



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., November 6, 2023

Northern Arena

- 133 attacks
- 61 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 9 other terrorist-organization operatives killed

Israeli Casualties

- Dead 1,400
- 348 IDF soldiers and officers killed
- Abducted – 241
- Five abductees returned

Rocket Fire

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

Overview¹

► **The southern sector:** The integrated activity of the IDF forces in the Gaza Strip intensified and the forces currently encircle Gaza City. During the night, a massive integrated attack was carried out on Hamas targets. Sources in the Gaza Strip said it was the most severe attack since the outbreak of the war. Hamas strongly denied the IDF spokesman's statement that Hamas exploited the hospitals in the Gaza Strip for military-terrorist use. Hamas claimed it could delay the IDF's advance in the Gaza Strip and force Israel to agree to a cease-fire, adding that its fighting force "had hardly been affected." The rocket fired continued, a few dozen were launched from the Gaza Strip, with barrages launched at Beersheba and the center of the country.

► **More than 1,400 civilians and soldiers were killed in the October 7 attack; 230 civilian and soldier abductees are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip; 348 IDF soldiers and officers have been killed since October 7.** A spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry said Iran had received appeals from many countries whose citizens had been

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

abducted and had transferred the messages to the head of Hamas' political bureau. Hamas claimed Israel was posing obstacles to the release of the foreign abductees.

► **The Gaza Strip:** According to the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in Gaza, 10,022 people have been killed so far. The IDF continued urging the population to evacuate to the south, while Hamas continued preventing them from leaving the northern Gaza Strip. A senior Hamas figure in Beirut claimed there were still 900,000 Palestinians in the northern Gaza Strip, indicating the failure of the Israeli plan.

► **The northern sector:** Hezbollah continued attacking IDF posts and the cities, towns and villages near the border, firing mortar shells and anti-tank missiles. Rocket barrages were launched at Kiryat Shemonah; Hezbollah claimed the attacks were in response to the killing of four civilians in south Lebanon, and claimed responsibility for them.

► **Judea and Samaria:** In Jerusalem, a Palestinian terrorist stabbed a Border Police fighter who later died. An unknown organization, which claimed its operatives belonged to the Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces, issued an ultimatum to PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas stating he had 24 hours to declare a “confrontation without borders” with Israel. Mahmoud Abbas met with the United States Secretary of State.

► **Iran:** The Iraqi prime minister visited Iran. The two countries presented a joint position stating that Israel's attacks had to be stopped immediately and a cease-fire established in the Gaza Strip. The leader of Iran recently met with the head of the Hamas political bureau.

► Many Arab sources condemned the Israeli minister of heritage regarding the possibility of dropping an atomic bomb on the Gaza Strip. They called it a “violent and racist” proposal and called on the international community to take action.

The Combat Arena

IDF activity

► **Integrated ground activity:** IDF forces encircled Gaza City from all sides and reached the coast, attacking more than 1,600 Hamas targets, including military facilities, underground facilities, munitions depots, anti-tank observation posts, apartments used for military-terrorist purposes, posts and positions. The forces killed more than 300 terrorists, some of them in close combat (IDF spokesman, November 5, 2023).



IDF forces in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman's website, November 6, 2023)

► During a search conducted in the Beit Hanon region, the forces located various weapons, intelligence materials, armed drones and RPGs in a residential dwelling. IDF special forces located and destroyed a laboratory for the manufacture of explosives (IDF spokesman, November 5, 2023). On the night of November 5, 2023, ground forces took control of a Hamas facility which included observation posts, training compounds and terrorist tunnels. Several terrorists were killed in the operation (IDF spokesman, November 6, 2023).



Some of the weapons found in Beit Hanon (IDF Spokesman website, November 5, 2023)

► **Aerial activity:** During the past day, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked approximately 450 Hamas targets, including military compounds, observation posts and anti-tank posts. In

targeted attacks directed by intelligence units, a number of Hamas commanders were killed, among them Jamal Musa, in charge of Hamas' security apparatus (see below) (IDF spokesman, November 6, 2023).



