomatic facility near Baghdad International Airport on October 1.
- **Houthis:** Houthi Spokesperson Yahya Sarea claimed that the Houthis launched one drone at Tel Aviv and four "Sammad 4" drones targeting unspecified sites in Eilat, Israel, on October 1, before Iran's ballistic missile attack on Israel.
- **Terrorist Attack in Israel:** Two unidentified individuals shot and killed eight civilians in Jaffa, south of Tel Aviv, on October 1.



## **Gaza Strip**

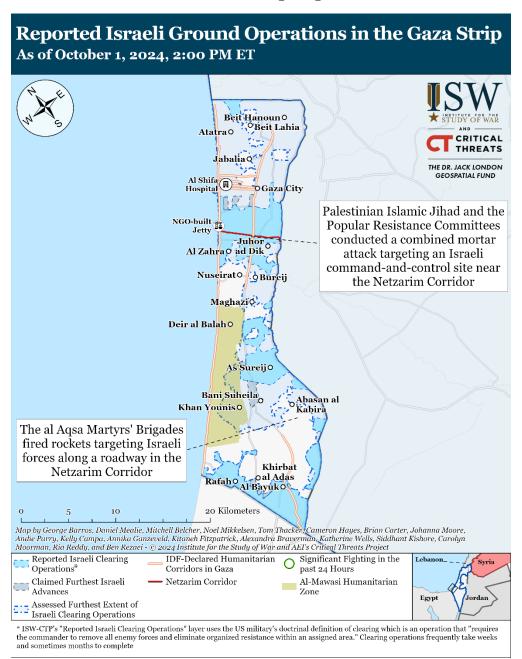
## **Axis of Resistance objectives:**

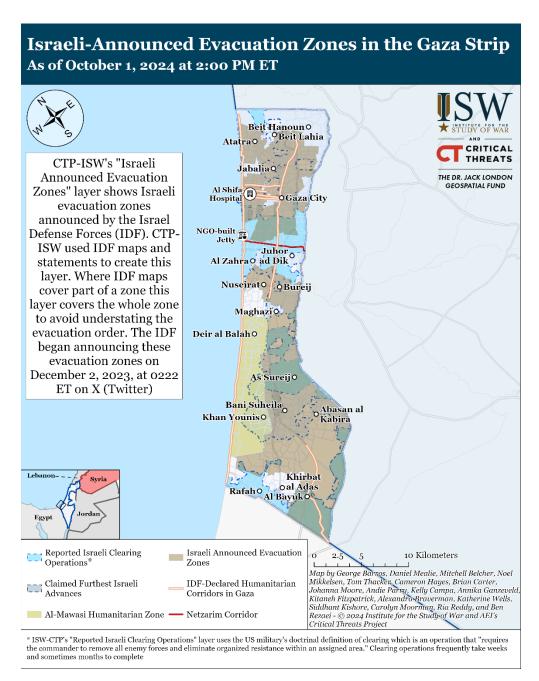
- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to sustain clearing operations in the Gaza Strip
- Reestablish Hamas as the governing authority in the Gaza Strip

The IDF Air Force struck a Hamas command-and-control site in the northern Gaza Strip on October 1.[97] The IDF reported that Hamas had been using a former United Nations Relief and Works Agency school east of Gaza City as a site to plan and execute attacks targeting Israeli forces in

the Gaza Strip and into Israeli territory.[98] The IDF added that it took steps to minimize casualties in the airstrike.[99]

Palestinian militias conducted three attacks targeting Israeli forces and armor near the Netzarim Corridor on October 1.[100]





## **West Bank**

## Axis of Resistance objectives:

Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

The IDF reported on October 1 that Israeli security forces conducted an operation in the Balata refugee camp, Nablus, and killed two Palestinian fighters.[101] The IDF identified one of the two fighters killed in Balata refugee camp as a member of the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades.[102] The IDF said that this individual was responsible for conducting shooting attacks targeting IDF positions in the West Bank and recruiting fighters from Nablus.[103] The IDF also

recovered several firearms and IEDs and detained two wanted persons during the operation. Israeli media reported that Palestinian fighters wounded four IDF soldiers in the operations in Nablus.[104] The IDF separately operated in the Palestinian town of Binyamin and detained six wanted persons.[105]

Israeli forces have engaged Palestinian fighters in at least four locations in the West Bank since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 30.[106] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades fired small arms and detonated IEDs targeting Israeli forces operating in Balata refugee camp, Nablus.[107] Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and the al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades separately engaged Israeli forces in Jenin.[108]



Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

## **Axis of Resistance objectives:**

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

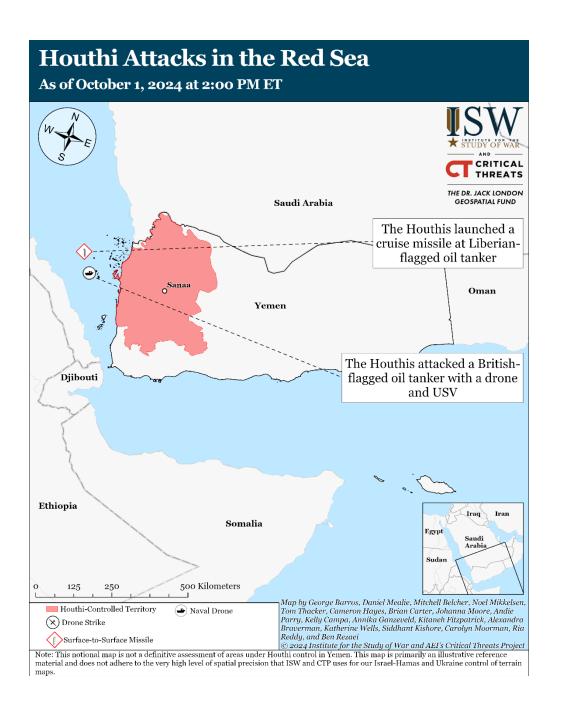
Lebanese Hezbollah conducted at least 14 attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 30.[109] See the topline section for more information.

#### Iran and the Axis of Resistance

Iranian Economic Affairs and Finance Minister Abdol Nasser Hemmati met with his Russian counterpart Maxim Reshetnikov in Tehran on October 1.[110] Reshetnikov expressed Russia's intentions to promote Iranian-Russian trade. The officials also discussed the progress of transportation initiatives, like International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), the Rasht-Astara Railway, custom issues, and Russian investment in the Iranian oil industry.

The Iranian Artesh ground forces and air force participated in a military training exercise with the Omani ground forces and Royal Oman Police in Jebel al Khader province, Oman, from September 30 to October 1.[111] The "Mountain Falcons 1" exercise focused on joint combat training.

The Houthis continue to attack commercial vessels in the Red Sea. Houthi spokesperson Yahya Sarea claimed that the Houthis targeted British-flagged oil tanker *Cordelia Moon* with eight ballistic and cruise missiles, a drone, and an uncrewed surface vessel (USV).[112] Sarea also claimed two separate attacks on oil tanker Maltese-flagged *Marathopolis*, with a cruise missile and with a drone on October 1.[113] The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) received two reports of attacks on oil tankers in the Red Sea.[114] UKMTO reported that a drone hit British-flagged oil tanker *Cordelia Moon* and an uncrewed surface vessel punctured its ballast tanks approximately 64 nautical miles northwest of al Hudaydah.[115] UKMTO also reported a missile attack on Liberian-flagged *Minoan Courage* approximately 97 nautical miles northwest of al Hudaydah. UKMTO reported sustained damage to *Minoan Courage*.[116]



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