



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., November 20, 2023

Northern Arena

- 263 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:** IDF forces continued the integrated ground maneuver, focusing mainly on the northern Gaza Strip and Gaza City. Palestinian officials reported IDF activity at the Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip. The IDF spokesman exposed Hamas terrorist activity inside Shifa Hospital, including a 55 meter (about 60 yards) tunnel passing directly under the hospital intended for Hamas activity. He also revealed that Israeli abductees had arrived at the hospital and that one of them was murdered within its walls. Hamas denied the reports.

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 352 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 abductees were recovered by IDF forces.

► **The Gaza Strip:** Jordan sent equipment into the Gaza Strip for the construction of a second field hospital in Khan Yunis. Palestinians, including the Palestinian Authority, exploited an

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

investigation published in Israel² according to which some of the Nova Festival participants may have been killed by Israeli security force fire, a reinforcement of the [fictitious] narrative that Hamas terrorist operatives did not harm civilians during the attack on October 7.

► **The northern arena:** In Lebanon, Hezbollah continued attacking IDF positions along the border. Hezbollah reported carrying out about 15 attacks. The IDF responded by attacking Hezbollah targets with artillery fire and airstrikes.

► **Judea and Samaria:** Vehicles were shot at in the Salfit area. No casualties were reported.

► **Yemen:** The Houthis hijacked a ship, which they claimed was Israeli, and captured the crew. They claimed the operation was carried out “in support of the Palestinians,” who, along with Iran, praised the action. The Iranian foreign minister claimed we were witnessing the first stage of the spread of the war by the “resistance groups.”³

The Combat Arena

IDF activity on the ground

► **The integrated ground maneuver:** The IDF continued its ground maneuver in a number of locations in the Gaza Strip, detaining nakhba terrorist-operatives, rocket-firing operatives, demolitions operatives, snipers and logistics personnel. They were questioned and provided information about the location of terrorist organization tunnels, warehouses and weapons, digging the tunnels and recruitment processes. About 100 of them were brought to Israel for further questioning, including some nakhba terrorists who carried out the attack on October 7 (IDF spokesman, October 19, 2023).

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan,** claimed there had recently been an escalation in the rate of "Israeli massacres", whose objective was to displace the Palestinians by force. He claimed that IDF forces' finding shafts here and there was not proof of its claims, since did not hide that the tunnels extend “along the streets of the Gaza Strip” (Masrawy website, November 19, 2023).

² The Israel Police Force denied the allegations in the report.

³ Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.



IDF activity in the Gaza Strip (IDF website, November 20, 2023)

The hospitals as centers of Hamas terrorist activity

Shifa Hospital

► The IDF spokesman revealed the findings of the IDF forces during their activities at Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, which proved that despite Hamas' denials, Shifa Hospital was used as a center of terrorist activity (IDF spokesman, November 19, 2023):

- ◆ A tunnel dug to a depth of ten meters (about 11 yards) and 55 meters (about 60 yards) long was exposed, its route passing under the hospital. The tunnel shaft was exposed in the hospital grounds. Regarding the tunnel, **Zaher Jabarin, who holds the prisoner's portfolio in Hamas**, claimed Israel falsified the facts when it claimed the presence of Israeli prisoners and the Hamas leadership in the tunnels under the Shifa Medical Center. He also noted that before the IDF entered the hospital, Hamas had called for a visit by a neutral international commission to inspect it. He also mentioned the “testimonies of several foreign doctors and nurses who worked at the hospital,” who [allegedly] told the international community that there were no tunnels or fighters in the hospital (al-Jazeera Mubasher website, November 20, 2023).



The tunnel shaft in the hospital grounds (IDF spokesman website, November 19, 2023)

◆ A number of abductees were brought in to the hospital grounds on October 7. One of the female soldiers who was abducted and whose body was found by the IDF forces and returned to Israel, was injured, brought to the hospital and murdered there. In response, **senior Hamas terrorist Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed that as they had already stated in the past, they “transferred many of the abductees to the hospitals for medical treatment” (Hamas Telegram channel, November 19, 2023).



Right: October 7, 2023, 10:55 a.m., abducted Israeli accompanied by armed Hamas terrorists in a Shifa Hospital corridor. Left: Hamas terrorist operatives outside the room where the abductee was brought (IDF spokesman's website, November 19, 2023)

◆ A vehicle similar to the one used by Hamas terrorists in the October 7 invasion was found in the hospital, loaded with weapons. IDF military vehicles taken by the terrorists were also brought to the hospital compound (IDF spokesman, November 19, 2023).



