

Iran Update



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September 1, 2024, Information Cutoff: 2:00pm 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.

A senior Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force commander reiterated Iran’s support for Hamas’ maximalist ceasefire demands on September 1.[1] IRGC Quds Force Coordination Deputy Brigadier General Eraj Masjedi expressed support for Hamas’ maximalist demands, which include a permanent ceasefire, the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip, and a hostage-for-prisoner exchange.[2] Masjedi stated that Hamas will continue to fight Israel unless Israel accepts its demands. Accepting Hamas’ maximalist demands would prevent Israel from being able to achieve its stated war aim of destroying Hamas as a military organization and governing authority. Israel’s acceptance of Hamas’ demand for a complete Israel Defense Forces (IDF) withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, for example, would mean that the IDF could no longer operate along the Philadelphi Corridor. Maintaining Israeli control of the Philadelphi Corridor would help prevent Hamas and other Palestinian militias from rebuilding their capabilities quickly by interdicting major smuggling operations into the Gaza Strip that would accelerate Hamas’ ability to resupply itself, as CTP-ISW has previously argued.[3]

IRGC-affiliated media indicated on August 31 that some elements of the Iranian regime are likely continuing to try to delay a retaliatory strike on Israel until the ongoing ceasefire-hostage negotiations conclude. Basirat claimed that Iran's response to Israel killing Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh will be "strong, decisive, and deterrent," but noted that Iran does not seek to derail the ongoing ceasefire talks.^[4] International mediators, including Qatar, have kept Iranian officials apprised of negotiation progress since the latest round of negotiations started in Doha in mid-August 2024.^[5] Unspecified Iranian officials previously told Western media on August 13 that Iran will "delay" its attack on Israel if Israel and Hamas conclude a ceasefire-hostage agreement.^[6]

Lebanese Hezbollah Representative to Iran Abdallah Safi al Din met with Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi in Iran on September 1.^[7] The Iranian Foreign Affairs Ministry reported that Safi al Din and Araghchi discussed the "latest situation of the anti-Israel front in Lebanon."^[8] Safi al Din and Araghchi likely discussed the Hezbollah drone and rocket attack targeting Israel in some capacity, though neither official would be responsible for planning or executing military operations against Israel. The United States sanctioned Safi al Din in May 2018 for acting as a conduit between Iran and Hezbollah and serving as an interlocutor between Iran and Hezbollah on financial issues.^[9]

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) recovered the bodies of six Israeli hostages from a tunnel in Rafah on September 1.^[10] Israeli security sources said that Hamas executed the hostages two to three days before the hostages were found and recovered.^[11] An IDF spokesperson said that the hostages were executed by Hamas guards "shortly before IDF forces reached them."^[12] The Israeli forces did not encounter Palestinian fighters inside or near the tunnels while discovering and recovering the hostages.^[13] The IDF located the hostages one kilometer away from where they rescued living hostage Farhan al Qadi on August 27.^[14] IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi, IDF Southern Command commander Major General Yaron Finkelman, and hostage talks negotiator Major General (res.) Nitzan Alon visited the recovery site in Rafah on September 1.^[15]

Hamas blamed Israel for the hostage's death and recovery, claiming that Israel is ultimately responsible for the deaths by failing to agree to a ceasefire.^[16] Hamas did not deny killing the hostages but attempted to shift overall blame to Netanyahu and the United States.^[17] Netanyahu's statement blamed Hamas for continuing to "firmly refuse any [ceasefire-hostage deal] offer" and said that the execution of the hostages demonstrates Hamas does not want a deal.^[18] Israeli security sources speaking to state-funded, IDF-supported Israeli Army Radio, said that the three of the hostages were supposed to be released in the first stage of a ceasefire-hostage deal.^[19] Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant criticized the August 29 decision by Israeli's political-security cabinet to back Netanyahu's proposal to maintain and IDF presence on the Philadelphi Corridor—a major hurdle in a ceasefire-hostage deal—in response to the execution of the six hostages.^[20] An Israeli Army Radio correspondent said that the hostages were likely executed around the time the security cabinet

