



# Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., October 25, 2023

## Overview<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ **The southern sector:** The Israeli Air Force continued aerial attacks on terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, including the Hamas security forces. A senior military-terrorist wing operative was reported killed. IDF forces, led by the Israeli Navy, prevented a terrorist squad from reaching the Zikim area from the sea to carry out an attack. Rocket fire continued, although less intensively than initially. Barrages were launched towards the center of the country, the coastal plain and Samaria.
- ▶ **More than 1,400 civilian and soldier deaths have been reported; 220 civilians and soldier abductees** are still being held by the Palestinian terrorist organizations in Gaza. A senior Hamas figure warned Hamas would not release more hostages unless medical equipment and fuel were allowed to enter the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ **The Gaza Strip:** Sources in the Gaza Strip warn of a worsening humanitarian situation. Medical sources reported the collapse of the hospitals. Aid convoys continued arriving through the Rafah Crossing. Medical equipment was also dispatched to the hospitals by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- ▶ **The northern sector:** In Lebanon, the shooting at IDF posts and Israeli cities, towns and villages near the border continued. The IDF attacked Hezbollah facilities as well as squads which were firing rockets and launching anti-tank missiles. Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, said Hezbollah fatalities were be called "martyrs on the way to Jerusalem." Two mortar shells were fired from Syria and fell in an open area in the Golan Heights; no damage was reported. The IDF returned fire and attacked Syrian army military facilities from the air. The Syrians reported eight deaths.

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<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.

- ▶ **Judea and Samaria:** The IDF continued counterterrorism activities, focusing on the Jenin refugee camp. Six Palestinians were killed, four of them in Jenin. Mahmoud Abbas met with French President Emmanuel Macron.
- ▶ **Iran:** Senior Iranian officials called on the Islamic regimes for a united position against Israel.
- ▶ **The UN Security Council** at foreign ministers level, convened to discuss the situation. The UN secretary general gave a speech which provoked sharp criticism, claiming Hamas “did not operate in a vacuum” and that “its actions were the result of many years of ‘occupation.’”

## The Combat Arena

### IDF activity

- ▶ **Aerial activity:** The Israeli Air Force continued attacking Hamas terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, including tunnel shafts, military headquarters, joint operations rooms, weapons warehouses, compounds and headquarters of the Hamas security forces, as well as mortar shell and anti-tank missile launching positions. Also attacked were facilities and terrorist headquarters of the Hamas emergency forces, which had erected blockades to prevent the residents of Gaza from evacuating to the southern Gaza Strip. Several terrorist operatives were killed in the attacks, including Taysir Mubasher, commander of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades’ North Khan Yunis Battalion, who had previously commanded Hamas’ naval force and held several positions in the organization’s munitions production system (IDF spokesman, October 25, 2023).



**Israeli Air Force attacks on Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip  
(IDF spokesman’s website, October 25, 2023)**



**Attack on a tunnel shaft (IDF spokesman's website, October 25, 2023)**



**Right: Israeli Air Force attack on Jabalia (QudsN Twitter account, October 24, 2023). Left: Attack on Khan Yunis (QudsN Twitter account, October 25, 2023)**

► **Combined activities:** On October 24, 2023, Israeli Navy forces located a group of Hamas terrorists on the beach who had emerged through a tunnel shaft and were preparing to infiltrate the Zikim area from the sea. Israeli Navy, Air Force and ground forces attacked and prevented them from landing on the Zikim beach. Israeli Air Force aircraft and Navy forces attacked the tunnel shaft from which they had emerged and a weapons storehouse (IDF spokesman, October 24, 2023). Several terrorists were reported killed (Israeli media, October 25, 2023).



**Eliminating terrorists at sea (IDF spokesperson's website, October 25, 2023)**

► Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed a naval commando force had landed on the Zikim beach and was battling the IDF (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, October 24, 2023).

