

ZeroFox Intelligence Geopolitical Brief for November 2023



TLP: CLEAR

B-2023-10-27a

Executive Summary

October 2023 saw the Middle East again emerge as the primary geopolitical disruptor in the world, temporarily overtaking Russia's war in Ukraine and U.S.-led trade restrictions against China. This will likely remain the case for the rest of the year, with an Israeli ground incursion into Gaza likely in November 2023.

Like the war in Ukraine, this conflict has forced the United States to pick sides, and it firmly stands with Israel. However, unlike in the Russia-Ukraine war—which has coincided with the severe weakening of the two biggest U.S. geopolitical threats, Russia and China—this conflict could see those regions regain ground. Russia's economy and military have both been set back decades since the war in Ukraine at a fraction of the cost it would take for the U.S. to actually militarily engage with Russia. At the same time, the United States has gained the upper hand on China in nearly every arena since the war broke out, passing two effective regulations and securing the partnership of its main allies in restricting advanced technology sales to China while reducing China's dominance of rare-earth metals. During this time, China's economy has been sluggish while the U.S. economy has grown, and China's neighbors have sought closer security ties with the United States.

It is unclear if Russia and China will take geopolitical advantage of war in Gaza since they are unlikely to play a diplomatic role in ending the conflict. However, Russia will likely benefit from global attention focused elsewhere, while U.S. support for Israel has far less backing than its support of Ukraine does. Many traditional U.S. allies in the Middle East, as well as elsewhere, do not share the United States' support for Israel. This presents opportunities for Russia and China, which could seek to paint the United States as a subjective negotiator and make inroads in the region.

There are concerns the war could spread beyond Gaza, which would likely cause supply chain disruptions. Energy supply is of particular concern, with a wider war likely coinciding with energy price spikes like those seen after the start of war in Ukraine. The war in Gaza also presents an added security risk outside of the conflict zone. Instances of antisemitism and Islamophobia have skyrocketed since the war broke out, with Europe enforcing border closures and experiencing a spate of hate crimes and terror attacks provoked by the war. Finally, there is the presence of Iranian proxy forces, which will likely be activated further in the event the war escalates. However, rather than wage a full-on Middle East war, Iran is likely to use asymmetric attacks against Israeli and U.S. forces in Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria—which it can deny and that are unlikely to reach the level that will prompt a major military retaliation. Iranian-backed cyber activity will likely be similar, via proxies, and easily deniable.

In the background, there were also notable developments in the ongoing U.S.-China trade dispute that will come into effect in the short term. The United States announced significant updates to its list of technologies that must be withheld from China, and China issued some of its most serious retaliations, which could impact global commodity prices and pose added risks to foreigners in China.

Key Findings

- European states are on high alert for violent antisemitic and Islamophobic attacks inspired by events in Gaza.
- Centrist parties with well-established political records look set to remain in power in the Netherlands.
- October 2023 saw a number of European Union (EU) and U.S.-inspired trade restrictions on technology transfers to China.
- Chinese economic and trade retaliation is likely in response.
- Anti-government protests and roadblocks will remain constant threats in Guatemala until January 2024 at least.
- Mozambique's mid-October local elections have still not been decided due to blatant government fraud. Challenges to elections in Mozambique are likely during the 2024 general elections, as well as in neighboring South Africa, where post-independence political parties have lost ground.
- A unified opposition candidate in Venezuela presents risks to a recently-enacted political agreement.
- Three upcoming weeks of political campaigning in Argentina could lead to social unrest.
- India has five state elections that have political significance ahead of general elections in 2024.
- Iran will likely utilize its proxy groups across the Middle East to target U.S. and Israeli interests once the ground incursion into Gaza begins.
- A Kenyan and UN force in Haiti by January 2024 looks certain.
- Foreign nationals in China face added security risks after new U.S.-led trade restrictions were announced.
- Elections in Madagascar were pushed back to later in November due to violent protests.
- Social unrest and violence are possible during Liberia's second-round elections.

Key Threats and Developments



China and the United States announced trade restrictions set to go into effect before 2024.



Fridays and Saturdays will remain the most popular days for protests related to the war in Gaza.



Iranian proxy groups will likely target U.S. and Israeli forces in the event of a ground incursion.



