



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., October 31, 2023

Northern Arena	Palestinian Fatalities	Israeli Casualties	Rocket Fire
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•90 attacks•49 Hezbollah operatives killed•9 other terrorist-organization operatives killed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Gaza Strip – 8,525•Judea and Samaria 119	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Dead – 1,400•Nine dead on the northern border•Abducted – 240•Five abductees returned	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•More than 8,500•About 10% failed launches

Overview¹

►**The southern sector:** IDF forces continued expanding the ground maneuver in the Gaza Strip with the entrance of additional infantry, tank and engineering forces. The combined attacks from land, air and sea also continued, and fierce fighting was reported. The Hamas government's media information office issued a notice to local residents not to report details about the movement of the IDF forces on social media. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Iranian establishment media represented the IDF maneuver in Gaza as a military failure. The Palestinian terrorist organizations continue firing rockets at Israel although at a relatively lower pace. Two attacks from the direction of the Red Sea were successfully intercepted. The Houthis in Yemen² claimed responsibility for launching an unmanned aerial vehicle towards Israel.

►**So far, over 1,400 civilian and soldier deaths have been reported; 240 civilian and soldier abductees are still held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.** An

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

² For further information about the Shi'ite Houthi movement, see the March 2023 ITIC report, "The Houthi Movement and the War in Yemen: Development and Significance." The Houthis are part of the Iran-Syria-Hezbollah-Palestinian terrorist organization "resistance axis."

abducted female soldier was released in a combined Israeli Security Agency-IDF operation in the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, Hamas released a video of three other abductees.

► **The Gaza Strip:** Reports from the Gaza Strip indicate a worsening humanitarian situation and fear that hospitals will be attacked, following the IDF's demand to evacuate hospitals where terrorist operatives use the population as human shields.

► **The northern sector:** Hezbollah terrorist operatives continued attacking IDF posts and Israeli cities, towns and villages on the border, although during the past day they were fewer in number. The IDF responded with artillery fire and aerial attacks on Hezbollah military targets. Hashem Safi al-Din, chairman of Hezbollah's Executive Council, said Hezbollah was prepared to remain on the ground in the arena as long as necessary. The Lebanese government continued to emphasize Lebanon did not want in war.

► **Judea and Samaria:** IDF forces continued their counterterrorism activities and demolished the house of Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau.

► **Iran:** The Iranians continue expressing support for the Palestinians. According to reports, the commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps' (IRGC) Qods Force has visited Lebanon several times. Pro-Iranian militias continue their attacks on American military bases in Iraq and Syria and their leaders call for the withdrawal of the American military. A Hamas delegation arrived in Iraq and met with senior government officials and militia leaders.

The Combat Arena

IDF activity on the ground

► IDF forces continued expanding the ground maneuver in the Gaza Strip, with the entry of additional infantry, armor and engineering forces. During the past day, the combined forces attacked about 300 targets from the land, air and sea (IDF spokesman, October 31, 2023).

► **Ground activity:** The IDF forces clashed with terrorist squads which were eliminated with the help of helicopters, fighter jets and remotely directed UAVs. The fighters destroyed terrorist facilities including anti-tank positions and launching positions, and eliminated terrorist operatives. Fierce face-to-face fighting with terrorists was reported (IDF spokesman, October 30 and 31, 2023). On the night of October 30, 2023, a suspicious person entering Israel from the Gaza Strip was identified near the Re'im Junction; he was shot and killed (IDF spokesman, October 31, 2023).

