



Operation Iron Swords

Updated to 1 p.m., November 21, 2023

Northern Arena

- 274 attacks
- 77 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 10 other terrorist-organization operatives killed

Israeli Casualties

- Approximately 1,200 military and civilian dead (unofficial estimate)
- Abducted – 236
- Five abductees returned

Rocket Fire

- About 9,500 rockets and mortar shells
- About 12% failed launches

Overview¹

► **The southern arena:** The IDF integrated ground maneuver continued in Gaza City and the north of the Gaza Strip; a number of attacks were also carried out in the central and southern Gaza Strip. The centers of activity included the neighborhoods of Zeitoun, Jabaliya, Beit Lahia and Rafah. Hamas' use of civilian residences and facilities, including hospitals, for terrorist activity, was exposed several times. During the past day, Israeli Air Force aircraft made about 250 sorties. In the evening, two rockets were launched at the center of the country. A short time later, aircraft attacked and destroyed the launcher.

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 388 of them soldiers and officers; 236 civilian and military abductees are being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.** The president of the Red Cross met with Isma'il Haniyeh, the head of Hamas' political bureau, and demanded that the Red Cross be allowed to meet with the abductees. Regarding negotiations for the release of the abductees, senior Hamas figures continue to insist on a

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

cease-fire and a complete cessation of flights over the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, they continue to accuse Israel of procrastination.

►**The Gaza Strip:** UNRWA and figures from the ministry of health in Gaza continue to report a worsening situation and fear of diseases due to the lack of water. Patients and evacuees were moved from the Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip to Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis. The Jordanian crown prince is supervising the construction of the Jordanian-donated **field hospital in Khan Yunis.**

►**The northern arena:** Hezbollah continued attacking IDF posts and cities, towns and villages along the northern border, launching mortar shells, anti-tank missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and rockets. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for ten operations during the past day. The IDF responded by attacking Hezbollah terrorist targets with artillery fire and from the air. According to an initial report, the IDF attacked a vehicle south of Tyre at 2:45 p.m., killing four Hamas terrorist operatives.

►**Judea and Samaria:** The Israeli security forces continue counterterrorism activities.

►**Iran:** The Iranians are trying to coordinate efforts with other countries, especially Muslim countries, to exert pressure on Israel. Ebrahim Raisi, the president of Iran, sent communiqués on the subject to fifty heads of state.

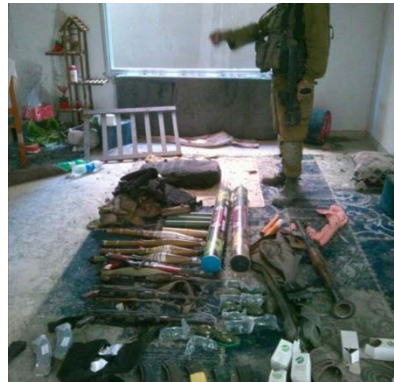
The Combat Arena

IDF activity on the ground

►**The combined ground maneuver:** The IDF maneuver continued in Gaza City and in the northern, central and southern Gaza Strip. The fighters continued finding weapons and military infrastructure in residences, hospitals, and educational and religious institutions. For example, fighters located a cache of weapons and an anti-tank missile hidden under a child's bed in a civilian residence. In the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City, a mosque was found which was used as a work site for the production of weapons (IDF spokesperson, November 20, 2023).