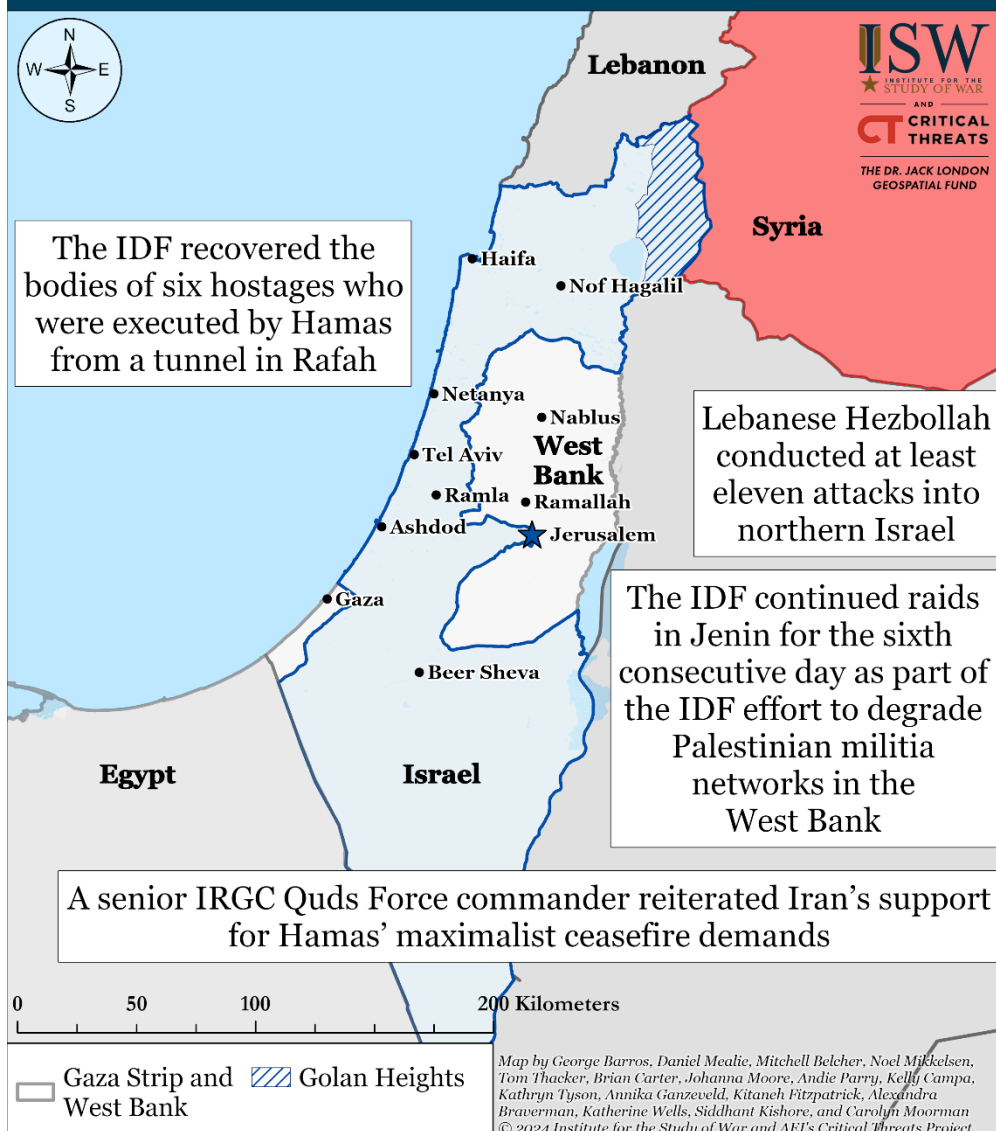
approved retaining an IDF presence on the Egypt-Gaza Strip border on August 29.^[21]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ceasefire Talks:** A senior Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force commander reiterated Iran's support for Hamas' maximalist ceasefire demands on September 1. IRGC-affiliated media indicated on August 31 that some elements of the Iranian regime are likely continuing to try to delay a retaliatory strike on Israel until the ongoing ceasefire-hostage negotiations conclude.
- **Hostage Recovery:** The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) recovered the bodies of six Israeli hostages from a tunnel in Rafah on September 1. Hamas blamed Israel for the hostage's death and recovery, claiming that Israel is ultimately responsible for the deaths by failing to agree to a ceasefire.
- **Gaza Strip:** A humanitarian pause began September 1 in the central Gaza Strip to enable humanitarian aid groups to start a mass polio vaccination campaign.
- **West Bank:** The IDF continued raids in Jenin for the sixth consecutive day as part of the IDF effort to degrade Palestinian militia networks in the West Bank.

