

Iran Update



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September 10, 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.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken confirmed on September 10 that Iran has sent short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) to Russia amid growing international condemnation of Tehran's support for Russia's war in Ukraine.^[1] Blinken confirmed that Russia has received an unspecified number of SRBM shipments and warned that Russian forces will likely use them on the battlefield "within weeks." Iranian officials continue to deny that Tehran has sent weapons to Moscow. Blinken and UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy affirmed on September 10 that the United States and the United Kingdom are "completely aligned" on the need to tackle Iranian influence both in Ukraine and the Middle East.^[2] France, Germany, and the United Kingdom jointly condemned Iran's SRBM deliveries and emphasized that they are taking steps to cancel bilateral air services with Iran (including by sanctioning Iranian national airline Iran Air), designate individuals and organizations involved in Iran's ballistic missile program and the transfer of SRBMs to Russia, and

sanction Russian cargo ships.[3] UK outlet the *Times*, citing Ukrainian intelligence sources, reported that Iran had delivered over 200 Fateh-360 SRBMs to Russia via a Caspian Sea port on September 4. CTP-ISW continues to assess that Russia will use Iranian-supplied SRBMs to target Ukrainian critical infrastructure in the coming months, thus alleviating the strain on Russia's domestic missile production capacity.[4]

The United States and several European countries imposed sanctions on Iran and Russia on September 10 following Iran's shipment of ballistic missiles to Russia. The US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned ten individuals and six entities based in Iran and Russia for enabling Iran's delivery of weapons components and systems to Russia and thus supporting Russia's war in Ukraine.[5] OFAC sanctioned the following Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and Iranian Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Ministry officials:

- **Rouhollah Katebi.** Katebi is the Russian point of contact for the Iranian defense ministry. Katebi participated in Russian preparations to receive the Iranian Fateh-360 short-range ballistic missiles.
- **Ebrahim Bahrami.** Bahrami has been a point of contact in Iran for the Russian government and the training of Russian military personnel in Iran. Bahrami is an employee of Shahid Kharrazi Industries, which the United States previously sanctioned in January 2018.
- **Ali Jafar Abadi.** Jafar Abadi is the commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force's Salam Farsi Space Command and has overseen satellite launches in Iran. Russia has previously helped Iran launch satellites into orbit, including in August 2022 and February 2024.[6]

OFAC also sanctioned the following entities:

- **Iran Air.** Iran Air has shipped electronics and aircraft parts to Russia. OFAC previously sanctioned Iran Air in November 2018 and identified 67 of its aircraft as blocked property.[7] The US State Department separately designated Iran Air on September 10 for "materially contributing to the supply, sale, or transfer, directly or indirectly, to or from Iran, or for the use in or benefit of Iran, of arms or related materiel, including spare parts." [8]
- **Iran-based Azadegan Transportation Company.** The Azadegan Transportation Company is an IRGC-affiliated company that is "critical to the logistics operations of the IRGC."
- **Iran-based Farzanegan Propulsion Systems Design Bureau.** The Farzanegan Propulsion Systems Design Bureau has provided Russian weapons makers with samples of its engines in support of Russian cruise missile development. Farzanegan manufactures numerous types of engines, including turbojet engines, and previously claimed that it produced Iran's first ramjet engine, according to the US Treasury Department.

The United Kingdom's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), France's Foreign Affairs Ministry, and Germany's Federal Foreign Office announced, as the E3, that they will cancel bilateral air services agreements with Iran and sanctioned three individuals and four entities.[9] Cancelling bilateral air services will restrict Iran Air's ability to fly to the United Kingdom and Europe.[10]

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi reportedly plans to appoint Kazem Gharib Abadi as the lead Iranian nuclear negotiator with the West.[11] This appointment would further signal the willingness of the Masoud Pezeshkian administration to pursue nuclear negotiations given Gharib Abadi's experience. Gharib Abadi was the Iranian representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from 2018-21, during which time he played a key role in engaging Western diplomats and negotiating teams.[12] Gharib Abadi claimed that the United States and the E3 (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) have failed to uphold their commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.[13] Abadi currently serves as deputy judiciary chief for international affairs and secretary of the Iranian Supreme Human Rights Council.[14]