## Rocket fire

► Over the past day the terrorist organizations continued firing rockets at Israel, although less intensively than initially. Starting in the early afternoon, several barrages were launched at the center of the country, the coastal plain and northern Samaria. A house was damaged in Alfei Menashe; there were no casualties. On October 25, 2023, a rocket was fired at the northern Carmel area and another targeted Eilat, Israel's southernmost city. The Hamas military wing claimed responsibility for firing an R160 rocket at Haifa and an Ayash 250 rocket at Eilat (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, October 25, 2023).

► Since the beginning of the war, Israel has been attacked with more than 7,500 rockets and mortar shells. About 10% of them were failed launches which landed in the Gaza Strip.



**Right: A house in Alfei Menashe hit by rocket from Gaza (Fire and Rescue, Judea and Samaria district, October 24, 2023). Left: Debris from a rocket found in a house in Holon (Photo: David Israeli, October 24, 2023)**

## Israeli casualties

► **So far, more than 1,400 civilian and soldier deaths have been reported; 220 abducted civilians and soldiers are still held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.** About 30 of them are children and adolescents younger than 18 years of age and about 20 of them are elderly. Four abductees were returned to Israel.

## The issue of releasing the abductees

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** said Hamas would not release more hostages unless medical equipment and fuel were allowed to be delivered to the Gaza Strip. He claimed Hamas had released four hostages unconditionally for "humanitarian reasons," but if they were asked to release more, Hamas would "insist" the international community put more pressure on Israel to open the Rafah Crossing to allow medical supplies into Gaza. He added Israel had to stop its attacks on the Palestinians to make it possible to guarantee the release of the abductees (al-Shorouk website, October 24, 2023).

► **Zaher Jabarin, the deputy chairman of Hamas in the West Bank and responsible for the prisoner file in Hamas**, stated that their position regarding the captives was clear: non-Israeli citizens were their "guests." As for the Israelis, they had a different account to settle with them, and a different way of treating them. They were national security bargaining chips, and he did not want to elaborate (aljazeera.net, October 24, 2023).

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## The Gaza Strip

### Palestinian casualties

► The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in Gaza reported that as of 2 p.m., the number of dead in the Strip stood at 6,546, and the number of wounded at 17,439 (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, October 25, 2023).<sup>2</sup>

### The situation in the Gaza Strip

► UNRWA reported that as of the morning of October 25, 2023, about 600,000 residents had found shelter in 150 UNRWA facilities in the Gaza Strip (Ma'an, October 25, 2023). Thomas White, a senior UNRWA figure, reiterated that the shortages would have a negative effect on the agency's ability to provide clean water and medical services. He also claimed that the lack of fuel could lead to a situation where even if humanitarian aid did enter the Strip, there would be no fuel for trucks to collect it (CNN, October 25, 2023).

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<sup>2</sup> So far, neither the ministry of health in Gaza nor the ministry of health in Ramallah has issued a list of names of the Palestinian fatalities.

► **Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the ministry of health in Gaza**, held a press conference where he announced the complete collapse of the hospitals in the Gaza Strip. He claimed Israel's attacks had caused the deaths of 65 medical personnel and disabled 25 ambulances. He also claimed that 12 hospitals and 32 medical centers were non-functioning (al-Jazeera Mubasher, October 24, 2023). He called for the immediate delivery of fuel and medical equipment to enable the life-saving departments in the hospitals to resume their activities (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, October 24, 2023).

► **Subhi Qushta, director of maintenance and engineering at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis**, said the hospital needed fuel to continue providing medical services. He also claimed that due to generator attrition, they needed spare parts (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, October 24, 2023).



**Subhi Qushta, director maintenance and engineering at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, October 24, 2023)**

► However, for the second consecutive day, the Wafa news agency (subordinate to Mahmoud Abbas' office) reported the continued arrival of medical aid to the hospitals, a contribution from the World Health Organization (WHO). On October 24, 2023, medical aid arrived at al-Qsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah and on October 23, 2023, at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis (Wafa YouTube channel, October 24, 2023).