IDF forces along the coastal road in Gaza (Hassan Aslih's X account, November 21, 2023)



The weapons found in the terrorist's house. Left: An anti-tank missile hidden under a child's bed (IDF spokesperson, November 21, 2023)



Right: Rocket pits. Left: A tunnel shaft inside a mosque (IDF spokesperson, November 20, 2023)

►The main IDF operations over the past day:

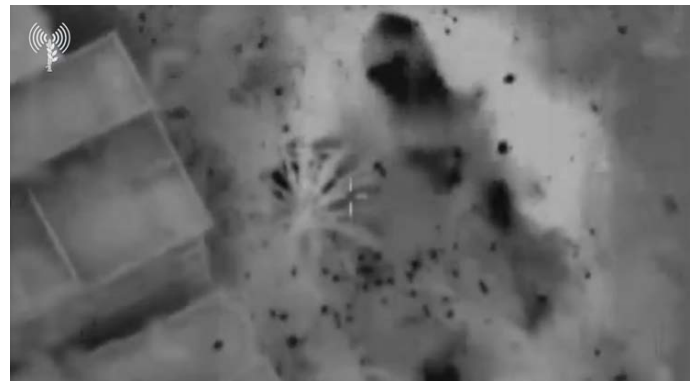
◆ **The Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza City:** IDF forces operated against the Zeitoun Battalion, one of the main battalions of Hamas' military-terrorist wing. The battalion operatives barricaded themselves in civilian dwellings, hospitals, schools and gardens, from where they attacked the IDF forces. The IDF forces took control of a number of key targets, including the office of the commander of the Gaza Brigade and the Battalion's central headquarters, which they later destroyed. The forces searched the area and

found weapons, a work site for the manufacture of rockets, IEDs and explosives, a tunnel shaft, a large quantity of weapons, and UAVs inside a mosque (IDF website, November 20, 2023).



Right: Attack on the Gaza Brigade commander's office. Left: Weapons and rockets found inside a mosque (IDF spokesperson's website, November 20, 2023)

◆ **Jabalia:** IDF forces completed the encirclement of Jabalia and prepared to continue operations. The forces attacked terrorist targets with the help of fighter jets and remotely manned aircraft, including three underground shafts on the outskirts of Jabalia where terrorists were located. They operated to the north of Jabaliya to open an axis and found tunnel shafts and weapons in several locations, including children's rooms in civilian residences (IDF spokesperson, November 21, 2023).



Attacks on terrorist squads in Jabalia (IDF spokesperson, November 21, 2023)

◆ **Beit Lahia:** During the night, nine buildings used by Hamas terrorist operatives were attacked from the air.

◆ **Rafah:** Aircraft attacked several houses in the Rafah area in the southern Gaza Strip.



**Aftermath of the Israeli Air Force attacks. Right: Rafah (QudsN X account, November 20, 2023).
Left: Beit Lahia (QudsN X account, November 21, 2023)**

► **Aerial activity:** During the past day, IDF aircraft attacked about 250 Hamas targets throughout the Gaza Strip. Among the targets were missile launchers, terrorist infrastructure and dozens of terrorists.



A Palestinian cartoon ridiculing Israel for continuing its efforts to locate tunnels under Shifa Hospital (Muhammad Sabaana's Facebook page, November 20, 2023)

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

► During the past day several dozen rockets were fired at the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip. One launch targeted the Ashdod area. In the evening two launches targeted the center of Israel. The rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome and David's Sling aerial defense systems, and sirens were widely activated out of concern of falling debris from the interceptions (IDF spokesperson, November 20, 2023). Shortly after the launch, the launcher, which was situated near civilian residences, was destroyed by an IDF airstrike (IDF spokesperson, November 21, 2023).



Right: The rocket launch, clearly carried out from within a populated area (Palinfo website, November 20, 2023). Left: The IDF attack on the launch site (IDF spokesperson's website, November 21, 2023)

Israeli casualties

►According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 390 of them soldiers and officers; 236 civilian and military abductees are being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, 35 children and adolescents under the age of 18, 32 over the age of 65. Five abductees were released; four were released alive, one was extracted by IDF forces and two bodies were recovered by the IDF and brought to Israeli territory.

The issue of the abductees

►The president of the Red Cross met in Qatar with **Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas' political bureau**, and demanded the immediate release of the abductees. She also demanded that members of the Red Cross be allowed to visit the abductees to make sure they are safe, receiving medication and are allowed to contact their families. According to the president, agreements must be reached, but the Red Cross cannot force entry into where the abductees are being held (Red Cross website, November 20, 2023).