Key Takeaways in the Israel-Hamas War

As of September 1, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance objectives:

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

A humanitarian pause began September 1 in the central Gaza Strip to enable humanitarian aid groups to start a mass polio vaccination campaign. Humanitarian aid groups will administer the vaccines to Gazan children over three days during nine-hour humanitarian pauses in the central Gaza Strip.[22] Israel will also conduct three day pauses in designated areas of the southern and northern Gaza Strip from September 4 to 9.[23] The IDF agreed on August 29 to pause

military operations in designated areas from 0600 to 1500 local time.[24] The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) spokesperson Louise Wateridge said that the first day of the campaign had seen higher-than-expected turnout and did not encounter major hurdles.[25] The Israeli Prime Minister's Office has emphasized that the pause is not related to the longer-term ceasefire proposal currently under discussion in Doha.[26]

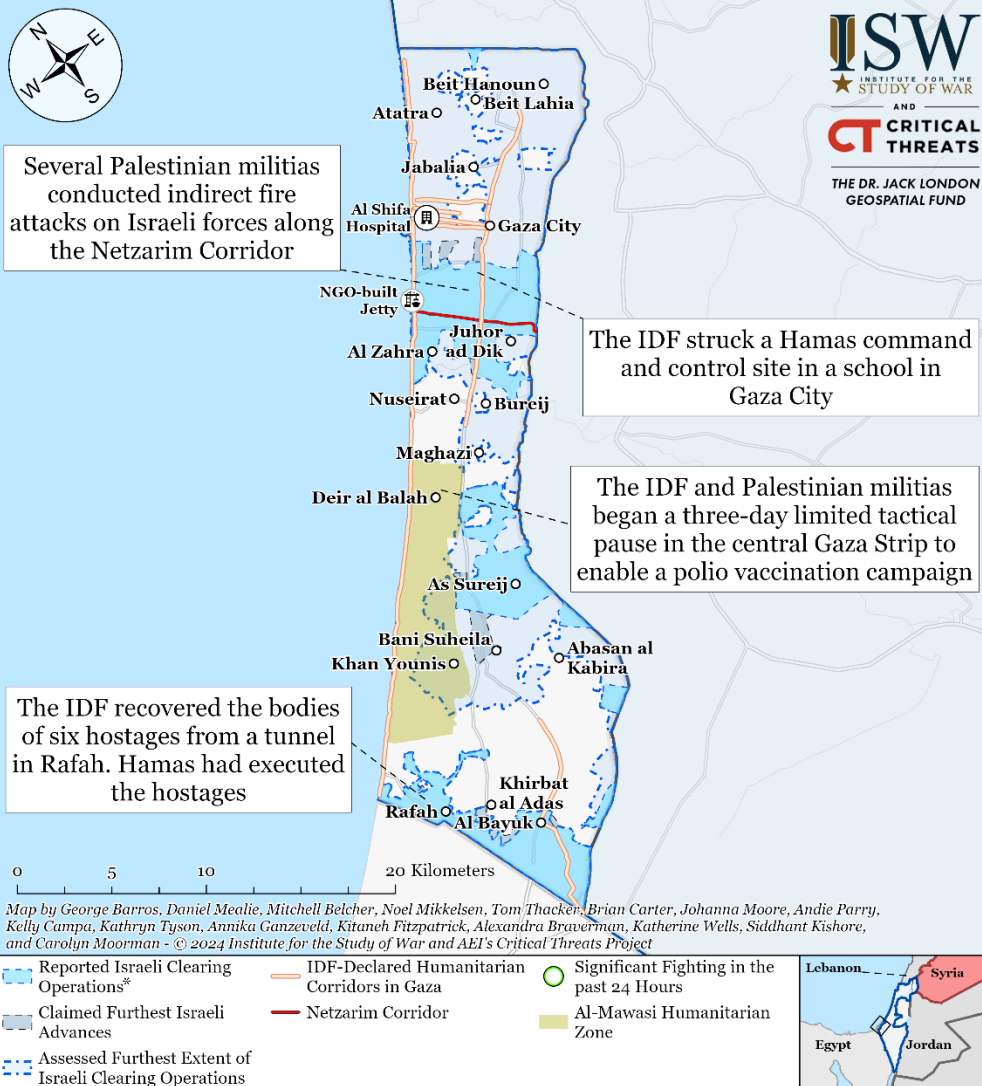
The IDF continued to conduct limited military operations in the Gaza Strip during the humanitarian pause. The IDF Air Force struck Safed school in Gaza City that Hamas used as a command-and-control site on September 1.[27] The IDF said that Hamas has planned and conducted attacks from the school.[28] Local Palestinian sources reported small arms fire and shelling south of Gaza City on September 1, suggesting Israeli clearing operations have continued in the northern Gaza Strip.[29]