The appointment of Gharib Abadi as lead nuclear negotiator would come as Araghchi has selected other experienced diplomats for key positions. Araghchi appointed Majid Takht Ravanchi as deputy foreign affairs minister for policy on September 9.[15] Ravanchi was part of the Iranian nuclear negotiating team under former moderate President Hassan Rouhani.[16] Araghchi also appointed Ali Bagheri Kani as his personal adviser.[17] Bagheri Kani was appointed as lead nuclear negotiator in 2021 under former President Ebrahim Raisi.[18] Bagheri Kani reiterated Tehran's willingness to resume nuclear negotiations with the West in July 2024.[19]

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conducted an airstrike in the al Mawasi humanitarian zone targeting three senior Hamas commanders on September 9.[20] The IDF stated that it targeted Hamas commanders in a command-and-control compound within the al Mawasi humanitarian zone in Khan Younis.[21] The IDF killed the head of Hamas' aerial system in the Gaza Strip, Samer Ismail Hader Abu Daqa, the head of targeting and surveillance in Hamas' military intelligence, Osama Tabash, and senior Hamas fighter Ayman Mabhouh.[22] The IDF stated that the three commanders were directly involved in the October 7 attack and continued to conduct attacks against Israeli forces and Israel itself.[23] The IDF stated that it collected "extensive" intelligence and conducted aerial observation in the hours prior to the attack to verify the commanders' presence in the area.[24] A security source told Israeli Army Radio that there is a "high level" of intelligence indicating that the three Hamas commanders were present at the site of the attack.[25] IDF clearing operations in recent months have forced senior Hamas officials to leave underground tunnels and hide among civilians in the al Mawasi humanitarian zone.[26]

Palestinian sources, including the Hamas-run Gazan Health Ministry, reported that the IDF killed at least 19 and wounded over 60 people in the strike.[27] The Hamas-run Government Media Office claimed that the strike killed 40 Palestinians.[28] US White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby called the reports of high civilian casualties in the strike "deeply concerning" and added that the United States would not be "bashful" about pressing Israel for more information about the attack.[29] The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres condemned the airstrike.[30] The IDF stated that it took steps to reduce civilian harm from the strike, including through the use of specific munitions and aerial surveillance.[31] The IDF added that the Hamas-run Government Media Office's figures on Palestinian casualties are inconsistent with the IDF's information.[32] The IDF stated that Hamas continues to concentrate its operatives and infrastructure in the humanitarian zone, despite IDF measures to keep Gazans out of combat zones.[33]

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said that Hamas is no longer an organized military force in the Gaza Strip.[34] Gallant told reporters on September 9 that Hamas’ “military formation no longer exists.”[35] Gallant’s comments suggest that IDF operations have disrupted Hamas’ ability to operate as a conventional military. Prior to October 2023, Hamas structured its al Qassem Brigades to survive Israeli military action by building a resilient military organization with doctrinally correct unit echelons and command hierarchies.[36] This organization was meant to facilitate recovery in the face of the loss of militia leaders or the destruction of elements of units. The al Qassem Brigades organized themselves into echelons from the squad all the way to the brigade level just as conventional militaries do.[37] IDF operations in the Gaza Strip have significantly reduced Hamas’ ability to operate under these structured command hierarchies, however. Israeli military sources said in late August 2024 that IDF operations in Rafah caused the “collapse” of Hamas’ Rafah Brigade, for example.[38] An Israeli military correspondent reported that Hamas fighters have increasingly attempted to flee Rafah via tunnels north to the al Mawasi humanitarian zone, indicating a lack of moral cohesion or adherence to a command structure.[39] Furthermore, the lack of clear tactical or operational objectives in recent Hamas attacks in Rafah are inconsistent with those of an effective military unit. Israeli tactics responding to Hamas rocket fire have resulted in a significant decrease in rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel as well.[40]

Hamas continues to operate in the Gaza Strip from the remnants of its former structure. Gallant said that the IDF continues to engage Hamas fighters and pursue Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip.[41] CTP-ISW continues to observe Hamas attacking Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip although at a significantly diminished rate in recent months.[42] Hamas likely continues to operate in small, decentralized cells of fighters throughout the Gaza Strip.

