

Iran Update



Ashka Jhaveri, Annika Ganzeveld, and Brian Carter

Iran Update, May 12, 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.

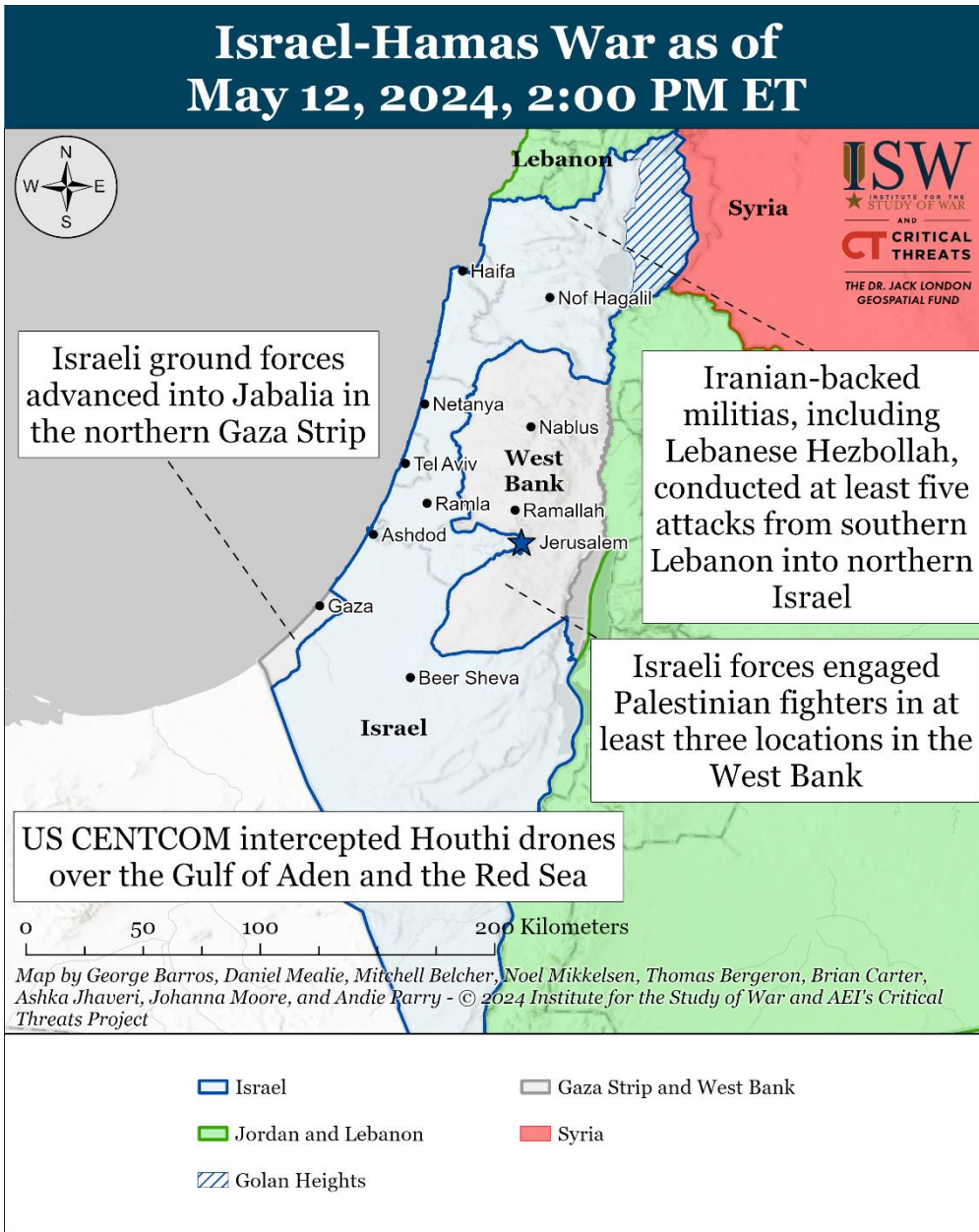
We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even 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:** Israeli ground forces advanced into Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip.
- **Southern Gaza Strip:** Israeli forces continued a "precise operation" targeting Hamas in eastern Rafah.
- **West Bank:** Israeli forces have engaged Palestinian fighters in at least three locations in the West Bank.
- **Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights:** Iranian-backed militias, including Lebanese Hezbollah, conducted at least five attacks from southern Lebanon into northern Israel.

