

Iran Update



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May 11, 2024, 2:00 pm ET

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report. Click [here](#) to subscribe to the Iran Update.

CTP-ISW defines the “Axis of Resistance” as the unconventional alliance that Iran has cultivated in the Middle East since the Islamic Republic came to power in 1979. This transnational coalition is comprised of state, semi-state, and non-state actors that cooperate to secure their collective interests. Tehran considers itself to be both part of the alliance and its leader. Iran furnishes these groups with varying levels of financial, military, and political support in exchange for some degree of influence or control over their actions. Some are traditional proxies that are highly responsive to Iranian direction, while others are partners over which Iran exerts more limited influence. Members of the Axis of Resistance are united by their grand strategic objectives, which include eroding and eventually expelling American influence from the Middle East, destroying the Israeli state, or both. Pursuing these objectives and supporting the Axis of Resistance to those ends have become cornerstones of Iranian regional strategy.

We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

CTP-ISW will publish abbreviated updates on May 11 and 12, 2024. Detailed coverage will resume on Monday, May 13, 2024.

Key Takeaways:

- **Northern Gaza Strip:** The IDF issued evacuation orders for civilians around Jabalia, northern Gaza Strip, due to Hamas reconstituting militarily there.
- **Southern Gaza Strip:** The IDF issued expanded its evacuation orders for civilians around Rafah, extending the evacuation zone to two refugee camps and nearby neighborhoods.
- **West Bank:** CTP-ISW did not record any engagements between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters.

- **Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights:** Lebanese Hezbollah conducted six attacks from southern Lebanon into northern Israel.
- **Iraq:** The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed one attack targeting Israel.



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to sustain clearing operations in the Gaza Strip
- Reestablish Hamas as the governing authority in the Gaza Strip

Palestinian militias defended against Israeli clearing operations in Zaytoun, southern Gaza City, on May 11. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched a re-clearing operation into the Zaytoun neighborhood on May 8, marking the third time that the IDF has conducted a clearing operation there.[1] Palestinian fighters attacked Israeli forces with small arms, improvised explosive devices, and mortar fire in Zaytoun.[2] The IDF Nahal Brigade located a large quantity of weapons, including some in a clinic, and killed a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) fighter, who had participated in Hamas' attack into Israel on October 7, 2023.[3]

The IDF issued evacuation orders for civilians around Jabalia, northern Gaza Strip, on May 11.[4] The IDF disseminated the orders with leaflets, text messages, phone calls, and via Arabic-language media broadcasts. Around 100,000-150,000 people live in the designated evacuation area.[5] The IDF said that it would operate in the evacuation area due to Hamas' efforts to "rebuild its capabilities" there.[6] The IDF Air Force conducted airstrikes in Jabalia to shape the terrain for follow-on ground operations.[7] Israeli forces first advanced to the Jabalia refugee camp area in December 2023 and withdrew later that month.[8] CTP-ISW previously observed that Hamas cells have probably established a rear area in Jabalia and/or northern Shujaiaya, from which they can mount attacks on IDF units along the Israel-Gaza Strip border.[9]

Hamas remains determined to reassert its governing authority and reconstitute itself militarily in the Gaza Strip. Hamas has the space and personnel to do so in the northern Gaza Strip since Israeli forces withdrew and in the absence of a local alternative to Hamas rule. An Israeli military correspondent cited the IDF saying that the IDF will need to continually return to areas that it has previously cleared because Hamas military infrastructure remains there.[10] The resilience of Hamas and other Palestinian militias across the Gaza Strip supports CTP-ISW's assessment that Hamas will likely survive an IDF clearing operation into Rafah.