►**Ismail Haniyeh** claimed that Hamas had conveyed its answer to Qatar and the mediators, and they were approaching a cease-fire agreement (Hamas Telegram channel, November 21, 2023). **Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, confirmed Haniyeh's claim about a ceasefire. He also claimed that any agreement would be reached in accordance with "the terms of the resistance" [terrorist organizations], and its details would be made public by Qatar and the mediators (al-Araby, November 21, 2023).

►"Exclusive" sources told the Filastin al-Yawm TV channel, which is affiliated with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), that Hamas and the PIJ agreed in principle on the conditions for an abductee-release deal, but they were still subject to change. According to the sources,

the conditions include a five-day pause in the fighting and a complete cessation of IDF flights over the Gaza Strip (Filastin al-Yawm TV Telegram channel, November 20, 2023). **Musa Abu Marzouq, the head of Hamas' international relations office**, interviewed by the Indian program "The Wire," said the most important condition for a ceasefire was a total cessation of IDF aerial activity, including reconnaissance flights and UAVs (The Wire website, November 18, 2023).

► Izzat al-Rishq responded to White House spokesman John Kirby, who claimed they were close to reaching a deal. Izzat al-Rishq claimed Israeli "procrastination" was responsible for the delay. He said the negotiations were progressing and "the Qatari brothers" were "working feverishly" but it was not yet possible to discuss details. He claimed Hamas was conducting the negotiations with the mediators, but collaborating with all the "resistance forces" [terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip], and Hamas, the PIJ and the resistance were "one thing." He claimed they were "united on the battlefield, on the political level and in any agreement that was reached" (al-Ghad TV YouTube channel, November 20, 2023).

► **Zaher Jabarin, who holds the Hamas prisoner portfolio**, claimed that so far Israel had been procrastinating regarding the truce and so far had violated its commitments to the mediators 13 times. He also stated that one of the conditions for negotiations was to restore the conditions of prisoners in Israeli prisons to the Operation al-Aqsa Storm status quo ante. He said that for the first time in the history of the conflict, the "resistance" had something that enabled it to empty all the prisons and release all the Palestinian prisoners, and they would remove all the bodies of the dead Palestinians held by Israel and bury them in Palestinian territory (Hurriya News, November 20, 2023; al-Anadolu News, November 20, 2023).

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The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

► The Hamas government media information bureau in Gaza reported that as of 7:00 p.m., November 20, 2023, the number of dead stood at more than 13,300 and the number of wounded at more than 31,000 (Facebook page of the Hamas government media information bureau in Gaza, November 20, 2023).



An infographic of the number of dead and wounded in the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the war (QUDSN's X account, November 20, 2023)

►The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip published a video of the transfer of patients and displaced residents from the Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip to the Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis. The video shows the main entrance to the Nasser Hospital, the presence of Hamas police officers and two police vehicles (Facebook page of the ministry of health in Gaza, November 21, 2023). **Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the Hamas-controlled ministry of health**, said that in the Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip there were still 400 wounded, 200 medical staff members and 2,000 residents who had taken shelter in the hospital. He claimed that so far only 120 patients had been evacuated from the hospital to the southern Gaza Strip. He called for a humanitarian corridor to be opened to allow the continued evacuation of the sick and evacuees (Shebab X account, November 21, 2023).



Patients and evacuees from the Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip arrive at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis (QudsN X account, November 20, 2023)



The main entrance to Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis as patients and evacuees arrive from the Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, November 21, 2023)

►The Palestinian media reported the death of two senior Hamas terrorists in Jabalia, Mustafa al-Qanua (aka Abu Sa'ad), and 'Ataf al-Qanua (aka Abu Rajab), the brother of Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanua. The two were killed in an attack on the house of the al-Qanua family in Jabaliya on November 20, 2023 (Paltoday Telegram channel, November 20, 2023; Alaa Nabhan's X account, November 21, 2023).