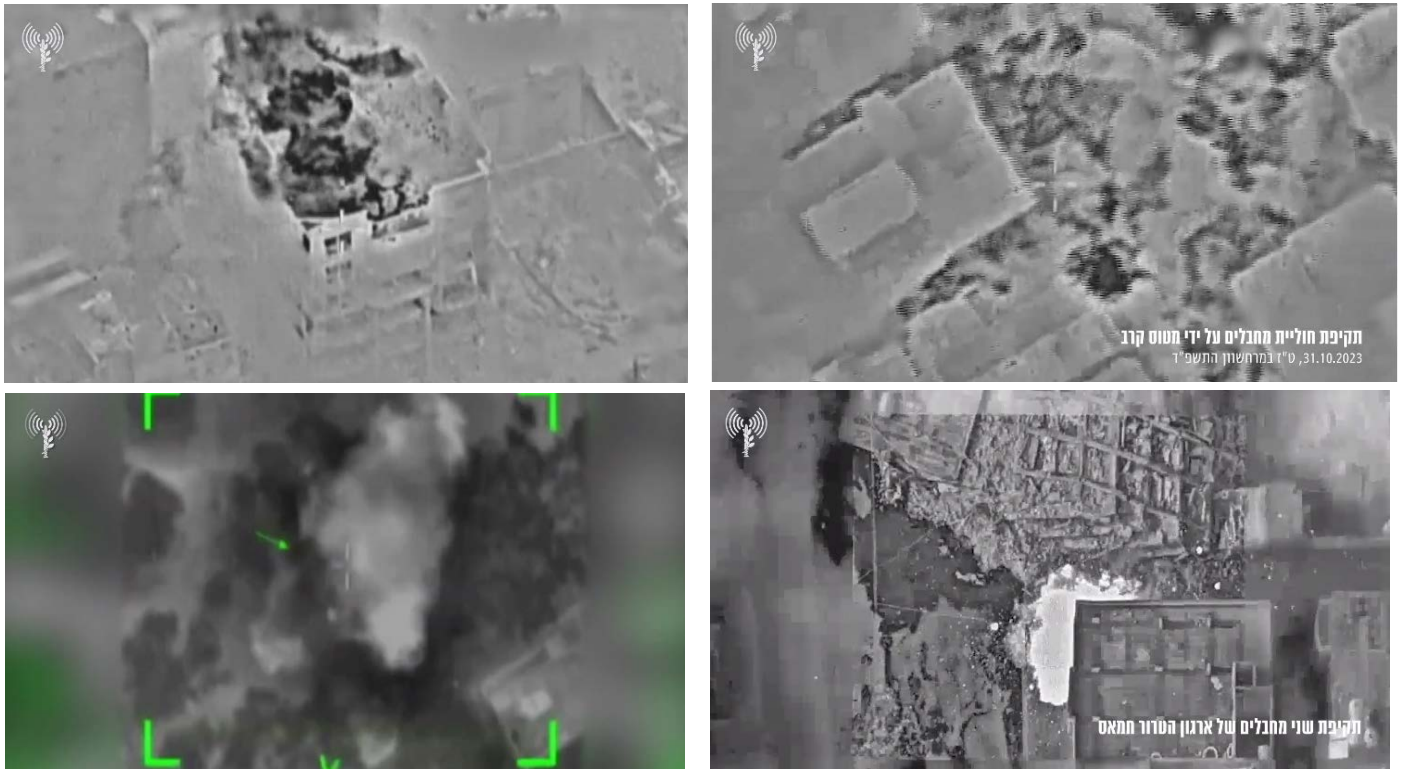


The IDF ground maneuver in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman's website, October 31, 2023)



IDF tank in Gaza (IDF website, October 30, 2023)

► **Aerial activity:** Israeli Air Force aircraft continued intense attacks on targets throughout Gaza, including Hamas anti-tank and rocket launching positions, tunnel shafts and military compounds, while also assisting the ground forces (IDF spokesman, October 31, 2023).



Airstrikes in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman's website, October 31, 2023)



Right: Israeli Air Force strikes in Gaza (Shehab Twitter account, October 31, 2023). Left: Attacks in the Tel al-Hawa neighborhood in Gaza City (QudsN Twitter account, October 31, 2023)



Right: Israeli Air Force attacks on Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip (QudsN Twitter account, October 30, 2023). Left: Nuseirat residents visit the ruins after the Israeli Air Force attack (Wafa YouTube channel, October 31, 2023).

Reactions to Israel's ground maneuver

► In reaction to the IDF ground activity, the Hamas government media information office issued a message warning local residents not to post information on the social networks about the movements of the forces and battles with Palestinian military operatives. According to the announcement, only "resistance" [terrorist organization] sources were entrusted with making such information public (Facebook page of Hamas' media information office, October 31, 2023).