The IDF attacks in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman's website, November 6, 2023)

- ▶ **Naval activity:** IDF Navy forces attacked Hamas headquarters, anti-tank missile launching positions and observation posts (IDF spokesman, November 6, 2023).
- ▶ A correspondent for al-Ghad TV in Gaza reported that the night of November 5, 2023, was the most difficult since the beginning of the war because of the intensity of the IDF attacks, which continued throughout the night and focused on the northwestern Gaza Strip. He reported that there were attacks from the air, ground and sea, and throughout the night there were intense exchanges of fire between the IDF forces and the “resistance operatives” [terrorist operatives] (al-Ghad TV, November 6, 2023).



Massive attacks in the Gaza Strip (QudsN Twitter account, November 5, 2023)

Denying the exploitation of hospitals for military-terrorist purposes

- ▶ In response to the IDF spokesman's statement that Hamas exploited hospitals for terrorist activities, Hamas called on the UN secretary general to appoint an international commission to visit the hospitals in order to disprove the [allegedly] “false narrative” Israel was spreading. According to Hamas, the IDF spokesman tried to “use his lies to justify Israel's threat” that it

would attack the Indonesian and Qatari hospitals in the northern Gaza Strip. Hamas claimed all the hospitals were open to visits by correspondents and international institutions. According to Hamas, in the Indonesian Hospital, the equipment in question was the hospital's "fuel reservoir" and "engineering maps and photographs proved it." In the Hamad Hospital, the site was "a room under the hospital used for storing pumps and transformers," and the plans of the hospital "refuted" the IDF claim (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, November 5, 2023).

► Regarding the IDF spokesman's statement about the theft of fuel, Hamas claimed it was slander and had been "completely denied by UNRWA." Hamas claimed that all international institutions knew how to calculate the quantities of fuel delivered to the hospitals in Gaza, and the periods of time in which the fuel was used and its containers emptied. The data, claimed Hamas, led the UN, the World Health Organization and many other bodies to warn that fuel was running out (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, November 5, 2023).

► **Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed the IDF spokesman's statements revealed Israel's intention to carry out more "massacres" in the hospitals in the Gaza Strip. He claimed that the spokesman for the "Nazi enemy army" had presented baseless lies and was marketing imaginary videos, inventions and blatant lies to restore its image, which was "stained with the blood of children and women" (Hamas Telegram channel, November 5, 2023).

► Interviewed in Beirut, **senior Hamas figure Usama Hamdan** claimed that correspondents of various nationalities from all news agencies, who had been staying in the hospitals since the beginning of the war, said that the talk about the presence of "resistance operatives" [terrorist operatives] in the hospitals was a lie. He claimed those killed in the "aggression" were women, children and civilians, and if there was any truth to Israel's claims there should have been "resistance" operatives among the dead. However, all the Hamas dead were operatives and leaders killed on the battlefield and did not hide in the hospitals. He claimed that the IDF had not yet provided evidence for its accusations. He claimed the IDF spokesman had referred to the Qatari hospital because Israel wanted to sabotage Qatar's efforts to return the abductees. The reference to the Indonesian Hospital, he claimed, was a response to Israel's seeing millions of people in Indonesia supporting Gaza (al-Araby TV, November 5, 2023).

► The **Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)** condemned the IDF spokesman's [alleged] "lies" regarding the use of the hospitals by "resistance" fighters, warning it was a ploy to prepare public opinion for the destruction of the hospitals and the continued [alleged] "massacring" of civilians. The PIJ criticized the silence of the international community, which allowed Israel to continue its [alleged] "crimes" (PIJ media information bureau Telegram channel, November 5, 2023).

Assessment of Hamas' capabilities

► Reuters published an item about Hamas' preparations for ground warfare, quoting two "sources close to the Hamas leadership" who stated Hamas was preparing for a protracted war and believed it could delay the IDF's advance long enough to force Israel to agree to a cease-fire. The sources, who refused to be identified "due to the sensitivity of the situation," told Reuters that Hamas had stockpiles of weapons, missiles, food and medical supplies, and was confident that thousands of its fighters could survive for months in the city of tunnels cut deep under the Gaza Strip and face IDF forces using urban guerrilla warfare tactics. According to "the sources," Hamas believed that as the number of civilian casualties increased, international pressure would increase on Israel to end the siege, force a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement that would result in the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the abducted Israelis. The item also stated that Hamas [allegedly] had about 40,000 fighters, who could move throughout the Strip through a vast network of fortified tunnels, hundreds of kilometers long and up to 80 meters deep, constructed over many years.

