

Iran Update, March 30, 2024

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Information Cutoff: 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.

The Axis of Resistance is 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 with one another 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 militias 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 March 30 and 31, 2024. Detailed coverage will resume Monday, April 1, 2024

Key Takeaways:

- **Northern Gaza Strip:** The IDF Air Force struck Palestinian fighters and militia infrastructure in the northern Gaza Strip.
- **Southern Gaza Strip:** Israeli forces continued to conduct clearing operations in western and northern Khan Younis.
- **West Bank:** Israeli forces have engaged Palestinian fighters in at least three locations in the West Bank.
- **Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights:** Lebanese Hezbollah has conducted at least 11 attacks from southern Lebanon into northern Israel.
- **Iraq:** The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed a drone attack targeting an unspecified Israeli military facility in the Golan Heights.

Israel-Hamas War as of March 30, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



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

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Air Force struck Palestinian fighters and militia infrastructure in the northern Gaza Strip on March 30. The IDF 215th Artillery Brigade (162nd Division), which has been targeting Palestinian militia assets and positions in the northern Gaza Strip, directed the airstrikes, which targeting Palestinian fighters around a military building in an unspecified area of the northern Gaza Strip.[1]

Israeli forces continued operating in and around al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City on March 30. The IDF 162nd Division located militia infrastructure and unspecified weapons near the hospital.^[2] Israeli forces also engaged Palestinian fighters in the area.^[3] The IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi said on March 29 that the al Shifa Hospital operation "achieved its goal" but that Israeli forces would continue to operate there.^[4] Halevi called the operation a "great achievement" for leading to the capture and death of many senior Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) fighters during his visit to the al Shifa Hospital area.^[5] The IDF separately announced that Israeli forces killed two senior Hamas officials in al Shifa Hospital, who were responsible for organizing attacks targeting Israel from the West Bank.^[6] Both senior officials were released in a hostage-for-prisoner exchange in 2011.^[7]

Palestinian militias have continued attacks targeting Israeli forces around al Shifa Hospital. Hamas targeted Israeli forces with mortars, anti-personnel explosive charges, and rocket-propelled grenades on March 29.^[8] PIJ mortared an Israeli command-and-control node on March 30.^[9]

The IDF Nahal Brigade continued to conduct clearing operations in the central Gaza Strip on March 30. The brigade directed an airstrike on a Palestinian militia squad transporting weapons from a military building.^[10] The airstrike caused several secondary explosions, indicating that the building contained ammunition storage.^[11] PIJ mortared an Israeli artillery and command-and-control position in the eastern central governorate on March 29.^[12]

Israeli forces engaged Palestinian militias in southern Gaza City on March 30. Israeli forces engaged PIJ in Mughraqa, south of Israeli-built highway Route 749.^[13] Palestinian media reported clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters in Mughraqa and Zahra on March 30.^[14]

Israeli forces continued to conduct clearing operations in western and northern Khan Younis on March 30. The IDF 98th Division targeted Palestinian fighters and militia infrastructure in al Qarara, northern Khan Younis.^[15] The IDF Givati Brigade separately destroyed a Palestinian militia squad that attempted to target Israeli forces with an explosive device in al Amal, western Khan Younis.^[16]

Several Palestinian militias targeted Israeli forces in Khan Younis on March 30. Hamas detonated an explosively formed penetrator targeting an Israeli tank in central Khan Younis.^[17] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, which is the self-proclaimed military wing of Fatah and aligned with Hamas in the war, claimed that it ambushed Israeli forces in central Khan Younis.^[18] The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), which is a leftist Palestinian militia aligned with Hamas in the war, targeted Israeli forces operating near Nasser Hospital and central Khan Younis with multiple attack waves.^[19] Other Palestinian fighters mortared Israeli forces in Qarara, northern Khan Younis.^[20]