►Mustafa al-Qanua was deported to Lebanon in 1991. He was a Hamas representative in Syria and later in Iran. In 2007, he returned to the Gaza Strip. He had served as the mayor of Jabalia (Alaa Nabhan's X account, November 21, 2023; Syrian Writers Association website, November 15, 2011; Nun Post website, January 31, 2018).



Mustafa al-Qanua (Alaa Nabhan's X account, November 21, 2023)

The situation in the Gaza Strip

►Adnan Abu Hasna, UNRWA's media advisor in the Gaza Strip, said the following about the situation in the Gaza Strip (al-Mayadeen TV, November 20, 2023):

- ◆ The number of displaced persons since the beginning of the war is approximately 1.7 million. The number of displaced persons sheltering in UNRWA is 900,000, and hundreds of thousands are staying on the streets without shelter.

- ◆ The number of UNRWA workers who have been killed is 104.
- ◆ More than 70 UNRWA institutions and schools were attacked, even though, he claimed, the UN flag flew over them, and UNRWA informed the Israeli side of the exact location of the agency's centers and schools.
- ◆ There is insufficient fuel, as 120,000 liters (31,700 gallons) are needed per day, and only 60,000 liters (15,850 gallons) are being delivered daily. That means the sewage plants cannot operate at maximum capacity, leading to sewage flowing into the streets, which will cause epidemics. The fact that people are forced to drink polluted water will also cause the spread of diseases.
- ◆ The markets are running out of food and prices have risen sharply.
- ◆ Food and clothing should be brought into the strip because of the cold weather.

Aid for the Gaza Strip

► According to reports, on the morning of November 21, 2023, UNRWA began distributing sacks of flour to residents, from the Rafah area to the center of the Gaza Strip (Husam Abu Shakra's Telegram channel, November 21, 2023).



**Distribution of flour to residents in the southern Gaza Strip
(Husam Abu Shakra's Telegram channel, November 21, 2023)**

► Following the request of Egypt and the director of Shifa Hospital, IDF forces, through the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, enabled the transfer of babies from Shifa Hospital to Egypt for medical treatment. The babies were accompanied by UN teams (IDF spokesperson, November 20, 2023).



The coordinated evacuation of babies from the Shifa premature baby ward with the assistance of the IDF forces (IDF spokesperson, November 20, 2023)

► **Hussein bin Abdullah, the heir to the Jordanian throne**, arrived in El Arish to supervise the transfer of the equipment that had arrived from Jordan for the establishment of the second Jordanian field hospital in the Khan Yunis area (Jordanian royal house X account, November 20, 2023).

Hamas

► **Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the Hamas political bureau**, called **Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general**, to discuss the latest developments in the Strip and coping with the situation on the ground in the face of "Israeli aggression." They also discussed the negotiations concerning the issue of the abductees (PIJ Telegram channel, November 20, 2023).

► In an interview in English to CBS reporter Holly Williams in Doha, **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, [falsely] claimed that Hamas "fighters" [terrorists] had been instructed not to kill civilians in the October 7 attack and that "any killing of a civilian by Hamas in an attack is a mistake and wrong." Asked if that meant Hamas bore no responsibility for current events in the Gaza Strip, he answered Hamas had no responsibility, and claimed Hamas was "doing its duty [sic] to create a future for the Palestinians" (CBSNEWS website, November 20, 2023).



Musa Abu Marzouq (CBSNEWS website, November 20, 2023)

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The Northern Arena

Lebanon

► Hezbollah continued its attacks against IDF posts and Israeli cities, towns and villages along the northern border. The attacks included mortar shells, anti-tank missiles, UAVs and rockets. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for ten operations carried out during the past day (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, November 21, 2023). It was also reported that the IDF had fired artillery at a Lebanese army center in al-Wazzani, near Ghajar (the eastern sector). There were reportedly no casualties, but damage was caused (Lebanese News Agency, November 21, 2023). The following were noteworthy events:

- ◆ On October 20, 2023, about 25 launches into Israeli territory were identified, some of which were intercepted by the IDF. In addition, three UAVs were identified that hit near an IDF post, with no casualties (IDF spokesperson, October 20, 2023).
- ◆ On November 21, 2023, three anti-tank launches were identified from Lebanese territory targeting the Metulla area (IDF spokesperson, October 21, 2023).

