



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., November 19, 2023

Northern Arena

- 246 attacks
- 76 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 10 other terrorist-organization operatives killed

Israeli Casualties

- Approximately 1,200 military and civilian dead (unofficial estimate)
- Abducted – 236
- Five abductees returned

Rocket Fire

- About 9,500 rockets and mortar shells
- About 12% failed launches

Overview¹

► **The southern arena:** During the past few days the IDF forces continued operations at Shifa Hospital and in several other neighborhoods in Gaza City. In the northern Gaza Strip they operated in Beit Hanoun, Zeitoun, Beit Lahia and Jabalia, and destroyed a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) post where they found a large quantity of strategic weapons. Several operations were also carried out in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, where weapons were found hidden in kindergartens, schools and children's rooms in residential apartments. Hamas continues to report successes and accuses the IDF of operating at Shifa Hospital, under false pretenses by claiming Hamas headquarters are located there. Hamas also accused the IDF of attacking an UNRWA school where Gazans took shelter, killing 200 people.

► **Rocket fire:** The Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip continue firing rockets daily at Israel, especially at the cities, towns and villages near the border. During the past day a barrage of rockets was fired at the center of the country. Hezbollah also launched a number of rocket barrages at the towns and cities of the north.

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

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 383 of them soldiers and officers; 236 civilian and military abductees are being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.**

The bodies of two Israeli women were recovered by IDF forces.

► **The Gaza Strip:** According to the Palestinians, the situation in the Gaza Strip is getting worse and there is a fear of the spread of diseases. Sources in the Gaza Strip reported that Israel's agreement to bring in two fuel trucks a day for UNRWA was not enough. Egypt is considering opening another crossing to transfer aid to the Gaza Strip. Hamas reported that a number of senior operatives were killed, including Ahmed Bahar, the head of the Hamas Legislative Council.

► **The northern sector:** In Lebanon, Hezbollah's daily attacks on IDF positions and northern cities, towns and villages increased. Hezbollah reported launching an air-to-surface missile to attack an IDF drone. The IDF responded with tank, artillery and aerial attacks on Hezbollah targets in Lebanese territory.

► **Judea and Samaria:** Two Palestinian terrorists attempted a shooting attack; they were shot and killed by IDF forces. The Israeli security forces focused their counterterrorism activities on the Balata refugee camp in Nablus and Jenin, using UAVs. Demonstrations of solidarity with the Gaza Strip continued throughout Judea and Samaria. Jordan sent a field hospital to Nablus.

► **Iran:** The commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Qods Force sent a communiqué to Muhammed Deif, the commander of Hamas' military-terrorist wing, congratulating him on Hamas' October 7 attack. Rallies in support of the Palestinians were held throughout Iran. Senior Iranian officials praised the Hamas attack.

► **The Arab and international arena:** Activities and contacts for a ceasefire and the introduction of aid to Gaza continue.

The Combat Arena

IDF activity on the ground

► **The integrated ground maneuver:** On November 18, 2023, IDF offensive operations were expanded to include additional neighborhoods in the Gaza Strip, and IDF forces began operating in the Zeitoun and Jabaliya neighborhoods (IDF spokesman, November 18, 2023).

- ◆ **Gaza City:** IDF forces continued a targeted operation to locate terrorist facilities in Shifa Hospital. On November 18, 2023, the IDF responded to the hospital manager's

request to enable residents who wished to evacuate the hospital to make their way to the humanitarian crossing via a secure route. The IDF emphasized that at no point did it request patients or medical staff to leave the hospital (IDF spokesman, November 18, 2023). Meanwhile, IDF forces operated to defeat Hamas' Zeitoun Battalion, one of the main battalions in Gaza City. They also operated to eliminate terrorist operatives from the neighborhoods on the outskirts of Zeitoun, including the Sheikh Ajlin and Rimal neighborhoods (IDF spokesman, November 18, 2023).



Right: Operational tunnel shaft located near the hospital. Left: Weapons found inside a vehicle prepared for the terrorist attack on October 7, 2023, and located in the hospital (IDF Spokesman website, November 16, 2023)

◆ The northern Gaza Strip: IDF fighters continued operations in the northern Gaza Strip, especially on the outskirts of Jabalia, where four Hamas battalions and the command and control center of the Northern Gaza Strip Brigade were located, considered one of the most important terrorist strongholds in the northern Gaza Strip. IDF forces located Hamas operatives hiding in schools and eliminated them, also finding weapons. The fighters located dozens of mortar shells hidden in a kindergarten (IDF spokesman, November 17, 2023); 35 tunnel shafts were located (IDF spokesman, November 19, 2023).



Eliminating the terrorists at the observation post. Left: Eliminating terrorists from the air (IDF spokesman's website, November 17, 2023)



Right: Mortar shells found in the kindergarten. Left: Weapons found in the school (IDF spokesman's website, November 17, 2023)

◆ **Khan Yunis:** On the afternoon of November 16, 2023, IDF forces raided the house of a Hamas military-terrorist operative. A large quantity of weapons were found in the house, including missiles, IEDs and tens of kilograms of explosives. They also found a number of rockets hidden inside a bed in a children's room (IDF website, November 16, 2023).



Weapons found in the children's room (IDF website, November 16, 2023)

◆ **The PIJ's "Palestine" post:** IDF fighters raided the post of the PIJ commander of the northern area, where the offices of the organization's leadership and a facility for the manufacture of strategic weapons were located. Weapons with heavy warheads, UAVs and other weapons were found. After 12 hours of combat, the forces destroyed the post. Two truckloads of weapons were taken from it, including parts of three rockets, parts of a UAV and PIJ intelligence material (IDF spokesman, November 17, 2023).



Some of the weapons found at the post (IDF spokesman website, November 17, 2023)

► **Aerial activity:** During the ground maneuver Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked dozens of terrorist cells and facilities throughout the Gaza Strip. They included operational headquarters, launch sites and weapons production laboratories (IDF spokesman, November 18, 2023). On the morning of November 19, 2023, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked and destroyed Hamas facilities in the neighborhoods of Jabalia, Zeitoun, and Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman, November 19, 2023).



Israeli Air Force aircraft attack targets in the Gaza Strip (IDF website, November 18, 2023)



Right: Israeli Air Force attack in the northern Gaza Strip (Shehab X account, November 16, 2023).

Left: Israeli Air Force attack on the Hamad neighborhood in Khan Yunis (QudsN X account, November 18, 2023)

► **Naval activity:** During the ground maneuver, Israeli Navy missile ships attacked Hamas targets and assisted the ground forces with fire, observation, eliminating land threats and covering ground missions from the sea (IDF spokesman, November 19, 2023).