► The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) reported that the "ground aggression" had begun a few days ago, and so far, Israel had achieved nothing but limited penetration into open areas in Gaza. The PIJ claimed the "resistance" on the ground continued and could thwart Israel's plans and goals (al-Jazeera, October 30, 2023). The PIJ later said the IDF spokesman was focusing on al-Shifaa Hospital, which was a warning to the world that Israel was preparing for "a new massacre" (Filastin al-Yawm, October 30, 2023).

► The Iranian establishment media recently represented the IDF's ground maneuver in the Gaza Strip as a military failure. On October 30, 2023, the Tasnim news agency, quoting "Palestinian sources," reported that the IDF had withdrawn from a number of the routes it had used to enter the Gaza Strip following "severe injuries," allegedly caused by Hamas. The conservative daily Hamshahri also reported on the failure of Israel's ground attack on October 30, 2023, claiming Israel had made three unsuccessful attempts to invade Gaza since the weekend, but was forced to retreat after Hamas damaged several Israeli tanks. The following day the daily Kayhan also reported "the failure of the Zionist regime's fifth ground attack on Gaza." The report [falsely] claimed Israel had failed to advance "even one meter" inside the Gaza Strip because of Hamas resistance and that Israel's documentation had also shown no evidence of the success of the ground maneuver.

Rocket fire

► During the past day rocket launches continued, although at a slower pace. Several barrages were launched at the center of the country and the southern city of Beersheba. Several houses and buildings were damaged.

► **So far, more than 8,500 rockets and mortar shells have been fired at Israel since the beginning of the war. About 10% of them were failed launches which fell in the Gaza Strip and in the sea.**



A rocket from Gaza landed near Efrat in Gush Etzion (QudsN Twitter account, October 30, 2023)

Interception of missiles launched from the direction of the Red Sea

► On the morning of October 31, 2023, sirens were sounded in the Eilat region warning of the entry of a hostile aircraft, apparently from the direction of Yemen. Later, explosions were heard in the area; the weapon was intercepted before it penetrated Israeli territory. The IDF spokesman reported that the IDF systems detected an aerial target approaching Israel, it did not pose a threat and there was no danger (IDF spokesman, October 31, 2023).

► During the afternoon, Israel's Hetz long-range defense system intercepted a surface-to-surface missile launched at Israel from the Red Sea (IDF spokesman, October 31, 2023).

► **Abd al-Aziz bin Hابتour, prime minister of the Houthi interim government in Yemen,** reported that the Houthis had launched a UAV at Israel "because of the fighting in the Gaza Strip." He stressed Yemen's total solidarity with the residents of the Gaza Strip, south Lebanon and the Syrian Golan. (Hezbollah's al-Mayadeen, October 31, 2023).

Israeli casualties

► **So far, over 1,400 civilian and soldier deaths have been reported; 240 civilian and soldier abductees are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.** About 30 of the abductees are children and adolescents under the age of 18, and about 20 are elderly. Five abductees have been released.

The issue of the abductees

► A female soldier who was abducted from her base on October 7, 2023, was rescued during the ground maneuver in the Gaza Strip. According to security sources, the rescue was made possible by a joint Israeli Security Agency-IDF operation which was dangerous and carried out under fire (IDF spokesman, October 30, 2023). Around the same time as her rescue, Hamas

issued a video showing three female Israeli abductees. One of them asked the Israeli government to act quickly to free them.

►In response to the announcements about the rescue of the abductee, **Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed the announcements had been made to "disrupt" the video of the captives which Hamas had issued. He called it an attempt by the Israeli government to lessen the pressure it was under because of the issue of the abductees (Hamas Telegram channel, October 30, 2023).

►As to an exchange deal, **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** said the abductees would be returned to Israel only if all the Palestinian prisoners were released. He also claimed that while Israel said it was acting to free the abductees, it continued to endanger their lives with its attacks in Gaza (al-Jazeera, October 30, 2023). In a recorded speech, **Abu Hamza, spokesman for Hamas' military-terrorist wing**, warned the abductees' families that Israel was endangering their lives. He said Hamas would not permit Israel to take advantage of the negotiations to achieve some of its goals in the Gaza Strip (Abu Hamza's Telegram channel, October 30, 2023).

