



## Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., November 5, 2023

### Northern Arena

- 127 attacks
- 60 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 9 other terrorist-organization operatives killed

### Israeli Casualties

- Dead 1,400
- 30 soldiers killed in the ground maneuver
- Nine dead on the northern border
- Abducted – 241
- Five abductees returned

### Rocket Fire

- More than 9,000
- About 10% failed launches

## Overview<sup>1</sup>

► **The southern sector:** The IDF's integrated aerial, land and naval maneuver in the Gaza Strip intensified. According to reports, more than 2,500 terrorist targets have been attacked since the beginning of the ground maneuver. The forces exposed Hamas' exploitation of civilian facilities for positioning rocket launchers. Sources in the Gaza Strip claimed the "resistance" had the upper hand in combat and Israel had made no operational achievements. Hamas accused Israel of attacking UNRWA ambulances, hospitals and schools which shelter local residents.

► **So far, over 1,400 civilian and soldier deaths have been reported; 241 civilian and soldier abductees are still held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip; 30 IDF soldiers have been killed.**

► **The Gaza Strip:** Officials in the Gaza Strip noted that the humanitarian situation was deteriorating and the aid delivered through the Rafah Crossing was insufficient. According to

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

the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in Gaza, so far 9,770 people have been killed in the Gaza Strip.

► **The northern sector:** Hezbollah continued attacking IDF posts and the cities, towns and villages on the northern border. Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility for launching a barrage of rockets. The IDF forces responded with artillery fire and airstrikes on Hezbollah targets. In his first speech since the beginning of the war, Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, said the war in the Gaza Strip was a Palestinian war and unrelated to other regional issues. He said Hezbollah's demonstration of solidarity with the Palestinians began on October 8 and would continue in its current form unless Lebanon was attacked.

► **Judea and Samaria:** Palestinians terrorists carried out three shooting attacks and an attempted stabbing attack. Over the weekend, the Israeli security forces continued extensive counterterrorism activities, detaining Palestinians wanted for involvement in terrorist activities, mainly Hamas operatives. According to the ministry of health in Ramallah, there have been 150 deaths in Judea and Samaria since the beginning of the war in Gaza.

► **The pro-Iranian militias** continued to attack American bases in Iraq and Syria and threatened to intensify the attacks.

► In **Jordan** a conference of foreign ministers of Arab countries was held; United States Secretary of State Anthony Blinken was also present. The Arab foreign ministers demanded a cease-fire agreement in the Gaza Strip and the provision of humanitarian aid to the residents. Blinken emphasized Israel's right to defend itself.

## The Combat Arena

### IDF activity

► **Integrated ground activity:** The IDF's integrated ground maneuver intensified. IDF forces continued to engage in face-to-face combat with terrorists and to direct aircraft to destroy terrorist facilities, weapons warehouses, observation posts and operational headquarters. More than 2,500 terrorist targets have been attacked since the beginning of the ground maneuver.

► On November 2, 2023, IDF fighters completed the encirclement of Gaza City. With the help of Israeli Air Force aircraft, the forces attacked headquarters, rocket-launching positions and terrorist facilities used by the Hamas leadership. The activity continued in Jabaliya in the

northern Gaza Strip, where the forces took control of a Hamas military-terrorist stronghold of Hamas used by the nakhba operatives and of a Hamas operational intelligence headquarters. Searches conducted after the takeover revealed intelligence information, including operational orders and maps, command and control tables, communication equipment and personal details of commanders and terrorists (IDF spokesman, November 2 and 3, 2023). The forces operated in the northern Gaza Strip, an area where Hamas used attack tunnels and military compounds as launching pads for attacks. A large number of terrorists who operated in the area were killed, tunnel shafts were exposed, weapons were located, and observation posts were destroyed (IDF spokesman, November 4, 2023).

► Mustafa Daloul, the commander of the Sabra-Tel al-Hawa Battalion, who played a central role in commanding the fighting against IDF forces in the Gaza Strip, died in a targeted killing from the air (IDF spokesman, November 3, 2023). The IDF spokesman reported that 12 commanders of various ranks, who helped plan the attack on October 7, had been eliminated since the beginning of the war (IDF spokesman, November 3, 2023).

► Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility for several operations against IDF forces, including attacking an armored force and destroying six tanks and an APC. According to the announcement, the military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) had also participated in the attacks in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, November 2, 2023).



**IDF forces in the Gaza Strip (IDF website, November 4, 2023)**



#### **IDF forces in the Gaza Strip (IDF website, November 4, 2023)**

►  **Hamas' use of civilian facilities for terrorist purposes was exposed during the fighting.**

The IDF forces found rocket launchers situated near a children's swimming pool, and rocket launch pits and launchers in an old playground (IDF spokesman, November 5, 2023).

► **Aerial activity:** In addition to assisting the ground forces, Israeli Air Force aircraft continued attacking terrorist targets, including military headquarters used by senior Hamas operatives, terrorist facilities and military compounds located in civilian areas, and Hamas naval force targets (IDF spokesman, November 2, 3, 2023).

► The Palestinian media reported that a UAV attacked the house of Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, in the al-Shati refugee camp in western Gaza City (Shehab Telegram channel, November 4, 2023). Senior Hamas figure Ghazi Hamad said that the house was used by two of Haniyeh's sons (Politico website, November 4, 2023).



#### **IDF attacks in the Gaza Strip (IDF website, November 5, 2023)**



**Destruction of Hamas tunnel shafts in the Gaza Strip (IDF website, November 3, 2023)**



**Israeli Air Force strikes in the Gaza Strip (QudsN Twitter account, November 4, 2023)**



**Right: The Israeli Air Force morning attack on Tel al-Za'atar in Jabaliya (Shehab Twitter account, November 5, 2023). Left: Israeli Air Force night strikes in Gaza (Wafa YouTube channel, November 5, 2023)**

► **Naval activity:** To support the IDF forces operating on land, **an Israeli Navy missile ship** attacked booby-trapped buildings and Hamas observation posts (IDF spokesman, November 2, 2023).