► **Ali Baraka, head of Hamas's foreign relations department in Beirut**, said Hamas had gradually improved its military capabilities, especially its rockets, during the wars it waged with Israel. He said that in the 2008 war [Operation Cast Lead], Hamas rockets had maximum range of 25 miles, but by 2021 [Operation Guardian of the Walls] the range had increased to 143 miles. He added that in every war Hamas surprised the Israelis with something new. "An official close to Hezbollah" noted that Hamas' fighting force remained "largely unharmed" after weeks of attacks. Hezbollah and Hamas officials noted the existence of a joint military operations room in Lebanon with Hamas and other forces of the "axis of resistance"² (Reuters, November 4, 2023).

² Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.

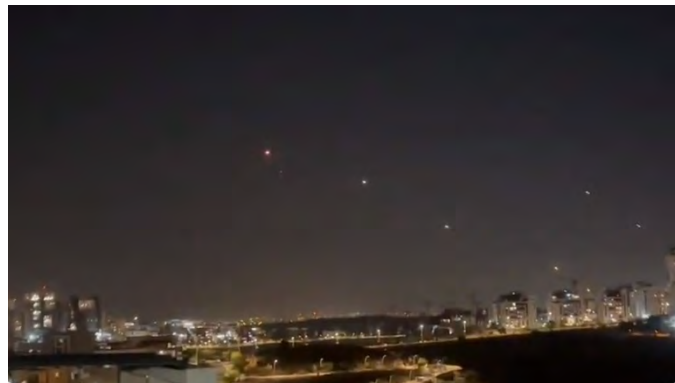
Rocket fire

► Rocket fire, which has not stopped since the first day of the fighting, continued. Several dozen rockets were launched during the past day, most of them at the cities, towns and villages near the Gaza Strip. Several barrages were launched at the center of the country and Beersheba. No casualties were reported; property was damaged. The IDF spokesman revealed the location of launch pits and rocket launchers near civilian facilities, including a playground and a children's wading pool.



Right: Rocket launch pits in a playground in the Gaza Strip. Left: Launchers near children's wading pools in the Gaza Strip (IDF website, November 5, 2023)

► Since the beginning of the war, about 9,000 rockets and mortar shells have been launched at Israel from Gaza. About 10% of them were failed launches that fell in the Gaza Strip or in the sea.



Rocket barrage attacks the center of Israel (Shehab Twitter account, November 5, 2023)



Right: A fire that broke out in Beer Ya'akov following a rocket hit from Gaza (Shehab Twitter account, November 5, 2023). Left: A direct rocket hit in an Israeli community near the Gaza Strip (QudsN Twitter account, November 5, 2023)

Israeli casualties

► **In the events of October 7, over 1,400 people were killed; 241 abducted civilians and soldiers are still being held by terrorists in the Gaza Strip; 35 of the abductees are children and adolescents below the age of 18, 32 are over the age of 65. Five abductees have been released; 348 IDF soldiers and officers have been killed since October 7, 2023.**

The issue of the abductees

► **Khalil al-Haya, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed that Israel was using the issue of civilians and people with dual nationalities "in a vile, despicable and immoral way." He claimed Hamas had clearly announced its position from the beginning, but every time they were on the verge of an agreement to release Israeli and foreign citizens, Israel returned to the starting point. He claimed they would exchange the civilians for women and children in Israeli prisons, but Israel posed obstacles every day and evaded the issue by saying something different to each mediator (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, November 5, 2023).

► **Muhammad al-Hindi, deputy PIJ secretary general**, claimed that the civilian abductees held by the PIJ, especially the foreigners, would be released if there was a temporary cease-fire. He claimed Israel would eventually be forced to agree to a prisoner exchange deal. He claimed that the negotiations currently underway were specifically focused on a temporary humanitarian cease-fire (al-Arabiya, November 6, 2023).

► **Nasser Kanaani, a spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry**, said Iran had received inquiries from a number of countries whose citizens had been abducted by Hamas, and had forwarded them to Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, who expressed “a willingness” to assist in the matter (Tasnim, November 6, 2023).