Right: The vehicles of the terrorists at the entrance to the hospital. Left: an IDF vehicle that was brought to the hospital (IDF spokesman's website, November 19, 2023)

► During the activities of the IDF forces at the hospital on November 19, 2023, a delegation from the World Health Organization (WHO) visited Shifa Hospital. According to the delegation,

the situation there was “difficult” because supplies had been cut off and several wards had been destroyed (QudsN X account, November 19, 2023).



Visit of the World Health Organization (WHO) delegation to the [well-lit] Shifa Hospital (QudsN X account, November 19, 2023)

The Indonesian Hospital

- ▶ According to media reports, during the past day, the Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip was a center of IDF activity. **Dr. Muneir al-Barash, director general of the Hamas-controlled the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip**, said the hospital was surrounded by tanks and snipers. He said that there was a medical staff of 200 people, as well as “thousands of Gazans” who had taken shelter inside and outside the hospital (aljazeera.net X account, November 20, 2023). **Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip**, claimed that after the IDF attacks, the hospital could “no longer function” and that in coordination with international organizations, they were safely evacuating medical staff and the Gazans who had taken shelter in the hospital (al-Ghad TV, November 20, 2023).
- ▶ Hamas condemned the IDF's activity in the Indonesian Hospital, claiming it caused 12 deaths and dozens of wounded, including members of the medical staff, patients and displaced persons. Hamas called on the international community to intervene to protect the last health facility operating in the northern Gaza Strip (Hamas Telegram channel, November 20, 2023).
- ▶ **Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) spokesman Musab al-Breem** called the IDF activity in the hospital a “barbaric crime and a heinous massacre,” a continuation of the “violations of international and humanitarian law committed by the IDF forces” with the backing and support of the United States government. He claimed the objective of the activity was to put an end to the Palestinian presence in the northern Gaza Strip, reoccupy and annex it (PIJ media information office, November 20, 2023).



IDF tanks near the Indonesian hospital (Hassan Aslih's X account, November 20, 2023)

► **Aerial activity:** Israeli Air Force aircraft continued to operate in the Gaza Strip to eliminate terrorist squads, attack terrorist targets and locate weapons and military equipment. During the past day, three company commanders of Hamas' military-terrorist wing were killed.



The IDF attacks targets in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman's website, November 20, 2023)



The IDF attacks weapons warehouse and Hamas terrorists (IDF spokesman's website, November 20, 2023)



Israeli Air Force aircraft attack in west Rafah (QudsN X account, November 20, 2023)

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

► During the past day, several dozen rockets were fired at the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip. No casualties or damage were reported.

Israeli casualties

► According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7, approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 388 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; four were released alive, one was extracted by IDF forces and two bodies were recovered by the IDF and brought to Israeli territory.

The issue of the abductees

► Zaher al-Jabarin, a member of Hamas' political bureau and who holds the prisoner portfolio, said no ceasefire agreement had been reached and Israel was delaying the hostage exchange deal. He claimed that from the beginning they said negotiations would not be held under fire (Filastin al-Yawm, November 20, 2023).

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The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

► The Hamas government media information bureau in Gaza reported that as of 7:00 p.m., November 19, 2023, the number of dead stood at 13,000 and the number of wounded at 30,000

(Facebook page of the Hamas government media information bureau in Gaza, November 19, 2023).

Aid for the Gaza Strip

- **Abdullah II, King of Jordan**, spoke with the staff of the Jordanian Field Hospital in Gaza and with its commander, Tha'er al-Khatib, to discuss the situation at the hospital. Abdullah called attacking medical staff in hospitals a "heinous crime" and said measures would be taken to deal with the issue. Reportedly, so far seven medical personnel have been injured by Israeli attacks. (Jordanian State News Agency, November 19, 2023).
- The Hamas-controlled Gaza crossings authority announced that 40 trucks of equipment had been brought in through the Rafah crossing for the Jordanian field hospital (al-Ghad TV, November 20, 2023). The equipment is for the construction of another Jordanian field hospital in Khan Yunis during the next 48 hours. A Jordanian medical team of 50 doctors is expected to arrive (Mamlaka, November 20, 2023).