**A shipment of medical aid arrives at al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah  
(Wafa YouTube channel, October 24, 2023)**

## The Rafah Crossing

► According to UNRWA, since October 21, 2023, 54 humanitarian aid trucks have entered the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing (Ma'an, October 25, 2023).

## Hammas

► A delegation of Iran's Majles Commission of National-Security and Foreign-Policy, **led by its chairman, Wahid Jalalzadeh**, met in Qatar with **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**. They discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip, the cooperation between Iran and Hamas and Hezbollah's activities in south Lebanon. Jalalzadeh praised the "resistance [i.e., terrorist] activities" in Gaza since the outbreak of the war, and said that October 7 would go down in history as the day of the victory of the Palestinian resolve. He added the struggle was now global, and no longer only Palestinian or regional (Safa, 24 in October 2023). They also discussed the ongoing cooperation between Hamas and Iran, and praised the "resistance activity" [terrorist attacks on Israel] in south Lebanon, especially Hezbollah and its influence on the course of events, and emphasized the need to combine efforts (Palinfo, October 24, 2023).

► **Usama Hamdan, a senior Hamas official, and Ghazi Hamad, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, held a press conference in Beirut where Hamdan called on the Arab-Muslim countries and the UN to take political and moral responsibility and stop "Israel's aggression and crimes and massacres." He called on the countries to sever their relations with Israel, expel the ambassadors from the Arab-Muslim countries which maintained relations with it and stop all forms of normalization. He also called on the countries of the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to implement the boycott on Israel. Hamdan said the opening of the Rafah Crossing for the entry of very limited amounts of aid did not meet the

needs of the Palestinians or affect the scope of the humanitarian disaster. He appealed to the Arab-Muslim countries, the UN and all relevant parties to increase their efforts to open permanent humanitarian corridors, deliver sufficient fuel to the hospitals, bakeries and water pumps, bring in food, medicines and medical equipment, take the wounded Palestinians for treatment abroad, bring in equipment to clear the rubble and rescue those trapped under the ruins and evacuate the bodies of the dead. **Ghazi Hamad** said the chairman of the government monitoring committee in the strip told him the situation in Gaza could not be described. There were 40,000 displaced persons staying in al-Shifaa Hospital, and 1,400,000 displaced persons inside the Gaza Strip (CampsPostPlus Facebook page, October 24, 2023).



The press conference in Beirut (Lebanese News Agency, October 24, 2023)

## The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

► **PIJ spokesman Musab al-Bari** said the "Palestinian resistance" [terrorist organizations] was prepared for the scenario of an Israeli ground invasion. He said the attacks they carried out on IDF armored vehicles and concentrations of forces on the border were a message to Israel that the war would not be a picnic and would be a second defeat after the one on October 7. He claimed they were fighting against Israel and the United States, and there was an Arab-Islamic-Palestinian alliance fighting them, represented by the "resistance forces." He added that many fronts had sent messages which Israel had to understand, messages from Yemen, Syria and Iraq, and there was also the practical participation of Hezbollah (Hespress website, October 24, 2023).

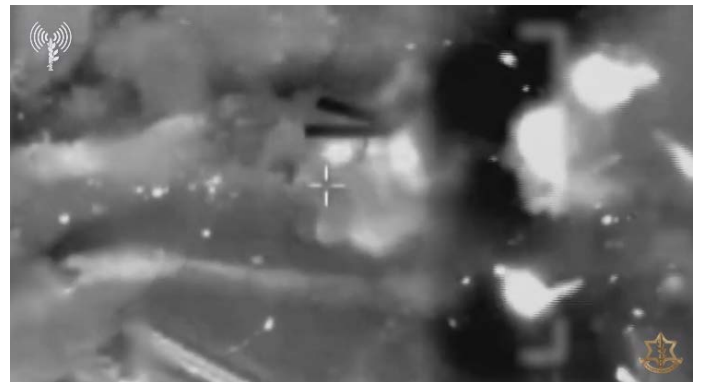
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## The Northern Arena