Palestinian militias conducted at least three rocket attacks targeting Israeli forces near the Netzarim Corridor, south of Gaza City.[30] Palestinian fighters also mortared Israeli forces north of the corridor in Zaytoun, southern Gaza City.[31] The IDF 252nd Division operated in Gaza City on August 31.[32]

Hamas and the Popular Resistance Committees targeted an Israeli military bulldozer with a tandem charged rocket-propelled grenade in a combined attack in Tal al Sultan, Rafah, on August 31.[33] The IDF 162nd Division operated in Rafah on August 31, including to recover the bodies of six Israeli hostages.[34]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

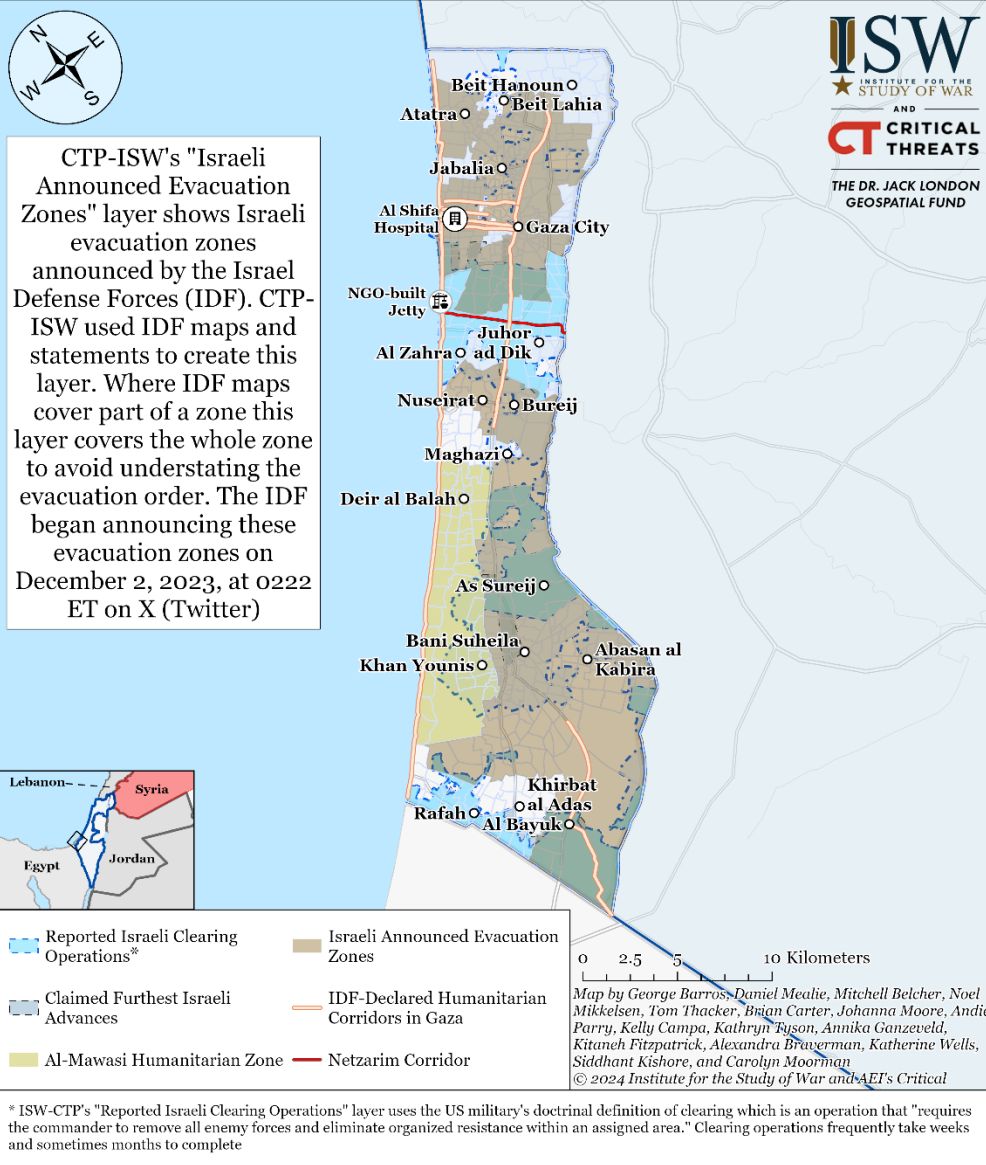
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* ISW-CTP's "Reported Israeli Clearing Operations" layer uses the US military's doctrinal definition of clearing which is an operation that "requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area." Clearing operations frequently take weeks and sometimes months to complete