Humanitarian aid for Gaza from Saudi Arabia and the UAE lands at the El Arish airport (al-Ghad TV, November 19, 2023)

The Rafah Crossing

- Ambulance teams of the Palestinian Red Crescent transferred 28 premature babies from Shifa Hospital through the Rafah Crossing for treatment in Egyptian hospitals (Hamza al-Masri's Telegram channel, November 20, 2023).

UNRWA

- **Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA commissioner general**, relating to the accusation that Israel attacked two of the agency's schools, claimed it was further proof that no one and no place was safe in the Gaza Strip. He said the war had reached a point of no return, as neither party

“respected the rules” and openly disregarded the loss of life (UNRWA website, November 19, 2023).

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

► **Nasser Abu Sharif, PIJ representative in Iran**, claimed that the minimum responsibility of the Islamic world was to impose sanctions on Israel for its [alleged] "crimes" against the Palestinians. He called on the regional Islamic countries to sever their relations with Israel regarding energy, stop their aid to Israel and impose sanctions on it (Fars Agency, November 19, 2023).

Denying the murder of the Nova Festival party-goes by Hamas terrorists

► An article was published in Haaretz (and denied by the Israel Police Force) claiming that a police investigation indicated that some of the victims at the Nova Festival on October 7, 2023, had been killed by the IDF and police gunfire because of the chaos that prevailed there. Palestinian figures opportunistically rushed to exploit the “report” and claim that the victims were killed by Israel to justify its attacks on the Gaza Strip.

► **Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** claimed that the investigation by the Israeli police, which [allegedly] “confirmed” that an Israeli fighter jet attacked the party near the Reim on October 7, “proved the lie of the Israeli narratives based on fabricated stories and lies according to which the ‘resistance’ [terrorists] attacked civilians. Israel’s objective was to justify the aggression, massacres and genocide of the residents of the Gaza Strip.” He added that it also “proved the lie of the Israeli narratives presented during the war, by which Israel also justified the assaults on Rantisi Hospital and Shifa Medical Center, attacking schools and places of worship and killing thousands of civilians” (Shehab X account, November 19, 2023) .

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** held a press conference in Beirut where he spoke at length about the investigation by the Israeli police, which he claimed “concluded that Hamas had not been not aware of the existence of the party,” while the Israeli authorities knew about its date, location and details, including the fact that 4,000 people were participating, including foreign citizens. He claimed the police investigation “confirms that the aggression against the Gaza Strip was based on lies spread by Israel's leaders” and supported by the United States and other Western countries. He said the attack did not stop with the revelers, but also extended to attacks on civilian homes, which the army chiefs

believed contained hostages, which increased the number of civilians killed. Hamdan [falsely] claimed that harming civilians was not a Hamas goal (al-Jazeera TV, November 20, 2023).

► The PA echoed the narrative. Its foreign ministry accused Israel of killing the party goers, claiming that according to the Israeli media, a preliminary police investigation "proved" that Israeli helicopters attacked the Israeli civilians at the festival. The foreign ministry also claimed the Israeli Air Force was behind the great destruction in the area and in some of the kibbutzim after the implementation of a directive which, claimed the foreign ministry, "allows the police and the army to kill everyone." Therefore, the ministry claimed the investigation cast doubt on the Israeli reports about the destruction and killing committed by the terrorists (PA foreign ministry Facebook page, November 19, 2023). Shortly after the announcement was published it was removed from the Facebook page.



PA foreign ministry statement (PA foreign ministry Facebook page, November 19, 2023)

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The Northern Arena

Lebanon

► During the past day, Hezbollah continued its attacks on IDF posts and Israeli cities, towns and villages along the northern border. The attacks included mortar shells and anti-tank missiles, small arms fire, and rocket and drone launches. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 21 attacks, including the launching of four Burkan heavy rockets and three explosive drones (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, November 19 and 20, 2023). A fire broke out in the Biranit area (IDF spokesman, November 20, 2023).

- ▶ On October 20, 2023, about 25 launches into Israeli territory were identified, some of which were intercepted by the IDF. In addition, three UAVs hit near an IDF post, with no casualties (IDF spokesman, October 20, 2023).
- ▶ The IDF responded with tank and artillery fire, and fighter jets attacked Hezbollah targets in Lebanese territory, including a military compound, a military post, and infrastructure for directing terrorism. In addition, a terrorist squad about to launch anti-tank missiles in the Mirwaheen area was attacked (IDF spokesman, November 19 and 20, 2023).