Reactions to the IDF activities

► **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed the recent events at Shifa Hospital were a "cruel attack based on lies invented by the enemy about the compound." He commented favorably on the situation of the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] in the Gaza Strip and claimed they had successfully prevented Israel from recovering its abductees by force. He called for the decisions of the Arab-Islamic summit to be implemented, adding that the presence of the Palestinian resistance in the fight against the "occupation" had become necessary and was clearly an Arab-Islamic interest. He criticized the UN Security Council resolution, claiming it should have included a direct condemnation of the [alleged] "war crimes" committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria (Hamas Telegram channel, November 16, 2023).

► **Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' military-terrorist wing**, claimed that the military wing's operatives had destroyed 62 IDF vehicles over the past four days. He claimed they had documented many attacks, the destruction of vehicles and attacks on soldiers and would [allegedly] "present them soon." Regarding the issue of the abductees, he claimed they wanted the issue of the prisoners to be a "humanitarian issue," had offered to complete a deal from the beginning of the campaign and were "struggling to keep the abductees alive." Regarding the activity at Shifa Hospital, he claimed that what the Israeli government was looking for in the hospital was a "disgrace" to the international system and international law and that Israel was looking for proof that the hospitals were command centers. He called on "[military-terrorist] wings of our people's fighters in the West Bank" to escalate their attacks on Israel (Telegram channel of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, November 17, 2023).

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** held a press conference in Beirut where he offered his condolences for the deaths of Khaled Abu Halal and Ahmed Bahar, and claimed the IDF was "massacring" civilians in the Gaza Strip. He claimed the attack at the Shifa Hospital was the "greatest crime," and the evacuation of the patients, the displaced and the medical staff was an act of revenge and a violation of the most sacred human profession. He falsely claimed no command or control rooms or one of the abductees had been found in the hospital. He

claimed, “the forced evacuation of the hospital and its transformation into a military camp was the height of moral and human degradation, a war crime and a crime against humanity” (Palinfo, November 18, 2023; al-Jazeera TV YouTube channel, November 18, 2023).

► **Muneir al-Barash, director general of the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip**, located in Shifa Hospital, claimed the IDF had not proved Hamas’ headquarters were located in the hospital. He falsely claimed the IDF had blown up food warehouses in the hospital basement and was continuing to dig up and set off explosions in the basement. He denied having received incubators from Israel and reported the death of a fourth premature baby. He also claimed IDF soldiers had “abducted” the bodies of 18 “shaheeds” (aljazeera.net, 17 November 2023).

► The foreign ministry of the Palestinian Authority (PA) issued a statement warning against Israeli reports about the discovery of weapons and a tunnel at Shifa Hospital. It falsely claimed, “Israel planted the weapons in a hospital to justify its attack.” He also claimed that all the reports about the presence of abductees inside the hospital were lies (Facebook page of the PA foreign ministry, November 18, 2023).

Israel accused of attacking an UNRWA school

► According to Hamas, on the afternoon of November 18, 2023, the IDF attacked the al-Fakhoura School in Jabaliya, which housed thousands of displaced persons, and more than 200 people were killed (al-Aqsa, November 18, 2023). Some of the media published [alleged] documentation of the attack. The news of the attack provoked a wave of condemnation from Palestinian, Arab and international sources.

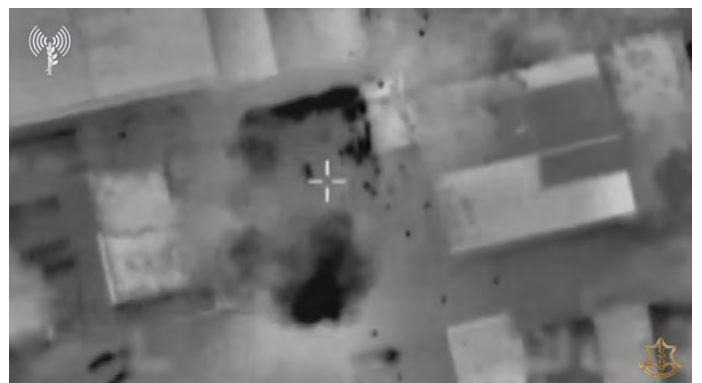
► Hamas condemned the "massacre carried out by the neo-Nazis" at the school which, it claimed, caused dozens of deaths and injuries, in addition to the hundreds of "massacres" Israel was carrying out with the approval of the United States (Hamas Telegram channel, November 18, 2023). According to reports, following the attack on the school, **Ismail Haniyeh** contacted a series of regional and international leaders and officials whose names were not specified. He called for an urgent meeting of the monitoring committee appointed at the Arab-Islamic summit for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, [demanding it] begin measures to stop attacks on residents and civilian facilities (Hamas Telegram channel , November 18, 2023).

►The PA's foreign ministry and the foreign ministries of Jordan, Egypt and Qatar condemned the IDF's action and called on international authorities to bring about an immediate ceasefire. Hezbollah also issued a condemnation (al-'Ahed, November 18, 2023).

Rocket fire

►The Palestinian terrorist organizations continued firing rockets at Israel, although in a relatively low volume. Over the past few days, several rockets have been launched at the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip, and one daily barrage at the center of Israel.

►On the afternoon of November 17, 2023, a heavy barrage was fired at central Israel. Less than an hour later, IDF soldiers identified the terrorists who had fired the rockets on the roof of a building. They were eliminated from the air (IDF spokesman, November 18, 2023).



Attacking the terrorists who launched rockets at Israel (IDF website, November 18, 2023)

►So far approximately 9,500 rockets and mortar shells have been launched from the Gaza Strip at Israel since the beginning of the war. On the first day of the war, over 3,000 rockets were launched. About 12% of them were failed launches that fell in the Gaza Strip and in sea. The Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted approximately 2,000 launches and dozens of unmanned aircraft that tried to penetrate Israeli airspace.

Israeli casualties

►According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7, approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 383 of them soldiers and officers; 236 civilian and military abductees are being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, 35 children and adolescents under the age of 18, 32 over the age of 65. Five abductees were released.

►Based on intelligence information, IDF forces recovered the bodies of two abductees, one a resident of Kibbutz Be'eri and the other a soldier. The bodies were found separately near Shifa Hospital and brought to Israel (IDF spokesman, November 16, 17, 2023).

The issue of the abductees

► **Salman bin Hamad, crown prince of Bahrain**, said it was time for direct talks and called on Hamas to release women and children in exchange for the release of Palestinian women and children imprisoned in Israel who are non-combatants (Reuters, November 17, 2023).

► Interviewed in Doha, **Zaher Jabarin, who holds the prisoner portfolio in Hamas**, said that a five-day ceasefire deal was being negotiated, during which Israeli hostages would be released in exchange for the release of Palestinian women and children from Israeli prisons. He claimed Israel had no real intention of reaching a deal soon and the attack on the hospitals was delaying the negotiation efforts. He said Hamas did not intend to release prisoners in exchange for only a ceasefire, but rather in exchange for prisoners (Asharq News website, November 18, 2023).