### **Reactions to Israel's ground maneuver**

► **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem**, interviewed at the entrance to Shifa Hospital in Gaza, responded to Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who said "we will find Yahya al-Sinwar and eliminate him." Hazem Qassem claimed that Gallant, who "every day failed to implement the

plans on the ground thanks to the fighting of the ‘resistance’ [terrorist operatives],” was making promises he could not keep. He said that practically speaking, in the past, Israel had killed senior Hamas figures, including Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, and in every campaign Hamas had casualties from among its leaders and senior military officers. However, Hamas remained, and assassinations had not succeeded and would not succeed in eliminating Hamas (al-Jazeera Mubasher TV YouTube, November 5, 2023).



**Hazem Qassem at the entrance to Shifa Hospital  
(al-Jazeera Mubasher TV YouTube, November 5, 2023)**

- ▶ **Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' military-terrorist wing**, gave a speech broadcast live on Hamas' al-Aqsa network. He elaborated on the "achievements of the military wing" against the IDF forces, Israel's achievements in the ground maneuver and claimed there had been so many military wing actions against the IDF that it was difficult to mention them all. He claimed they had destroyed six tanks and a bulldozer in northwest Gaza City and the number of IDF fatalities was “much greater” than what Israel had reported (Hamas Telegram channel, November 2, 2023). In a speech two days later, he claimed that during the last 48 hours they had documented Hamas operatives destroying 24 vehicles either completely or partially and would publish the information “soon.” He claimed that was only a small part of the “jihad fighters' bravery” against the enemy forces on the ground (al-Aqsa, November 4, 2023).
- ▶ At a press conference in Beirut, **senior Hamas figure Usama Hamdan** claimed the military wing and the “resistance” were conducting a powerful campaign. They had capabilities and control, and they were progressing according to plan. He said Israel had heavy losses and its army was helpless in the face of the "resistance.” He claimed that after a month of bombing, Israel had not been able to achieve a single military or operational achievement, and was marketing false and imaginary achievements to itself. He further claimed “its tanks only move around in visible and exposed areas under the cover of the air force, which only attacks civilians. Hundreds of soldiers were killed or wounded, and Israel is silent on the issue of its

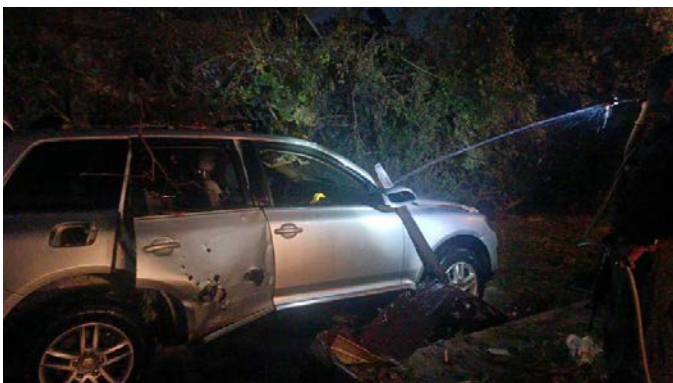
casualties and material losses for fear of damage to the home front” ( Hamas' Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, November 4, 2023).

► **PIJ spokesman Tareq Salami** mocked Israel's claims that it had struck heavy blows to the “resistance” infrastructure in Gaza. He claimed the “resistance” had inflicted heavy blows on the IDF forces, forcing them to retreat in the northern and central Gaza Strip. He also claimed the “resistance” had strategic and tactical policies to deal with the IDF forces, and was capable of continuing to fight for several months. He also claimed the prime minister of Israel and the political and security leadership were distressed and embarrassed by “the [alleged] failure of the Israeli forces to achieve military successes on the ground” (al-Jazeera TV website, November 4, 2023).

### Rocket fire

► Rocket fire, which has not stopped since the first day of the war, continues. During the past few days several dozen rockets were fired at Israel, most of them targeting the towns and villages near the Gaza border and the rest targeted the center of Israel. On the afternoon of November 4, 2023, a rocket was launched towards Israel’s southernmost towns and villages and was intercepted by the Hetz aerial defense system. It was the longest range of a rocket fired by Hamas so far. Hamas’ military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility for launching an Ayash 250 rocket at Eilat (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, November 4, 2023).

► **So far, more than 9,000 rockets and mortar shells have been launched at Israel since the beginning of the war. About 10% of them were failed launches that fell inside the Gaza Strip and in the sea.**



**A direct hit by a rocket from Gaza on a house near the town of Elad  
(QudsN Twitter account, November 2, 2023)**



**A crater caused by a rocket in the area east of Tel Aviv and west of Jerusalem  
(no source, November 4, 2023)**

## Israeli casualties

► So far, over 1,400 civilian and soldier deaths have been reported; 241 civilian and soldier abductees are still being held by the terrorist organizations inside the Gaza Strip. Thirty-five of the abductees are children and adolescents under the age of 18, 32 are over the age of 65. Five abductees have been released. Thirty soldiers have been killed since the start of the Ability ground maneuver.

## The issue of the abductees

► **Zaher Jabarin, who holds the prisoner file in Hamas**, said Hamas wanted the release of more than 6,000 Palestinian [terrorist] prisoners from Israeli jails, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not want the Israeli prisoners held by Hamas to return. He claimed that from the beginning, the Hamas leadership had informed all the mediators that they were prepared to exchange the Israeli abductees in exchange for all the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. After the IDF spokesman said the families of the abductees in Gaza had been notified, Jabarin was asked if that was the total number or if there were more. He answered that every bit of information had a price, and Israel had to pay because Hamas would not give Israel any information unless they got something in return (al-Jazeera Mubasher TV website, November 4, 2023; al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, November 5, 2023).