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Judea, Samaria, and the Palestinian Authority

Terrorist attacks

- ▶ On the night of November 19, 2023, shots were fired at Israeli vehicles near the village of al-Zawiya (west of Salfit). Several vehicles were damaged. No casualties were reported (IDF spokesman's X account, November 20, 2023).



An Israeli vehicle damaged by gunfire near al-Zawiya (Roya News website, November 19, 2023)

Preventive and counterterrorism activities

- ▶ The Israeli security forces continued their extensive counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria. During the past day, 16 wanted Palestinians were detained, two of them Hamas operatives. Since the beginning of the war in Gaza, approximately 1,850 wanted Palestinians have been arrested, about 1,100 of them Hamas operatives (IDF spokesman's website, November 20, 2023).

Palestinian Authority

- ▶ **Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority**, spoke with **French President Emmanuel Macron**. Abbas stressed that France had to exert pressure on Israel to "stop its aggression against the Palestinian people" and accelerate the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. He also noted the need for intervention to release the Palestinian tax revenues and thanked France for its calls advocating a ceasefire (Wafa, November 19, 2023).
- ▶ At the start of the weekly cabinet meeting, **Muhammad Shtayyeh, PA prime minister**, called for an end to the war in the Gaza Strip. He accused IDF forces of deliberate killing in revenge and to displace Gazans. He also called on the UN and the Red Cross to take responsibility and make their voices heard. Regarding salaries, he said Israel had deducted about 600 million shekels (about \$161 million) from the tax revenues, under the pretext that the PA government was transferring the funds to the residents of Gaza. He said a number of countries were working on the issue (Wafa, November 20, 2023).
- ▶ **Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, met in Doha with **Muhammad bin Abdulrahman, Qatar's prime minister and foreign minister**. They discussed actions to stop the "aggression against the Palestinian people" and bring aid into the Gaza Strip (Hussein al-Sheikh's X account, November 19, 2023).

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Iran

- ▶ **Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein-Amir Abdollahian** told a meeting of the Majles National Security and Foreign Policy committee, which had convened to discuss the developments in the Gaza Strip, that Israel had made no achievements in the fighting against the "Palestinian resistance." Committee spokesman Abolfazl Amo'i said that Abdollahian had noted that the United States was Israel's most important supporter and partner both in Israel's "operations room" and in international forums. He added that the continuation of the "crimes of the Zionist regime" was liable to lead to an expansion of the conflict. He added that the "resistance groups" [terrorist organizations] were exerting pressure on Israel prudently and there were many capabilities they had not yet employed. Abdollahian also claimed that world public opinion could no longer tolerate the "crimes of the Zionists" (ILNA, November 19, 2023).

- ▶ The Iranian foreign minister spoke by phone with his **Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov**, to discuss the situation in the Gaza Strip. They stressed the need to reach an immediate ceasefire and provide urgent aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip (IRNA, November 19, 2023).
- ▶ **Mohsen Rezaei, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)**, said that the war in the Gaza Strip would decide the fate of the “Zionist regime” and the “axis of resistance.” He claimed the “axis of resistance” would play a greater role in the future and the “Zionist regime” would be defeated in the war. According to him, the deeper Israel penetrated into the Gaza Strip, the deeper it would sink into the quagmire. He also said the “resistance forces” in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen were on Hamas’ side, and in the coming days, new fronts would be opened.
- ▶ **Mohammad-Reza Naqdi, head of the IRGC's coordination division**, told a conference in the city of Kerman that Hamas' attack had proved how close the victory of Palestine was and the fulfillment of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's promise to eliminate the "Zionist regime." He said that despite Israel's advanced technological and intelligence means, Hamas had managed to establish a missile factory and prepare its forces in an area half the size of Tehran. He added that the Zionists had failed militarily and intelligence-wise and their tanks were destroyed every day like mice. He added that the entire world knew that the "Zionist regime" was an American military base and that there were no civilians there [sic] (Fars, November 20, 2023).

Activity of pro-Iranian militias

Yemen

- ▶ After a series of threats from the Houthis, a cargo ship was hijacked near Yemen in the southern Red Sea. The ship left Turkey and was en route to India with an international crew; there were no Israelis on board. As far as is known, the ship belongs to the Ray shipping company, which is partly owned by Israeli businessman Rami Unger. The Israeli Prime Minister's Office said it was "an escalation in Iran's aggression against the citizens of the free world" (Ynet, November 19, 2023). According to the IDF spokesman, the hijacking of the cargo ship by the Houthis was a very serious incident on a global level (IDF spokesman's X account, November 19, 2023).