► **Srettha Thavisin, the prime minister of Thailand**, said they had received photographic proof that the abductees in the Gaza Strip were alive. He also said they were waiting for a temporary ceasefire that “would last a day or two,” which could be a window to evacuate the abductees (CNN, November 6, 2023).

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The Gaza Strip

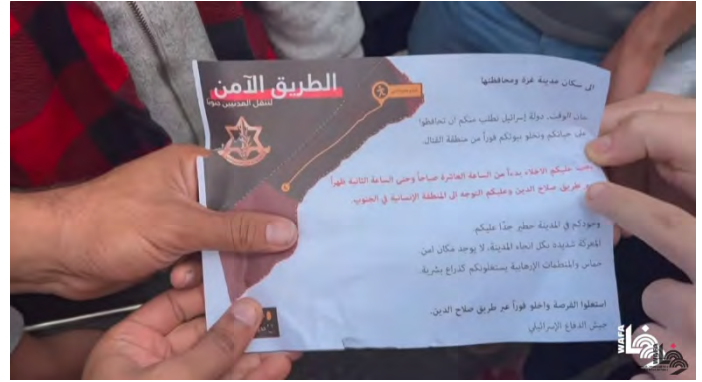
Palestinian casualties

► **Dr Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip**, said that as of 3 p.m. the number of dead in Gaza stood at 10,022 and the number of wounded at more than 24,000 (Palinfo website, November 6, 2023).

► **Mai al-Kayla, PA minister of health**, said there were more than 24,000 wounded in the Gaza Strip who needed field hospitals, since 16 hospitals in the Gaza Strip stopped after they were attacked by Israel and “their fuel supplies ran out.” She called on the international community to open the Rafah Crossing to allow the delivery of aid to the Gaza Strip and the evacuation of the wounded (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook, November 5, 2023).

The situation in Gaza

► The IDF continued to urge the population of Gaza City to evacuate to the south, and announced a window of time and the route through which it was possible to leave. Hamas continues to sabotage the evacuation. Hamas' media information bureau in Gaza claimed that it had received dozens of reports of hundreds of bodies in the streets in Gaza City, especially residents who tried to move to the humanitarian corridor or who tried to defend themselves from the attacks carried out during the night (Facebook page of Hamas' media information bureau, November 6, 2023). **Usama Hamdan, a senior Hamas official in Beirut**, claimed there were still 900,000 Palestinians in the northern Gaza Strip, indicating the failure of the Israeli plan to displace them (al-Arabi TV, November 5, 2023).



Right: Gazans hold an IDF flyer urging them to evacuate from Gaza City to the south between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. through Saladin Street (Wafa YouTube channel, November 5, 2023). Left: Gazans evacuate towards the southern Gaza Strip (Wafa, November 5, 2023)

► The Palestinian communications company Paltel announced that all Internet and communications lines in the Gaza Strip were down following the IDF attacks (Ma'an, November 5, 2023). **Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** said the "terrorist Zionist occupation" had cut off communications and the Internet in the Gaza Strip while it carried out "fierce attacks" on residential neighborhoods, which he claimed revealed Israel's intentions "to carry out more massacres and hide them from the world and the media." He called on Egypt to open Egyptian communications networks for Palestinian use and to fully open the Rafah Crossing (Hamas Telegram channel, November 5, 2023). According to UNRWA, due to the collapse of the media, they were unable to contact their staff members in the Gaza Strip (UNRWA Twitter account, November 6, 2023).

► King Abdullah II of Jordan said that the Jordanian Air Force had air lifted urgent medical aid to the Jordanian Hospital in the Gaza Strip (King Abdullah's Twitter account, November 6, 2023).



Unloading aid from Jordan (Ammun Agency, November 6, 2023)

Senior Hamas terrorist killed

► The Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip do not often issue reports about senior operatives who are killed. However, **Fayiz Abu Shamala, a political commentator from Khan Yunis**, reported that Lt. Col. Jamal Muhammad Abd al-Hamid Musa Abu Shamala, the commander of the Gazan police security apparatus, was killed in an attack on the Awad family house in the Japanese neighborhood west of Khan Yunus (Faiz Abu Shamala's Twitter account, November 3, 2023).