► **Musa Abu Marzouq, head of Hamas' bureau of international relations**, claimed he did not know how many prisoners Hamas had, adding that the PIJ declared that it had prisoners, and that there were Palestinian families who had taken Israeli prisoners to exchange them for their relatives in Israeli prisons. He claimed they were making attempts to compile a list of hostages to be released, but Hamas claimed it “could not until there was a cease-fire,” and therefore they were not talking about lists of names but rather of numbers. Asked why a nine-month-old baby and men in their seventies and eighties had been abducted, he claimed they had not been abducted by the fighters, but there had been “chaos.” He claimed the civilians were “guests,” would be “treated well” and would all be released (The Wire program website, November 18, 2023).

► Hamas spokesmen referred to Israel's accusation that signs of the presence of abductees had been found at Shifa Hospital. They claimed the abductees had been brought to the hospital “for medical treatment:”

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** claimed [with a straight face] that the operatives of Hamas's military wing had taken some of the wounded hostages to the hospitals for medical treatment and “the operatives risked their lives so the captives could be treated” [sic] (Hamas Telegram channel, November 18, 2023).

► **Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau and head of Hamas' central information bureau**, also claimed [with a straight face] that they transferred many Israeli abductees to the hospitals for treatment and surgery, especially after some of them were [allegedly “injured by air force strikes.” He claimed they risked their men to ensure the

wounded abductees received the best possible treatment in the hospitals in the Gaza Strip [sic]. However, he claimed, nevertheless, Israel's leaders and the IDF spokesman, with the help of the United States, “invented explanations and reasons to attack Shifa and other hospitals” (Khabarani website X account, November 18, 2023).

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The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

- ▶ The Hamas government media information bureau in Gaza reported that as of 7:20 p.m., November 18, 2023, the number of dead stood at 12,300 and the number of wounded at 30,000 (Facebook page of the Hamas government media information bureau in Gaza, November 15, 2023).
- ▶ At a press conference in Beirut, **senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** reported that so far there were more than 12,000 dead in the Gaza Strip, among them more than 4,500 children and about 30,000 wounded. He said 4,000 Palestinians were still under the rubble (Palinfo, November 18, 2023; al-Jazeera TV YouTube channel, November 18, 2023).
- ▶ The Palestinian media published the identities of a number of casualties:
 - ◆ **Ahmed Bahar (Abu Akram)**, acting chairman of the Legislative Council and a member of the Hamas political bureau in Gaza (Ma'an, November 17, 2023; al-Quds X account, November 17, 2023). Hamas issued a mourning notice for him, praising his activity and noting the movement would continue "its heroic struggle against the enemy." Hamas called on the Arab, Islamic and foreign parliaments for urgent activity to condemn Israel, exert pressure to stop the "aggression," act to prosecute the "aggressors" in international courts, and to cry out against the "crimes" of Israel and the American support for them (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, November 18, 2023).
 - ◆ **Khaled Abu Halal (Abu Adhem)**, secretary general of the Palestinian al-Akhrar Movement, was killed along with his son Adhem in the attack on his home in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood in Gaza. Abu Halal was a Fatah activist who retired from the movement after the elections to the Legislative Council in 2006, and the establishment of the Hamas government. He served as spokesman for the ministry of the interior and was involved in the establishment of the "operational force," the security force

established by Sayid Siam, the minister of the interior, as a counterweight to the security forces. After Hamas took control of Gaza in June 2007, he established the al-Ahrar Movement (QudsN, November 17, 2023). Husam Badran, head of Hamas' ministry of national relations, published a mourning notice for his death (Palinfo, November 18, 2023).



Right: Ahmed Bahar (Facebook page Hassan Kharisha, a member of the Legislative Council, November 17, 2023). Left: Khaled Abu Halal (Facebook page of journalist Fatma Jabr al-Atwana, December 31, 2018)

► **Mustafa Sawaf**, a Hamas operative and political commentator, who was killed along with his wife and son in an attack on their home in Gaza on November 17 (Palinfo, November 18, 2023).

► The IDF spokesman said two underground compounds were attacked where senior Hamas terrorists were hiding, among them **Ahmed al-Ghandour, commander the North Gaza Brigade, and Ayman Siam, head of Hamas' rocket fire disposition**. Members of the Hamas leadership were hiding in another underground complex attacked by the IDF, **including Rawhi Mushtaha, who was very close to Yahya al-Sinwar; Issam Delis, Hamas prime minister in the Gaza Strip, who was close to Ismail Haniyeh; Sameh al-Sarraj, also a close associate of Yahya al-Sinwar**, and other senior officials (IDF website, November 16, 2023). So far their deaths have not been made public in the Gaza Strip.

The situation in Gaza

► A video uploaded by Gazan journalist Anas al-Sharif, who walked around with his camera in the Indonesian Hospital's ER in the northern Gaza, clearly showed that the hospital was well lit. That invalidated the hospital's claims and recent photos purporting to show the hospital was in complete darkness, causing it to stop providing medical services (QudsN X account, November 16, 2023). Ibrahim Qanan, a correspondent for al-Ghad TV, visited the pediatric ICU at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, and the visit showed that the hospital had full electric power (al-Ghad TV, November 16, 2023).



Right: A photo from Anas al-Sharif's visit to the emergency room at the Indonesian hospital (QudsN X account, November 16, 2023). Left: The lighting at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis (El-Ed channel, November 16, 2023)

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamadan, who lives in Beirut**, claimed that the humanitarian aid that entered Gaza today was only 10% of the Palestinians' needs for food, after Israel had destroyed the bakeries and food warehouses, cut off the water sources, and attacked the water reservoirs and desalination plants. He wondered about the fate of the Arab-Islamic summit's decision to break the siege and force an immediate influx of aid, medicine and fuel into the Strip. He called on the UN, the international organizations, the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to take responsibility (Palinfo , November 18, 2023; al-Jazeera YouTube channel, November 18, 2023).

Aid for Gaza

► Israel's war cabinet approved the entry of two fuel tankers (60,000 liters, or 15,850 gallons) daily into the Gaza Strip, for international organizations operating in the Strip. The decision was made in response to an American request, and the fuel will be transferred to the United Nations to support the water and sewer infrastructure in the southern Gaza Strip, on the condition that it be directed to the civilian population and not reach Hamas (Israeli media, November 16, 2023). According to a statement from the White House, the United States is working together with Israel and American regional partners to ensure the continued supply of fuel to the Gaza Strip so humanitarian aid can be provided and essential services restored. According to the United States, the shipments should continue on a regular basis and in larger quantities (White House X account, November 18, 2023).

► On November 18, 2023, UNRWA claimed the amount of fuel entering the Gaza Strip was “very small” and did not meet the agency’s needs. UNRWA claims to be unable to evacuate about 70% of the solid waste in Gaza because of the lack of fuel (al-Quds, November 18, 2023). **Adnan Abu Hasna, UNRWA’s communications consultant**, interviewed at an UNRWA facility in

Gaza, protested the small amount of fuel entering through the Rafah Crossing and cautioned that the agency's services had been damaged by the lack of fuel (Shehab X account, November 16, 2023).