Israeli-Announced Evacuation Zones in the Gaza Strip

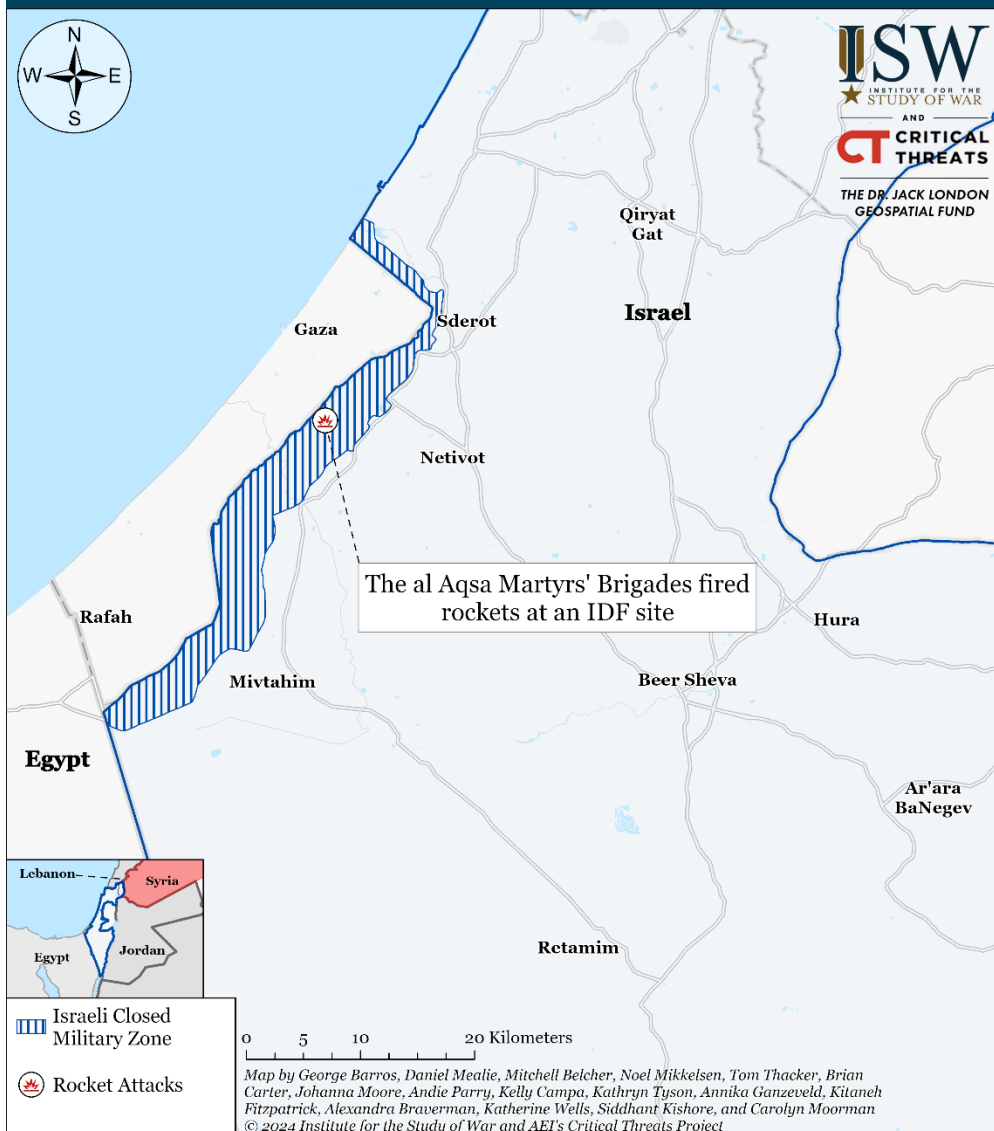
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The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades fired rockets at an IDF site in southern Israel east of the Netzarim Corridor.[35]