The commander of the Gazan security apparatus who was killed in Khan Yunis (Faiz Abu Shamala's Twitter account, November 3, 2023)

Hamas

► Interviewed by al-Jazeera TV, **Khalil al-Haya, a member of Hamas' political bureau and head of the ministry for Arab and Islamic relations**, related to a number of issues (al-Jazeera website, November 5, 2023; Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, November 5, 2023):

◆ **The fighting in the Gaza Strip:** In response to Israel's statements that the war would be long, he claimed Israel was using a "flood of lies" as an excuse to extend the amount of time during which it killed the residents of Gaza, with the objective of uprooting the Palestinians from their land. He claimed that by extending the duration of the war, Israel was preparing the ground for more killings and "crimes" after the cutting off communications and the Internet, and the world, unfortunately, failed to uphold the values and morals it preached. He expressed his confidence that the Palestinians would subvert the displacement plot, claiming as evidence that tens of thousands of Palestinians remained in the northern Gaza Strip.

◆ **Using hospitals as headquarters:** He denied what the IDF spokesman had said about the hospitals in Gaza, claiming that the hospitals and shelters for displaced persons

were open to the media and all international organizations. He claimed they could see for themselves that Israel was “spreading lies” about the hospitals as an excuse to destroy the Shifa medical complex and the 60,000 people who had taken refuge there.

◆ **The United States position:** He said the United States supported Israel's policy of killing and destruction, which used the issue of civilians and abductees to gain time and make it easier for the home front. The United States government prioritized appeasing Israel, gave it a green light to commit “crimes,” bore moral, political and human responsibility for all the crimes, and had not made it clear to Israel that there had been “enough killing and bloodshed.”

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The Northern Arena

Lebanon

- ▶ During the past day, Hezbollah continued attacking IDF posts and the cities, towns and villages near the border, firing mortar shells, anti-tank missiles and rockets, and claimed responsibility for the attacks.
- ▶ On the afternoon of November 5, 2023, a UAV was detected approaching Israeli territory from deep within Lebanon; it was tracked and intercepted while still in Lebanese territory. A number of anti-tank missiles were fired from Lebanon at the Avivim and Malkia areas of Israel. The IDF responded with artillery fire at the sources of the attacks (IDF spokesman, November 5, 2023). An Israeli civilian was killed by an anti-tank missile near Kibbutz Yiftah.
- ▶ In the evening, several rocket barrages were launched at Kiryat Shemonah. Some rockets fell in the city, fires broke out and several houses were damaged. There were no casualties. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for firing rockets³ “in response to an attack on a civilian vehicle that killed a woman and three of her grandchildren” (see below). Hezbollah noted that any attack against civilians would be met with a “strong and decisive response” (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 5, 2023).

³ In previous instances, Palestinian terrorist organizations claimed responsibility for the rocket fire.

Hezbollah casualties

►Hezbollah reported the death of Riyan Yusuf Darwish, aka Abu Ali, from the town of al-Qlaileh in south Lebanon.



Riyan Yusuf Darwish, the Hezbollah terrorist operative killed on November 5, 2023 (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 5, 2023)

Reactions to the death of civilians in south Lebanon

►The Lebanese media reported that during the IDF's response in south Lebanon, a civilian vehicle was attacked between Einata and Itaron (near Avivim). According to reports, a woman and her three grandchildren were killed (Lebanese News Agency and al-Nashra, November 5, 2023). It was further reported that the vehicle belonged to a journalist named Samir Ayyub (Bint Jbeil website Telegram channel, November 5, 2023). The attack provoked reactions from Lebanese officials, including government officials. Hezbollah responded by launching rocket barrages at Kiryat Shemonah:

►**Najib Mikati, the prime minister of the interim government**, said the attack on civilians which had caused the death of four people, including three children, and shooting from an unmanned aerial vehicle that resulted in the injury of other civilians, were "heinous crimes" (al-Nashra, November 5, 2023).

►**Abdullah Bou Habib**, the Lebanese foreign minister, said they would submit a complaint to the UN Security Council regarding the "killing of civilians, including children, in the Israeli attack in Lebanon." He said they had started gathering information about the incident for the complaint (Reuters, November 5, 2023).

►**Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese parliament**, reported that three children between the ages of 8 and 14 had been killed in south Lebanon

in an Israeli attack. He said the attack would have consequences and Israel would pay a price based on the equations determined by Hezbollah (Reuters, al-Mayadeen, November 5, 2023).