► Regarding negotiations with Hamas for the release of abductees with Russian citizenship, **Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov** said some progress had been made and the dialogue with all the parties continued. He said the situation was “complicated” since there was no one person who could decide on the release of the abductees and therefore their release required coordination between several factors. (TASS, November 4, 2023). When **Musa Abu Marzouq**,



**a member of the Hamas political bureau**, visited Moscow, he claimed that they were trying to locate eight prisoners with Russian citizenship to release them as part of a deal with Russia.

► **Musa Abu Marzouq** said that the negotiations had almost reached a dead end, due to Israel's intransigence and its method of negotiation, which had "a lot of cunning and deception in its dealing with all sides." He claimed Israel incited each side to demand its citizens and at the same time frustrated every effort, the latest example of which was what happened regarding holders of Russian citizenship: when Hamas wanted to release two Russian hostages, Israel actively opposed it (aljazeera.net, November 3, 2023).

► **Muhammad al-Hindi, PIJ deputy secretary general**, claimed that discussions were in progress for a temporary humanitarian ceasefire, during which the civilian abductees held by his organization would be released. He also claimed that the Palestinian Authority (PA) would be a partner in any future arrangements regarding the Gaza Strip (al-Dustour, Egypt, November 5, 2023).

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## The Gaza Strip

### Palestinian casualties

► According to **Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip**, as of 1:45 p.m. the number of dead in the Gaza Strip stood at 9,770. He claimed, again, that the hospitals in the Gaza Strip could not provide medical services and within a few hours would collapse (Palinfo website, 5 November 2023). He claimed that as of November 4 the number of injured stood at 24,158.

### The situation in the Gaza Strip

► The IDF spokesman in Arabic announced that on November 4, 2023, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. the Saleh al-Din road<sup>2</sup> in the Gaza Strip would be used for the humanitarian transit of residents of the northern Gaza Strip who had not yet moved south. Hamas terrorist operatives exploited the humanitarian window of opportunity to fire mortar shells and anti-tank missiles at the IDF forces who arrived to open the road (IDF spokesman, November 4, 2023).

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<sup>2</sup> The main road in the Gaza Strip, which runs from north to south.

► After Israel’s political-security cabinet severed all contact with Gaza, the decision was made to return all Gazan workers who were in Israel on the day the war broke out. Therefore, on November 3, 2023, Israel returned 3,200 Gazans through the Kerem Shalom Crossing. Some of them had been detained in Israel following the October 7 attack (Israeli media, November 3, 2023). Upon their return to the Strip, they claimed they “had been humiliated” by Israel and the PA (QudsN Twitter account, November 3, 2023).



**Gazan workers return to the Strip through the Kerem Shalom Crossing (Twitter account of photojournalist Hassan Aslih, November 3, 2023)**

► **Dr. Khalil al-Daqrان**, the spokesman for al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Hospital in Deir al-Balah, claimed that the situation at the hospital was difficult due to the load of casualties and the lack of medical equipment. He said that in addition to the hospitalized, many residents were staying there, knowing that a hospital was a protected place. He called on the Arab countries to provide medical aid urgently because, he claimed, the aid currently being delivered constituted only 2% of the needs of the Gaza Strip (al-Ghad TV , November 5, 2023).



**Spokesman for al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Hospital in Deir al-Balah (al-Ghad TV, November 5, 2023)**

► A conversation held with a source in Gaza’s public health system again revealed that Hamas had its own fuel reserves. The source stated that Hamas’ fuel depots under Shifa Hospital had reserves of more than half a million liters (about 133,000 gallons) (IDF spokesman, November 3, 2023). In response, the spokesman for the ministry of health in Gaza claimed the reports

were false and that “the hospital complex is open to everyone” (al-Jazeera Mubasher, November 3, 2023). The Shehab news agency claimed that Shifa’s main generator had stopped working, leaving some of the wards without electricity (Shehab, November 3, 2023).

## Accusing Israel of attacking hospitals and schools

► Palestinian sources in the Gaza Strip claimed that IDF forces attacked UNRWA schools in northern Gaza City and Jabaliya, where civilians who left their homes had taken shelter (al-Jazeera, and the ministry of health in Gaza Telegram channel, November 4 2023). They also reported damage to Shifa, al-Quds and the Indonesian Hospitals and an attack on an ambulance convoy that left Shifa Hospital en route to the Rafah Crossing to evacuate wounded to Egypt (al-Risalah, November 3, 2023). They claimed the attack had resulted in deaths and injuries. The reports provoked a wave of condemnations of the IDF forces and the United States, which supports it:

► Hamas claimed that “as part of the policy of brutally harming civilians and displaced persons,” Israel attacked a school where many displaced persons were staying, and that Israel was carrying out "brutal massacres" with the backing of the United States and President Biden, who bore full responsibility for the "crimes of genocide" against the “civilians” in the Gaza Strip. Regarding the damage to the hospitals, Hamas called them "heinous crimes" for which the United States and countries "that support the Nazi occupation" bore responsibility (Hamas Telegram channel, November 3, 4, 2023).

► **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed that the attacks were an expression of Israel's “distress,” and carrying them out at the same time that American Secretary of State Blinken was in the region, was the result of the "green light" that the United States gave Israel. He called on Egypt to open the Rafah Crossing and appealed to the Arab and Islamic nations to continue "expressing their anger against the occupation and its supporters" (Hamas Telegram Channel, November 3, 2023).