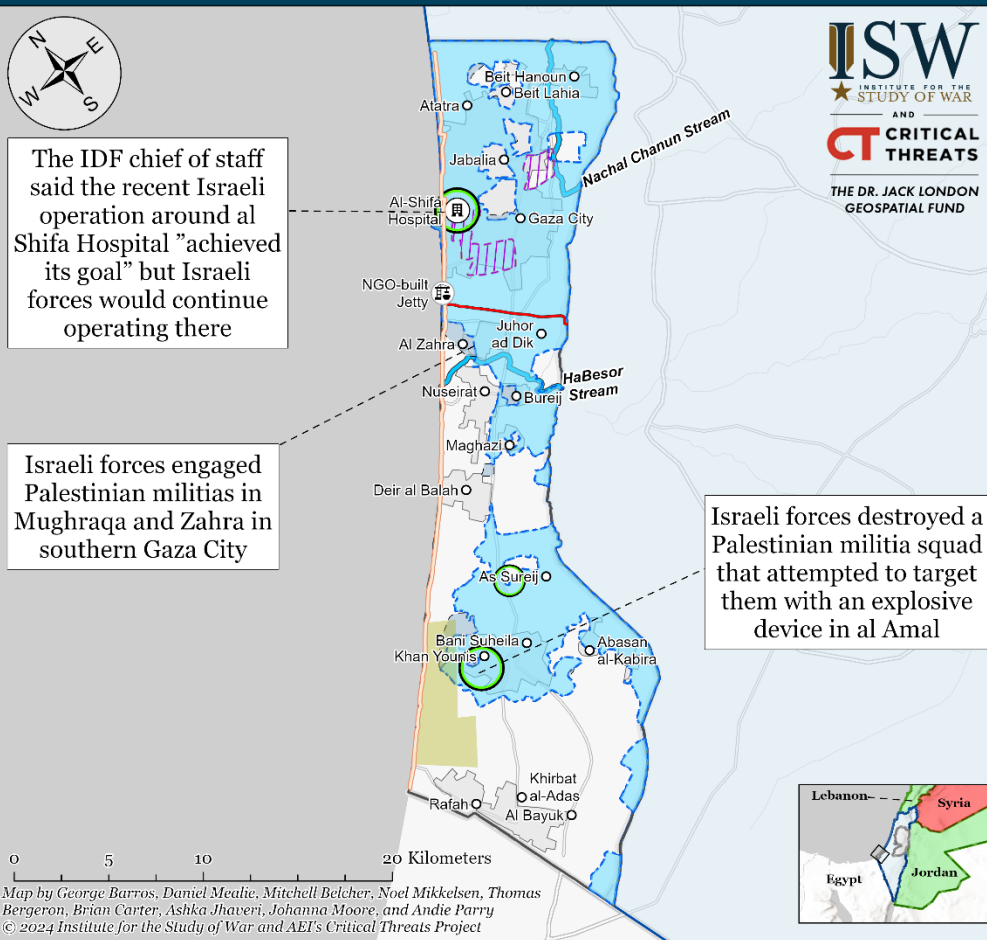
Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of March 30, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



The IDF chief of staff said the recent Israeli operation around al Shifa Hospital "achieved its goal" but Israeli forces would continue operating there

Israeli forces engaged Palestinian militias in Mughraqa and Zahra in southern Gaza City

Israeli forces destroyed a Palestinian militia squad that attempted to target them with an explosive device in al Amal

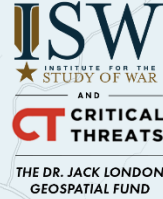


Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry
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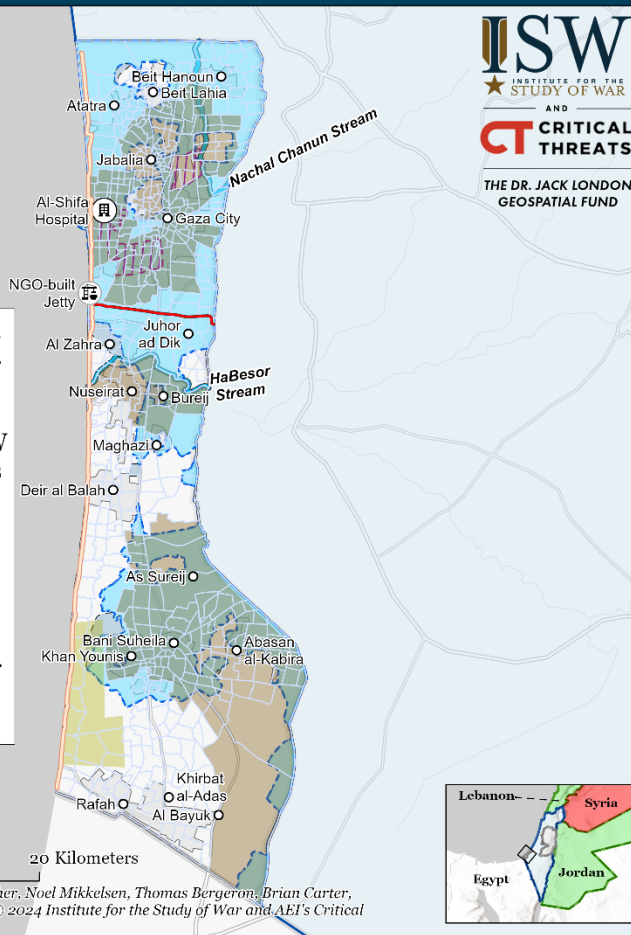
- Israel
- Gaza Strip
- Jordan and Lebanon
- Syria
- Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*
- Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances
- Areas Reportedly Infiltrated by Palestinian Militias
- Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone
- IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridor on Road 230
- Israeli-Built Highway Route 749
- Significant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

Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones in the Gaza Strip as of March 30, 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)



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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US and Israeli officials may discuss a possible Israeli clearing operation into Rafah in a high-level meeting in Washington, DC, as soon as April 1, according to unspecified US officials.[21] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved plans for a clearing operation into Rafah on March 15.[22] Axios reported on March 27 that Netanyahu is expected to send Israeli Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer and National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi to Washington for the high-level meeting with US officials.[23]

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant discussed establishing a multinational Arab coalition to improve law and order in the Gaza Strip and escort humanitarian aid convoys during his recent visit to Washington, DC, according to unspecified Israeli officials.[24] Israeli officials reportedly believe that a multinational force could help establish a

viable alternative to Hamas rule. The proposal includes an Arab force remaining in the Gaza Strip for a “limited transition period.” The forces would be responsible for securing the temporary US pier and distributing aid to civilians. Israeli officials have already met with prospective countries to discuss the multinational force. An unspecified Arab official from one of the countries reportedly involved in the plan said that Gallant misunderstood the Arab position and that the countries are not ready to send troops into the Gaza Strip to secure aid now but that they might consider it in a post-war scenario.[25] The Arab countries' involvement is conditional on steps toward a two-state solution following the war. Hamas published a statement on March 30 on behalf of several Palestinian factions rejecting the Israeli proposal to send Arab forces to manage the Gaza Strip.[26]

The United States has warned Israel that a “total breakdown of law and order” is exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the strip.[27] The absence of a local security force contributes to this issue.[28] Hamas has already sought to reconstitute militarily and rebuild its governing authority in the northern Gaza Strip after the Israeli drawdown in the strip that began in December 2023, as CTP-ISW has previously reported.[29]

The second delivery of humanitarian aid via the maritime corridor left Cyprus for the Gaza Strip on March 30.[30] World Central Kitchen (WCK) organized the delivery, which includes “hundreds of tons of food.”

Palestinian militias did not conduct any indirect fire attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel on March 30. The IDF Air Force conducted airstrikes targeting a launch area in the Gaza Strip following a rocket attack targeting Kissufim on March 29.[31] PIJ published footage of its fighters' firing rockets from the northern Gaza Strip targeting Sderot after the group claimed a rocket attack on March 25.[32] Palestinian militias have launched most of their indirect fire attacks into Israel from the northern and central Gaza Strip since January 2024.[33]