- **Yemen:** US CENTCOM intercepted Houthi drones over the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.



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

Israeli ground forces advanced into Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip on May 11.[1] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) 98th Division launched a re-clearing operation in Jabalia after Israeli intelligence assessed that Hamas and Palestinian militias were attempting to rebuild infrastructure in the area.[2] The IDF Air Force conducted about 30 airstrikes overnight, killing several Hamas

fighters.[3] Israeli forces are currently operating east of Jabalia refugee camp, but CTP-ISW cannot confirm the IDF's path to the area.[4] The IDF issued evacuation orders for civilians in Jabalia on May 11.[5]

Palestinian militias defended against Israeli forces in eastern Jabalia. Hamas fighters conducted two separate complex attacks.[6] Hamas used a drone to drop an explosive onto an Israeli tank in eastern Jabalia.[7]

Palestinian militias defended against Israeli operations in Zaytoun on May 12. The 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.[8] Palestinian fighters attacked Israeli forces with mortar fire and RPGs in Zaytoun and along the Netzarim corridor on May 12.[9]

Palestinian militias wounded the Israeli Defense Ministry deputy comptroller in Zaytoun on May 10.[10] The comptroller, a brigadier general, is the highest ranking IDF officer wounded in the Gaza Strip during this war.[11] Palestinian militias killed five other Nahal Brigade soldiers in Zaytoun on May 10.[12]

Israeli forces continued a "precise operation" targeting Hamas in eastern Rafah on May 12.[13] The IDF Givati Brigade located and destroyed several tunnel shafts and rockets that Palestinian fighters had prepared to fire into Israel.[14] The IDF 401st Brigade identified ten armed Hamas fighters and directed an airstrike targeting them.[15] Israeli soldiers posted photos of the IDF inside the Rafah crossing.[16]

The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) reported on May 12 that about 300,000 people have fled Rafah in the past week.[17] The estimate is consistent with the IDF's estimation of the number of Gazans who have moved to the humanitarian zone north of Rafah.[18]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of May 12, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



Israeli ground forces advanced into Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip

Palestinian fighters attacked Israeli forces with mortar fire and RPGs in Zaytoun and along the Netzarim corridor

Israeli forces continued a "precise operation" targeting Hamas in eastern Rafah

0 5 10 20 Kilometers

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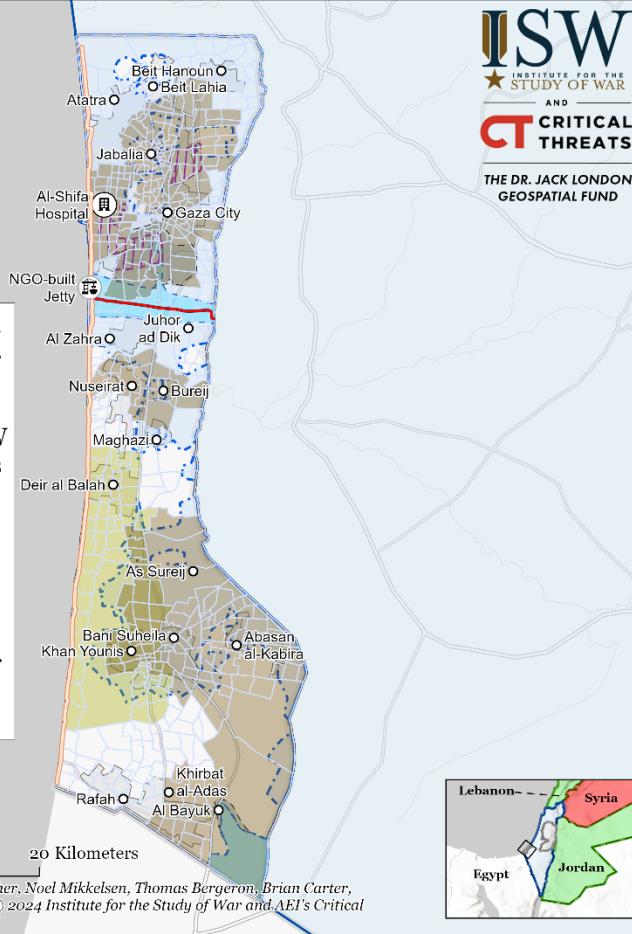
- Israel
- Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*
- Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone
- Assessed Furthest Extent of Israeli Clearing Operations
- Gaza Strip
- Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances
- IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridor on Road 230
- Densely Urban Areas
- Jordan and Lebanon
- Areas Reportedly Infiltrated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