► **Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed that Israel was running away from its “failure” against the operatives of the military wing, who humiliated its soldiers and forces on October 7. He demanded that the leaders and peoples of the Arab and Islamic world take a serious position towards the residents of the Gaza Strip. He said bargaining chips should be used to pressure Israel and the American government to stop the bloodshed, such as severing relations, the expulsion of Israeli ambassadors and the use of oil as a weapon (Hamas Telegram channel, November 4, 2023).

► **The PIJ** claimed the “crime” exposed Israel's false statements, which misled public opinion into thinking that there are safe areas in the southern Gaza Strip (PIJ Telegram channel, November 3, 2023).

► **The PA foreign ministry** condemned the Israeli attacks on hospitals, schools and residences, and stressed the international failure to convince the Israeli government to deliver fuel for the hospitals and humanitarian aid. The ministry called on the international community to force Israel to stop the war and protect the civilians (PA foreign ministry Twitter account, November 4, 2023).

► **Antonio Guterres, the UN secretary general**, said he was “shocked and appalled” by the Israeli attack on a convoy of ambulances outside Shifa Hospital. He claimed he had not forgotten the terrorist attack that Hamas carried out in Israel and called for a ceasefire and the return of the abductees held by Hamas (Agence France-Presse, November 4, 2023).

## The Rafah Crossing

► A source in the Hamas administration's crossings authority announced that they had stopped evacuating foreign residents and holders of foreign passports to Egypt because of Israel's refusal to transfer wounded Palestinians to Egyptian hospitals. An Egyptian security source confirmed that on November 4, 2023, not a single injured person or foreign passport holder had arrived at the Egyptian side of the Rafah Crossing (Agence France-Presse, November 5, 2023).

► **Senior Hamas figure Usama Hamdan** said that the aid coming in through the Rafah crossing did not meet the minimum needs of the Palestinians and called for the crossing to be fully opened as it had been before October 7. He called on the Arab and Islamic countries to support the [Hamas] demand and Egypt's position that it was necessary to open the Rafah Crossing, and to send medical aid and fuel. He claimed the agreement for the evacuation of foreigners and the wounded and the delivery of aid had been violated by the attack on the ambulances, which did not allow them to reach the Rafah Crossing from the north of the Gaza Strip, and he blamed Israel for sabotaging the agreement and the exit of foreigners and the wounded. He falsely claimed that since the opening of the Crossing, only 440 trucks had entered, which did not meet the needs of the Palestinians, adding that even under the "Israeli siege" at least 500 trucks entered the Strip every day. He claimed that 142 wounded and 1,058 foreigners had left the Strip (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, November 4, 2023).

## The Northern Arena

### Lebanon

- ▶ Over the past few days, Hezbollah has continued attacking IDF posts and the cities, towns and villages along the border, including mortar shell, anti-tank missile, rocket and UAV attacks. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for the attacks in announcements issued by the organization's combat information unit.
- ▶ On the afternoon of November 2, 2023, a barrage of rockets was launched at the Galilee settlements. Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility for launching 12 rockets at Kiryat Shemonah from Lebanese territory "in response to the massacres of the occupation against our people in Gaza" (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, November 2, 2023).
- ▶ According to reports, Hezbollah asked the residents of south Lebanon to avoid crossing the roads in Kafr Kala, al-Adaisseh and Markaba due to the "danger of the bombings" (MTV Twitter account, November 2, 2023).



**Right: UAV attack on the Nahal Sion post. Left: Attack on the Pereg post (Telegram channel of Hezbollah's combat information unit, November 2, 2023)**



**Launching mortar shells at the Wadi Shomera area (Telegram channel of Hezbollah's combat information unit, November 2, 2023)**

► In response, IDF artillery, tanks and aircraft attacked Hezbollah targets, mainly along the Lebanon-Israel border, including military headquarters, terrorist facilities and terrorism-directing facilities, rocket launch sites, rocket and munitions warehouses, and compounds used by the organization. IDF forces attacked terrorist squads which shot at them (IDF spokesman, November 4, 2023).



**Right: IDF attack on a terrorist squad about to launch anti-tank missiles. Left: IDF attack on Hezbollah military facilities (IDF website, November 4, 2023)**

## Hezbollah casualties

► Hezbollah reported ten operatives had been killed as "martyrs on the way to Jerusalem," all from south Lebanon except for one from the Harat Kharak area of the Dahia in Beirut. Hezbollah did not specify the date or location of their deaths (Telegram channel of Hezbollah's combat information unit, November 2-4, 2023):

- ◆ Hashem Muhammad Isma'il, aka Hamza, from the town of Meis al-Jabal in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Ali Abbas Milhem, aka Ali, from the town of Majdal Selm.
- ◆ Muhsen Ridaha Ayash, aka Ghreib, from the town of Harouf.
- ◆ Ali Kathem Fatouni, aka Mujahed, from the town of Suwaneh.
- ◆ Hussein Walid Dh'eib, aka Jawad Ali, from the town of Shaqra.
- ◆ Ali Ibrahim Ramiti, aka Javad Isma'il from the town of Mjadel.
- ◆ Hussein Ali Srouf, aka Ali Imad, from the town of Aita al-Sha'ab.
- ◆ Yusuf Muhammad Sabra, aka Ridha, from the town of Haddatha.
- ◆ Ahmed Muhammad Salim, aka Maher Hamza, from the Harat Kharak area in Dahia al-Janubia in Beirut.

- ◆ Qassem Ibrahim Abu Ta'em, aka al-Sayid Ridha, from the city of Tyre in southern Lebanon.