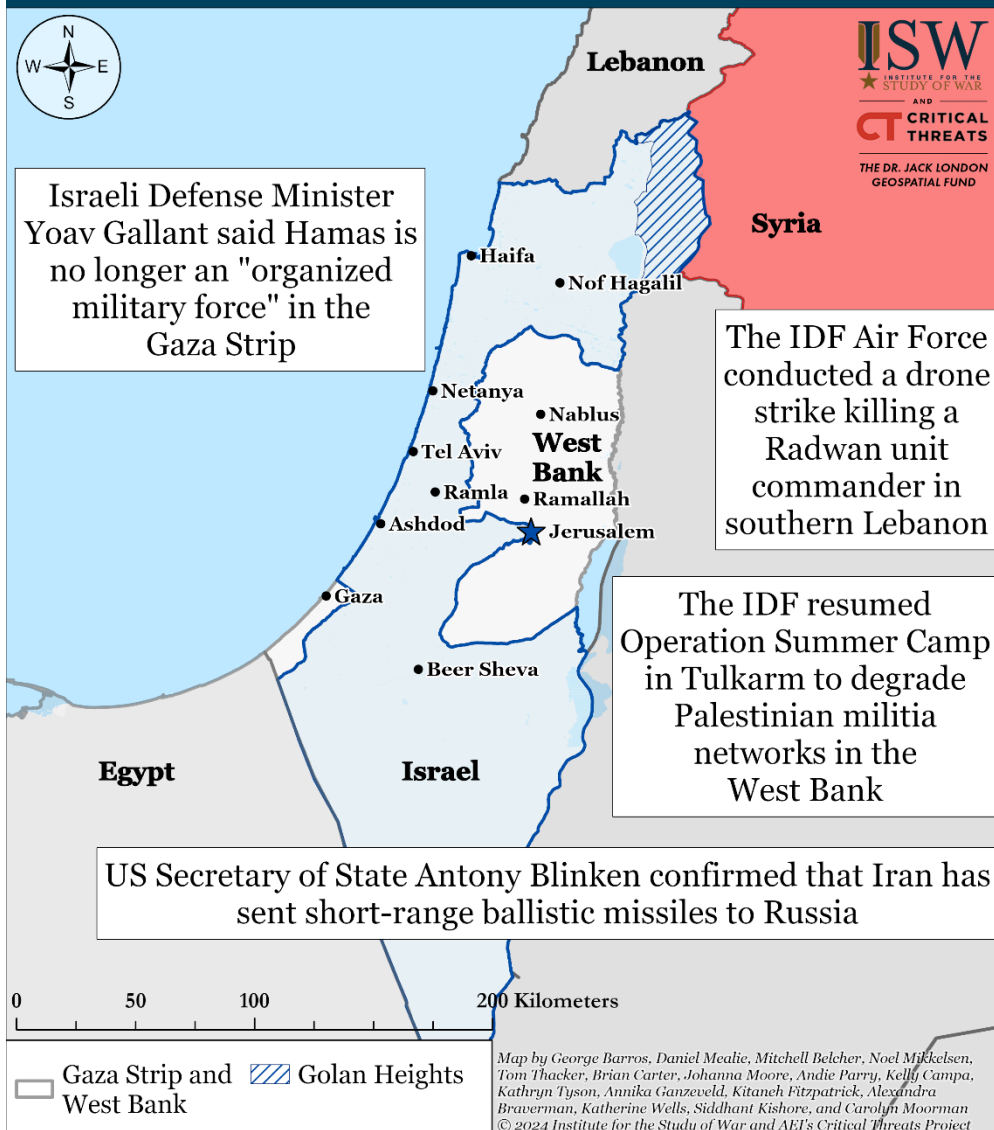
Gallant said that the IDF is “wrapping up [its] missions in the south” and will shift its focus from the Gaza Strip toward the Israel-Lebanon border.[43] Gallant visited Israel’s northern border on September 10 and spoke to Israeli forces simulating a military exercise in northern Israel.[44] Gallant told Israeli forces that they must be ready to execute the IDF’s mission along the northern front “when the time comes.”[45]