* 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 12, 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)



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 - © 2024 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project



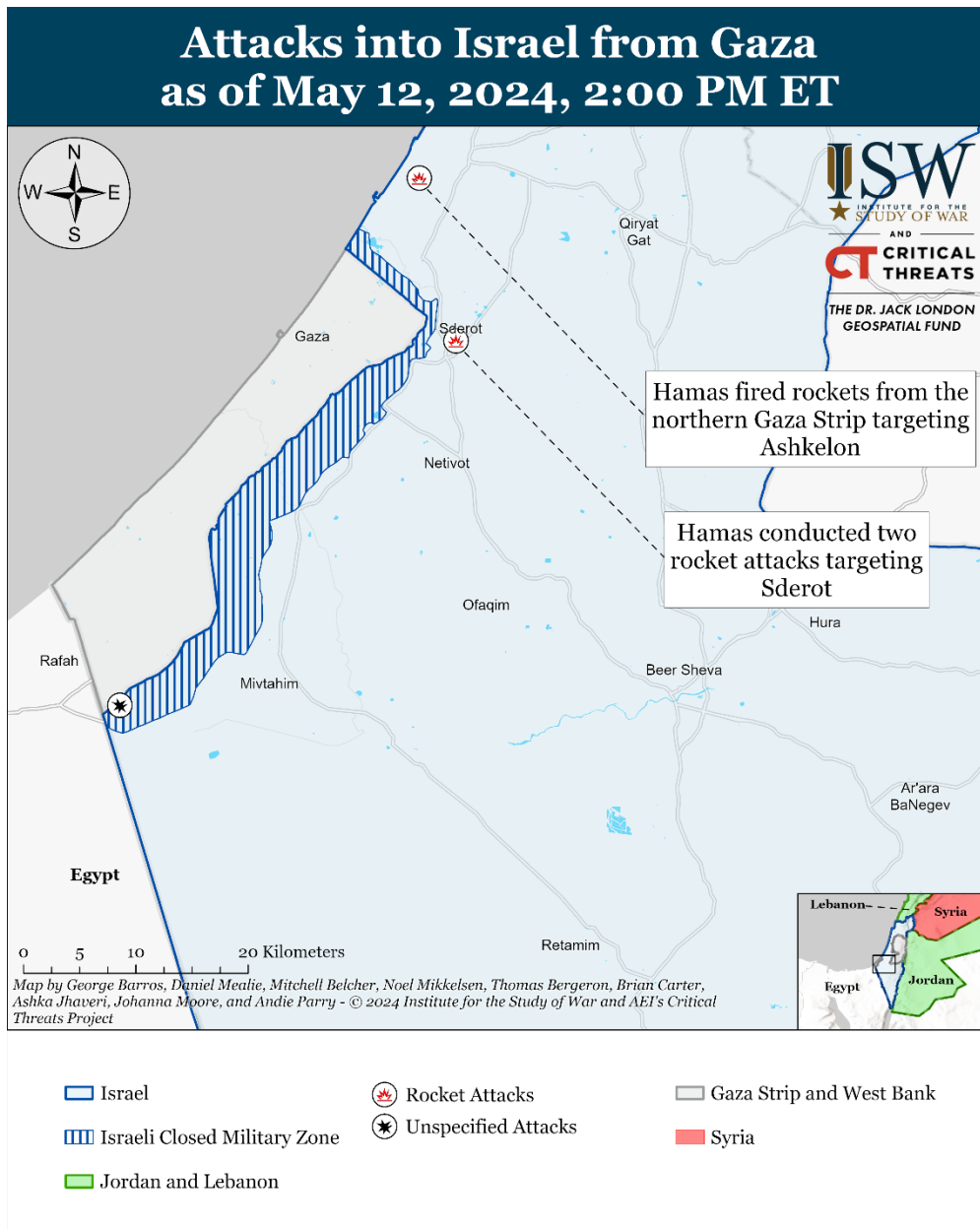
- Israel
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Israel opened a new border crossing in the northern Gaza Strip on May 12 to increase the flow of aid into the northern Strip.[19] The Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT)—a department within the Israeli Defense Ministry—said that it opened the crossing in coordination with the United States to increase aid flow into the northern Gaza Strip.[20] COGAT said that dozens of World Food Programme (WFP) trucks carrying flour left the Port of Ashdod for the Strip. The new crossing follows the WFP reporting that aid has not entered southern crossings to the Gaza Strip in several days.[21]