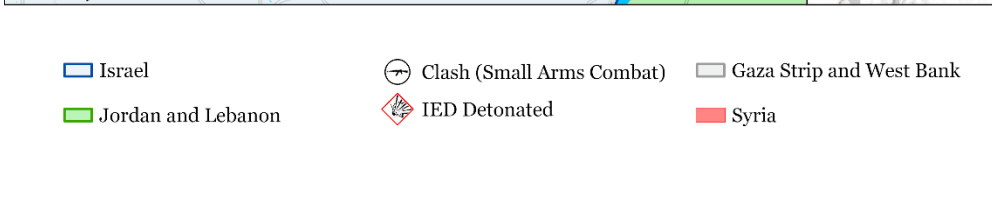
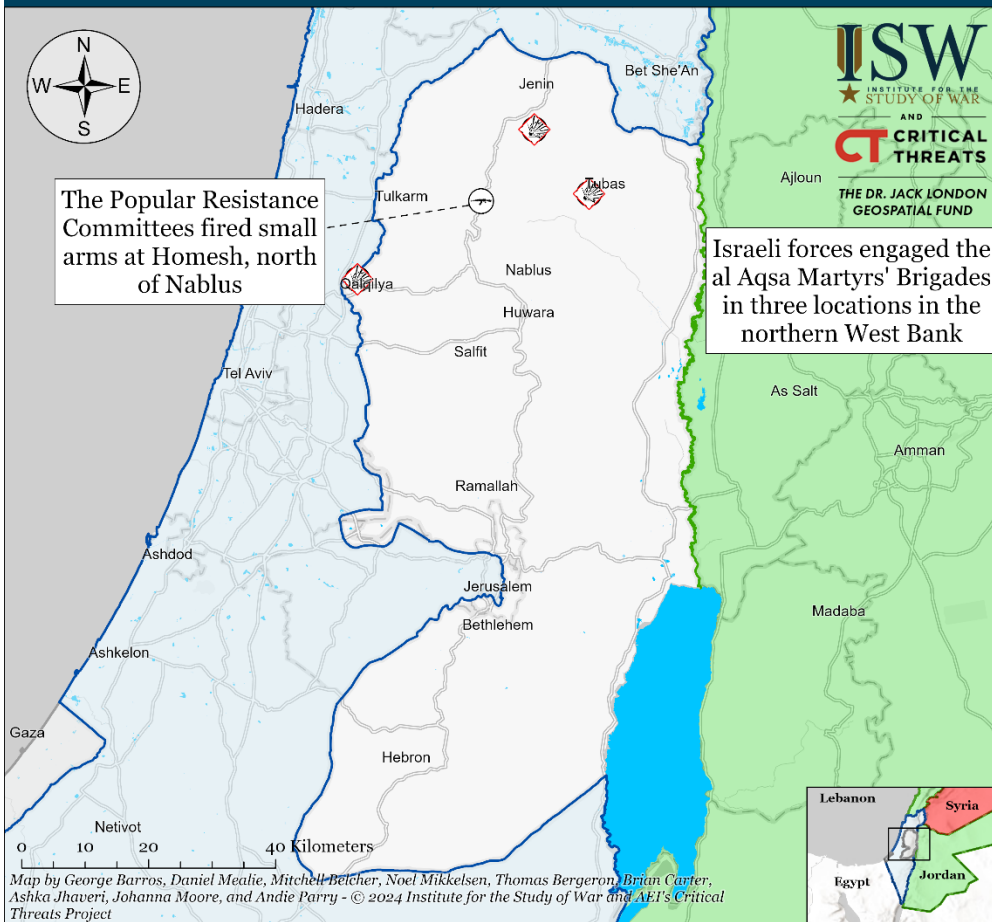
West Bank

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 last data cutoff on March 29.[34] The Popular Resistance Committees reported that its fighters fired small arms targeting Homesh, north of Nablus.[35]

Clashes in the West Bank as of March 30, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



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

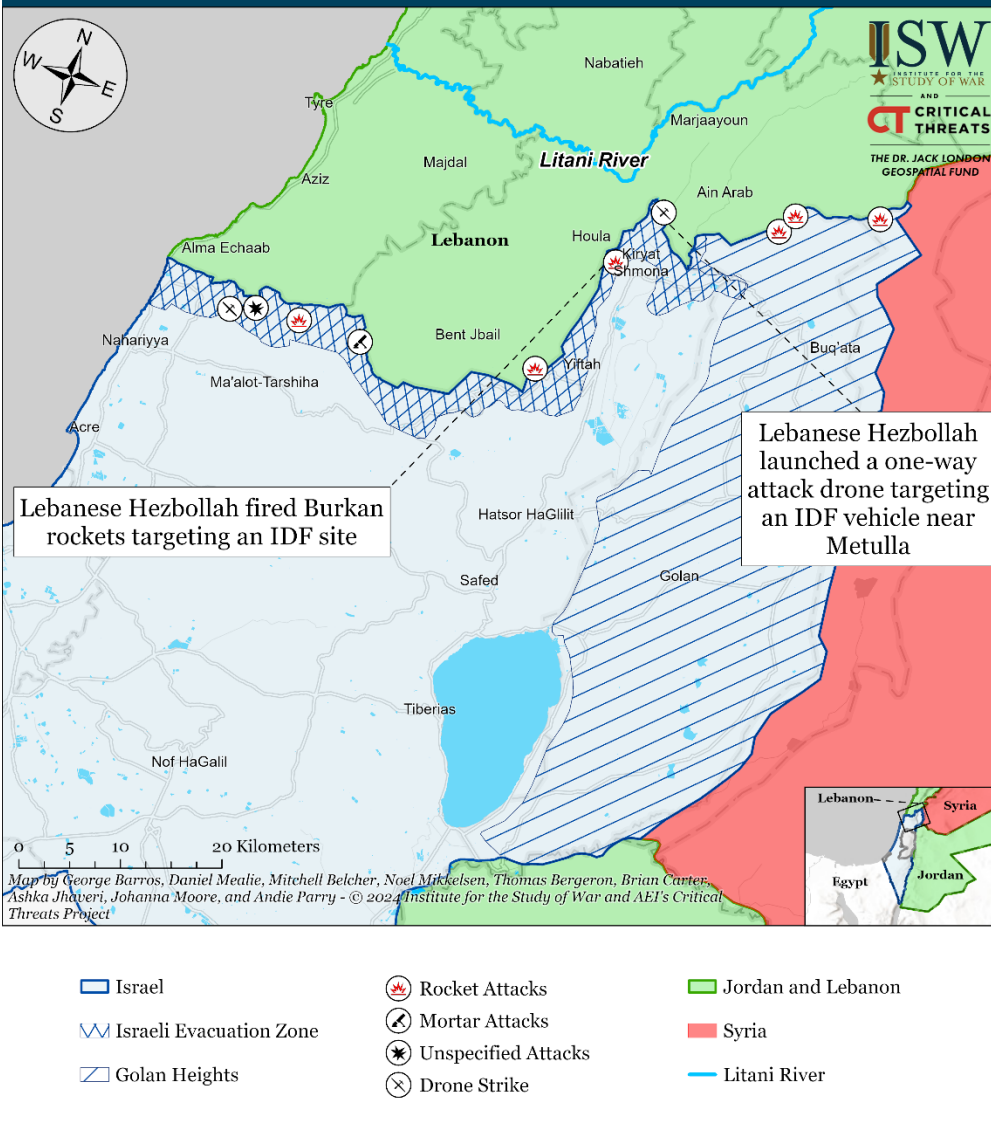
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