Right: A fuel truck entering the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing. Left: Humanitarian aid trucks enter the Palestinian side of the Rafah Crossing (Wafa YouTube channel, November 18, 2023)

►Meanwhile, as the IDF operated to locate terrorists and terrorist facilities at Shifa Hospital, the forces, with the assistance of the Coordination and Liaison Directorate for the Gaza Strip, during the night of November 17, 2023, delivered over 6,000 liters (5,585 gallons) of water and over 2,300 kilograms (5,070 pounds) of food rations including fish, canned goods, bread, spreads and dates (IDF spokesman, November 18, 2023).



IDF forces deliver humanitarian aid to the hospital (IDF spokesman's website, November 18, 2023)

►The spokesman for the Egyptian ministry of health said they were prepared to take in children from the Gaza Strip and were waiting for their arrival. He also noted the importance of expediting the transfer of children in the Gaza Strip who need medical treatment to hospitals in Egypt (al-Jazeera Mubasher, November 16, 2023).

►The Palestinian Red Crescent announced that in coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),²

² The office was established in 1991, by UN General Assembly resolution. It was designed to strengthen and coordinate the response of the UN in emergency situations and natural disasters. Its offices are

they had evacuated 31 premature babies in ambulances from Shifa Hospital and transferred them to the UAE Hospital in Rafah (Wafa, November 19, 2023).

UNRWA

►UNRWA stated it would not participate in the establishment of a safe zone in the Gaza Strip unless all the parties consented, basic conditions to ensure security and other needs had been met, and an oversight mechanism had been created. UNRWA added that none of the humanitarian organizations it represented was involved in preparing for the arrival of displaced persons to some "safe zone" or "humanitarian zone" in Gaza (UNRWA website, November 16, 2023).

►The OCHA issued a warning about the overcrowding in UNRWA shelter facilities in the center and south of the Gaza Strip, stating that the 154 facilities housed about 813,000 people and were packed to capacity. It noted that such overcrowding could lead to serious sanitation problems and disease (al-Quds, November 16, 2023).

The Rafah Crossing

►On November 18, 2023, 44 residents with Turkish citizenship left the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing. The Turkish foreign ministry stated that since the beginning of the war, it had put a lot of effort into removing civilians with Turkish citizenship from the Strip (Facebook page of the Rafah Crossing News, November 18, 2023).



Residents of Gaza with Turkish citizenship leave the Strip through the Rafah Crossing (Facebook page of the Rafah Crossing News, November 18, 2023)

►“Knowledgeable” Egyptian sources reported that Egypt planned to open the Salah al-Din gate, which is located about four kilometers north of the Rafah Crossing, to bring humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. The sources noted that if the gate opened, it would be used exclusively for the entry of goods, and that allowed Egypt to avoid the legal issue of the

scattered throughout the world. The Palestinian branch was established in 2002, its center is in Jerusalem and it has offices in Gaza, Ramallah, Hebron and Nablus.

Rafah Crossing, which according to agreements is supposed to be a crossing exclusively for humans (al-Araby al-Jadeed, November 17, 2023).

► A spokesman for the Egyptian ministry of health announced that as far as the Egyptians were concerned there would be no difficulty about accepting children evacuated from the Gaza Strip and they were expecting their arrival (al-Jazeera, November 16, 2023).

► Wa'el Abu Omar, spokesman for the Palestinian side of the Rafah Crossing, said the amount of fuel that had entered the Strip since Israel permitted its entry on November 16, was 144,000 liters (about 38,040 gallons) of diesel fuel, of which 127,000 liters (about 33,550 gallons) were for UNRWA, and 17,000 liters (about 4,490 gallons) for the Palestinian Communications Company. He added that on November 18, 2023, three diesel tankers and 50 humanitarian aid trucks entered the Strip (al-Hurra TV website, November 19, 2023; Sky News website in Arabic, November 19, 2023).

Hamas

► Interviewed in Doha by an Indian media outlet, **Musa Abu Marzouq, head of Hamas' bureau of international relations**, was asked how Hamas justified the murder of 1,200 people in the October 7 attack, the overwhelming majority of them civilians. He claimed the Hamas “fighters” [terrorists] had been instructed not to harm women, children and elderly citizens, but only to attack the fighters of the Gaza Division. The interviewer pressed him and said that it was impossible to deny that the participants of the Nova Festival, who were all civilians, had been massacred. Abu Marzouq lied and answered that “based on the testimonies of survivors, Israeli tanks and planes that arrived at the scene attacked the Palestinian fighters along with the civilians.”

► Asked if he was not embarrassed by the barbaric behavior of a Palestinian who called his father during the operation to brag about it, he answered that “it was a shame for the IDF, which had failed to hold its own against the fighters [terrorists],” and the recording had been checked by “media sources” which concluded it was fake. He claimed that they ordered the “fighters” not to take phones with them out of concern for their lives (The Wire program website, November 18, 2023).

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** said that the management of the affairs of the Gaza Strip in the future would be decided by the Palestinians and anyone who thought about involvement in the control of Gaza as part of an American-Israeli equation would be considered a collaborator. He also said Hamas was conducting international and regional

efforts as well as political contacts, all focusing on two issues: the need to stop the “aggression” against the Palestinians and the need to end the siege on the Gaza Strip (al-Araby al-Jadeed, November 18, 2023).

► **Khaled Mashaal, head of the "external" Hamas leadership**, met in Doha with a delegation of the Pakistan Central Muslim League Party (PMML). The head of the delegation, Dr. Nasir Hamdani, who is the chairman of the Pakistani Muslim Medical Mission, expressed sympathy with the residents of the Gaza Strip, and offered help with medical facilities and doctors (Pakistani nawaiwaqt website, November 18, 2023; PMML X account, November 17, 2023).



Mashaal (center) in Doha (Pakistani nawaiwaqt website, November 18, 2023)

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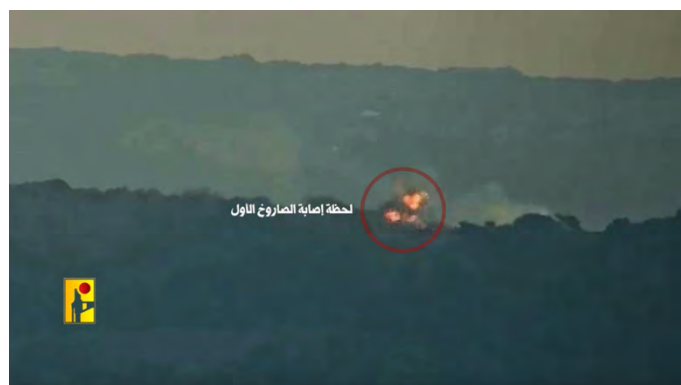
The Northern Arena

Lebanon

► Hezbollah's attacks on IDF positions and the cities, towns and villages along the border continued. On November 19, 2023, the Lebanon 24 website reported an escalation in the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah following the renewal of Israeli attacks on Lebanese villages which began during the morning (Lebanon 24 website, November 19, 2023). The escalation may be a reaction to the winter weather in the north and Hezbollah's assessment that it will make it difficult for the IDF to locate Hezbollah's activity

► In important events of November 16-19, 2023:

- ◆ On **November 16**, 2023, a number of anti-tank missiles were launched from Lebanon at IDF positions in the Biranit and Rosh HaNikra areas.