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

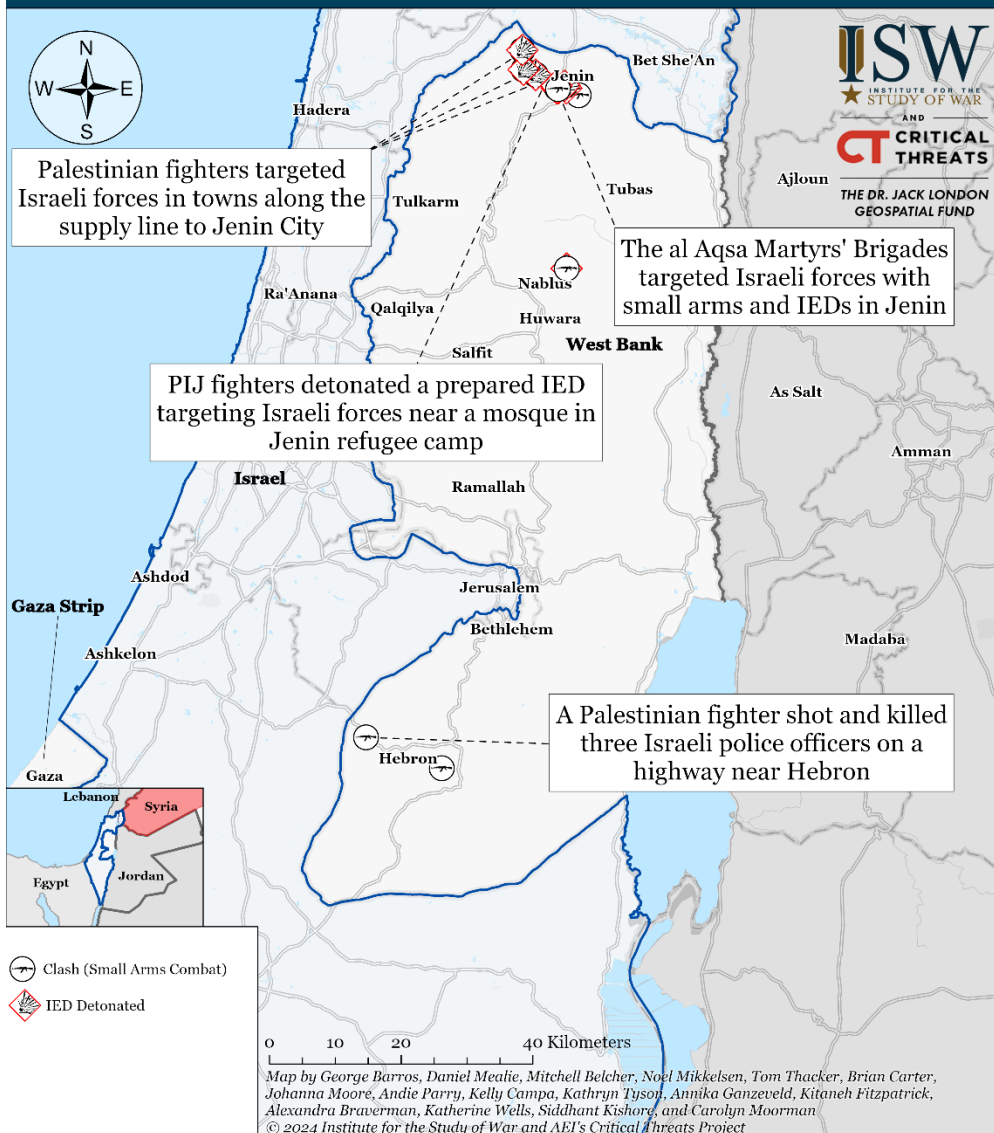
A Palestinian fighter shot and killed three Israeli police officers in a vehicle near Hebron on September 1.^[36] The Palestinian fighter shot at a police car on Route 35 between Tarqumiyah and Idhna.^[37] The lone Palestinian fighter was associated with Fatah and had previously served in the Palestinian Authority's Presidential Guard.^[38] IDF Duvdevan Commandos found and killed the perpetrator hours after the attack in Hebron.^[39] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades fired small arms at Israeli forces entering Hebron to search for the preparator.^[40] Several Palestinian militias, including Hamas, praised the operation and called for additional attacks on Israeli civilians and military targets

in the West Bank.[41] Hamas called the attack a “natural response” to the ongoing major Israeli counter-terrorism operations in the northern West Bank and Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip.[42]

The IDF continued raids in Jenin for the sixth consecutive day as part of the IDF effort to degrade Palestinian militia networks in the West Bank. Israeli forces engaged Palestinian militias in at least ten areas of Jenin Governorate, mostly concentrated in Jenin City and refugee camp.[43] The al Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades and Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s Jenin battalions targeted Israeli forces with small arms and improvised explosive devices.[44] Palestinian fighters killed one IDF Bislamach Brigade soldier and wounded three others in Jenin on August 31.[45] The IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi visited Jenin to assess the ongoing operation on August 31 and stated the IDF’s ”offensive” in militia stronghold like Jenin is essential to stopping attacks in the West Bank.[46]