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

Lebanese Hezbollah has conducted at least 11 attacks from southern Lebanon into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on March 29.[36]

Attacks into Northern Israel from Lebanon as of March 30, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



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—claimed a drone attack targeting an unspecified Israeli military facility in the Golan Heights on March 29.[37] Israeli officials have not commented on the attack at the time of this writing. CTP-ISW cannot verify this claim.



- [1] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1773956135323599048> ;
<https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1773956136963539023>
- [2] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1773956122623267308>
- [3] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1773956122623267308>
- [4] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1774118370461221007> ;
<https://twitter.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1774116825145434192>
- [5] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1774118370461221007>
- [6] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1774074100094300321> <https://www.dotdf.il/188876>
- [7] <https://twitter.com/manniefabian/status/1774074100094300321>
- [8] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1843> ; <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1844> ;
<https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1845>
- [9] <https://t.me/sarayaps/17619>
- [10] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1773956133566210052>
- [11] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1773956133566210052>
- [12] <https://t.me/sarayaps/17617>
- [13] <https://twitter.com/wesleysmorgan/status/1759333045524402287?s=46&t=Pd9EQ5ncm-TX8rDDEiGN2Q> ; <https://www.idf.il/186268>
- [14] <https://t.me/QudsN/387899>
- [15] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1773956138951930024>
- [16] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1773956130873410025> ;
<https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1773956138951930024>
- [17] <https://t.me/qassam1brigades/1847>
- [18] https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6170
- [19] https://t.me/kataeb_moqawma/4187 ; https://t.me/kataeb_moqawma/4188 ;
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- [20] <https://t.me/sarayaps/17618>
- [21] https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-03-30-24/h_fobfo67f70ff13d8ddfaco75ebd64b5c
- [22] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/16/israel-hamas-war-news-gaza-palestine/>
- [23] <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/27/netanyahu-biden-delegation-rafah-reversal>
- [24] <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/29/gaza-arab-security-force-israel-proposal>
- [25] <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/29/gaza-arab-security-force-israel-proposal>
- [26] <https://t.me/hamasps/19893>
- [27] <https://www.axios.com/2024/02/24/gaza-humanitarian-aid-israel-hamas-police-biden>
- [28] <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/with-police-absent-gaza-vigilante-groups-arrive-streets-2024-03-06/>
- [29] <https://www.understandingwar.org/background/iran-update-march-18-2024>
- [30] https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-03-30-24/h_fcca6ef572dff22942fa54c1bcb6257b
- [31] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1773956130873410025>
- [32] <https://t.me/sarayaps/17621> ; <https://t.me/sarayaps/17597>
- [33] https://twitter.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1772545323325374498
- [34] https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6167 ; https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6168 ;
https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/6169

[35] <https://t.me/alwya2000/6194>

[36] <https://t.me/mmirleb/2948> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/2950> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/2953> ;
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[37] <https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/1006>