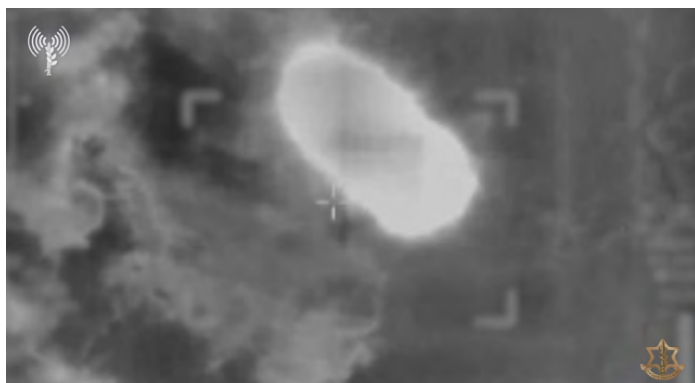
The first anti-tank missile hit a Merkava tank near the Biranit post (Hezbollah's combat propaganda unit Telegram channel, November 17, 2023)

- ◆ On **November 17**, IDF forces operating in the Metulla area identified a drone crossing from Lebanon into Israeli territory. The aircraft, which was suspected of carrying explosives, was shot down (IDF spokesman, November 17, 2023).



The downed drone (IDF spokesman's website, November 17, 2023)

- ◆ On the morning of **November 18, 2023**, about 25 rockets and mortar shells were launched at the Upper Galilee. The air defense fighters successfully intercepted an air-to-air missile that was launched from Lebanon at an IDF remote-controlled UAV. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for shooting down the aircraft with a surface-to-air missile (Hezbollah's combat information unit, November 18, 2023). In response, Israeli Air Force aircraft destroyed Hezbollah's advanced surface-to-air missile system.
 - ◆ On the morning and afternoon of **November 19, 2023**, two barrages of rockets were launched at cities, towns and villages in the Galilee.
- In response, IDF forces attacked the sources of the rocket fire with tanks and artillery, and Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked a large number of Hezbollah targets in Lebanese territory, including terrorist infrastructure, combat positions, observation posts, munitions warehouses and buildings and compounds used for military purposes. Terrorist squads intending to shoot at Israel were also attacked (IDF spokesman, November 17-19, 2023).



The IDF attacks Hezbollah targets (IDF spokesman's website, November 18, 2023)

Hezbollah casualties

- ▶ Hezbollah announced the death of two operatives who were killed as "martyrs on the way to Jerusalem" without specifying the time or location of their deaths, both from the Lebanon Valley (Hezbollah's combat information unit Telegram channel, November 16, 2023). The dead are:
 - ▶ Mahdi Ali Nasser al-Din, aka Abbas, from the town of al-Harmel.
 - ▶ Haidar Ali Nun, aka Abu Tarab, from the town of Ram, who lived in Baalbek.



Hezbollah casualties

(Telegram channel of Hezbollah's combat information unit, November 16, 2023)

Hezbollah

- ▶ The Lebanon 24 news website reported that according to "knowledgeable sources," Hezbollah succeeded in rapidly learning how to deal with the IDF, adopted new military tactics and made daily changes in its operating methods, thereby reducing the number of its casualties (Lebanon 24, November 18, 2023).

The Palestinians

► **Muhammad al-Hindi, deputy PIJ secretary general**, claimed that the South Lebanon Front had participated in the campaign from day one and was “open to all possibilities.” Regarding coordination with Hezbollah, he said it was natural because the campaign was not only against the Gaza Strip and the Palestinians. As for Hezbollah’s functioning so far, he said they were working to expand the conflict, such a possibility existed and was substantial, and the United States and Israel feared the war in Gaza would turn into a regional conflict (al-Arabi TV website, November 17, 2023).

Syria

► according to a military source, on November 17, 2023, at around 2:25 a.m., the Israeli Air Force attacked several targets in the Damascus area from the direction of the Syrian Golan. The source added that the Syrian aerial defense systems had intercepted a number of missiles and the attack had caused material damage (SANA, November 17, 2023). The Syrian foreign ministry condemned the "Israeli aggression" in the Damascus area and warned Israel against further attacks, adding they demanded the UN Security Council act urgently against Israeli aggression" (SANA, November 17, 2023).

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Judea, Samaria, and the Palestinian Authority

Terrorist attacks

► On the morning of November 17, 2023, two Palestinians drove up to HaZait Junction near Hebron, crashed into a concrete checkpoint, got out of the vehicle, and one of them fired at the Israeli forces operating there. The fighters killed the two terrorists and seized a Carlo weapon used in the shooting (IDF spokesman, November 17, 2023).



The weapon used by the terrorists (IDF spokesman's website, November 17, 2023)

► Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility for the attack carried out on November 16, 2023, at the Tunnels checkpoint in Jerusalem (Hamas' military-terrorist wing's Telegram channel, November 16, 2023). That was the second announcement by Hamas' military-terrorist wing claiming responsibility for terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria since the beginning of the fighting.



Poster posted on the Hamas X account in the Gaza Strip: "Elite al-Qassam representatives and the Hebron ammunition. Heroes of the storming of the Tunnel checkpoint." Shaheed (martyrs) al-Qassam operatives and jihad fighters: Hassan Mamun Qafisha, Nasrallah al-Qawasmeh, Abd al-Qader al-Qawasmeh (Shehab X account, November 16, 2023)

Preventive and counterterrorism activities

► The Israeli security forces continued their extensive counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria. In the past day, 38 wanted Palestinians were arrested. Since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip, about 1,800 wanted Palestinians have been detained, about 1,100 of them Hamas operatives (IDF spokesman's website, November 19, 2023).