► In response to the launches, IDF forces fired tanks and artillery. Fighter jets attacked Hezbollah's operational headquarters and terrorist infrastructure. In addition, the IDF attacked terrorist squads (IDF spokesperson, November 20 and 21, 2023).



Right: Attack on Hezbollah's terrorist infrastructure. Left: Attack on a Hezbollah anti-tank squad (IDF spokesperson's website, November 21, 2023)

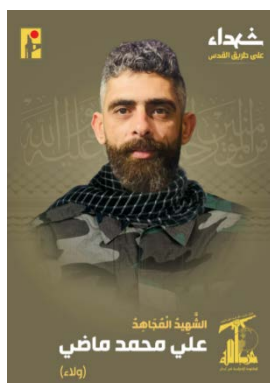


Attack on Hezbollah's terrorist infrastructure (IDF spokesperson's website, November 20, 2023)

Fatalities in Lebanon

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah announced the death of Ali Muhammad Madi, aka Walaa, from the town of Meidoun in the Beqa'a Valley. He was killed as a "shaheed (martyr) on the way to Jerusalem." The time or location of his death were not specified (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, November 20, 2023). Recently there has been an increasing number of Hezbollah fatalities from the Beqa'a Valley.



Hezbollah fatality (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, November 20, 2023)

Civilians and Hamas operatives

► Two journalists and a civilian were reportedly killed in an IDF drone attack in Tayr Harfa. The Hezbollah-affiliated al-Mayadeen TV network announced that two of its employees, journalist Farah Omar and cameraman Rabih Maamari, were killed in the attack (al-Nashra, November 21, 2023). Hezbollah condemned the attack and expressed condolences to the families of the dead (Radio al-Nur, November 21, 2023).



The two reporters who were killed (Hani Hashem's X account, November 21, 2023)

► According to an initial report (2:45 p.m.), an IDF aircraft attacked a car south of Tyre. The passengers in the car were reportedly Khalil Harraz, deputy commander of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam branch, Hamas' military-terrorist wing in Lebanon, and three other operatives, all of whom were killed (al-Nashra; Qanat el-Nabatieh Telegram channel; Lebanese News Agency, November 21, 2023).



The car after the attack (al-Nashra, November 21, 2023)

The significance of using the Burkan rocket

► On November 20, 2023, Burkan rockets were fired at the Israeli Biranit camp, causing extensive destruction. An article published in Lebanon raised the question of whether the Burkan rocket would change the course of the fighting. It was noted that so far, Hezbollah had tried to maintain the rules of engagement, and was carrying out a gradual escalation, but the launch of the Burkan heavy rocket on November 20, 2023, attacking the Biranit outpost and causing substantial destruction, might constitute a violation of the rules of warfare (i.e., deviation from the line of the threshold of war) and constitute grounds for opening a full-scale war between Israel and Hezbollah (Beirut News, November 21, 2023).

Israel's response to the rocket launch

► The rockets were reportedly fired at Biranit from among houses in the town of Rmeish, a Christian town located about 1.7 kilometers (a little over 1 mile) north of the Lebanon-Israel border (north of the village of Matat). In response, the IDF attacked targets near the town's houses. The townspeople condemned Hezbollah's conduct, which put the town in danger of attack (IMLebanon, November 20, 2023).