### Lebanon

#### The situation on the ground

► On October 24, 2023, shooting continued from south Lebanon, targeting the IDF posts and Israeli cities, towns and villages near the Lebanese border. IDF forces continued attacking mortar and anti-tank missile launchers. On the evening of October 24, 2023, a UAV attacked two terrorist squads that were firing mortars and anti-tank missiles at IDF positions in the Natua and al-Qosh region. Near Kibbutz Yiftah, the forces attacked another squad in Lebanese territory which was about to launch anti-tank missiles. In the Har Dov area, an aircraft attacked a squad and destroyed its weapons; meanwhile, aircraft attacked Hezbollah facilities in south Lebanon (IDF spokesman October 24 2023).



**Right: Israeli Air Force attack on Hezbollah terrorist facilities infrastructure. Left: The IDF attacks a terrorist squad (IDF spokesman's website, October 24, 2023)**

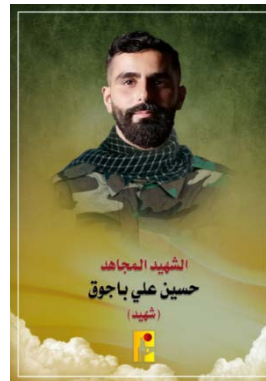
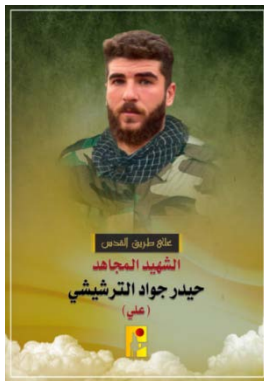
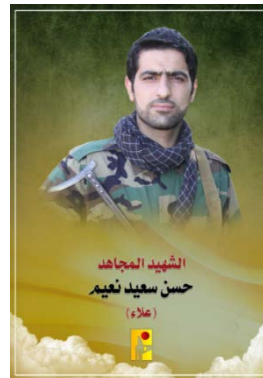
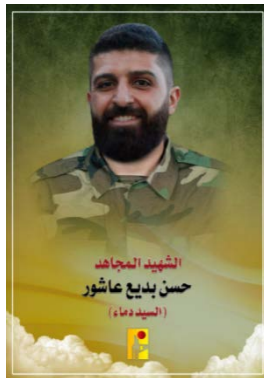
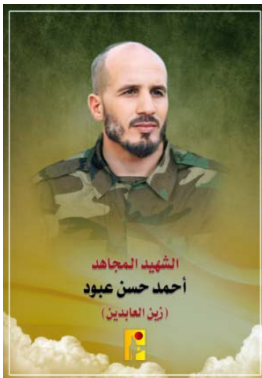
► Hezbollah claimed responsibility for several attacks, including using guided missiles and artillery to attack the "abandoned post" of Menara and the "Biranit military base" (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, October 24, 2023).

► On October 25, IDF forces attacked two squads about to shoot at Israeli territory. In the morning, the IDF attacked a terrorist squad which was about to fire anti-tank missiles at the Har Dov area, and in the afternoon, a squad about to fire at the Zar'it area (IDF spokesperson, October 25, 2023) .

#### Hezbollah casualties

► During the past day Hezbollah reported that ten operatives had been killed while "fulfilling their jihad duty." The reports did not mention the date or location of the events (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, October 24, 2023):

- ◆ Najib Muhammad Ali Zaher, aka Jawad, from the town of Bayt Yahoun in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Hassan Sayid Na'im , aka Alaa' , from the town of Sala' in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Hassan Badi' 'Ashour, aka al-Sayid Dama', from the town of Shaqra in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Ahmed Hassan Aboud, aka Zayin al-Abdin, from the town of Deir 'Aames in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Kamil Hussein Suidan, aka Sajed, from the town of Hanin in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Hossein Ali Bajuk, aka Shaheed, from the town of Ayta al-Sha'b in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Isma'il Hassan al-Mula, aka Ali, from the town of Hrabta in the Lebanon Valley.
- ◆ 'Adel Mahmoud Zaitar, aka Abu Ali, from the town of al-Qasr in the Lebanon Valley.
- ◆ Haidar Jawad al-Tarshishi, aka Ali, from the town of al-Nasiriyah in the Lebanon Valley.
- ◆ Jaafar Hashem Mufлах, aka Muhammad Ali, from the town of al-Khraibeh in the Lebanon Valley.