Right: The hijacked ship (al-Arabiya, November 19, 2023). Left: The takeover of the ship: several vessels surround the ship and Houthi fighters board it (Jenin al-Khadra Telegram account, November 19, 2023)

► A senior figure in the Houthi movement's political bureau, said that their forces had led an Israeli ship to the coast of Yemen and taken it over to support the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (al-Jazeera, November 19, 2023). The ship is the Galaxy Leader and there are reportedly 22 people on board (al-Arabiya, November 19, 2023).

► **Yahya Saria, spokesman for the Houthi movement's armed forces**, said that in accordance with instructions from commander Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, the forces had seized an Israeli ship in the Red Sea and led it to the coast of Yemen. He noted that their men were treating the ship's crew "in accordance with the instructions and values of Islam." He also said they would continue to carry out military operations against Israel until the "aggression" against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank stopped, and they called on all countries whose citizens work in the Red Sea to refrain from any work or activity with Israeli ships or Israeli-owned ships. He also reiterated the warning to Israeli ships (Yahya Saria's X account, November 19, 2023).



**Text of the announcement by the spokesman of the Houthi movement's armed forces
(Houthi Armed Forces Spokesman Yahya Saria's X account, November 19, 2023)**

► **Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein-Amir Abdollahian** told journalists that "we are witnessing the first stage of the expansion of the war by the resistance groups" and that if the possible scenarios for stopping "Israel's crimes" did not yield results, "we will probably witness a new situation in the region" (Fars, November 19, 2023).

► At the same time, **Nasser Kanani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry**, rejected Israel's claims about Iranian involvement in the Houthi takeover of the ship off the coast of Yemen. He said the "resistance organizations" [terrorist organizations] in the region were making their own decisions based on the interests of their people and were not under Iran's command. He said the "Zionist regime" was unable to recognize its strategic defeat at the hands of a "resistance organization" in Gaza and was trying to blame Iran to justify its defeat. He once again called on Muslim countries to impose an oil embargo on Israel and sever ties with it. He said the "Zionist regime" had not learned a lesson from its defeat and that it was successful in its crimes, but had not yet [allegedly] recorded any military victory (Tasnim, November 20, 2023).

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** addressed the hijacking of the ship at a press conference, saying that he saluted the Yemeni army for its recent action, calling it a "worthy measure" (Ansar Allah website, November 19, 2023).

► The **PIJ** praised the Yemeni army's efforts to support the "Palestinian resistance" through its "courageous actions" directed against Israeli interests, the most recent of which was halting

a cargo ship en route to Israel and detaining the people on board. According to the announcement, the “heroic and courageous operation” reflected Yemen's belief in its obligations to help the Palestinian cause and stand by the “resistance,” and was a true translation of the positions, without speeches and condemnations that Israel did not pay attention to (PIJ's information bureau Telegram channel, November 19, 2023).

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The Arab Arena

Meetings of Arab foreign ministers in China

► The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, the PA, China and Turkey held a summit meeting in China. They stressed that an immediate ceasefire had to be achieved and the killing of innocent civilians had to be stopped. They also noted that the uprooting of Palestinians had to be stopped and called for humanitarian aid to enter the Gaza Strip to prevent any disaster. The ministers also stressed the responsibility of the international community and the responsibility of the UN Security Council to act to stop Israel. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi expressed China's support for the two-state solution. Riyadh al-Maliki, PA foreign minister, claimed that “Israel is leading a war against the two-state solution and preventing freedom and life in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Jerusalem” (Wafa News Agency, November 20, 2023).

Egypt

► **Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** spoke with **Najib Mikati, prime minister of Lebanon's interim government**, to discuss developments in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria. They also discussed Egyptian and international efforts to achieve a ceasefire, protect the civilians of the Gaza Strip, and bring in humanitarian aid (al-Qahera, November 19, 2023).

Qatar

► **Mohammed bin Abdulrahman, Qatari prime minister and minister of foreign affairs**, met in his office with **Josep Borrell, EU foreign minister**. Bin Abdulrahman thanked Borrell on behalf of Qatar for the efforts to deliver humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip and stressed the need for a ceasefire. He said the international community had to bear responsibility for

the Palestinian issue. He also said Qatar continued its mediation efforts to release the prisoners (Qatari foreign ministry website, November 19, 2023).