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Judea, Samaria, and the Palestinian Authority

Terrorist attacks

► On the morning of November 6, 2023, an Arab from east Jerusalem armed with a knife stabbed two Border Police fighters near the Shalem station in east Jerusalem. A female fighter was critically wounded and later died; the other fighter sustained minor injuries. The terrorist was shot and killed by police, who also detained an accomplice near the scene of the attack. The terrorist was reportedly Muhammad Omar al-Farrukh, 16, from Issawiya (Israel Police Force Facebook page; Shehab, November 6, 2023).



**The knife used in the stabbing in Jerusalem
(Police spokesman's unit, November 6, 2023)**

Preventive and counterterrorism activities

► On the night of November 6, 2023, Israeli security forces detained 38 wanted Palestinians in Judea and Samaria, five of them Hamas operatives. During the operation, three printing presses used to print incitement materials for Hamas were sealed. In addition, during searches soldiers found improvised weapons, an air rifle and military equipment (IDF website, November 6, 2023). Since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip, more than 1,350 wanted Palestinians have been detained, over 850 of them Hamas operatives (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, November 6, 2023).

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported 152 fatalities in Judea and Samaria since the beginning of the war. During the past day, it was reported that a Palestinian was killed in Halhul during clashes with IDF forces (Wafa, November 6, 2023).

Support for the Gaza Strip

► A new and hitherto unknown network calling itself Bani Abu Jandal, which claims to have dozens of PA security apparatus operatives as its members, issued a leaflet with an ultimatum for PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas, ordering him to declare a “confrontation without borders” with Israel within 24 hours. Otherwise, they threatened, they would declare themselves rebels and would no longer follow orders (the network's Telegram channel, November 5, 2023). Hamas-affiliated media outlets in the Gaza Strip, including al-Aqsa and the Shehab News Agency, quoted the ultimatum on their Telegram channels.

► Marches in support of the Gaza Strip continued throughout Judea and Samaria. On the evening of November 5, 2023, marches were held in several cities, and on November 6, marches and student demonstrations also took place (Hurriya News, November 5, 2023; QudsN Telegram channel, November 5 and 6, 2023).

► After it was reported that Jewish prisoners helped guards at Megiddo Prison conduct a raid on security prisoners' cells following an attempt by a number of minors, residents of east Jerusalem, to lower the Israeli flag in one of the prison wards, **Zaher Jabarin, head of Hamas' shaheeds, wounded and prisoners office**, called on Palestinians in Judea and Samaria, the prisoners' families and the entire public to come out immediately to defend the prisoners and exert pressure on Israel by all means (Hamas Telegram channel in the West Bank, November 5, 2023).



Right: Demonstrators burn an Israeli flag in the town of Tammun, south of Tubas (QudsN Telegram channel, November 5, 2023). Left: A student march in Ni'lin (QudsN Telegram channel, November 6, 2023)

The Palestinian Authority

- ▶ **PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas** met with **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken**. Abbas asked for the "aggression against the Palestinian people" to stop and for accelerated humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. He reiterated that military and security solutions would not bring security to Israel and that security and peace would be achieved only by ending the "occupation" and establishing a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital. He said the PLO was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the decision-maker (Wafa, November 5, 2023).
- ▶ At the same time as the meeting, a demonstration was held in Ramallah to protest Blinken's visit. The demonstrators claimed that Blinken was a "war criminal" collaborating with Israel, the United States was not neutral and tended to side with Israel. The demonstrators burned a picture of Blinken and called for him to leave (QudsN Twitter account, November 5, 2023).



Right: Mahmoud Abbas meets in Ramallah with Secretary of State Blinken (Wafa, November 5, 2023). Left: Demonstrators in Ramallah burn a picture of Blinken (QudsN Twitter account, November 5, 2023)

► **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** met with the French consul general in Jerusalem. Shtayyeh stressed the need for the international community to take responsibility and stop the aggression immediately and bring humanitarian and medical aid, fuel and water into the Gaza Strip. They also discussed France's preparations for an international conference, led by the French president and with the participation of other presidents and foreign ministers, for humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip (Wafa, November 5, 2023).