### Hezbollah casualties

(Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, October 24 and 25, 2023)

- ▶ According to a count carried out by the ITIC, at **least 27 Hezbollah operatives have been killed so far in clashes with IDF forces in south Lebanon**. In addition, two operatives of the Hezbollah-affiliated “Lebanese companies for resistance to the Israeli occupation,” four operatives of the PIJ’s military-terrorist wing (two from the Syrian arena and two from Lebanon) and three Hamas military-terrorist wing operatives were killed.<sup>3</sup> According to a report from Lebanon, **45 operatives were killed** (Ain al-Sham, October 25, 2023).<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ Given Hezbollah’s large number of casualties on the Lebanese border, **Hassan Nasrallah** sent a communiqué to the organization’s units and information institutions calling on them to refer to those killed since October 7, 2023 as "martyrs on the way to Jerusalem." He said that the designation was fitting for the current campaign as part of “Operation al-Aqsa Storm” (al-Mayadeen, October 25, 2023). Following Nasrallah's call, Hezbollah's report on October 25, 2023 called those killed "martyrs on the way to Jerusalem."

## UNIFIL

- ▶ **Aroldo Lázaro, UNIFIL commander**, stated that since the situation began escalating a few weeks ago, UNIFIL forces had remained in their positions and were carrying out their tasks according to Security Council Resolution 1701.<sup>5</sup> He claimed they were working with both sides

<sup>3</sup> The count was based on the names noted in claims of responsibility issued by the terrorist organizations involved in the clashes.

<sup>4</sup> An opposition website to the Syrian regime that defines itself as a "news center covering the news in the areas occupied by Assad militias" and it may be deliberately exaggerating the number of casualties.

<sup>5</sup> A resolution passed by the Security Council after the Second Lebanon War calling for a cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah and the deployment of an armed UN force and Lebanese army forces in south Lebanon, in order to prevent Hezbollah from continuing to operate in south Lebanon. It also called for the disarmament of Hezbollah.

to reduce escalation and “avoid misunderstandings” (UNIFIL Telegram channel, October 24, 2023).

## Hezbollah

► **Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general**, stated Hezbollah was “at the heart of the "resistance's" campaign to defend the Gaza Strip and fight the occupation and its aggression in Palestine and Lebanon." He added that Hezbollah's finger was on the trigger. He claimed Israel's "aggression" was not war, but “the murder of civilians,” for which the West was also responsible (Na'im Qassem’s Telegram channel, October 24, 2023).

► On an unspecified date, **Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general**, met in Lebanon with **Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general**, and **Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau**. They discussed events and developments in the Gaza Strip, as well as the clashes near the Lebanese border, and assessed international and regional positions. They also discussed the measures the members of the “axis of resistance” [Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, and the Houthis in Yemen] should take at this stage in order to achieve victory and stop the aggression in Gaza and West Bank. They agreed to continue daily coordination and the monitoring of developments (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, October 25, 2023).

## Lebanese government

► During his visit to south Lebanon, **Najib Mikati, prime minister of the interim government**, said south Lebanon had always paid the "defense tax" on Lebanese lands from a "violent entity." He called for a ceasefire in "Palestine and an end to Israeli crimes and to Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty.” **Lebanese Army Commander Joseph Aoun** said defending Lebanon was the army’s "natural role" with respect to the dangers it faced, mainly the "Israeli enemy." He said the army was monitoring developments and was on alert along the southern border (*al-Nashra*, October 24, 2023).

► After calling on its citizens to leave Lebanon immediately, the Saudi Arabian embassy in Lebanon evacuated the families of employees and diplomats through Beirut Airport on Saudi Air Force flights (a-Jadid Network, October 24, 2023).