US Central Command commander Gen. Michael Kurilla met with IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi in Israel.[22] The commanders discussed unspecified operational developments and coordination between US and Israeli militaries.

Palestinian militias conducted four indirect fire attack from the Gaza Strip into Israel on May 12. Hamas conducted three rocket attacks targeting Ashkelon and Sderot.[23] One rocket landed in Ashkelon causing damage and injuring three people.[24] The IDF reported that its air defenses intercepted two munitions launched from Rafah toward Kerem Shalom.[25] Palestinian militias have conducted near daily indirect fire attacks targeting the Kerem Shalom area since May 5.[26] The IDF has said that Palestinian fighters are attempting to harm Israeli forces.[27] The IDF stated on May 8 that the attacks aim to prevent the Kerem Shalom crossing from functioning.[28] Kerem Shalom is the main entry point for humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip.



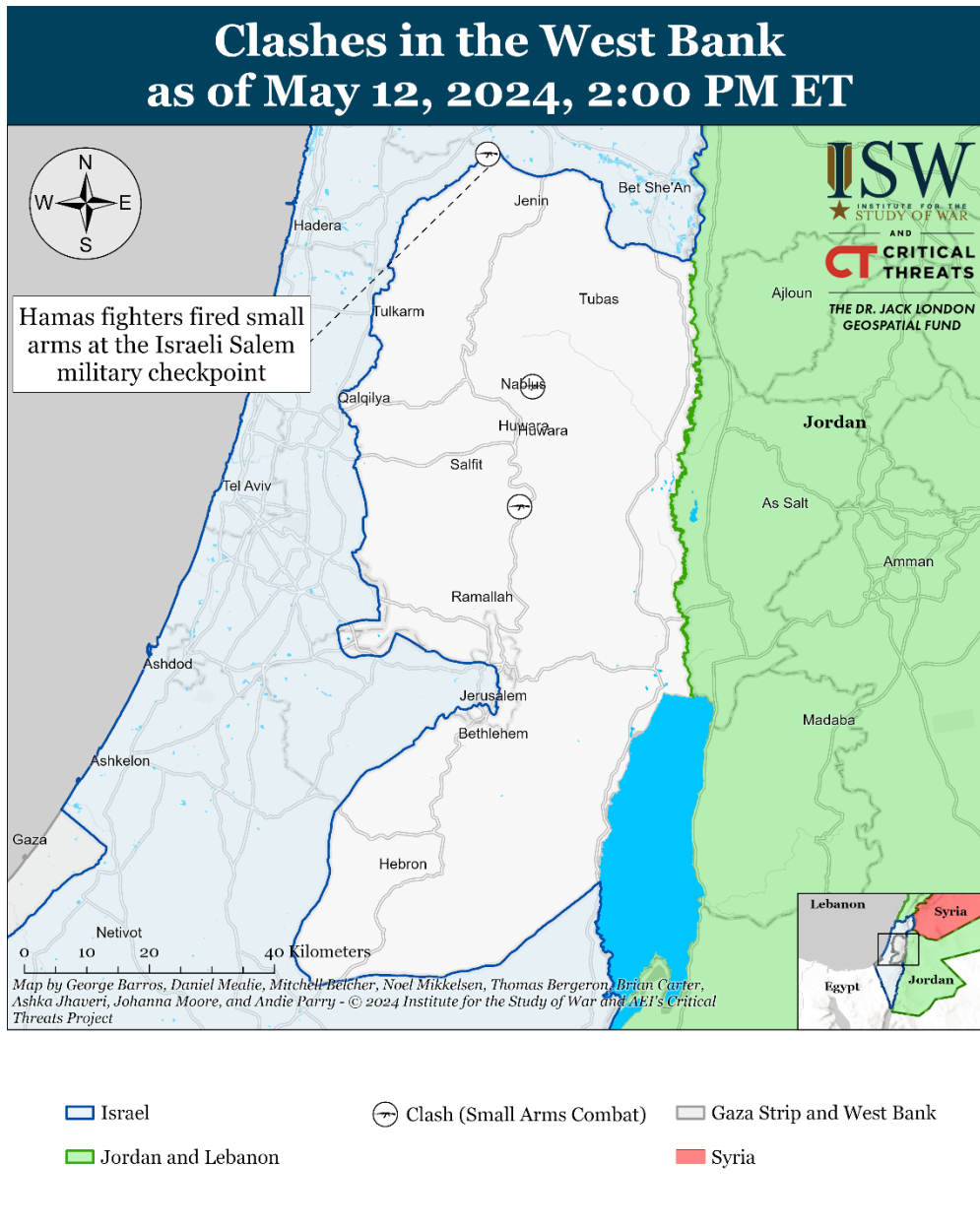
Recorded reports of attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