#### Hezbollah casualties

(Telegram channel of Hezbollah's combat information unit, November 2-4, 2023)



#### Hezbollah casualties on November 5, 2023

(Telegram channel of Hezbollah's combat information unit, November 5, 2023)

## UNIFIL

► UNIFIL announced that on November 1, 2023, two bombs had exploded near the UNIFIL position in Bayt Lif, causing significant damage to a wall and minor damage to several vehicles. The UNIFIL staff members were in the bunkers at the time and no one was injured. According to reports, an investigation was begun without pointing to any party as guilty of the incident. UNIFIL announced that despite this and previous incidents, UNIFIL personnel

continued to fulfill their duties and work to reduce tensions and restore stability along the border (UNIFIL's Telegram channel, November 2, 2023).

► **Najib Mikati, interim Lebanese prime minister**, met with **Sébastien Lecornu, minister of the French Armed Forces**. They discussed cooperation and coordination between the Lebanese army and UNIFIL, the execution of the missions of the international forces and the need to reduce the tensions along the border. Lecornu noted the importance of all parties in south Lebanon acting rationally and wisely, so as not to cause the situation to deteriorate (Lebanese government Twitter, November 3, 2023).

## Hezbollah

► According to reports, **Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general**, visited Damascus less than two weeks ago and met with **Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian president**, to coordinate between the “axis of resistance” forces<sup>3</sup> and to examine possible ways to deal with the next phase of the war against Israel. It was also reported that the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces recently moved to Syria out of concern that a Golan front could be opened (al-Joumhouria, Lebanon, November 3, 2023).

► **Na'im Qassem, deputy Hezbollah secretary general**, called for the war in Gaza to stop to keep it from spreading and not to demand that Hezbollah not spread it. He said that Hezbollah did not differentiate between the liberation of Palestine, Lebanon and the region. He claimed that one of the achievements of Operation al-Aqsa Storm was the moral and political fall of the United States, because their talk about human rights turned out to be only slogans (al-Mayadeen, November 4, 2023).

► A conference was held entitled, “Operation al-Aqsa Storm, a campaign between truth and lies.” Present were **Na'im Qassem, deputy Hezbollah secretary general**, and **senior Hamas figure Usama Hamdan**. Hamdan said they were proud of the "mobilization of the brothers of the axis of resistance" who stood with the Palestinians, proud of the assistance provided by Hezbollah in Lebanon, which had sacrificed dozens of lives in the conflict with Israel since it began participating in the conflict on October 8, and that they saluted their brothers in the Islamic resistance in Iraq and Yemen, who were determined to be partners in the conflict with Israel. He noted that Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, had gone to Tehran a

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<sup>3</sup> Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.



few days ago and met with the leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei (al-Mayadeen TV Telegram channel, November 4, 2023).



**Usama Hamdan speaks at the conference  
(al-Mayadeen TV Telegram channel, November 4, 2023)**

## Hassan Nasrallah's speech

► After extensive preparations and a build-up of expectations, on November 3, 2023, Hassan Nasrallah gave a speech which was broadcast live to large audiences in the squares of major cities in Lebanon; it was his first speech since the beginning of the war. Nasrallah presented the organization's position on the war in the Gaza Strip. He emphasized that the decision to launch an attack against Israel had been entirely the Palestinians' and they hid their intentions from everyone. He pointed out that Hezbollah entered the campaign as early as October 8, and although Hezbollah's actions appeared "moderate," they were "very important" and kept a large part of the IDF's forces busy and forced Israel to keep large numbers of forces on alert in the north. Hezbollah had also forced tens of thousands of Israelis to evacuate their homes. According to al-Manar, desiring to maintain ambiguity regarding the continuation of Hezbollah's aid and to keep Israel in suspense, he had stated that as to expanding the campaign from Lebanon, "all options are open" (al-Manar, November 3, 2023).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Nasrallah's speech and responses to it will be discussed in a separate report.



Right: Hassan Nasrallah gives his speech. Left: A crowd gathered in the Dahia, the Shi'ite stronghold in the south of Beirut, to listen to the speech (al-Manar, November 4, 2023)

## The Lebanese government

► **Najib Mikati, prime minister of the interim government in Lebanon**, met in Cairo with **Egyptian President Abd el-Fattah el-Sisi**. Mikati expressed his appreciation for Egypt's efforts to stop the "Israeli aggression" in the Gaza Strip. He praised el-Sisi for rejecting the possibility of uprooting Palestinians from their territories. He stated that a permanent solution to the Palestinian issue had to be found (Lebanese News Agency, November 4, 2023).

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## Judea, Samaria and the Palestinian Authority

► The Israeli political-security cabinet decided to deduct the funds earmarked for the Gaza Strip from the tax funds transferred by Israel to the PA, an amount of about \$30.5 million annually. That, in addition to the deduction, according to law, of the "salaries" the PA pays terrorists and their families (Israeli media, November 3, 2023). **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh**, meeting with **Sven Koopmans, the European envoy to the peace process in the Middle East**, expressed his opposition to Israel's attempts to split the Gaza Strip from Judea and Samaria, recently reflected in the deduction of the funds earmarked for the Gaza Strip from the funds Israel transfers to the PA (Wafa, November 4, 2023). **Fatah spokesman Muneir al-Jaghoub** said that the PA refused to accept the funds because "there are no salaries without the Gaza Strip" (Muneir al-Jaghoub's Twitter account, November 5, 2023).