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The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

►**Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip**, said that as of 1 p.m. the number of dead stood at 8,525 and the number of wounded at 21,543 (ministry of health in Gaza Telegram channel, October 30, 2023).

The situation in Gaza

►Hamas announced that the "fascist occupation" continued to attack the hospitals in the Gaza Strip without regard for moral norms or international laws, such as its attack on the Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital. He claimed it was the only hospital in Gaza that treated cancer patients. Hamas called on the UN and international organizations to deter Israel and ensure the supply of hospital needs, including medical equipment and fuel (Hamas Telegram channel, October 30, 2023).

The Rafah Crossing

►The Red Cross reported that the humanitarian aid delivered to the Gaza Strip so far through the Rafah Crossing was far from meeting the Gazans' needs (Hassan Aslih's Twitter account,

October 31, 2023). **Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA commissioner**, claimed the mechanism for delivering humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing was doomed to failure. He said the needs in the Gaza Strip were many and the collapse of the civilian system would make it impossible for UNRWA to continue its work (Ma'an, October 31, 2023).

Hamas

► **Ghazi Hamad, a member of Hamas' political bureau of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and Usama Hamdan, a senior Hamas terrorist operative** held a press conference in Beirut. Ghazi Hamad claimed Israel had entered the Gaza Strip in an attempt to whitewash its image and raise morale. He claimed the operatives of Hamas' military wing had successfully repelled the IDF forces wherever they tried to enter and had inflicted heavy losses in personnel and equipment. The Gaza Strip, he said, would be a "cemetery for invaders," and boasted they had prepared many surprises for Israel. He claimed 42 % of the victims of the Israeli attacks were children, more than 1,600 women had been killed and 881 families had been wiped out completely. He added that 47 mosques and three churches had been attacked, 203 schools damaged or destroyed, especially those housing displaced persons. He said Israel threatened hospitals in Gaza in flagrant violation of international and humanitarian law, and had begun to attack the area around the hospitals as a threat to the medical teams. He said 12 hospitals were not functioning and 23 medical centers had stopped functioning due to Israel's threats. Hamad called the humanitarian situation in general "catastrophic" due to the lack of elementary services, electricity and water, and the severe shortage of fuel. He [falsely] claimed that only 110 trucks had entered the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the maneuver, and called on all countries, and especially the Arab countries, to exert pressure on Israel to stop its aggression and open the Rafah Crossing. He also called for marches and demonstrations to continue around the world in support of the Palestinians and again called on the countries that had relations with Israel, and in particular the Arab and Islamic countries, to sever relations and expel the Israeli ambassadors (al-Jazeera TV YouTube channel, October 30, 2023).



The press conference in Beirut (Lebanese News Agency, October 30, 2023)

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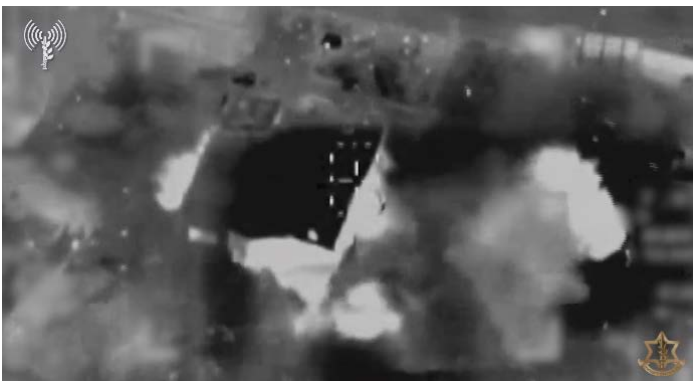
The Northern Arena

Lebanon

The situation on the ground

►Hezbollah operatives continued attacking IDF outposts and towns on the border, although less frequently. The events of October 30, 2023, were the following (IDF spokesman, October 30, 2023):

- ◆ In the afternoon, two rockets were launched at Israel and fell in open areas. In response, during the evening and night Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked Hezbollah facilities in Lebanon territory, destroying weapons, positions and sites used by the organization.
- ◆ Three anti-tank missiles were fired from Lebanese territory at the Biranit area. IDF forces responded with artillery fire.
- ◆ IDF forces fired at a terrorist squad in Lebanese territory, which was about to launch mortar shells at the area of Rosh HaNikra.