Key Takeaways:

- **Iran-Russia cooperation:** US Secretary of State Antony Blinken confirmed that Iran sent short-range ballistic missiles to Russia. The United States and European countries imposed sanctions on Iran and Russia in response.
- **Iranian Nuclear negotiations:** Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi appointed Kazem Gharib Abadi, further signaling the willingness of the Masoud Pezeshkian administration to pursue nuclear negotiations with the West.
- **Gaza Strip:** Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said that Hamas is no longer an organized military force in the Gaza Strip. Hamas is instead operating from the remnants of its conventional military structure.

Key Takeaways in the Israel-Hamas War

As of September 10, 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

The IDF Air Force struck and killed Hamas fighters in a command-and-control site within a former mosque in Bureij refugee camp on September 10.[46] The IDF Air Force struck a building formerly known as al Farouq Mosque and the building next to it under the guidance of the IDF 252nd Division, Israeli military intelligence, and Shin Bet.[47] The IDF stated that Hamas

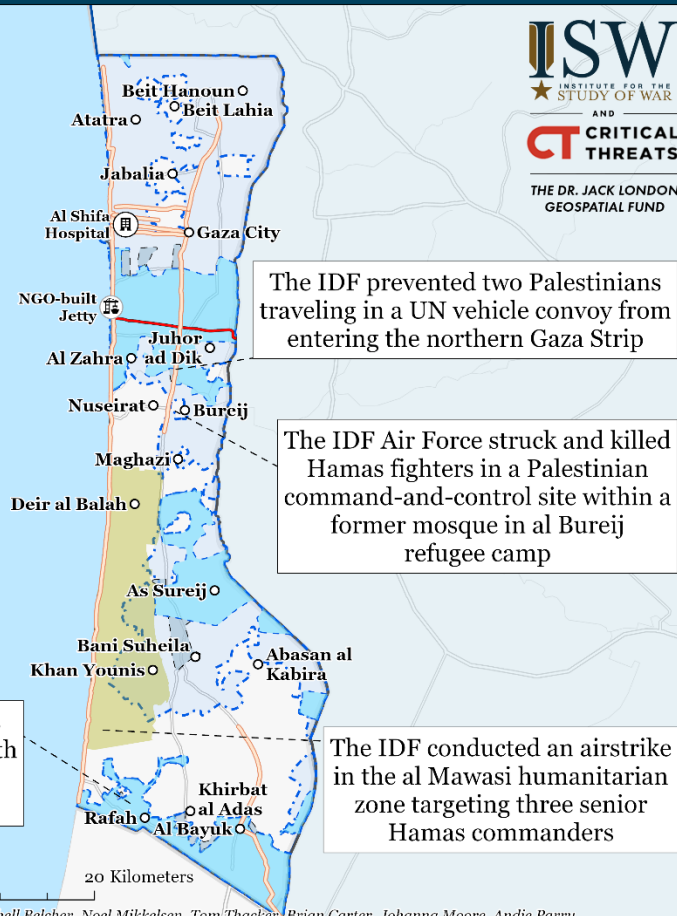
used the compound to support attacks against Israeli forces and Israel.[48] The IDF added that it took steps to reduce civilian harm, including through the use of specific munitions and aerial surveillance.[49] Palestinian sources said that at least two Palestinians were killed and several wounded in the attack.[50]