The IDF continued its limited operation into eastern Rafah on May 11. The IDF 401st Brigade, which seized the Rafah border crossing with Egypt on May 7, destroyed a Hamas rocket launch site on May 10.[11] Israeli ground and air elements destroyed Hamas tunnel shafts.[12] The IDF Givati Brigade also continued operations in eastern Rafah.[13] Hamas fighters fired an anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) at an Israeli armored personnel carrier near the Rafah crossing.[14]

The IDF issued expanded its evacuation orders for civilians around Rafah on May 11, extending the evacuation zone to two refugee camps and nearby neighborhoods.[15] The IDF said that Hamas is active in the evacuation areas and told civilians to immediately go to the IDF-designated humanitarian zone north of Rafah. The IDF frequently issues evacuation orders ahead of expanding military operations.[16] The IDF reported that an estimated 300,000 Gazans have already moved to the humanitarian zone north of Rafah since the beginning of evacuations from eastern Rafah began on May 6.[17] Local Palestinians told the *Wall Street Journal* that space in the humanitarian zone north of Rafah has "filled up" amid rising prices of tents, gasoline, and rides to leave eastern Rafah.[18]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of May 11, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



The IDF issued evacuation orders for civilians in Jabalia due to Hamas efforts to rebuild its capabilities there

Four Palestinian militias attacked Israeli forces in Zaytoun

The IDF issued evacuation orders for civilians in eastern Rafah due to Hamas activity there

Israeli ground and air elements destroyed Palestinian militia tunnels in eastern Rafah

0 5 10 20 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry
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- Israel
- Gaza Strip
- Jordan and Lebanon
- Syria
- Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*
- Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances
- Areas Reportedly Infiltrated by Palestinian Militias
- Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone
- IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridor on Road 230
- Israeli-Built Highway Route 749
- Assessed Furthest Extent of Israeli Clearing Operations
- Densely Urban Areas
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours

* ISW-CTP's "Reported Israeli Clearing Operations" layer uses the US military's doctrinal definition of clearing which is an operation that "requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area." Clearing operations frequently take weeks and sometimes months to complete. CTP-ISW recessed all Israeli clearing operations in the Gaza Strip on May 10, 2024, to cover only the areas in which Israeli forces are actively conducting clearing operations.

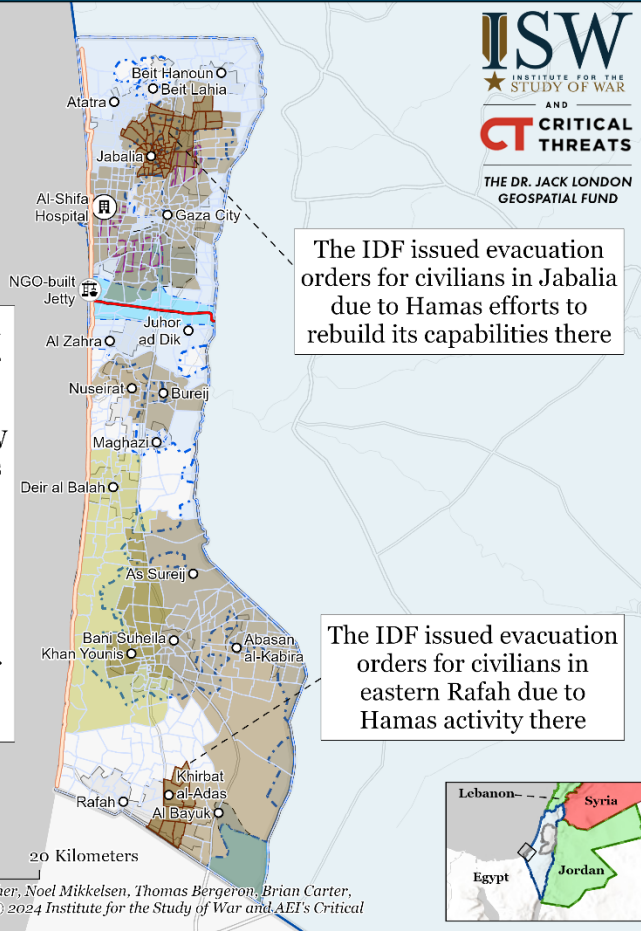
Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones in the Gaza Strip as of May 11, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



CTP-ISW's "Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones" layer shows Israeli evacuation zones announced by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). CTP-ISW used IDF maps and statements to create this layer. Where IDF maps cover part of a zone this layer covers the whole zone to avoid understating the evacuation order. The IDF began announcing these evacuation zones on December 2, 2023, at 0222 ET on X (Twitter)

The IDF issued evacuation orders for civilians in Jabalia due to Hamas efforts to rebuild its capabilities there

The IDF issued evacuation orders for civilians in eastern Rafah due to Hamas activity there



Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2024 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

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- Densely Urban Areas
- Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones on May 11