## Syria

► On the evening of October 24, 2023, two mortar shell launches attacked Israel from Syria; the shells fell in an open area. No casualties or damage were reported. In response, IDF forces

fired artillery at the source of the shelling. Later, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Syrian army military facilities and mortar launching positions (IDF spokesman, October 24, 2023). It was later reported that the IDF had dropped leaflets warning the Syrian army, especially the 112<sup>th</sup> Brigade, that rocket fire from the area would lead to a harsh response from Israel (@hammam270 Twitter account, October 25, 2023).



**Text of the leaflet warning the Syrian army**  
 (@hammam270 Twitter account, October 25, 2023)

► Syrian TV, quoting a "military source," reported that "at around 1:45 a.m., Israel carried out an airstrike and hit several military outposts in the Daraa area." According to the report, eight military personnel were killed and seven were wounded (Syrian TV's Telegram channel, October 25, 2023).

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## Judea, Samaria, and the Palestinian Authority

### Events on the ground

► The Israeli security forces continued extensive counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria. Since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip, 930 Palestinians wanted for involvement in terrorist activities have been detained, 600 of them Hamas operatives (Israeli media, October 25, 2023). The security forces focused on the Jenin refugee camp, where terrorist operatives fired live ammunition and threw IEDs at them. A drone attacked the terrorists (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, October 25, 2023). The ministry of health in Ramallah reported four fatalities (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, October 25, 2023).

► During the past day, six Palestinians were killed (four in the Jenin refugee camp, one in Qalqilya and one in Qalandia). The ministry of health in Ramallah 102 fatalities since the beginning of the war (Wafa, October 25, 2023).

► The PIJ announced Arafat Yasser Hamdan, 25 years old, from the town of Bayt Sira in Ramallah, had died in an Israeli prison two days after his arrest (PIJ media information office Telegram channel, October 24, 2023). According to his family, Hamdan, who was arrested on October 22, suffered from juvenile diabetes (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, October 24, 2023). Zaher Jabarin, in charge of the Hamas prisoners' portfolio, called on the Palestinians and the families of prisoners to rise up in West Bank cities and clash with IDF soldiers and settlers (Safa, October 24, 2023).

### Palestinian Authority

► **Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority**, met with **French President Emmanuel Macron**. Abbas said they would no longer accept partial security or military solutions to the Gaza Strip which could escalate and drag the region into a regional or even global war. He called for an immediate cessation of aggression and stressed that they strongly condemned the uprooting of Palestinians from Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip and the killing of civilians on both sides. He also called for the release of prisoners on both sides (Sawa, October 24, 2023).

► During the visit, residents of Ramallah demonstrated and burned a picture of Emmanuel Macron, chanting slogans of support and solidarity with the residents of Gaza (QudsN Twitter account, October 24, 2023).



**Right: Mahmoud Abbas meets in Ramallah with French President Macron (Wafa, October 24, 2023). Left: Demonstrators in Ramallah burn a picture of French President Macron (QudsN Twitter account, October 24, 2023)**