► **At the weekly cabinet meeting, Muhammad Shtayyeh** said that the International Criminal Court should issue an arrest warrant for Israel to stop the Israeli aggression in Gaza. He expressed appreciation for the countries that recalled their ambassadors from Israel and urged other countries to make their voices heard and take similar steps. Regarding the decision to deduct additional sums from the tax revenues Israel collected for the PA, he noted that it was a political decision aimed at separating the Gaza Strip from Judea and Samaria. He said they would neither allow nor accept such separation. He said international activity was taking place regarding the funds, which he hoped would yield results in the coming days (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, November 6, 2023). As opposed to last week, when government members sat with the names of those killed in Gaza in the background, this week the background was normal.

► **Mahmoud al-Habash, advisor to Mahmoud Abbas for religious affairs**, said the PA was responsible for the Palestinians and represented them. He said the Gaza Strip was part of the PA like Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and they would not allow anyone to talk about conducting the affairs of the Gaza Strip the day after the war. The PA would decide how to manage the Gaza Strip, not international forces or anyone else (QudsN Twitter account, November 5, 2023).

Iran

► **The office of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei** confirmed a meeting was recently held by Khamenei and **Ismail Haniyeh**, head of Hamas' political bureau. According to the announcement, Haniyeh briefed Khamenei about the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and the Iranian supreme leader expressed his appreciation for the firm stand of the residents of the Gaza Strip and his sorrow for the "crimes of the Zionist regime" with the support of the United States and some Western countries. Khamenei also stressed the Islamic Republic's support for the "resistance forces in Palestine" against the "Zionist occupiers" and the need for Muslim countries and the international community to mobilize for comprehensive and practical support for the residents of the Gaza Strip (website of the Supreme Leader of Iran, November 5, 2023).

► **Mohammad Reza Ashtiani, Iranian minister of defense**, warned that action would be taken against the United States if it did not act for a ceasefire in the war in the Gaza Strip. He said the Americans would be "severely harmed" if they did not stop the war immediately (Twitter account of the minister of defense, November 5, 2023)

► **Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Iranian foreign minister**, sent a letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres calling for an end to Israel's attacks in the Gaza Strip. He called on Guterres to condemn Israel and take the necessary steps to end the attacks immediately, lift the siege on the Gaza Strip and allow free access to international humanitarian aid (Fars, November 5, 2023).

► **Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia' al-Sudani** arrived in Tehran as part of a regional trip prompted by the war in the Gaza Strip and the continued attacks by pro-Iranian Shi'ite militias against American bases in Syria and Iraq. Before that, al-Sudani met in Baghdad with American Secretary of State Antony Blinken (IRNA, November 6).

► During his visit to Tehran, the Iraqi prime minister met with Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi. They held a joint press conference where President Raisi said the two countries had a common position on the Palestinian issue and that Israel's attacks had to be stopped immediately and a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip established. He again condemned American military aid to Israel, saying it was complicit in "crimes" that Israel was carrying out in Gaza. The Iraqi prime minister stressed Iraq's support for the Palestinians, saying that whoever wanted to prevent the war from spreading in the

region had to exert pressure on Israel to stop its crimes in the Gaza Strip (Fars, November 6, 2023). Meeting with the Iraqi prime minister, Khamenei said political pressure had to be exerted on the United States and Israel to stop the attacks in the Gaza Strip. He said the United States was complicit in Israel's "crimes" and that without American military and political aid, Israel would not have been able to continue its activities. He added that the "Zionist regime" had been defeated so far in the conflict because it had not been able to rehabilitate its reputation and would not be able to do so in the future (Tasnim, November 6, 2023).

► **Nasser Kanani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry**, said it was impossible to count the number of crimes Israel had committed in the past month in Gaza with the support of several Western countries, especially the United States. He said that if the "crimes" against the Gaza Strip continued, there was a possibility that the war would spread in the region. He said the United States could not claim it did not want the war to spread while at the same time provide military assistance to Israel (Tasnim, November 6, 2023).

Activity of pro-Iranian militias

Iraq and Syria

► During the past day, the Islamic Resistance Forces continued attacking American bases in Syria and Iraq with UAVs and rockets. an attack on the Al-Tanf base in Syria was reported as well as attacks on a base near Erbil Airport and the Ayn al-Assad base in Iraq (Saberin News Telegram channel, November 6, 2023)

Yemen⁴

► **Muhammad al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, issued a statement to members of the "axis of resistance," saying it was time to launch an all-out war that would decide the fate of the region and the world, and that it should not be postponed (Muhammad al-Bukhaiti's Twitter account, November 5, 2023).