The IDF conducted drone strikes that killed several prominent fighters in Hamas' Rafah Brigade, including the commander of the Tal al Sultan Battalion.[51] The IDF 401st Brigade identified several militia cells via drone surveillance and directed drone strikes targeting the fighters in Tal al Sultan.[52] The IDF stated that it killed the commander of the Tal al Sultan Battalion, Mahmoud Hamdan. Israeli Army Radio reported that Hamas held and executed six Israeli hostages under Hamdan's command in Tal al Sultan.[53] Hamdan also participated in planning the October 7 attack and led the Rafah Brigade's preparations before Israeli forces entered Rafah in May 2024.[54] The IDF also stated that it killed three other company commanders in the Tal al Sultan Battalion, including Nukhba Force company commander Emad Abu Hani, company commander Naeel Bashir, and combat assistance commander Rami Ayash.[55] The IDF did not specify when it conducted the drone strike, but an Israeli military correspondent reported that IDF killed Hamdan and the other commanders several weeks ago.[56]

IDF spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari visited on September 10 the tunnel complex in Tal al Sultan where Hamas executed six Israeli hostages.[57] Hamas held and killed the six Israeli hostages in a 20-meter-deep, 120-meter-long underground passageway in Tal al Sultan.[58] An Israeli military correspondent said that the tunnel was located within one of the largest underground tunnel networks found by the IDF so far during the war.[59] The IDF did not have precise intelligence indicating that Hamas was holding the hostages in this tunnel, but Israeli forces operated "in a very, very careful manner" in Tal al Sultan due to indications that Israeli hostages were in the area.[60] The military correspondent reported that the IDF rescued Israeli hostage Farhan al Qadi on August 27 in a tunnel less than 700 meters away from where the six hostages were held.[61] Hamas reportedly blocked the route connecting the two tunnels.[62] The IDF said that it will continue to map the tunnel complex before destroying it.[63]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip