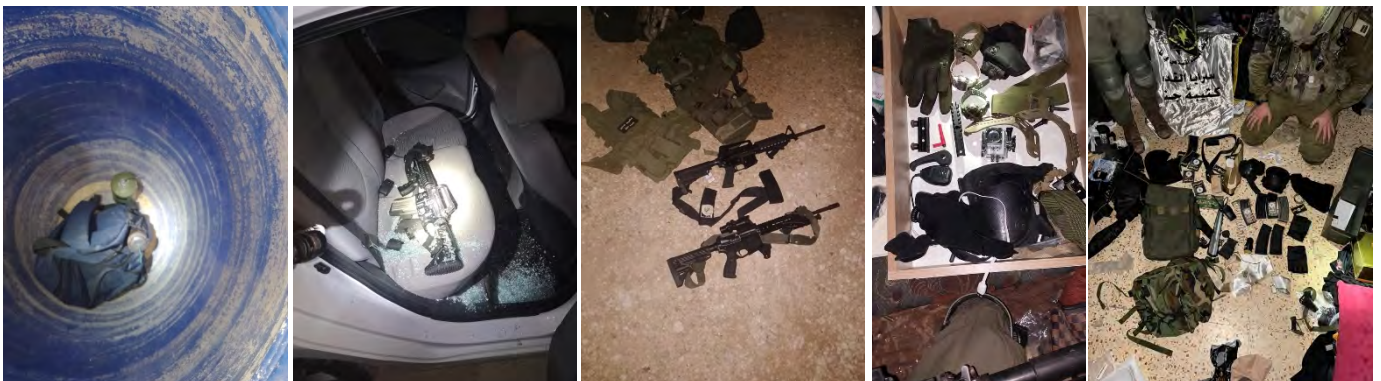
► In a joint Israeli security force operation on the night of November 17-18, 2023, **in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus**, an aircraft attacked a safe house used by Palestinians involved in planning imminent attacks against civilian and military targets. In addition to the terrorists who were attacked, Muhammad Zuhd, a resident of the refugee camp, who was involved in a

series of shooting attacks in the Nablus area and planning military activity, was killed. He was involved, among other attacks, in a shooting in April 2023 in Jerusalem, wounding two people (IDF spokesman, November 18, 2023). Security forces also found and destroyed a laboratory for manufacturing explosive devices, where they found several IEDs ready for use. IDF heavy engineering vehicles uncovered IEDs planted under and on the side of the road intended to hit the fighters (IDF spokesman, November 18, 2023).



Weapons found in the safe house (IDF spokesman's website, November 18, 2023)

►On the night of November 17, 2023, Israeli security forces **in the Jenin refugee camp** uncovered IEDs planted under and on the side of the road intended to hit Israeli forces. IDF aircraft attacked a squad of armed terrorists who fired at the forces (IDF website, November 17, 2023). The Palestinians reported that as part of the forces' activity, they surrounded Ibn Sina Hospital, demanded that the medical staff evacuate it, questioned several staff members, and prevented people from entering the hospital (Wafa, November 17, 2023). The PIJ issued an announcement stressing that the "storming" of the hospital was a "declaration of war against the Palestinians" and had to be responded to by escalating the "resistance" (Al-Nahar al-Arabi, November 17, 2023).



Weapons found by the forces (IDF website, November 17, 2023)

► **Senior Hamas figure Abdul-Hakim Hanini** called on Palestinians in Judea and Samaria to enlist, stressing the need for incessant confrontations with Israel. He called for turning the lives of the settlers into hell by blocking roads and sabotaging water and electricity lines, etc. He also called for the demonstrations to continue in all the squares and friction points (Hurriya News, November 18, 2023). **Abdul-Rahman Shadid, a senior Hamas figure from Tulkarm**, urged the residents of Judea, Samaria, Jerusalem and Israeli Arabs to mobilize and resist by all means (Hurriya News, November 18, 2023).

Solidarity with the Gaza Strip

► In Judea and Samaria, after Friday prayers, marches were held in support of the Gaza Strip and the "resistance." The IDF reportedly dispersed a march held in Hebron after a drone fired tear gas at the participants (Wafa, November 17, 2023). It was also reported that operatives of the PA's security forces in civilian clothes had detained three students from Birzeit University at the end of a support march held in Ramallah (Hurriya News, November 17, 2023; Al-Araby al-Jadeed, November 17, 2023).



Right: The march in Ramallah attended by PLO Executive Committee member Ramzi Rabah and senior Fatah figure Sabri Sidam (QudsN X account, November 17, 2023). Left: Arrests at the end of the march in Ramallah (QudsN, November 17, 2023)

Palestinian Authority

► **Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority**, addressed **American President Joe Biden** in a televised speech calling on him to intervene immediately to stop the "aggression," the humanitarian disaster and the genocide and to provide aid to the Palestinians under siege in the Gaza Strip. He also called for urgent intervention to stop Israeli attacks and "settler terrorism" in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem for fear of an imminent explosion (Wafa, November 18, 2023).

- ▶ **Josep Borrell, EU foreign policy chief**, met with Mahmoud Abbas and discussed ways to end the war. He noted that in the immediate term, the EU demanded practical solutions, from humanitarian ceasefires to the release of abductees, and in the long term it called for support for the Palestinian Authority to control the Gaza Strip. He urged to redouble efforts to achieve peace based on the two-state solution (Josep Borrell's X account, November 17, 2023).
- ▶ **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** met with the Greek foreign minister and demanded that he pressure Israel to stop the war in the Gaza Strip and allow humanitarian aid to be brought in. Shtayyeh stressed his opposition to the separation between the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria because, he claimed, Gaza was an integral part of the Palestinian state. He also condemned Israel's decision to deduct PA aid to the Gaza Strip from the tax revenues (Wafa, November 16, 2023).
- ▶ **Riyadh al-Maliki, PA foreign minister**, met with UNICEF deputy director general to discuss UN efforts to protect the civilians of the Gaza Strip, especially children (PA ministry of foreign affairs Facebook page, November 16, 2023). Al-Maliki also met with Josep Borrell and called on the European Union to exert pressure on Israel to stop the aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria. He also stressed the need to allow urgent entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip (PA foreign ministry Telegram channel, November 17, 2023).
- ▶ Hamas condemned Josep Borrell's press conference in Ramallah, saying they held him responsible for justifying "the crimes of the Israeli occupation, which massacres women and children." According to the statement, the United States and the European Union are violating international law by giving the green light to commit more and more crimes and massacres (Hamas Telegram channel, November 17, 2023).
- ▶ As part of Jordan's efforts to support the residents of Judea and Samaria, the Jordanian army, under the royal family's instructions, reportedly sent equipment to Nablus to establish a field hospital that includes two operating rooms, two intensive care rooms, 15 hospital beds for patients, a laboratory, a pharmacy and an X-ray examination room (Ammon News Agency X account, November 16, 2023).



**A Jordanian army field hospital for the residents of Nablus
(Ammon News Agency, November 16, 2023)**

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Iran

► During a visit to an exhibition of the achievements of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) aerospace arm, **Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei** said that the "Zionist regime" had been defeated in the Gaza Strip and had so far failed to realize its goal of eliminating Hamas despite its extensive attacks. He added that despite Israel's advanced military capabilities, it had not been able to overcome an adversary that did not possess any of those capabilities. Khamenei noted some Muslim countries did not condemn Israel enough and they had to deny it the supply of energy and goods and sever diplomatic relations with it, at least for a limited period (Tasnim, November 19, 2023).