## Terrorist attacks

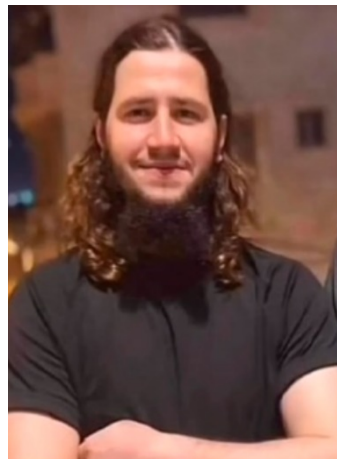
- ▶ On November 4, 2023, shots were fired from a passing vehicle at an IDF force near Nebi Elias (east of Qalqilya). An Israeli reserve soldier was injured. (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, November 4, 2023).
- ▶ On November 3, 2023, a stabbing attack was thwarted at the Tiyasir checkpoint near Tubas. The terrorist was shot and killed (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, November 3, 2023).
- ▶ On the evening of November 3, 2023, shots were fired at the settlement of Rehalim (south of Nablus). Three houses were damaged. No injuries were reported; 26 empty shell casings were found (Israeli media, November 3, 2023).
- ▶ On the evening of November 3, 2023, shots were fired from a passing vehicle at an IDF force near Turmus Aya (north-east of Ramallah). The force returned fire. No casualties were reported (Israeli media, November 3, 2023).

## Counterterrorism activities

- ▶ The Israeli security forces continued counterterrorism activities, detaining 34 wanted Palestinians, 18 of them Hamas terrorist operatives. Since the beginning of the war in Gaza, over 1,350 wanted Palestinians have been detained, more than 850 of whom were Hamas operatives (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, November 5, 2023). The ministry of health in Ramallah reported 150 deaths in Judea and Samaria since the beginning of the war in Gaza (Wafa, November 5 2023). Over the weekend, 18 Palestinians were killed during clashes with the security forces in Judea and Samaria.

### ▶ The main events:

- ◆ On November 5, 2023, Israeli security forces operated in Abu Dis (east of Jerusalem) to detain Nabil Halabia, a wanted Palestinian. He was shot and killed in an exchange of fire with the forces. Palestinians rioted, throwing IEDs and shooting at the forces, who returned fire. Nabil Halabia was an ISIS operative who was previously imprisoned for terrorist activities. Immediately after his release in July 2023, he recruited a squad, purchased weapons and carried out a shooting attack against IDF forces (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, November 5, 2023). The Palestinians reported he had been wanted by the security forces for two months. According to reports, during the activity three Palestinians were killed (Ma'an, November 5, 2023).



**Right: Nabil Halavia (Ma'an, November 5, 2023). Left: An IED explodes during the Israeli security force activity in Abu Dis (Shehab Twitter account, November 5, 2023)**

- ◆ On November 5, 2023, Israeli security forces operated in the Jenin refugee camp and detained nine wanted Palestinians. The forces uncovered IEDs placed under the surfacing of the roads (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, November 5, 2023).

### **Demonstrations of support**

- Marches were held throughout the West Bank in support of the Gaza Strip. On November 3, 2023, events were held after the Friday prayer following the call of the national and Islamic forces, who also called for confronting IDF soldiers (Palestine Post, November 3, 2023). On November 4, marches were also held in various cities. On November 5, marches and student demonstrations were held in response to a call by the "student movement" not to obey the decisions of the PA ministry of education and to continue the marches in support of the resistance and the Gaza Strip (Huriya News, November 4, 2023).



**Right: A march in Hebron (QudsN Twitter account, November 3, 2023). Left: A march in Nablus (Paldf Twitter account, November 3, 2023)**



**Right: A march in Ramallah (Palestine Post Telegram channel, November 3, 2023). Left: Students demonstrate in front of the education department in Ramallah district (Paldf Twitter account, November 5, 2023)**

► The PIJ leadership in Judea and Samaria said that what was happening in Judea and Samaria paved the road for a broad war that would end with the uprooting of the population of the West Bank in accordance with the plan and agenda of the Israeli extreme right, and that Israel was isolating the West Bank in light of its war in the Gaza Strip. The announcement stressed that all national forces had to be mobilized to deal with the plan, calling on everyone to bear responsibility at the national level, disregarding any political consideration that was not in the interests of the Palestinians (Telegram channel of the PIJ's information bureau, November 3, 2023).

## Palestinian Authority

► **PA Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh** met with **Sven Koopmans, the European Union Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process**. Shtayyeh called on the European Union to act for a ceasefire and put an end to "Israeli aggression" in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, as well as to allow the entry of humanitarian and medical aid and fuel and to restore electricity and water to the Gaza Strip (Wafa, November 4, 2023).

► **Mei al-Kayla, PA minister of health**, participated in an online conference of the health ministers of Arab countries on the war in the Gaza Strip. She briefed them about the situation in the Gaza Strip and demanded that pressure be exerted on Israel to allow fuel and medical and humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. She also demanded that the ministers of health expedite aid to the "collapsing" health system in the Gaza Strip (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, November 2, 2023).

## Iran

- ▶ On November 2, 2023, **Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Iranian foreign minister**, tweeted that he had spoken by phone with **Ismail Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, and discussed with him the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria. Previously, the IDF spokesman revealed that Haniyeh intended to visit Iran on his private plane. On November 4, 2023, **senior Hamas figure Usama Hamdan** said Haniyeh had visited Tehran a few days before and met with Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei (IRNA, November 4, 2023).
- ▶ The Iranian foreign minister spoke with his Syrian counterpart, **Faisal Mekdad**. Abdollahian reviewed the Iranian diplomatic moves aimed at stopping Israel's "war crimes" in the Gaza Strip and providing humanitarian aid to the residents of Gaza. He stressed the readiness of the "Palestinian resistance and other resistance groups in the region" to stand up to the "Zionist enemy." He blamed Israel and the United States for the situation in Gaza. The Syrian foreign minister stressed Syria's support for Palestine and the "axis of resistance" and the need for the unity of the Muslim world to deal with the "Zionist regime" (Twitter account of the Iranian foreign ministry, November 3, 2023). Abdollahian also spoke with the foreign ministers of Qatar, Russia and Britain and discussed developments in the Gaza Strip and ceasefire initiatives (Fars, November 3, 2023). He also spoke with the foreign ministers of Oman and Iraq (IRNA, November 4, 2023).
- ▶ **Abolfazl Shekarchi, deputy chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces for cultural and propaganda affairs**, speaking on the anniversary of the takeover of the American embassy in Tehran, said that the Western powers supported Israel because they could not tolerate Hamas' resistance against it. He noted that the greatest success for the Muslim world following Operation al-Aqsa Storm was the global consensus against Israel. He added that with each passing day, Israel was sinking more and more into the swamp and advancing toward collapse (Tasnim, November 4, 2023).
- ▶ **Mohammad Reza Naqdi, coordinating deputy to IRGC commander-in-chief**, warned that if the "crimes of the Zionists" continued, American interests in the region would have to be attacked, and everyone would have to act in this regard in every possible way. Naqdi also called for the boycott of goods belonging to the United States and other Western countries

