

Situation Report

Israel-Hamas War Monitoring

Classification: TLP:CLEAR

Criticality: High

Intelligence Requirements: Key Personnel Residential Threats, Geopolitical, Military

**As of 1200 EDT
October 16, 2023**



Situation Report: Israel-Hamas War Monitoring as of 1200 EDT on October 16, 2023

| Key Findings

- Israel's military is amassing its forces on multiple fronts in preparation for likely ground operations in Gaza. Missile strikes in Gaza continue, with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) also confirming its artillery struck Syrian targets over the weekend.
- Protests continued worldwide over the weekend of October 14-15, with citizens expressing their respective voices on the ongoing Israel-Hamas war; although some protests resulted in clashes with police, violence remained isolated and contained overall.
- Hackers continue to conduct cyberattacks in support of the side of the conflict with which they are aligned. Side-agnostic threat actors are very likely capitalizing on interest in the conflict—including from breach package buyers—to conduct intrusions for financial gain.

| Situation on the Ground

Israel's military is amassing its forces on multiple fronts in preparation for likely ground operations in Gaza. Missile strikes in Gaza continue, with the IDF also confirming its artillery struck Syria-based targets over the weekend.¹ Israel continues urging Gazans to evacuate the north and move south towards the Rafah border; hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have reportedly done so.² Hamas officials have reportedly instructed citizens to shelter in place in their respective homes in Gaza.

The Egyptian-controlled Rafah border crossing into Gaza is expected to reopen on October 16, 2023, amid a diplomatic agreement between the United States, Egypt, and Israel to deliver vital aid into Gaza and evacuate dual nationals holding foreign passports. Early reports that the border would open at 0900 (GMT+3) were inaccurate.³

Amidst escalating tensions and continued cross-border rocket strikes between Israel and Lebanon, reporting indicates that Israeli authorities have ordered the evacuation of people living in 28

¹ [hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/world/middle-east/israel-strikes-back-after-shooting-syria-sets-off-sirens-military-2023-10-14/](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-strikes-back-after-shooting-syria-sets-off-sirens-military-2023-10-14/)

² [hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/world/middle-east/palestinians-fleeing-fighting-south-find-no-escape-danger-2023-10-15/](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/palestinians-fleeing-fighting-south-find-no-escape-danger-2023-10-15/)

³ [hXXps://il.usembassy\[.\]gov/security-alert-rafah-border-crossing-october-16/](https://il.usembassy[.]gov/security-alert-rafah-border-crossing-october-16/)



communities near the Lebanese border.⁴ Hezbollah militants have begun destroying surveillance cameras on Israeli outposts along the border to prevent the IDF from monitoring movements on the Lebanese side.⁵

According to a report from *The New York Times*, the invasion of the Gaza Strip was planned to begin last weekend but was allegedly delayed due to poor weather and visibility.⁶ This has allowed more time for Gaza civilians to leave after the IDF initially gave residents 24 hours to do so. Amid the postponement, President Joe Biden is reportedly considering a trip to Israel, the details of which remain non-specific and vague, almost certainly due to security concerns.⁷

| Global Protest Activity, Escalating Community Tensions

Protests continued worldwide over the weekend of October 14-15, with citizens expressing their respective voices on the ongoing Israel-Hamas war; although some protests resulted in clashes with police, violence remained isolated and contained overall.

However, the conflict is almost certainly driving an increase in both antisemitic and anti-Muslim hatred in the United States, Europe, and more broadly, empowering fringe elements to commit acts of violence and vandalism. These tensions are exacerbated by mis- and disinformation online, both intentionally and unintentionally spreading fear within vulnerable communities.

- In Illinois, a man stands accused of fatally stabbing a six-year-old Muslim boy and wounding his mother on October 14, 2023, in an attack that officials have alleged is tied to the violence in Israel and Gaza.⁸
- Following weekend reports of an ongoing anti-Jewish intimidation campaign in Berlin, Germany (where Jewish residences and Jewish-owned stores were allegedly marked with a Star of David) and the banning of the Palestinian keffiyeh scarves in schools, on October 15, 2023, Berlin police broke up a protest of roughly 1,000 people that had been banned by authorities at short notice.⁹

⁴ [hXXps://nypost.com/2023/10/16/israel-evacuates-towns-near-lebanon-during-hezbollah-threat/](https://nypost.com/2023/10/16/israel-evacuates-towns-near-lebanon-during-hezbollah-threat/)

⁵ [hXXps://apnews.com/live/israel-hamas-war-live-updates](https://apnews.com/live/israel-hamas-war-live-updates)

⁶ [hXXps://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/14/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-invasion.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/14/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-invasion.html)