As of September 10, 2024, 2:00 PM ET

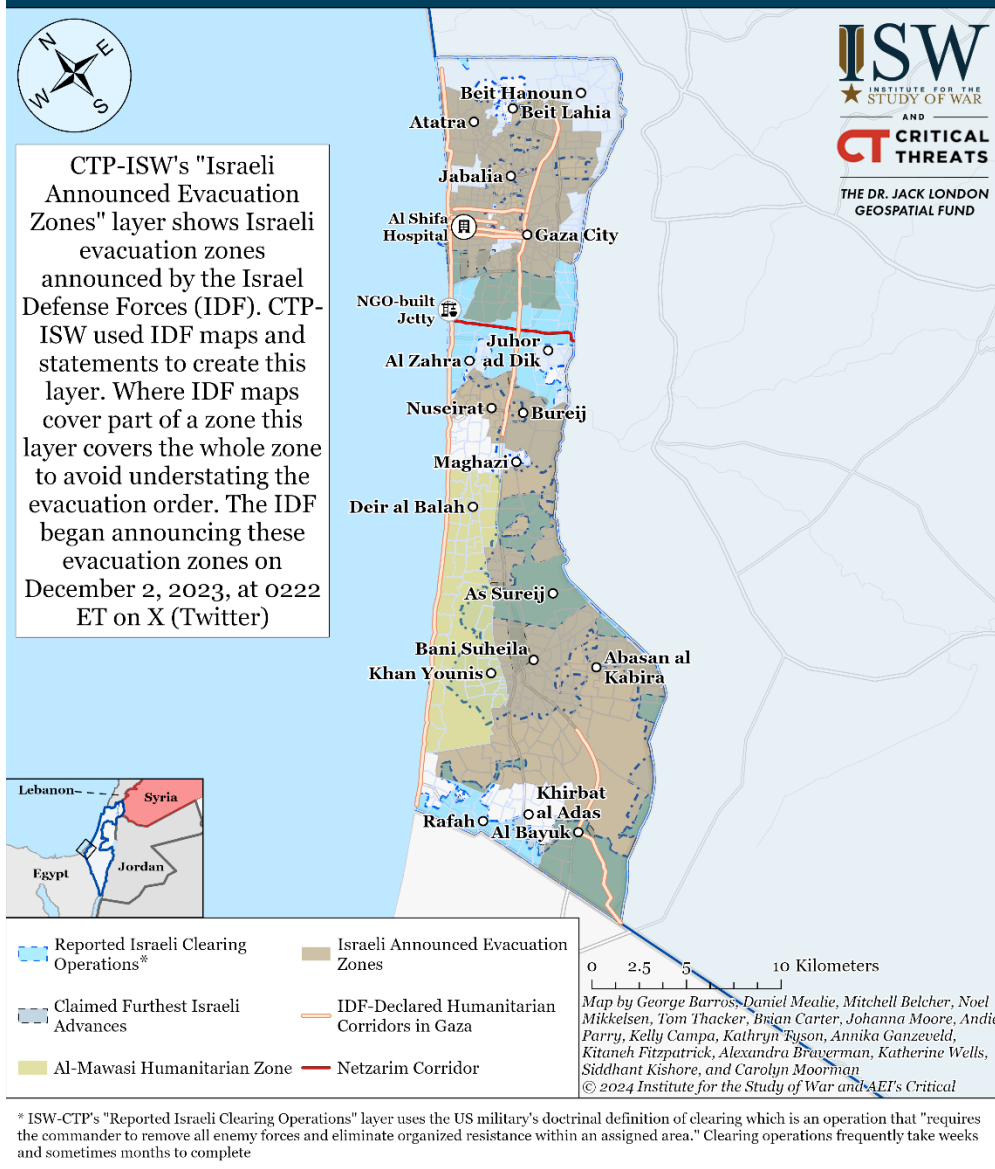


Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Tom Thacker, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Kathryn Tyson, Annika Ganzefeld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Alexandra Braverman, Katherine Wells, Siddhant Kishore, and Carolyn Moorman - © 2024 Institute for the Study 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			

* 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 As of September 10, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



Humanitarian aid groups started the first day of polio vaccinations in the northern Gaza Strip in the final phase of the UN polio vaccination campaign in the Gaza Strip.[64] The United Nations aims to vaccinate around 200,000 additional children in the northern Gaza Strip before this phase ends on September 12 and to repeat the vaccination operation throughout the Gaza Strip in a month to deliver the second vaccine dose.[65] Israel and Palestinian militias continue to observe limited humanitarian pauses in the Gaza Strip for the polio vaccination campaign.[66]

The IDF prevented two Palestinians traveling in a UN vehicle convoy from entering the northern Gaza Strip on September 9.[67] The IDF detained a UN convoy after it passed through the Wadi Gaza checkpoint in the central Gaza Strip.[68] UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said that the UN convoy was transporting Palestinian and international staff to Gaza City and

the northern Gaza Strip in order to work on the polio vaccination campaign.[69] The IDF stated that Israeli forces stopped the convoy to question two Palestinian suspects traveling with the convoy.[70] Israeli Army Radio reported that the two Palestinians were trying to travel to the northern Gaza Strip without Israeli approval.[71] UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said that Israeli forces encircled the convoy and that Israeli tanks and a bulldozer "proceeded to ram the UN vehicles." [72] Lazzarini said that the IDF bulldozers inflicted "heavy damage" to the UN armored vehicles. UN officials said that Israeli forces stopped the convoy for eight hours.[73] Israeli forces released the two Palestinians from detainment but did not allow them to continue to the northern Gaza Strip.[74] Dujarric added that Israeli forces' conduct endangered the UN staff.[75] The IDF stated that the convoy was not carrying polio vaccines.[76]

West Bank

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

The IDF resumed Operation Summer Camp in Tulkarm refugee camp on September 10 as a part of its effort to degrade Palestinian militia networks in the West Bank.[77] The IDF launched a ten day-long counterterrorism operation in the northern West Bank on August 28 in response to Hamas' attempted suicide bombing in Tel Aviv in August 2024.[78] The IDF temporarily halted Operation Summer Camp on September 6, stating that Israeli forces will "return soon" and that the operation was not over.[79] Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant previously labeled Tulkarm a hub for Palestinian militia activity, adding that Israeli forces must eventually destroy Palestinian militias in the West Bank.[80] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades fired small arms and detonated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) targeting Israeli forces in Tulkarm refugee camp on September 10.[81]