► **Esmail Qaani, commander of the IRGC's Qods Force**, sent a communiqué to **Mohammed Deif, commander of Hamas' military-terrorist wing**, congratulating him on the Hamas attack on October 7. In his communiqué, Qaani said Hamas had proven the weakness and fragility of the "Zionist regime" in the attack. It was also stated in the communiqué that Palestine and the region would not be the same as they were before the al-Aqsa Storm, and that the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip was capable of initiative and innovation. Qaani stressed that the brothers in the "axis of Jerusalem and the resistance" were united with Hamas, they would not allow Israel to realize its goals in Gaza and Palestine and would do whatever was necessary in the historic conflict (al-Mayadeen, November 16, 2023).

► **Hossein Salami, commander of the IRGC**, said at a conference in Esfahan that Gaza would soon become the burial place of the Zionists and that Israel was behaving madly like a dying animal, making a lot of noise before it died. He praised the young Palestinians facing the

Israeli tanks, claiming that Israel had lost 180 tanks so far, constituting more than ten percent of all the tanks in its possession. Salami added that young Palestinians were adapting themselves to the new conditions, and that this was the beginning of Israel's military, political, moral, economic and intelligence quagmire. Just as the enemy did not expect the previous storm [the al-Aqsa Storm], another storm was to be expected that would lead to the collapse of Israel (IRNA, November 16, 2023).

► On November 18, 2023, rallies were held throughout Iran in support of the Palestinians. **Hossein Salami, commander of the IRGC**, said at a rally in Tehran that the al-Aqsa Storm had been the most extraordinary surprise operation in human history and the answer to the injustices and crimes of Britain, France, the United States and the "Zionist regime" against the Palestinian people over the past hundred years. He noted the Hamas attack had proved that American aid could not save Israel from collapse because American aid usually came too late. The Hamas attack also proved that the geographical distance between the existence of the "Zionist regime" and its elimination was 80 kilometers and the time distance was 48 hours. Salami strongly criticized Western support for Israel, saying that it would not prevent the early collapse of the Zionists, which would happen even sooner than Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei predicted. He declared that Gaza and Palestine were on their way to victory. He said the land belonged to those who launched several thousand dollars' worth of missiles at Merkava tanks worth millions of dollars. Hamas and the PIJ could not be destroyed, and Palestine and its young fighters could not be destroyed as well (Tasnim, November 18, 2023).

► **Hossein-Amir Abdollahian, Iranian foreign minister**, said in an interview with The Financial Times that Iran had conveyed messages to the United States through the Office of the Protection of American Interests at the Swiss Embassy in Tehran that it was not interested in expanding the war, but warned the United States that it could be inevitable if Israeli attacks in Gaza and the West Bank continued. He said once again that Hezbollah, the Palestinian organizations and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq, Syria and Yemen were not Iranian proxies and operated independently. He stressed, however, that these groups were not indifferent to the killing of Muslims and Arabs in Palestine (The Financial Times, November 17, 2023).

► **Gholam-Ali Haddad Adel, former speaker of the Iranian parliament and a member of the Expediency Discernment Council**, warned against Iran's entry into the war in the Gaza Strip, which, he claimed, could lead to war between Iran and the United States. In a television interview, Adel said that Israel wanted to turn the conflict in the Gaza Strip into a war between

Iran and the United States, and that for years it had been trying to incite the Americans to war against Iran. He noted that strategically speaking, it was unclear whether Iran's entry into the war would serve the Palestinian cause (Tabnak, November 18, 2023).

Activity of pro-Iranian militias

Iraq and Syria

► In several announcements, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for two drone attacks on the American Harir base in northern Iraq, the Ayn al-Assad base in western Iraq, and Tal Bidr and the al-Tanf base in Syria (the Islamic Resistance Telegram channel, November 17-19, 2023).

► The United States Department of the Treasury imposed new sanctions on Iraqi militias supported by Iran. The sanctions were reportedly imposed, inter alia, on Kata'ib Hezbollah elements responsible for the recent attacks against the United States and its partners in Iraq and Syria. It was noted that the sanctions had been imposed to send a message that the United States would use all the means at its disposal to deal with those who tried to exploit the situation in the Gaza Strip for their own purposes (Treasury Department website, November 17, 2023).

► **Abu Ali al-Askari, spokesman for the Iraqi pro-Iranian Kata'ib Hezbollah militia**, said in response that it was a "ridiculous step" that showed stupidity and lack of connection to reality among American decision-makers. He noted that those actions would not deter them and that they were acting according to a strategy of eroding the enemy by planning the intensity of the escalation, methods of action and its timing (Abu Ali al-Askari's Telegram channel, November 19, 2023). The Iraqi pro-Iranian Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada militia said that the inclusion of militia secretary general Abu Alaa al-Wala'i on the sanctions list was "a cause for pride" (Saberin News Telegram channel, November 17, 2023).

Yemen

► **Yahya Saria, spokesman for the Houthi movement's armed forces**, said that following the Israeli-American aggression and the daily massacres against the Gaza Strip, they announced that ships bearing the Israeli flag, ships operated by Israeli companies and ships owned by Israeli companies were considered targets for them. He called on civilians working aboard the ships to leave them and called on other ships to stay away from them (Yahya Saria's Telegram account, November 19, 2023) The movement also posted a video on social media threatening to attack Israeli ships (Military Analysis Telegram channel, November 19, 2023).

► initial report: The Houthis announced they had taken over an Israeli-owned ship in the Red Sea (al-Arabiya, November 19, 15:15, 2023). According to the IDF spokesman, it was not an Israeli ship and there were no Israeli crew members on board (IDF spokesman, November 19, 2023).



**From the video threatening to attack Israeli ships
(Military Analysis Telegram channel, November 19, 2023)**

► In activity sponsored by the Yemeni government in support of al-Aqsa, with the participation of the Hamas representative in Yemen, one of the speakers was **Dr. Majdi Rashad Azzam, senior PIJ figure in Yemen**, who said that the “axis of resistance” and the PIJ were ready to continue fighting in the campaign for another year and that they could face Israel alone despite the Arabs' betrayal (September 26 website, November 18, 2023).



Majdi Azzam on the left (X account of Hamoud Mohammad Sharaf from Yemen, July 4, 2023)

► The Pentagon reported that a UAV launched from Yemen on November 15, 2023, flying in the direction of the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner, which was sailing in international waters in the Red Sea, had been intercepted by it (USNI News, November 16, 2023). The al-Arabiya correspondent in Washington reported that the Pentagon spokeswoman had reported that the aircraft launched from Yemen was not directed at the American warship, but came very close to it, so the ship decided to intercept it (al-Arabiya correspondent's X account, November 17, 2023).

The Arab Arena

Security conference in Bahrain

► A security conference was held in Bahrain with the participation of Arab foreign ministers as well as **Josep Borrell, EU foreign minister**. During the conference, **Salman bin Hamad, Crown Prince of Bahrain**, declared that "now is the time for direct talks" and called on Hamas to release women and children in exchange for the release of Palestinian women and children imprisoned in Israel who were not combatants. He said the situation in the Gaza Strip was intolerable and condemned the October 7 attack and Israel's response (Reuters, November 18, 2023).