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Judea, Samaria, and the Palestinian Authority

Preventive and counterterrorism activities

► Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities. On the night of November 20, 2023, the forces operated in Judea and Samaria and detained 16 wanted Palestinians, two of them Hamas operatives. In an activity in Wadi Far'a (southwest of Tubas), shots were fired at the forces. A stun grenade was thrown in Jericho and the forces responded with gunfire (IDF spokesperson's website, November 20, 2023).

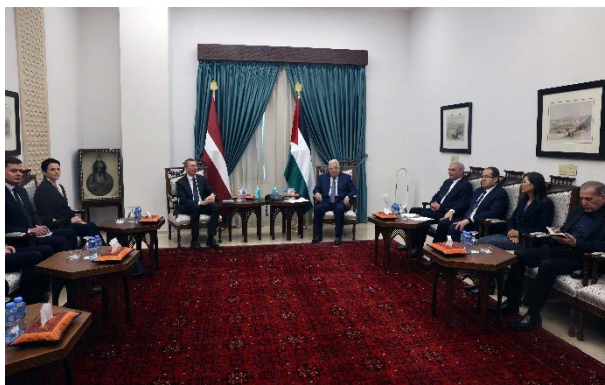
► The Palestinian media reported the detention of 45 Palestinians from Jenin, Hebron, Jericho, Nablus, Bethlehem and Ramallah (Wafa, November 21, 2023). Since morning, there have been reports of intensive Israeli security force activity in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus and Jericho (Ma'an, November 21, 2023). Since the beginning of the war in Gaza, about 1,850 wanted Palestinians have been detained, about 1,100 of them Hamas terrorists (IDF spokesperson's website, November 20, 2023).



**Activity of the Israeli security forces in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus
(QudsN X account, November 21, 2023)**

Palestinian Authority

► **Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority (PA)**, met with the president of Latvia. Abbas stressed the need to stop the "all-out Israeli aggression" against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria and urged to expedite the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. He also stressed the PA's opposition to the uprooting of the residents, noting that there was no security or military solution for Gaza since it was "an integral part of the Palestinian state." He said the PA would not accept or cooperate with any of Israel's plans to separate the Gaza Strip from Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem (Wafa, November 20, 2023).



Mahmoud Abbas meets with the Latvian president (Wafa, November 20, 2023)

► **Jibril Rajoub, secretary of Fatah's Central Committee**, condemned Israel's activity in the Gaza Strip, which, he claimed, endangered the entire region. He claimed Israel was a "racist and fascist" society and that all international laws should be used against it. He also said the "resistance" [terrorist attacks] in the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria would continue (Jibril Rajoub's Facebook page, November 20, 2023).

Iran

► **Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi** sent communiqués to 50 leaders of countries to unite and coordinate efforts to exert pressure on Israel to stop its [alleged] "crimes" in Gaza. He called on the leaders of the countries, especially Islamic countries, to play a more prominent role in stopping Israel's "crimes" by exerting pressure, including the cessation of commercial and political cooperation (Tasnim, November 20, 2023).

► **Hossein-Amir Abdollahian, Iranian foreign minister**, spoke with his Qatari counterpart, Mohammad bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, and discussed political initiatives to establish a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. They stressed the need for the Islamic countries to provide immediate aid to the Palestinian people and called on the international community to take immediate steps to force Israel to stop its [alleged] "blatant violations of international law" (IRNA, November 20, 2023).

► **Mohammad Bagheri, chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces**, said at the beginning of a tactical maneuver by the IRGC ground forces that "the victory of the Palestinian people was imminent" and that the killing of innocent civilians did not indicate the victory of the "Zionists," who had been "defeated" [sic] in the Hamas attack on October 7. He noted that the "crimes of the Zionists" revealed the truth about them and about the United States, Europe and the other countries supporting them (Tasnim, November 21, 2023).

Activity of pro-Iranian militias

Iraq and Syria

► The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for two drone attacks against the Ayn al-Assad American Army base in western Iraq (Islamic Resistance Telegram channel, November 20 and 21, 2023).