## Iran

- ▶ **Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei** said the United States was fully complicit in the "crimes of the Zionist regime in the Gaza Strip" and was in fact the one managing them. He also said that the Islamic governments could not remain indifferent to the "criminals" and victory was guaranteed to the Palestinians. He said the blow Israel had suffered was strong and decisive and the "resistance" fighters were still ready to act. He added that the visits of the leaders of the "evil" Western countries to Israel showed that the disintegration of the "Zionist regime" worried them (website of the Supreme Leader of Iran, October 25, 2023)
- ▶ **Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi**, meeting with the **new Saudi ambassador to Tehran, Abdullah bin Saud al-Anzi**, said the lack of cohesion and a united position of Islamic countries was causing "the continued massacre and oppression of the Palestinians." He noted that a united position of the Muslim world could have more effectively prevented the oppression and aggression by the "Zionist regime" and its Western supporters, even during the "recent unprecedented crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza" (IRNA, October 24, 2023).
- ▶ **Amir Ashtiani, Iranian minister of defense**, said during a visit of the Defense Ministry's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND) that Iran's enemies knew that any mistake on their part would be met with a decisive response. He noted the enemies were aware of the Islamic Republic's defensive capabilities and the ability of its armed forces to identify and neutralize all types of threats (Tasnim, October 24, 2023).
- ▶ An op-ed piece published in the conservative Iranian newspaper *Hamshahri* (October 23, 2023) said Iran should not directly intervene in the war. According to the article, unlike the Iranian military intervention in Syria against ISIS, which was necessary, given its strategic importance for Iran, the story of Lebanon and Palestine and the historic struggle against the "Zionist regime" were another matter. In those arenas, local "resistance forces" supported by Iran operated as part of its efforts to strengthen the "resistance front" and weaken Israel. Hamas and the PIJ, the Hezbollah Brigades in Iraq and Hezbollah in Lebanon had to act first, and Iran, as a supporter that does not take its eyes off the arena, should watch from the sidelines.

### Activity of pro-Iranian militias

- ▶ The attacks against United States Army bases in Syria and Iraq continued. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for attacking the American base of Kharab al-Jir in

northeastern Syria (the network's Telegram channel, October 25, 2023). The Islamic Resistance in Iraq also claimed responsibility for attacking the Ain al-Assad base in Iraq with rockets. The al-Mayadeen network, citing its sources in Iraq, reported that "the rocket fire took place in the Hit area east of Baghdad." "Security sources" reported that two rockets were fired at the Ain al-Assad base. It was also reported that the rocket launcher was located about 50 kilometers (30 miles) southeast of the base (Reuters, October 24, 2023).

► The pro-Iranian militias in Syria and Iraq were joined by the Alwiyat al-Waad al-Haq militia, which announced that in light of the fighting in the Gaza Strip, they considered the American bases in Kuwait and the UAE "legitimate targets" (the militia's Telegram channel, October 24, 2023). According to a study published by the Washington Institute in 2021, Alwiyat al-Waad al-Haq had ties to the Iraqi Kata'ib Hezbollah militia and operated under the direct control of the Qods Force. In the past, the militia issued threats and claims of responsibility for attacks against the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

The United States Army's Central Command (CENTCOM) reported that 24 American military personnel had been wounded in the drone attacks against American bases in Syria and Iraq. It was also reported that all the wounded had returned to duty and that no damage had been done to the military facilities (NBC Network, October 25, 2023). "American officials" said the United States military was taking new steps to protect its forces in the Middle East. According to the sources, the measures included strengthening military patrols in the area, restricting access to bases where American forces were located, increasing intelligence gathering and strengthening defense measures (Reuters, October 24, 2023).

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## The Arab Arena

### Egypt

► At the military display marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Yom Kippur War, **Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** said Egypt dealt with all crises logically and patiently without the excessive use of force. He claimed Egypt was playing an important role in halting the escalation in the Gaza Strip and in trying to calm the situation and bring about a ceasefire. It was also investing efforts to help the residents of the Gaza Strip and alleviate their suffering (al-Qahara Network, October 25, 2023).

## Qatar

► **Majed Mohammad al-Ansari, spokesman for the Qatari Foreign Ministry**, said Israel's ground incursion into the Gaza Strip would complicate efforts to bring the prisoners home. He noted Qatar's main priority was the safe return of the prisoners, unharmed (Reuters, October 25, 2023).

## The International Arena

### United Nations Security Council

► The UN Security Council convened on October 24, 2023, to discuss the war in the Gaza Strip. The Security Council emphasized the grave humanitarian situation in Gaza and called for immediate assistance, an immediate ceasefire and protection of civilians (UN website, October 24, 2023).