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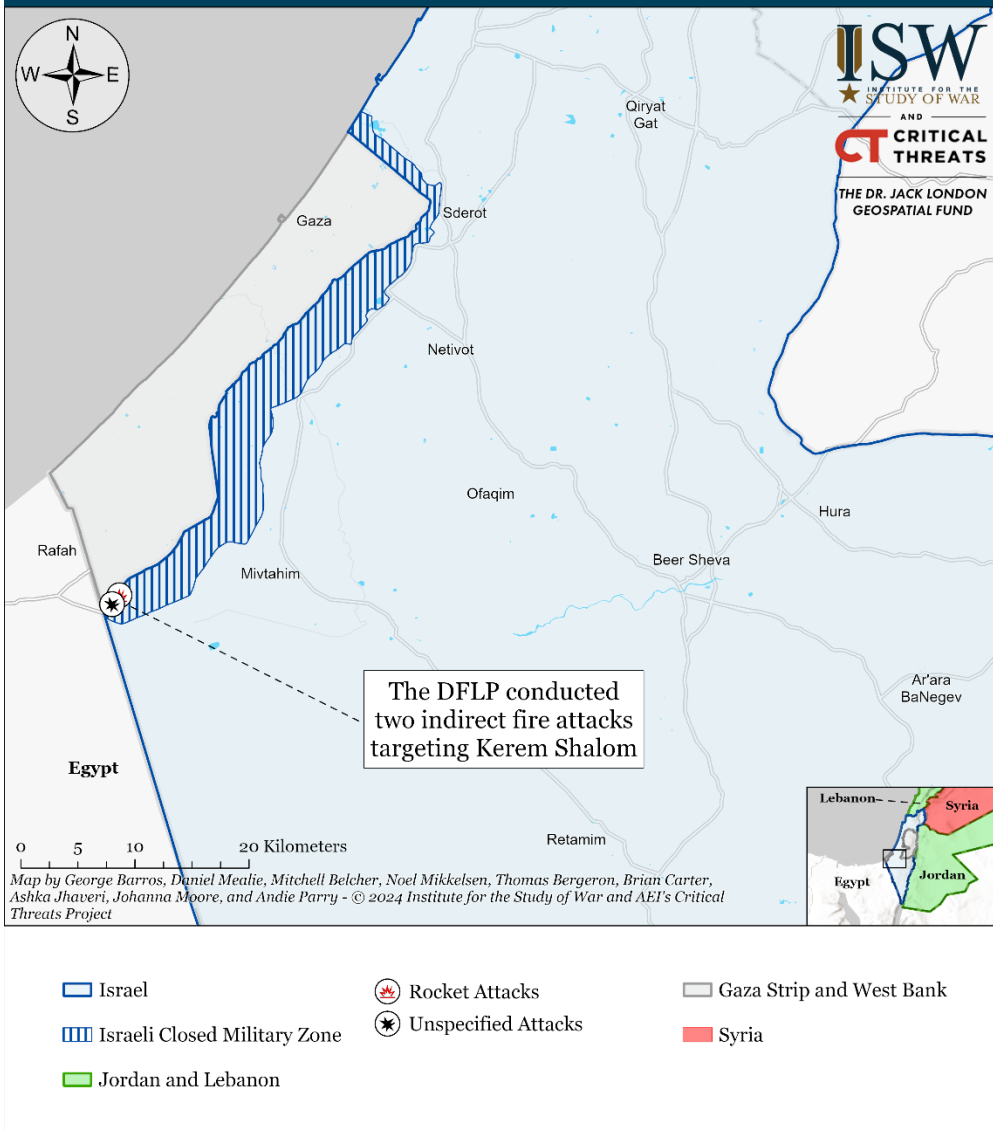
The World Food Programme (WFP) reported on May 10 that humanitarian aid has not entered the Gaza Strip from the southern border crossings in three days.[19] The WFP report follows a UN official stating on May 10 that no fuel and “virtually no” humanitarian aid has entered the Gaza Strip for five days.[20] UN officials reported that aid is not entering through the Kerem Shalom crossing due to heavy fighting in the area.[21] An unspecified senior official told Egyptian state news on May 11 that Egypt refuses to coordinate with Israel on the entry of aid into the Gaza Strip via the now Israeli-controlled Rafah crossing due to Israel’s “unacceptable escalation.”[22]