⁷

[hXXps://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/americas/1697456261-u-s-president-joe-biden-to-visit-israel-on-wednesday-report](https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/americas/1697456261-u-s-president-joe-biden-to-visit-israel-on-wednesday-report)

⁸ [hXXps://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/15/us/muslim-boy-stabbed-landlord-chicago.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/15/us/muslim-boy-stabbed-landlord-chicago.html)

⁹ [hXXps://www.dw.com/en/berlin-police-break-up-banned-pro-palestinian-rally/a-67104373](https://www.dw.com/en/berlin-police-break-up-banned-pro-palestinian-rally/a-67104373)



Cyber Activity, Mis-and Disinformation

Hackers continue to conduct cyberattacks in support of the side of the conflict with which they are aligned. Side-agnostic threat actors are very likely capitalizing on interest in the conflict—including from breach package buyers—to conduct intrusions for financial gain. ZeroFox anticipates a continued upward trajectory of cybersecurity incidents in the coming weeks, with victims including both pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian organizations and relief organizations.

- Threat actors have made various posts and shared data sets allegedly associated with multiple Palestinian entities, including databases allegedly stolen from the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Higher Education, and the Email Ministry of National Security of Palestine. Distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks against Palestinian-aligned websites were also observed.
- Threat actors have also targeted non-profit organizations, including claiming an alleged breach of the UN Mission in Palestine via an SQL injection attack, claiming to offer access to the “monitoring of missions, meetings, contacts on the operation of agreements in Gaza.”¹⁰

Pro-Palestinian threat actors, some of whom have been traditionally aligned with Russia, have continued to target Israel-based organizations and their allies with disruption and website defacements. Threat collectives include GHOSTS of Palestine, Mysterious Team Bangladesh, Team_insane_Pakistan, TEAM HEROX, GANON SEC Team, SYLHET GANG-SG, and other hacktivist organizations. Activity continues to be conducted under the campaigns #OpIsraelV2, #OPALLIESOFISRAEL, #ALAQSAFLOOD, and #OpIsrael.

- On October 14, Russia-aligned cyber threat group Killnet made an ambiguous announcement on its Telegram channel suggesting it was going to test a hypothesis whether it was possible for a “network attack” to both activate and deactivate Israel’s nuclear arsenal and asked its followers to stay tuned to find out.
- Killnet is known for its politically-motivated targeting (typically DDoS attacks) against government agencies, critical infrastructure, and financial institutions across Europe and the United States. Although the attacks receive significant media attention, they typically have limited impact, causing short service outages and disrupting access to information.

¹⁰ ZeroFox Intelligence Internal Collections



The mass proliferation of mis- and disinformation online about the war continues, with viral photos and videos circulated that have later been determined to be false or misleading. On October 14, 2023, widely-circulated rumors of a man with a knife patrolling an area with a large Jewish population in the United Kingdom were confirmed as false; the incident actually involved an individual suffering from mental health issues who did not have a knife and was not targeting the Jewish community.¹¹

¹¹ https://x.com/CST_UK/status/1713277343370764449?s=20



Appendix A: Traffic Light Protocol for Information Dissemination

	Red	Amber
WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?	Sources may use TLP:RED when information cannot be effectively acted upon by additional parties and could lead to impacts on a party's privacy, reputation, or operations if misused.	Sources may use TLP:AMBER when information requires support to be effectively acted upon but carries risks to privacy, reputation, or operations if shared outside of the organizations involved.
HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may NOT share TLP:RED with any parties outside of the specific exchange, meeting, or conversation in which it is originally disclosed.	Recipients may ONLY share TLP:AMBER information with members of their own organization and its clients, but only on a need-to-know basis to protect their organization and its clients and prevent further harm. Note that TLP:AMBER+STRICT restricts sharing to the organization only.
	Green	Clear
WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?	Sources may use TLP:GREEN when information is useful for the awareness of all participating organizations, as well as with peers within the broader community or sector.	Sources may use TLP:CLEAR when information carries minimal or no risk of misuse in accordance with applicable rules and procedures for public release.
HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may share TLP:GREEN information with peers and partner organizations within their sector or community but not via publicly accessible channels.	Recipients may share TLP:CLEAR information without restriction, subject to copyright controls.



Appendix B: ZeroFox Intelligence Probability Scale

All ZeroFox intelligence products leverage probabilistic assessment language in analytic judgments. Qualitative statements used in these judgments refer to associated probability ranges, which state the likelihood of occurrence of an event or development. Ranges are used to avoid a false impression of accuracy. This scale is a standard that aligns with how readers should interpret such terms.

Almost No Chance	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Roughly Even Chance	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain
1-5%	5-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%