The IDF Hezbollah military-terrorist facilities (IDF website, October 30, 2023)

►Hezbollah claimed responsibility for all the events (Telegram channel of Hezbollah's combat information unit, October 30, 2023).

The Lebanese army

►The Lebanese army announced that its forces had located 21 launch sites in the Wadi al-Khansa' and al-Khraibeh area, in the Hasbaiyya and al-Qleileh district, and in the Tyre region, and that a rocket had been found ready for launch (Lebanese army Twitter account, October 30, 2023).



A rocket ready for launch found by the Lebanese army (Lebanon Army website, October 30, 2023)

Hezbollah

►**Hashem Safi al-Din, chairman of Hezbollah's Executive Council**, announced Hezbollah's (the "resistance's) preparedness to remain on the ground in the arena as long as necessary. He claimed that all the events currently taking place in the Gaza Strip were "signs of a great victory over Israel." He claimed history would record that responsibility for the end of Israeli power, capability and supremacy would rest on the shoulders of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, because he had caused a social-political rift in Israeli society. He added that Netanyahu was also causing a rift in the IDF, and the end of the army would mean the end of Israel. He said, "If the IDF is broken in the Gaza Strip, when five divisions are stationed there, that is, about half of the IDF's order of battle, what will be left of it after that?" He also noted that the first blow the IDF suffered was in 2006 [the Second Lebanon War] and the second now, in Operation al-Aqsa Storm. He boasted of the great motivation of the "Palestinian resistance" [terrorist] operatives and their confidence that they would defeat the IDF (Mehr, October 30, 2023).

The Lebanese government

► **Najib Mikati, the prime minister of the Lebanese interim government**, said they demanded that Israel stop its "provocations on the border." He claimed the Lebanese people did not want war, but the decision to go to war was in Israel's hands. He also stated that if war broke out, they would coordinate with international organizations to operate an aid program (Sky News in Arabic, October 30, 2023).

Recruitment to the ranks of the Lebanese companies

► A recruitment ad was posted on social media, attributed to the "organization of Lebanese companies for resistance to the Israeli occupation," which is affiliated with Hezbollah. The ad stated that during the "unusual" developments in the Gaza Strip, Israel and the region, the organization had began recruiting fighters. The ad gave the locations of four areas in the capital and the names and phone numbers of the people responsible for recruitment in each. Outrage was expressed on Twitter, which shared the recruitment ad, and the Lebanese security agencies were called on to stop the activity (the Twitter account of "the national campaign to cope with turning Lebanon into Syria," October 31, 2023).



The Lebanese companies' recruitment poster (the Twitter account of "the national campaign to cope with turning Lebanon into Syria," October 31, 2023)

The Lebanese Forces Party

► Samir Geagea, leader of the [Christian] Lebanese Forces Party, announced they would do everything in their power to avoid a "hell" similar to what was happening in the Gaza Strip. He called for the immediate implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701³ (Lebanese Forces Party Twitter account, October 30, 2023).

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³ Resolution 1701, was approved by the UN Security Council on August 12, 2006 at the end of the Second Lebanon War. It called for a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah and the deployment of an armed UN force and forces from the Lebanese army in south Lebanon to prevent Hezbollah from continuing to operate in Lebanese territory. It also called for the disarmament of Hezbollah.

Judea, Samaria, and the Palestinian Authority

Terrorist attacks

► On the afternoon of October 30, 2023, Israeli vehicles near the village of Shavei Shomron were targets for drive-by shootings. No casualties were reported. One of the Israeli drivers responded by shooting at the assailant, who fled to one of the nearby villages after abandoning his vehicle along with his weapon (Judea and Samaria Rescue, October 30, 2023).