West Bank

Axis of Resistance objectives:

- Establish the West Bank as a viable front against Israel

Israeli forces have engaged Palestinian fighters in at least three locations in the West Bank since CTP-ISW's data cut off on May 11.[29] Israeli Army Radio reported that unspecified people set fire to a home in a Palestinian village and wrote “Regards from Binyamin” on the walls.[30] Palestinian media reported that Israeli settlers were responsible for the attack.[31]



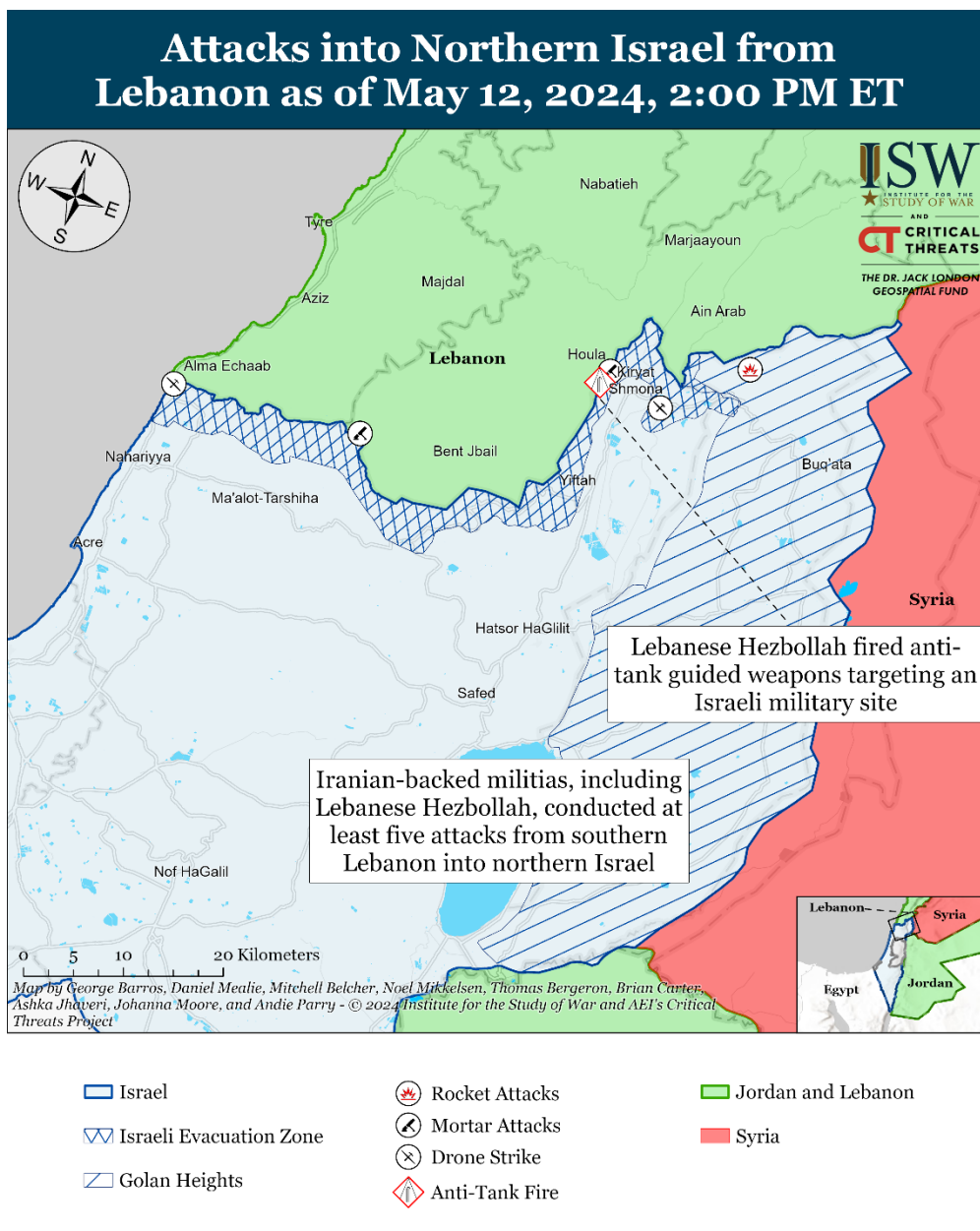
This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

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

Iranian-backed militias, including Lebanese Hezbollah, have conducted at least five attacks from southern Lebanon into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on May 11.[32] Hezbollah conducted a drone attack on an Iron Dome platform in Beit Hillel on May 11, as CTP-ISW previously reported.[33] Hezbollah added on May 11 that it fired another drone targeting an area in Beit Hillel where Hezbollah believed Israeli officers would gather following the initial attack.[34] The IDF confirmed on May 11 that two drones fell in the Beit Hillel area without causing casualties.[35]



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Iran and Axis of Resistance

US Central Command (CENTCOM) reported that a coalition aircraft intercepted a Houthi drone over the Gulf of Aden on May 10.^[36] CENTCOM separately intercepted three Houthi drones over the Red Sea on May 11.^[37] CENTCOM determined that the drones in both attacks presented an imminent threat to coalition forces and merchant vessels in the region.

POWERED BY:



BABEL STREET

[1] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1789360043428548947>

[2] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1789620604343046217>

[3] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1789620604343046217>

[4] <https://twitter.com/fdov21/status/1789577586747584771>; <https://t.me/almuhalle1/33865>;
<https://twitter.com/NemoAnno/status/1789658774275264735>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2051>

[5] <https://t.me/moriahdoron/10115>;
<https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1789171670105636971>

[6] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2053>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2058>

[7] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2043>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2051>

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

[9] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2042>; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/2041>;
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[10] <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1789586419125485593>;
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[11] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1789588117541789855>

[12] https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-05-12-24/h_5d226faab11a036992a208941a8dcf70

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[15] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1789620675780509976>

[16] <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1789620688350785979>

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- [31] <https://t.me/newpress1/75029>
- [32] <https://t.me/mmirleb/3816>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/3818>; https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/explosive-laden-drone-launched-from-lebanon-apparently-strikes-beach-near-rosh-hanikra/; <https://t.me/mmirleb/3820>
- [33] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-may-11-2024>
- [34] <https://t.me/mmirleb/3816>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/3808>
- [35] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1789352496017690629>
- [36] <https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/1789482421194215829>
- [37] <https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/1789482421194215829>