supporting Israel and for the closure of American and Israeli missions around the world (Khabar Online, November 5, 2023).

## Activity of pro-Iranian militias

### Iraq

- ▶ The Islamic Resistance in Iraq announced that on November 2, 2023, its operatives had attacked "a vital target of the Zionist entity on the shores of the Dead Sea" (Telegram channel of the Islamic Resistance's combat media unit, November 2, 2023). A day later, the Islamic Resistance claimed responsibility for an attack in the Israeli city of Eilat, claiming the attack was carried out in support of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and in response to "massacres of women, children and the elderly" (Telegram channel of the Islamic Resistance's combat media unit, November 3, 2023).
- ▶ At the same time, operations against American bases in Syria and Iraq continued. Attacks were reported on an American base near Erbil Airport and the al-Harir base in northern Iraq (November 3, 2023); In Syria, an attack on the al-Shadadi base in eastern Syria (November 3, 2023) was reported. The Islamic Resistance claimed responsibility for all the attacks (Islamic Resistance's Telegram channel, November 3, 2023).
- ▶ On November 3, 2023, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq announced that in support of the Palestinians and in revenge for the shaheeds, they would begin a new phase in the coming week in the conflict that would be broader and more powerful. The announcement was accompanied by a photo of a rocket (Telegram channel of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, November 3, 2023).



**Photo of a rocket attached to the threat  
(Telegram channel of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, November 3, 2023)**

- ▶ Given reports that **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken** would visit Iraq, Abu Ali al-Askari, spokesman for **the Kata'ib Hezbollah (Hezbollah Brigades) militia**, said Blinken was

not welcome in Iraq and that if he arrived, they would welcome him "with an unprecedented escalation." He also said that if the aggression continued, they would attack American interests in Iraq, and would even close the American embassy and prevent American citizens from entering the country (Kata'ib Hezbollah spokesman's Telegram channel, November 5, 2023).

## Yemen<sup>5</sup>

► **Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, threatened that the escalation would continue and become an all-out war despite American efforts to prevent it (Mohammed al-Bukhaiti's Twitter account, November 2, 2023). He also criticized the Saudi Arabian government's insistence on cooperating with the United States and Israel to deal with their missile attacks deep inside Israel. He said Saudi Arabia was doing so despite the guarantees they had given it (Mohammed al-Bukhaiti's Twitter account, November 2, 2023). A day later, al-Bukhaiti said they were not concerned by the American threats and were continuing their military operations against Israel. He also said they were happy that the American Navy was approaching the Yemeni coast because they would be able to attack it (al-Mayadeen, November 3, 2023).

► Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdeslam said that more than ever, the Arabs were required to take responsibility for the residents of the Gaza Strip and support the Palestinian people in every way. He noted he expected that during his meetings with representatives of Arab countries, Blinken would hear "firm positions and hints about the use of power cards, or at least a request for him to be kind enough and protect Gaza's children" (Mohammed Abdeslam's Telegram channel, November 4, 2023).

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## The Arab Arena

### Jordan

► In Amman, the capital of Jordan, a regional meeting of foreign ministers of Arab countries was held to discuss efforts to stop the war in the Gaza Strip, with the participation of **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken**. The meeting was attended by **Jordan's King**

<sup>5</sup> For further details on Houthi activity against Israel, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from November 3, 2023, "[The Houthis and Operation Iron Swords](#)"



**Abdullah II, the Jordanian Crown Prince, Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, and the foreign ministers of the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Egypt.** King Abdullah stressed the need to continue Arab coordination for a united voice towards the international community and the obligation to exert pressure on it to stop the fighting and bring aid on an ongoing basis into the Gaza Strip. He condemned "the massacres of innocent civilians in the Gaza Strip and the Israeli escalation in the West Bank" and stressed the need to continue supporting the Palestinian Authority and international organizations operating in the Gaza Strip. He also expressed his opposition to attempts to separate the West Bank from the Gaza Strip (Jordanian News Agency, November 4, 2023).

► **Hussein al-Sheikh, head of the Palestinian delegation and secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee,** gave a detailed explanation of the Palestinian position in light of the war in Gaza and demanded an immediate ceasefire. He stressed the need to open permanent humanitarian routes to provide medical equipment, water, food, and electricity to the Gaza Strip. He also stressed the importance of stopping attacks by Jewish settlers in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem (Wafa, November 4, 2023).