Events

► The Israeli security forces continued their extensive counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria. During the past day, 38 wanted Palestinians were detained, eight of whom were Hamas operatives. Since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip, about 1,110 wanted Palestinians have been detained, 710 of them Hamas operatives (IDF spokesman, October 31, 2023). The ministry of health in Ramallah reported 121 fatalities in Judea and Samaria since the beginning of the war in Gaza. During the past day, a Palestinian died of wounds sustained on October 30, 2023, during Israeli security force activity in the village of Zawata, west of Nablus (Wafa, October 31, 2023).

► On the morning of October 31, 2023, in the village of 'Aroura (north of Ramallah), Israeli security forces demolished the home of **Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau**, based in Beirut and in charge of Hamas terrorist activity in Judea and Samaria. Palestinians rioted during the activity, throwing rocks and IEDs at the forces, who responded with riot control measures (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, October 31, 2023). After the Israeli forces left, residents came carrying Hamas flags to express their solidarity (QudsN Twitter account, October 31, 2023).



(Right to left): Saleh al-'Arouri's house just before it was blown up; the house being blown up; local residents with green Hamas flags come to show solidarity and visit the ruins of the house (QudsN Twitter account, October 31, 2023)



The demolition of Saleh al-'Arouri's house (IDF spokesman's website, October 31, 2023)

Solidarity demonstrations

► Demonstrations in support of the Gaza Strip continued throughout Judea and Samaria. On October 31, 2023, "spontaneous demonstrations" were held by schoolchildren (QudsN Twitter account, October 31, 2023). At a demonstration in Ramallah, a student called on the PA ministry of education to issue official instructions calling on students to hold demonstrations and marches in support of the Gaza Strip (Watan News Agency, October 30, 2023).



Right: A student march in Bani Na'im (QudsN Twitter account, October 31, 2023). Center: A student march in the town of Kafr Ra'i in the Jenin district (Shehab Twitter account, October 31, 2023). Left: A student march in Ramallah (QudsN Twitter account, October 31, 2023)

Palestinian Authority

►The PA government approved a budget and an emergency plan for the PA ministry of health, which is also responsible for the Gaza Strip. According to the plan, the ministry will be able to purchase medical equipment and medicine for hospitals in the Gaza Strip for the next three months (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, October 30, 2023). The names of all the Palestinians killed were displayed on the wall at the weekly cabinet meeting (Wafa, October 30, 2023).



Muhammad Shtayeh, at the start of the cabinet meeting, points to the names of those killed in Gaza. The inscription in Arabic and English reads, Palestine 2023, Martyrs Have Names, Families, Homes & Dreams (Wafa, October 30, 2023)

►The PA foreign ministry called on international and UN officials to act immediately to stop Israel's attacks in the Gaza Strip. According to the ministry, "Israeli propaganda to defame the Palestinians" allows the IDF to attack civilians everywhere (al-Quds, October 31, 2023). **Riyadh al-Maliki, PA foreign minister, met with Cyprus' foreign minister and asked for his**

urgent intervention for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the PA foreign ministry, October 30, 2023).

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Iran

► **Hossein Salami, commander of the IRGC**, said that until three weeks ago, Israelis thought the United States, Britain, Germany and France supported them and no one could reach them. They also believed they had a sophisticated security apparatus that controlled everything and a strong army. But on October 7 everything collapsed, which could lead to the final defeat of the "Zionist regime." He added that no matter how much Israel attacked Gaza, Gaza would remain because the children of Gaza would not surrender. It was their land and that was the difference between them and the Zionists, who immigrated to "Palestine" for money [sic]. The Zionists were afraid of death and could no longer rely on the security apparatuses, the army and even the United States, which was always late. This time they had luck on their side but that might not happen next time. Salami added that Israel had deployed many tanks behind the borders of the Gaza Strip, but was not moving forward because the war requires men of faith and a sure heart. Israel, he claimed, was doomed to failure and would pay dearly (Mehr, October 30, 2023).

► **Mohsen Rezaei, former commander of the IRGC**, said Iran had no information about the Hamas attack on October 7. He noted Iran supported strengthening the "resistance" but did not interfere in the operational details related to it. He also said the United States and Israel opposed a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the Americans wanted to take advantage of the Gaza Strip issue to restore their presence in West Asia. He strongly condemned Israel's attacks on Gaza, saying that even Hitler and the greatest executioners in history did not attack hospitals [sic]. Asked about the possibility Iran would intervene in the war, he replied that Iran was monitoring the situation and believed it had to stop. He said very important events were taking place and Iran had to be prepared (al-Jazeera, October 30, 2023).