► **Ayman al-Safadi, Jordanian foreign minister**, said Jordan would do everything to prevent the uprooting of the Palestinians and that it was a "war crime" that they would never allow to happen because it meant a direct threat to Jordan's national security. He also expressed doubt about Israel's ability "to eliminate Hamas" (Reuters, November 18, 2023).

► **Faisal bin Farhan, Saudi foreign minister**, met on the sidelines of the security conference in Bahrain with EU foreign minister Josep Borrell, discussed with him the war in Gaza and called on the international community to stand against Israel's violations of international law in the Gaza Strip (Saudi foreign ministry X account, November 18, 2023).

Egypt

► In a telephone conversation between **Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** and **French President Emmanuel Macron**, el-Sisi stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire and expanding the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. He also reviewed Egypt's efforts to receive wounded Palestinians and evacuate foreign nationals. Both sides agreed on the importance of finding urgent solutions to the current crisis and working to secure the entry of humanitarian aid (spokesman of the Egyptian presidency Facebook page, November 18, 2023).

► **Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry** spoke with his American counterpart, **Antony Blinken**. The two discussed developments in the crisis in the Gaza Strip and international and regional efforts to deal with its humanitarian consequences. Shoukry stressed that the Security Council resolution regarding the pauses in the Gaza Strip had to be implemented (al-Qahera, November 17, 2023).

Jordan

► **King Abdullah II of Jordan** met with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. He stressed the need to act immediately for a ceasefire, protect the residents and ensure the arrival of humanitarian aid. He also said Israel's continued activity in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem would lead to an explosion of the situation in the region (Jordanian official news agency Petra, November 19, 2023).

► **Ayman al-Safadi, Jordanian foreign minister**, said that due to "Israeli violence," they would not sign an energy and water exchange agreement with Israel and would do everything they could to help the Palestinian people. He said the world had to face the fact that Israel was destroying what had been built over decades, and that "this is an ugly war of revenge." He said they were making a joint effort to demand an end to the war and bring urgent humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip (al-Mamlaka, November 16, 2023).

Qatar

► **American President Joe Biden** spoke by phone with **Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad** to discuss the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Qatar News Agency, November 17, 2023).

► **Mohammed bin Abdulrahman, Qatari foreign minister and prime minister**, met with **Brett McGurk, White House coordinator for Middle East and North African Affairs**, and **Barbara Leaf, Assistant Secretary of State**. Abdulrahman noted the need to invest diplomatic, regional and international efforts to achieve an immediate ceasefire. He also highlighted Qatar's ongoing efforts in the mediation for the release of the abductees. He noted that the ongoing attacks exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and complicated his efforts (Qatar News Agency, November 18, 2023).

Syria

► The Syrian foreign ministry said the world did not need further proof of the nature of Israel's leadership and that tanks and planes had not been employed with such ferocity since World War II. The ministry warned against Israel's continued actions, noting Israel had to take responsibility for its crimes (Syrian News Agency, November 16, 2023).

The International Arena

International Criminal Court

► The Office of the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague confirmed that it was conducting an investigation into the war in the Gaza Strip ("in the State of Palestine"). The investigation, which began on March 3, 2021, includes dealing with events

that have occurred in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria since June 13, 2014, including East Jerusalem, and continues until Hamas attacked the Israeli communities near the border with the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023. The website states that the prosecutor's office continues its involvement with all relevant parties, including national authorities, civil society, survivor groups or international partners, to advance the investigation (The Hague ICC website, November 17, 2023). According to the statement, it appears that it attached the investigation into the October 7, 2023, attacks to the investigation already underway by the ICC.

European Union

► **European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen** met in Cairo with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to discuss "the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. During her stay in Egypt, she also visited the Rafah crossing (European Commission president's X account, November 18, 2023).

United States

► **American National Security Council Spokesman John Kirby** said the United States assessed that Hamas was using al-Shifaa Hospital as a command center and possibly also as a weapons storage facility, noting that they were confident in their intelligence and assessments regarding Hamas' activity in the hospital (Reuters, November 16, 2023).

France

► The French foreign ministry spokeswoman said Israel had no right to decide the future of the Gaza Strip, which should be part of a Palestinian state. She said only 50 out of 100 tons of French aid had entered the Gaza Strip. She added that France condemned settler violence in Judea and Samaria and that it was an ongoing terrorist policy aimed at uprooting Palestinians. She urged the Israeli government to ensure the safety of the Palestinians (Reuters, November 16, 2023).

Germany

► **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** paid an official visit to Germany. At a joint press conference with **German Chancellor Olaf Scholz**, Erdoğan stressed the importance of Turkey and Germany's contribution to a humanitarian ceasefire and condemned Israel's actions (Anadolu News, November 18, 2023). Scholz said Germany condemned Hamas "unequivocally" and stressed that Israel had the right to defend itself in accordance with international law. But he said that what the residents of the Gaza Strip were going through also saddened Germany. Scholz noted that he and Erdoğan had very different views on the

Middle East conflict, hence the importance of their conversation. Scholz announced that Germany would provide aid worth €160 million to the Gaza Strip (Scholz's X account, November 18, 2023).

► Erdoğan concluded his visit by saying that Israel had 10,000 Palestinian hostages. They would let Germany work for their release, while at the same time, they would work to free the abductees held by Hamas. Erdoğan also said that with the help of thousands of lawyers, they would file complaints against the "massacres taking place in Gaza," and that if a ceasefire was reached, Turkey would help rebuild the damaged infrastructure in the Gaza Strip (Anadolu News, November 18, 2023).

South Africa

► **South African President Cyril Ramaphosa** announced that the country had appealed to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague to investigate alleged war crimes committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip (AP, November 16, 2023).

Global Jihad

► In recent weeks, Israeli security forces have detained three residents of Umm Tuba in their 20s, in East Jerusalem on suspicion of belonging to ISIS. They were detained before they joined the fighting in the ranks of the organization abroad. A search of their homes revealed cash, books and various materials related to the organization's ideology. The investigation revealed that they had recently pledged allegiance to ISIS and contacted operatives abroad via social media to join the fighting (Israel Police Force X account, November 16, 2023).

► The editorial of ISIS's weekly Al-Nabā' dealt with the joint conference of the Arab League and the Islamic Summit held in Saudi Arabia about a week ago. According to the article, these are conferences of the "tyrants" of the Arab and Islamic world who are too weak to oppose Jews and Christians, and anyone who wants to help Muslims in "Palestine" must act against the Arab armies before acting against the Jews. The article claims that the Muslim "tyrants" want to extinguish the flames in the Gaza Strip so that they will not reach them later. The writer concludes by stating that the problem lies with the leaders of the Arab countries and that they and their armies should be regarded as enemies of Islam and the front line of defense of the Jews, and the only solution is a war of jihad against them, because without jihad fighting against these "tyrants," Islam will not return "Palestine" and Muslims in "Palestine" will continue to be killed by the Jews (Telegram, November 16, 2023).