**The meeting of the foreign ministers in Amman (Wafa, November 4, 2023)**

► At a press conference held at the end of the meeting of the foreign ministers, Blinken said a ceasefire would allow Hamas to regroup and carry out attacks similar to the one on October 7. He said that no nation would accept such a situation, so it was important to allow Israel to exercise its right to defend itself (Reuters, November 4, 2023). The Jordanian foreign minister claimed that the meetings expressed the common interest of putting an end to the disaster in the Gaza Strip and that they stressed the need to bring humanitarian aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip and reject the idea of uprooting the Palestinians from their homeland. He condemned the killing of civilians, regardless of their nationality, and expressed concern over the events in Judea and Samaria. The Egyptian foreign minister said they demanded an

international investigation "into Israel's violations and crimes" and that efforts had to be made "to protect civilians and establish a lasting peace." He called on the international community to stop hostilities and refrain from promoting violence (Twitter account of the Jordanian News Agency, November 4, 2023).

► On the sidelines of the meeting, **Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman** met with Antony Blinken. During the meeting, they stressed the need to invest joint diplomatic, regional and international efforts to reach an immediate ceasefire and regularly open the Rafah Crossing to bring humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. Abdulrahman made it clear that Qatar continued to invest efforts to mediate the release of the abductees. However, he noted that the continued attacks in the Gaza Strip made it difficult to secure their release (Qatar News Agency, November 4, 2023).

► Blinken met with **Lebanon's interim prime minister, Najib Mikati**. Mikati stressed the importance of efforts to reach a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and stop "Israeli aggression in south Lebanon." He said Lebanon was committed to UN Resolution 1701 and called on the international community to pressure Israel to "stop the violations." Blinken stressed his efforts to stop military activities for humanitarian reasons and to address the issue of abductees (Reuters, November 4, 2023).

► On November 3, 2023, a demonstration was held in front of the Israeli embassy in Amman where calls were heard in support of Hamas and to revoke Jordan's peace agreement with Israel (Rida Yassin Twitter account, November 3, 2023).



**The mass demonstration in front of the Israeli embassy in Amman  
(Rida Yassin Twitter account, November 3, 2023)**

## Bahrain

► The Bahraini parliament announced they would expel the Israeli ambassador, recall their ambassador from Israel, and end economic relations with Israel as part of Bahrain's support

for the Palestinian cause. According to the announcement, Israel's continued escalation and violations of international law made them demand additional steps to protect the lives of civilians in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian territories (parliament website, November 2, 2023). It is unclear whether the parliament's decision is sufficient or whether it requires the king's approval. However, the Bahrain News Agency confirmed that the Bahraini ambassador in Tel Aviv had left Israel and that the Israeli ambassador in Manama had left the country. The statement said, "Protecting the lives of civilians and activity to maintain humanitarian corridors are the top priority at this time" (Bahrain News Agency, November 2, 2023).

## The International Arena

### United States

► **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken** arrived in Israel on November 3, 2023, for the third time since the beginning of the war. He met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli President Isaac Herzog. Blinken stressed the United States' commitment to stand with Israel, Israel's right to defend itself, and the need to prevent the conflict from spreading to other arenas. He also stressed the need to do more to protect Palestinian civilians, the need to deliver humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip and to evacuate foreign nationals. Regarding the abductees, he said they were working to free them. Blinken said they believed that all the efforts would be aided by the creation of humanitarian pauses, but it had to be done while ensuring that Hamas would not take advantage of the pauses to arm itself (Israeli newspaper *Israel Hayom* and NBC, November 3, 2023).

► Hamas lashed out against American National Security Council Spokesman John Kirby's statement that Hamas could not be involved in the future administration of the Gaza Strip at the end of the war. Hamas referred to it as "crude and unacceptable statements because the Palestinian people are a free people and are not subject to guardianship" (Hamas' Telegram channel, November 2, 2023).

### Turkey

► Turkey announced that it would recall its ambassador to Israel (Reuters, November 4, 2023). **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** accused the Israeli government of direct responsibility for the attacks in the Gaza Strip. Erdoğan noted that the Israeli government was "wiped out" as far as he was concerned. Regarding the European Union, he noted that recently it had played an unclear role and had not adopted a fair approach. He called on the

countries of the world to provide aid to the Palestinians. Erdoğan announced that Iranian President Raisi was expected to visit Turkey at the end of the month to discuss the war in Gaza and also noted that he saw great importance in a summit meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) scheduled for later this month (Anadolu News, November 4, 2023).

► Hamas praised Turkey's decision to recall its ambassador, and called on Turkey and all Arab and Muslim countries to take additional "deterrent" measures against Israel. Hamas also called for exerting pressure on American President Joe Biden to facilitate the evacuation of the wounded and the delivery of medical aid into the Gaza Strip (Hamas' Telegram channel, November 4, 2023).

## Germany

► **German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser** signed a decree banning Hamas activity and presence in the country. In addition, the activities of Samidoun, an organization affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) which has ties to extreme left-wing organizations in Europe, were also banned. Hamas has been on the EU's list of terrorist organizations since 2001, but until now its operatives have been able to operate on a limited basis in Germany. With Germany's announcement, Hamas' activity will be completely banned (Reuters, November 2, 2023).

## Russia

► In response to an article published in the *Wall Street Journal*, according to which the United States had intelligence that the Russian Wagner Group was considering sending the SA-22 air defense system to Hezbollah, the Kremlin issued a denial. **Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov** claimed that "in practice, the Wagner Group does not exist, and the accusations are baseless" (Reuters, November 3, 2023; *Wall Street Journal*, November 2, 2023).

## Demonstrations in Support of the Palestinians

► On November 4, 2023, demonstrations in support of Palestinians were held around the world. According to al-Jazeera TV, there was a prominent demonstration in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, attended by about a million and a half people calling for an end to the war in the Gaza Strip and for lifting the "siege" on it (al-Jazeera, November 4, 2023).



**Right: Demonstrations in support of the Palestinians (top row from right to left) in the United States, Britain, France and Germany. Bottom line from right to left: Italy, Yemen, the Netherlands and Venezuela. Left: Demonstration held in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia (al-Jazeera, November 4, 2023)**