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⁴ For further details on Houthi activity against Israel, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from November 3, 2023, "[The Houthis and Operation Iron Swords](#)"

The Arab Arena

Reactions to the Israeli heritage minister's remarks

► In response to a question in a radio interview, Amichai Eliyahu, minister of heritage in the Israeli government, mentioned the possibility of dropping an atomic bomb on the Gaza Strip (Israeli media, November 5, 2023). His remarks sparked outrage in Israel and abroad. Several Arab countries responded to his remarks, claiming it was a violent, racist statement, and called on the international community to take action on the issue:

- ◆ **The Saudi foreign ministry** condemned his remarks, saying they reflected the extremism and cruelty of Israeli government ministers. The foreign ministry also criticized the decision not to fire him and make do with freezing his membership in the government, claiming that "the decision reflects contempt" (Twitter account of the Saudi foreign ministry, November 5, 2023).

- ◆ **The Jordanian foreign ministry** called it a "racist, provocative statement" a blatant and unacceptable violation of international law, which required the international community to intervene to force Israel to stop its ongoing attacks against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria (Twitter account of the Jordanian foreign ministry, November 5, 2023).

- ◆ **The spokesman for the Egyptian foreign ministry** said the international community had to speak out against expressions of violence, hatred and racism. He said that while the world talked about nuclear disarmament and the dangers of nuclear weapons, part of the public yearned for more destruction and killing (Twitter account of the Egyptian foreign ministry, November 6, 2023).

- ◆ **The Qatari foreign ministry** said the remarks were serious incitement to a war crime and disregard for humanitarian and moral values and international law. He stressed the need for the international community to protect the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (Twitter account of the Qatari foreign ministry, November 6, 2023).

- ◆ **Nasser Kanani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry**, said the world had to immediately stand against the "fascist, racist regime" and bring its supporters to justice (Twitter account of the spokesman of the Iranian foreign ministry, November 5, 2023).

- ◆ **Usama Hamdan, a senior Hamas figure in Beirut**, said that the statements made by the Israeli minister of heritage clearly revealed that Israel had nuclear weapons and that the issue had been discussed by the government (al-Arabi TV, November 5, 2023).

The International Arena

United States

- ▶ **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken** visited Iraq as part of his tour of the region. He met with **Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia' al-Sudani** and later reported that the conversation had been positive and productive. At a press conference held in Iraq, he said the United States was working to ensure that the conflict would not spread beyond the Gaza Strip. He also said that the current delivery of aid to the Gaza Strip was not enough. He also noted they were investing their best efforts to return the abductees and that a humanitarian ceasefire could contribute to it. Blinken also stressed that attacking American forces in Iraq was unacceptable and violated Iraqi sovereignty (Reuters, November 5, 2023).
- ▶ In light of Blinken's visit to Iraq, **Saleh Mohammad al-Iraqi, a close associate of the leader of the al-Sadr faction in Iraq**, called on his supporters to go "immediately" to Tahrir Square in Baghdad to protest the visit. He called on the public to burn pictures of "the world's feeble-minded terrorist leaders and those who stood by the massacre in Gaza" (al-Iraqi's Telegram channel, November 5, 2023).
- ▶ The American Army Central Command announced that an Ohio-class nuclear submarine had reached the Central Command's area of responsibility (American Central Command Twitter account, November 5, 2023).

France

- ▶ **French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna** met with **Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman** in Doha to discuss regional developments. She declared that Hamas' use of civilian infrastructure for military purposes violated international law. She also condemned the "nationalist crime" of the Jewish settlers (Twitter account of the French foreign ministry, November 5, 2023). Abdulrahman said Qatar was continuing its mediation efforts to release the "captives," but that it was a complex process in light of false reports and "Israeli occupation's" activity in the Gaza Strip.

Turkey

► Pro-Palestinian demonstrators gathered near the NATO Incirlik Air Force Base in the south of the country and clashed with the security forces, who dispersed them using riot control measures (al-Jazeera, November 5, 2023).