Significant Activity in the West Bank

As of September 1, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



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

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

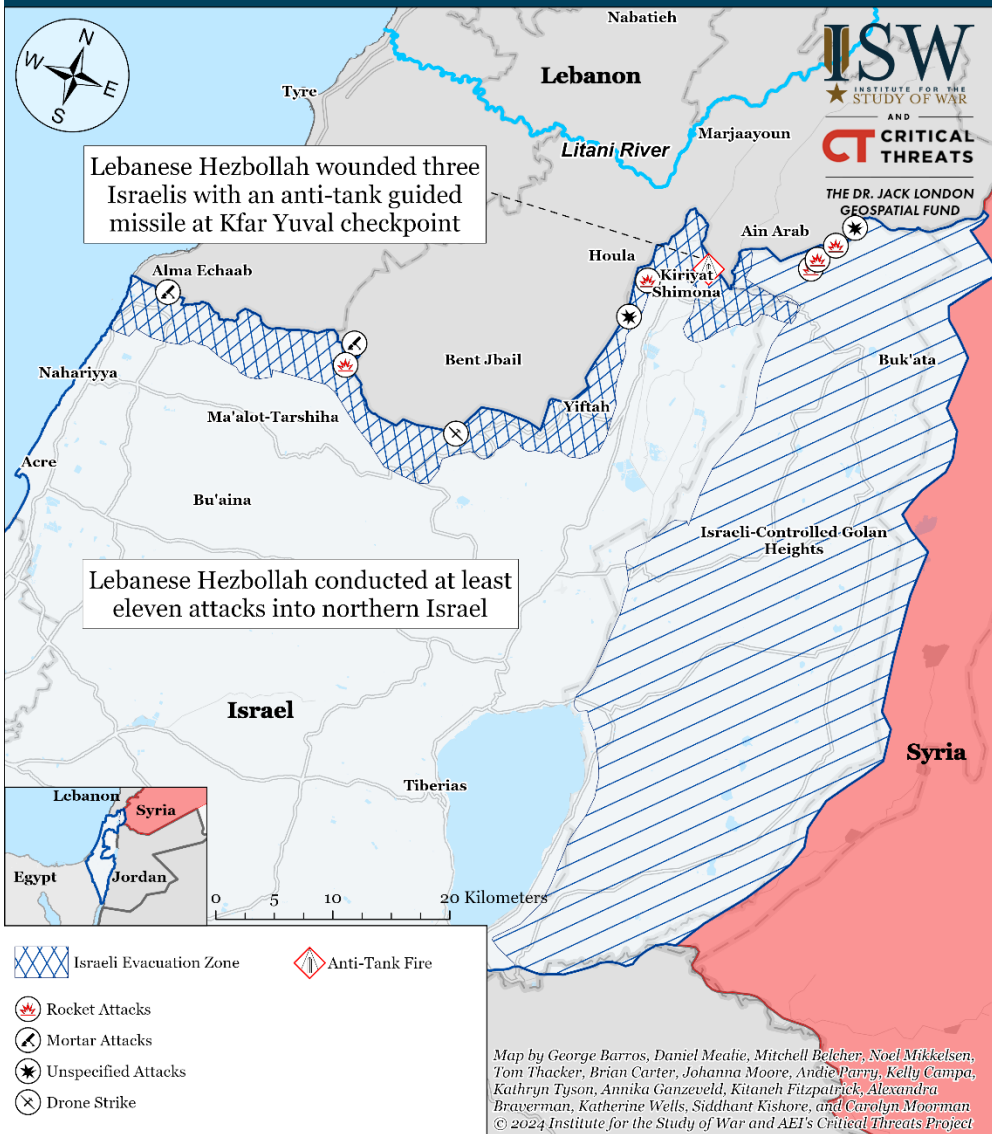
Axis of Resistance objectives:

- 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

Lebanese Hezbollah conducted at least 11 attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on August 31.[47] Lebanese Hezbollah wounded three Israelis with an anti-tank guided missile at Kfar Yuval checkpoint, Upper Galilee, northern Israel, on September 1.[48]

Attacks into Northern Israel from Lebanon

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Iran and Axis of Resistance

US Central Command (CENTCOM) destroyed a Houthi drone and unmanned surface vessel (USV) in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen on August 31.[49] CENTCOM determined that these Houthi systems presented a clear and imminent threat to US and coalition forces and merchant vessels in the region.

POWERED BY:



BABELSTREET

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- [1] <https://defapress dot ir/fa/news/688189>
- [2] <https://defapress dot ir/fa/news/688189>;
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- [7] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/only-gaza-ceasefire-can-delay-irans-israel-response-sources-say-2024-08-13/>
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- [12] https://twitter.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1830192806884728887 ;
- [13] <https://www.timesofisrael dot com/bodies-of-6-hostages-murdered-by-amas-just-days-earlier-found-in-rafah-idf/>
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<https://t.me/mmirleb/6529> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/6531>

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[49] <https://x.com/CENTCOM/status/1830029468129509833>