► The pro-Iranian Nujaba militia² in Iraq issued a statement threatening to attack an Israeli target at sea. According to the announcement, in light of the "cruel massacres" carried out by Israel in the Gaza Strip, they emphasized their solidarity with the Palestinians, and revealed a UAV they had manufactured, which could reach a distance of up to 500 kilometers and was ready for immediate action (Nujaba X account, November 20, 2023).

² For further details on the Nujaba movement, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from May 14, 2023, "The Nujaba Movement – the Movement of the Noble Ones: One of the dominant pro-Iranian militias in Iraq"

- ▶ Citing a "security source," the al-Arabiya network reported that an "unidentified" drone had attacked a vehicle belonging to the armed militias in Iraq in the Baghdad area. The Kurdish news agencies Bas News and Shafaq News also reported the incident, adding that according to their sources the vehicle belonged to the pro-Iranian Kata'ib Hezbollah (Hezbollah Brigades) militia and that the passengers had left before the attack, and therefore there were no casualties (al-Arabiya, Shafaq News and Bas News, November 21, 2023).
- ▶ The Islamic Resistance in Iraq announced that a militia operative by the name of Fadel al-Maksousi had been killed in the "battle of truth against lies" (the "struggle" against the American forces). It was not specified how and when he was killed (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, November 21, 2023). The report was also published on the official Telegram channel of the pro-Iranian Iraqi militia Kata'ib Hezbollah (Hezbollah Brigades), as well as on the Saber News Telegram channel, which is affiliated with the pro-Iranian Iraqi militias (Telegram channels of Saber News and Kata'ib Hezbollah, November 21, 2023).



The dead operative, Fadel al-Maksousi
(the Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, November 21, 2023)

Yemen

- ▶ Houthi officials commented on the takeover of the ship in the Red Sea:
 - ◆ **Muhammad Ali al-Houthi, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, said that if the United States and Israel stopped killing the Palestinians, it would be possible to talk about the captured ship (Houthi Telegram channel, November 21, 2023).
 - ◆ **Hizam al-Assad, a member of the Houthis' political bureau**, said in response to the accusations that the seizure of the ship in the Red Sea had been carried out under Iranian guidance and that there was coordination with Iran as part of the "axis of

resistance,"³ but the decision to attack was theirs. He noted this was only the beginning of their naval operations. He added that the confrontation with Israel had not affected the dialogue between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia (al-Araby al-Jadeed, November 20, 2023).

◆ **Mohammed al-Qadri, commander of Yemen's Houthi coastal defense forces**, warned that any foreign intervention in their territory would lead to an appropriate response. He claimed they had the appropriate weapons to deal with any development and could strike anywhere and whenever they chose. He noted they were entering a new phase of developments in the maritime field and their forces were prepared and deployed on the ground along with the equipment required to carry out any mission (al-Masirah, November 20, 2023).

The Arab Arena

Jordan

► **King Abdullah II of Jordan** met in Amman with **Josep Borrell, EU foreign minister**, to discuss the need to act intensively to stop the fighting in Gaza, lift the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip, and ensure the entry of humanitarian aid (Petra, November 20, 2023).

Iraq

► **Iraqi Prime Minister Muhammad Shia' al-Sudani** met with **Alina Romanowski, the United States Ambassador to Iraq**, to discuss relations between the countries and the situation in the Gaza Strip, "the crimes of genocide taking place there and the grave violations of Palestinian rights." Al-Sudani stressed that Israel's hostilities had to be stopped, humanitarian corridors had to be opened for the entry of food and medical aid, and the rights of the Palestinians had to be guaranteed (Iraqi Prime Minister's Office Telegram channel, November 21, 2023).

The International Arena

Turkey

► **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** said that Israel and its supporters were using modern weapons against children, women and the elderly, and that they would be judged by the conscience of humanity. He claimed the Turks were trying to stop the bloodshed in the

³ Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.

Gaza Strip and were watching with regret the lack of conscience of Western countries (Anadolu News, November 20, 2023).