Israeli forces conducted overnight raids across the West Bank and detained 16 wanted persons on September 9 and 10.[82] The IDF detained four wanted individuals and captured small arms, ammunition, and other military equipment in a raid in Kafr Aqab.[83] The IDF separately conducted a raid in Bani Naim to detain two wanted individuals and confiscate an M16-type rifle.[84] The IDF also shot a Palestinian who attacked Israeli forces with a Molotov cocktail in al Aroub refugee camp.[85]

Israeli forces thwarted an attempt to smuggle small arms into the West Bank from Jordan on September 10.[86] Israeli forces detected the smuggling attempt near Naran in the West Bank and recovered four handguns and one shotgun.[87]

The IDF concluded its initial investigation into the death of Turkey-born US citizen Aysenur Eygi who was killed near Nablus on September 6.[88] The IDF investigation revealed that it is "highly likely" that Eygi was hit "indirectly and unintentionally" by IDF fire.[89] The IDF stated that the incident occurred when Israeli military police were trying to target the main instigator of a "violent gathering" of dozens of Palestinian suspects in Beta Junction near Hebron.[90] US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken condemned the death of Eygi and called on Israeli forces to make "fundamental changes" in how they operate in the West Bank.[91] Several Palestinian militias, including Hamas, mourned the death of Eygi and condemned Israeli forces for targeting protesters in the West Bank.[92]

Israeli forces engaged Palestinian fighters in Nablus and Tulkarm in the West Bank since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 9.[93]