► On October 30, 2023, the news website amwaj.media, based on three sources, reported that **Esmail Qaani, commander of the IRGC's Qods Force**, had arrived in Beirut on October 8, 2023, left Lebanon on October 16, and returned on October 20. According to the report, Qaani maintains a permanent presence in Lebanon to help coordinate a possible broad

confrontation with Israel. He met with senior Palestinian figures and Hezbollah leaders in Lebanon and conveyed messages from the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei. However, one of the sources told the news website that it was Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah who was in charge.

Activity of pro-Iranian militias

Syria, Iraq

► Pro-Iranian militias continued their attacks on American Army bases in Iraq and Syria. According to a senior American official, from October 17 to October 30, 2023, the United States forces and forces of the global coalition against ISIS were attacked by drones and rockets at least 14 times in Iraq and nine times in Syria. According to the official, most of them were unable to reach their destinations because of the American means of aerial defense (Agence France-Presse, October 31, 2023).

In the past day, two attacks were carried out on the American base of Ain al-Assad in western Iraq and one on an American base in the Kuniko gas field in the Deir ez-Zor area of Syria (Reuters, October 30, 2023). The Islamic Resistance in Iraq (codename for the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq) claimed responsibility for the attacks (the network's Telegram channel, October 30 and 31, 2023).

► **Pentagon spokesman Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder** said that the United States had attacked several areas belonging to Iranian-affiliated militias to convey the message to Iran that their forces were in the Middle East for deterrence. He said their focus now was to ensure that Israel achieved everything necessary to defend its people. He also said they were consulting with Israel about operations in the Gaza Strip and offered intelligence assistance for the release of the abductees (al-Arabiya, October 31, 2023).

► **Hadi al-Amiri, secretary general of the Badr Organization**, a pro-Iranian militia operating in Iraq, said it was time for the global coalition forces to leave Iraq because there was no longer justification for their remaining. He said the American bases in the area, Ain al-Assad and Harir, had been attacked by the Islamic "resistance" organizations in Iraq as a "natural response" to the bias of the United States and some European countries in favor of Israel, which was [allegedly] committing war crimes (al-Ahed, October 30, 2023). There has recently been a demand by Muqtada al-Sadr, the head of the Sadr faction, to remove the American forces from Iraq because of the United States' support for Israel.

► A Hamas delegation arrived in Iraq without prior notice. The delegation was headed by **Usama Hamdan, senior Hamas figure, and included Muhammad al-Hafi, a member of Hamas' bureau of Arab and Islamic relations.** According to an "Iraqi politician," the delegation was touring the region to garner support and update on military and political developments. The delegation met with **Qais al-Khazali, secretary general of the Shi'ite militia Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq,** who stressed Iraq's consistent positions on the Palestinian issue. Hamdan also met with senior members of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, with Sheikh Hamam Hamoudi, chairman of the Supreme Shi'ite Islamic Council, with the leader of the State of Law coalition, former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, and with Ismail Najm, chairman of the al-Adl wal-Ihsan movement (UAE website The National, October 30, 2023; website of the Iraqi channel al-Anwar2, October 30, 2023; website of the al-Adl wal-Ihsan movement, October 30, 2023).

► Hamdan noted that at the meetings, the delegation reviewed the reasons for the attack on October 7, and was updated on the position of Ali al-Sistani, the supreme Shi'ite religious authority in Iraq, who supports the campaign, as well as on the position of the Iraqi prime minister. Another issue raised was the role of the militias in Iraq, which would act in the event of American intervention. He claimed the Iraqi resistance activities were a deterrent, because the Americans understood that the sweeping support for Israel would not only have consequences for the Israelis, but that the anger would turn into an action against those who supported Israel (al-Mayadeen TV website, October 29, 2023).