Egyptian sources said that unspecified negotiators will reconvene in Cairo or Doha early next week for ceasefire talks.[23] The latest round of talks concluded in Cairo on May 8 with both Israel and Hamas messaging that negotiations had stalled.[24]

Hamas claimed that a British-Israeli hostage died of wounds he sustained from an Israeli airstrike last month in the Gaza Strip.[25] Hamas took Nadav Popplewell hostage on October 7 from Nirim in southern Israel. The Office of the Israeli Prime Minister told CNN that it did not know whether Popplewell was alive or dead.[26]

Palestinian fighters conducted at least two indirect fire attacks from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel on May 11. The IDF reported that it intercepted one projectile and that three others fell in open areas near Kerem Shalom.[27] The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) claimed responsibility for two indirect fire attacks targeting Kerem Shalom.[28] Palestinian militias have conducted near daily indirect fire attacks targeting the Kerem Shalom area since May 5.[29] Israeli armored vehicles have gathered near Kerem Shalom, according to satellite imagery obtained by the *Wall Street Journal*.**[30]** The IDF has said that Palestinian fighters are attempting to harm Israeli forces and the functioning of the Kerem Shalom crossing, which is the main entry point for humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip.[31]

Attacks into Israel from Gaza as of May 11, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

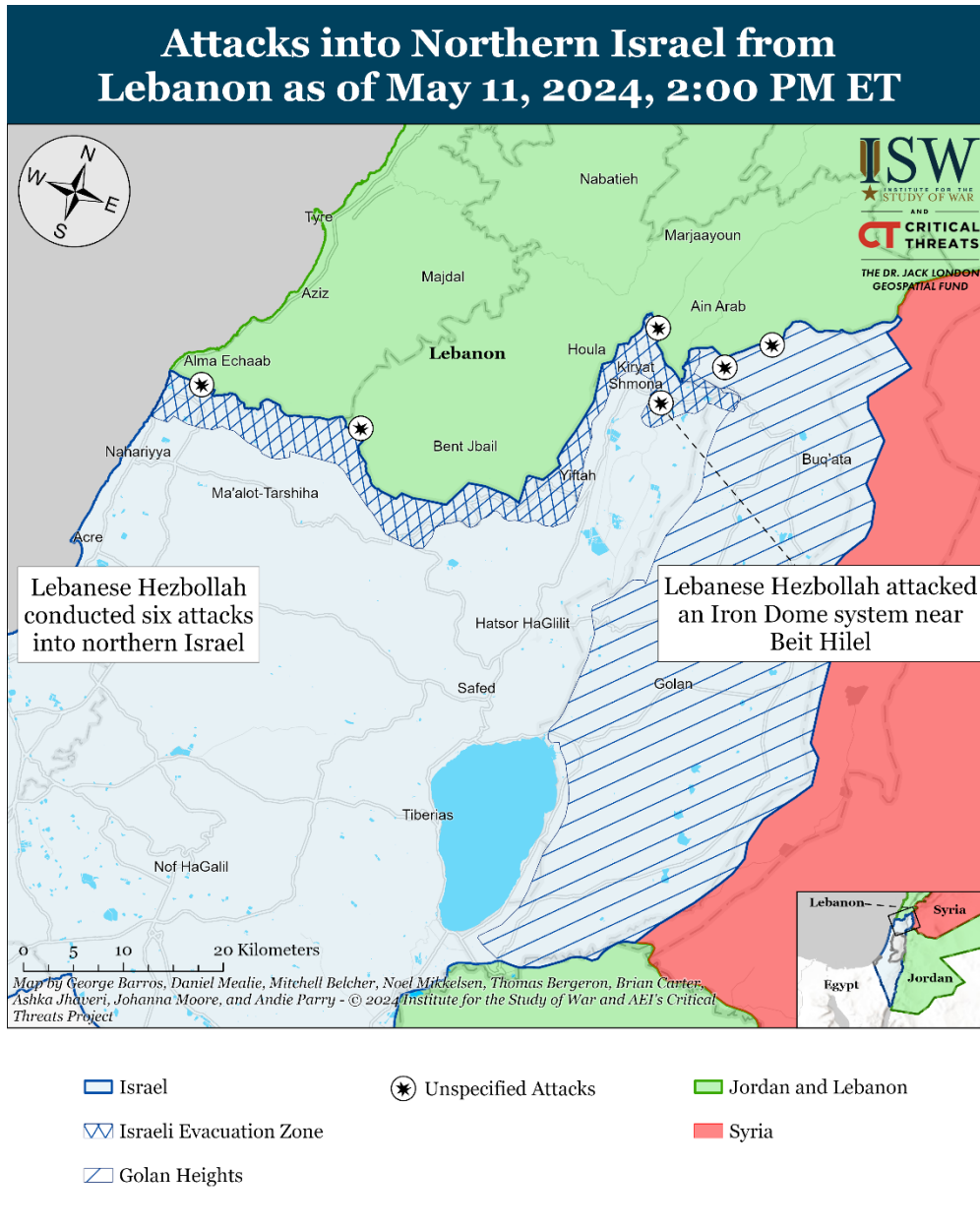
CTP-ISW did not record any engagements between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters since CTP-ISW's last data cut off on May 10.

Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Deter Israel from conducting a ground operation into Lebanon
- Prepare for an expanded and protracted conflict with Israel in the near term
- Expel the United States from Syria

Lebanese Hezbollah has conducted at least six attacks from southern Lebanon into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on May 10.[32]



Recorded reports of attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Iran and Axis of Resistance

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—has claimed one attack targeting Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on May 10.[33] The Islamic

Resistance in Iraq claimed to target the IDF Ramon airbase in the Negev desert using cruise missiles. CTP-ISW cannot verify that any claimed attacks occurred.



[1] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1788342741476241577>

[2] <https://t.me/nedalps/4109>;
<https://t.me/pflpgaza1/14133>; <https://t.me/mojahdeenpal/4503>; <https://t.me/sarayaps/17762>;
<https://t.me/sarayaps/17763>

[3] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1789250218652754175>;
<https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1789332140846399819>

[4] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1789171670105636971>

[5] <https://t.me/moriahdoron/10115>

[6] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1789171670105636971>

[7] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1789338340568780870>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1789227847468401143>; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1789337912389046558>

[8] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1731936414969872522>;
<https://x.com/2023gazawar/status/1769639838112706847>;
<https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-april-26-2024>

[9] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-may-10-2024>

[10] <https://t.me/moriahdoron/10115>

[11] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1789024732844564844>;
<https://t.me/qassamibrigades/2019>

[12] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1789250233899090302>

[13] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1789250233899090302>

[14] <https://t.me/qassamibrigades/2027>

[15] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1789171670105636971>

[16] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1760208935334629709/photo/1>;
https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/rafah-gaza-evacuations-a81a242c?mod=middle-east_news_article_pos1

[17] <https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1789171670105636971>; https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-05-11-24/h_363cd276329c8f2ae1c06aa762a39e59;
<https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1787361950298431761>

- [18] https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/rafah-gaza-evacuations-a81a242c?mod=middle-east_news_article_pos1
- [19] <https://twitter.com/WFP/status/1788948233345020320>
- [20] https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/un-agencies-warn-dwindling-food-fuel-stocks-could-force-gaza-aid-operations-to-grind-to-a-halt-in-days
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- [22] <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2024-05-11/egypt-refuses-to-coordinate-with-israel-on-entry-of-aid-from-rafah-crossing-alqahera-news-reports>;
https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-05-11-24/h_84161af3e81ea9e608d405e789500d58
- [23] https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/rafah-gaza-evacuations-a81a242c?mod=middle-east_news_article_pos1
- [24] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/iran-update-may-8-2024>
- [25] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2029>
- [26] https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-05-11-24/h_a2273e3f029d37ecd9d427f82f8ae42a
- [27] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1789268329884008930>
- [28] https://t.me/kataeb_moqawma/4232; https://t.me/kataeb_moqawma/4233
- [29] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1954>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1973>; https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6361; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1982>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1788281117197365579>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2004>
- [30] https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/rafah-gaza-evacuations-a81a242c?mod=middle-east_news_article_pos1
- [31] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1788281119856632287>
- [32] <https://t.me/mmirleb/3796> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/3798> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/3802> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/3804> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/3806> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/3808>
- [33] <https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1112>