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

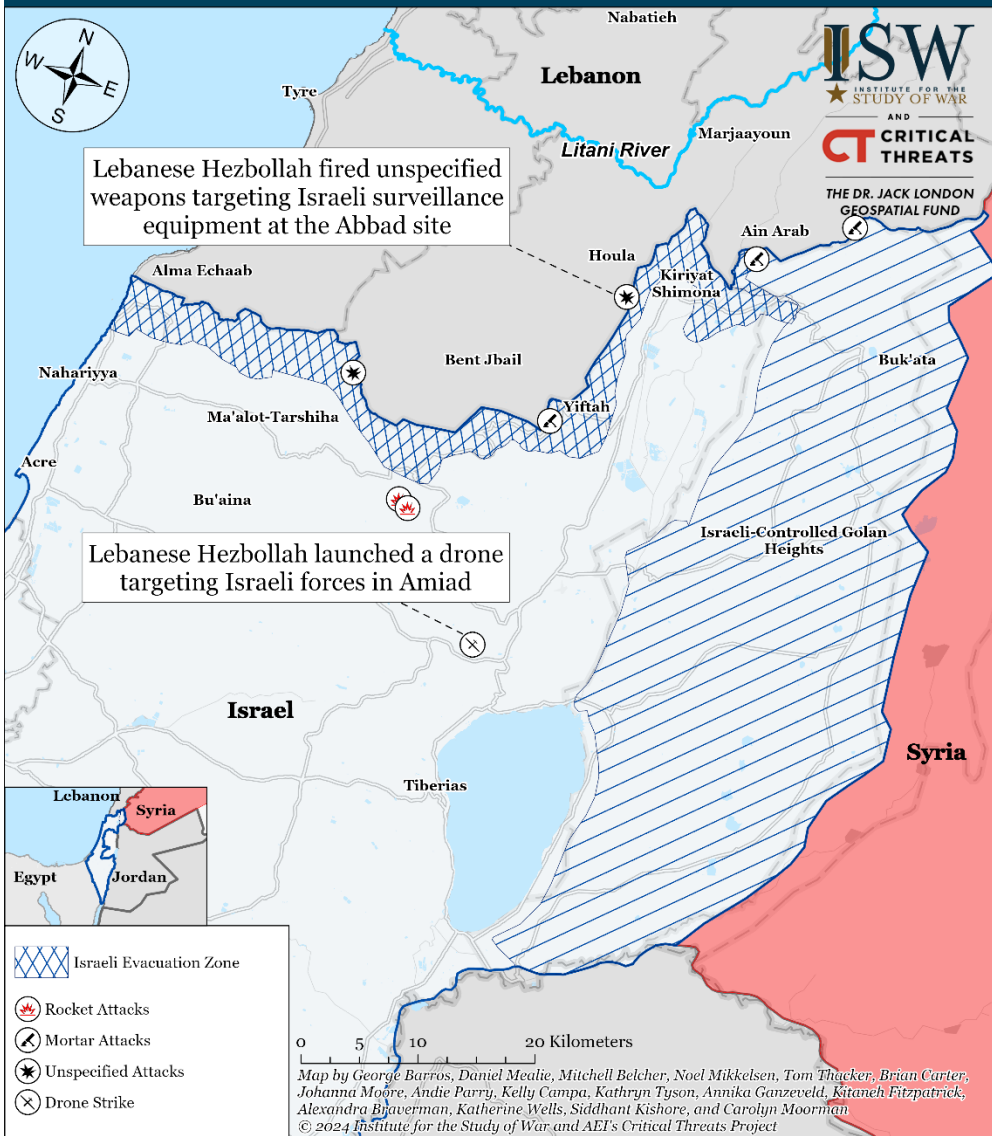
- Expel the United States from Syria

Iranian-backed militias, including Lebanese Hezbollah, have conducted at least ten attacks into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on September 9.[94] The IDF identified around 45 rockets fired from Lebanon into northern Israel.[95] The IDF intercepted some of the rockets and the rest fell in open areas.

The IDF Air Force conducted a drone strike that killed a commander from Hezbollah's Radwan unit in Qaraoun in the Western Beqaa District, Lebanon, on September 10.[96] The Radwan unit is Hezbollah's elite commando force and is designed to conduct ground attacks into Israel. The IDF stated that the commander, Mohammed Qassem al Shaer, "promoted many forms of terrorism" against Israel.[97] The IDF added that the killing would damage Hezbollah's ability to conduct attacks into Israel from southern Lebanon. An Israeli Army Radio correspondent reported on September 10 that an Israeli drone strike in the same area killed a Radwan commander, but that the commander was "not very senior." [98] Hezbollah acknowledged the death of al Shaer on September 10.[99]

Attacks into Northern Israel from Lebanon

As of September 10, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET



Iran and Axis of Resistance

US Defense Department Press Secretary Major General Pat Ryder confirmed ongoing US-Iraq Higher Military Commission discussions on the future of the US-led coalition in Iraq during a press briefing but did not comment on reports of the United States and Iraq agreeing to coalition troops withdrawing by the end of 2026.[100] US, coalition, and Iraqi officials told Reuters on September 6 that “hundreds” of coalition forces will withdraw from Iraq by September 2025 and remaining troops will withdraw by the end of 2026.[101] Ryder also reiterated the commitment of US President Joe Biden and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al Sudani to reviewing the results of the Higher Military Commission to determine “when and how” the coalition’s mission in Iraq would end and transition to a US-Iraqi bilateral relationship.[102] The Higher Military

commission is a dialogue between the Washington and Baghdad that is assessing the threat of ISIS, the operational environment in Iraq, and the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces.[103]

The Houthis claimed on September 10 that they intercepted a US MQ-9 Reaper drone over Saada Governorate, Yemen.[104] Houthi spokesperson Yahya Sarea claimed that the Houthis have intercepted nine US MQ-9 Reaper drones since the start of the Israel-Hamas War in October 2023. CTP-ISW cannot verify the Houthi claim.

US Central Command destroyed two Houthi missiles and a Houthi support vehicle in Yemen and a Houthi drone in the Red Sea on September 9.[105] Houthi spokesperson Abdul Salam Salah claimed that two US-UK airstrikes killed two students near a high school in al Jund area, Taiz Governorate.[106]

Iranian Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Akbar Ahmadian flew to St. Petersburg, Russia, for the BRICS meeting for high-ranking security officials on September 12 and 13.[107] Iranian state media reported that Ahmadian will meet senior Russian officials to discuss political, security, and economic cooperation.[108] High-ranking security officials from Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Saudi Arabi, Azerbaijan, Sri Lanka, and Ethiopia will also attend the summit. Ahmadian will hold separate meetings with some of his counterparts on the summit's sidelines.

POWERED BY:



BABEL STREET

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