► In a speech that provoked anger and criticism, **UN Secretary-General António Guterres** claimed on the one hand, that he unequivocally condemned Hamas' shocking terrorist acts on October 7, 2023, and that the abductees should be released unconditionally. However, on the other, he noted that Hamas attacks "had not taken place in a vacuum," but after the Palestinians "were subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation." He said Palestinian complaints could not justify Hamas attacks, but those attacks also could not justify the collective punishment of Palestinians. He expressed his grave concern about the "clear violations of international humanitarian law taking place in Gaza." **Riyadh al-Maliki, PA foreign minister**, stressed the need to "stop Israel's barbaric oppression."



**Right: UN Secretary-General António Guterres speaking at a Security Council meeting (UN website, October 24, 2023). Left: Riyadh al-Maliki speaking (Facebook page of the Palestinian foreign ministry, October 24, 2023)**

► **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken** noted that the United States recognized the right of countries to defend themselves against terrorism and that no nation would tolerate

terrorism without responding. He called on the UN to take action against countries that funded and assisted Hamas or any other terrorist organization. He also said Hamas did not represent the Palestinian people and that the Palestinians had to be protected from Hamas and not serve as its human shields. He called on Israel to reduce harm to civilians and allow humanitarian aid to enter (UN website; Sky News, October 24, 2023).

► The foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and Saudi Arabia held a press conference where they said they condemned the attacks on civilians on both sides and demanded an immediate cessation of the fighting to prevent the situation from deteriorating, and to allow the entry of regular supplies of food, water, medicine and fuel into the Gaza Strip (al-Jazeera, October 24, 2023).



**From right to left: The foreign ministers of the Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan in a joint statement (Al-Jazeera, October 24, 2023)**

## United States

► **American President Joe Biden** spoke by phone with **Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman**. They discussed diplomatic and military efforts to deter all parties from escalating the conflict and agreed to "continue to invest extensive efforts to prevent escalation." They called for the immediate release of the abductees held by Hamas. Biden stressed that the United States fully supported the defense of its partners' dealing with terrorism (White House website, October 24, 2023).

► **Wally Adeyemo, deputy Treasury secretary**, reported that the United States planned to establish an international economic coalition against Hamas, and would discuss the issue with United States' allies during his visit to Europe. He said they should use the same strategy they used against ISIS and other terrorist organizations (Agence France-Presse, October 24, 2023).

► The United States offered a reward of up to \$5 million to anyone who provided relevant information about Saleh al-Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau (@RFJ\_USA Twitter account, October 24, 2023).



**The announcement offers a reward of up to \$5 million to anyone who provides relevant information about Salah al-Arouri (@RFJ\_USA Twitter account, October 24, 2023)**

## Turkey

► **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** spoke by phone with **Russian President Vladimir Putin**. They discussed the development of the conflict between Israel and Palestine and the humanitarian crisis in the region. Erdoğan said that the "deliberate cruelty" against Palestinian lands was growing sharply, and the number of civilian casualties was increasing every minute. He noted that the silence of Western countries had led to an escalation in the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and Turkey would continue to devote everything in its power to maintaining quiet in the region (Turkish president's Twitter account, October 24, 2023).

► Erdoğan attacked Israel, saying it behaved like a terrorist organization and not like a state. He said Hamas was not a terrorist organization but "a liberation group waging a struggle to defend its land." Erdoğan noted that he had intended to visit Israel, but cancelled his visit. He also noted that they had no problem with the State of Israel, but did have a problem with Israel's policy towards the Palestinians (TRT, October 25, 2023).

## Global Jihad

### Germany

► Special forces in Germany broke into a residential building in downtown Duisburg in northwestern Germany and arrested a 29-year-old man, codenamed Osama the German, and

identified only by his first name, Tareq, on suspicion of attempting to carry out a terrorist attack during a rally in support of Israel held in North Rhine-Westphalia, northern Germany. The suspect, an ISIS supporter, intended to drive a truck into the rally as fast as possible and run over as many people as possible. According to a report in the *Bild* newspaper, the German authorities received information about the intention to carry out an attack at a pro-Israel rally from a "foreign intelligence organization" (Ynet, October 24, 2023).