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The Arab Arena

Egypt

► The al-Azhar Institute, Egypt's supreme and most important religious institution and one of the most important Muslim religious institutions in the Sunni world, issued a statement saying that "members of the Palestinian resistance are heroes facing a terrorist army." The institute called on the Arab countries to help their Palestinian brethren to stop the aggression against the Gaza Strip. The announcement also noted that the institute encouraged the position of all those who did not remain silent and condemned the brutal massacres in the Gaza Strip (Russia al-Youm, October 30, 2023).

► **Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly** stressed once again that they would not allow regional issues to be resolved or put to an end at their expense. He also noted that they were willing to sacrifice millions of Egyptians to defend the Sinai Peninsula (al-Qahera, October 31, 2023)

Jordan

► **King Abdullah II of Jordan** met in Amman with **Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA's Commissioner-General**. Abdullah called on the international community to take responsibility for supporting UNRWA in light of the situation in Gaza. He also stressed the need to stop the war and provide humanitarian aid without hindrance (Twitter account of the Jordanian royal family, October 30, 2023).

Saudi Arabia

► **Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan** spoke by phone with **Joseph Borrell, the foreign minister of the European Union**. They stressed the importance of the international community's bearing responsibility for stopping all military operations and the importance of returning to the path of peace (Twitter account of the Saudi foreign ministry, October 30, 2023).

► On October 30, 2023, **Saudi Defense Minister Khaled bin Salman** arrived in the United States for an official visit. He met with **Jake Sullivan, the American National Security Adviser**, to discuss bilateral cooperation. He stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the protection of civilians, the transfer of humanitarian aid, and the resumption of the peace process (Twitter account of the Saudi minister of defense, October 31, 2023).

► On October 30, 2023, Bloomberg News Agency reported that the army was on full alert after an exchange of fire between Saudi army forces and members of the pro-Iranian Houthi movement from Yemen in the Jazan Province in southwestern Saudi Arabia. Recently there have been many reports that relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran have worsened since the beginning of the war in Gaza. According to commentators, Iran's goal is to use the Houthis to pressure Saudi Arabia to adopt a more aggressive position against Israel (Belqees TV, October 30, 2023).

Qatar

► **Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian** met in Doha with **the Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad**, and separately with **Ismail Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau. Abdollahian**. Reportedly, they discussed developments in Palestine (IRNA, October 31, 2023).

The International Arena

►The United Nations

► On October 30, 2023, another emergency session was held to discuss the war and the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. There was no report on resolutions passed (UN website, October 30, 2023).

United States

► **John Kirby, spokesman for the American National Security Council**, said they did not believe a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip was the answer now. He noted that Israel was making efforts to avoid civilian casualties and that they had taken part in the talks that led to the return of the Internet to the Gaza Strip. Kirby also noted that the United States was leading the effort to bring humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip (Reuters, October 31, 2023).

► **The PIJ** rejected Kirby's statement, calling it "blatant hypocrisy," proof of which was is the administration's opposition to ceasefire efforts and giving more time to continue the "war of extermination against the Palestinians in Gaza." According to the announcement, the White House's continued repetition of the lie [sic] of Israel's right to defend itself was a reversal of the facts, an American green light for Israel to continue killing, and a denial of all laws and norms that give occupied peoples the right to resist their occupiers (PIJ website, October 30, 2023).

Turkey

► The Turkish foreign ministry strongly condemned the Israeli attack that hit the Turkish-Palestinian hospital in the Gaza Strip. According to the announcement, the objective of the siege was to deprive the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip of their most basic rights, and the inhuman attacks were a clear violation of international law (Anadolu News, October 30, 2023).

Russia

► **Russian President Vladimir Putin** accused Israel and the United States of implementing a policy of revenge based on collective punishment to undermine stability. He stressed that Russia's position on the Middle East was never based on self-interest and that the key to solving the problem was the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. He also accused the intelligence services of Ukraine and the West of helping to provoke riots in Dagestan (Russia al-Youm, October 30, 2023).

Global Jihad

► Three ISIS-affiliated Israeli citizens from the Arab towns of Sakhnin and Arraba in the Galilee were detained on October 29, 2023, by the police and the Israel Security Agency on suspicion of planning to carry out attacks during the war. Their detention has been extended until November 5, 2023 (Twitter account of the Israel Police, October 31, 2023).