Ukraine continues to make slow marginal gains against Russian forces.



Violent attacks in Europe related to the war in Gaza are likely.



New U.S. restrictions on technology transfers to China could inspire cyber espionage.



U.S.-led pro-democracy efforts in Venezuela will give more money to the Maduro government.



Protests in Central America are likely in November 2024.

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Russia-Ukraine Conflict

Ukraine continues making slow marginal gains on all three axes of the frontlines. However, a breakthrough on the Zaporizhzhia front after Ukraine captured Robotnye in August has not materialized. Meanwhile, Ukrainian General Oleksandr Tarnavsky recently adjusted his objectives for the counteroffensive, stating his current goal is to capture Tokmak (a major road and railway hub in Zaporizhzhia), which would sever Russian ground lines of communication. In early October, Ukrainian forces advanced close enough to bring Tokmak under direct fire. While it is unclear whether Ukraine will be able to challenge Tokmak before weather conditions turn, Ukraine is still in a decent position to target Russian supply routes through the city.[1]

On October 18, the Institute for the Study of War reported Ukrainian forces are conducting larger-than-usual ground operations on the east bank of the Dnipro River in Kherson. These operations could indicate Ukraine is trying to establish a sizeable foothold on the bank to threaten Russian positions before weather conditions turn.[2]

Forward Look:

- Ukraine received an advanced tactical ballistic missile system (ATACMS) from the United States in October. Ukraine used these missiles in a long-range strike on Russian airfields in occupied Berdiansk and Luhansk, destroying nine helicopters. ATACMS will provide Ukraine with an all-weather, long-range capability that can strike time sensitive targets.[3]
- Poor weather conditions are expected to set in between November and December. Muddy conditions will likely slow the pace of Ukrainian military operations, but Ukrainian officials have vowed to keep fighting through the winter.[4]
- In early October, Russian forces launched a massive assault on the town of Avdiivka. However, Ukrainian troops have firmly held their positions and extracted heavy casualties from the Russian side. Over the next few weeks, Ukraine is likely to hold Avdiivka and continue to significantly degrade Russian forces.

Threats to Foreign Nationals

- EU states on heightened alert following terrorist attacks in France and Belgium

Forward Look:

- On October 13, 2023, a teacher was killed in a knife attack in the city of Arras, France. Next, two Swedish citizens were shot by a gunman in Brussels, Belgium, on October 16, 2023.[5] Authorities in both countries have classified the incidents as "acts of terrorism" and believe that they are at least in part related to the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. Terrorism experts have warned that the risk of "lone wolf" attacks of this kind has increased due to heightened tensions in the Middle East. In response, police in France and Belgium raised the national threat levels and introduced enhanced security measures. Several EU states, including France, Italy, and Germany, have suspended the Schengen Agreement and temporarily reintroduced border controls. Finally, the U.S. State Department issued a "Worldwide Caution" on October 20, 2023, advising Americans traveling in Europe and other parts of the world to exercise caution when visiting popular tourist areas. U.S. citizens should also avoid protests or large gatherings of people and report all suspicious activity to local law enforcement.

European Politics

- EU unveils four technologies it will monitor for export controls in 2024
- Netherlands: Centrist parties expected to hold onto power in general elections on November 22, 2023
- London, UK:** Just Stop Oil three week protest starting on October 29, 2023
- Belgium:** Nationwide transportation strikes on November 6-7, 2023[6]

Forward Look:

- On October 3, 2023, the EU released a list of critical technologies that it wants to protect from its rivals. The list of 10 technologies highlights four that the EU is most concerned about exporting to rivals or being too dependent on rivals for. The four technologies are advanced semiconductors; artificial intelligence (AI), including cloud computing; quantum technologies; and biotechnologies, including genetic modification techniques. The EU criteria to make the list include the transformative nature of the technology, the risk of dual use for civilian and military purposes, and the potential for human rights violations. The other technologies that have not yet met all three criteria include virtual reality, cybersecurity, sensors, space navigation, nuclear reactors, hydrogen, batteries, drones, and robotics.[7]
- The technology listed will not necessarily undergo an export control, but there will be a months-long risk assessment of the technology, after which a determination will be made if the technology needs to be subjected to export controls or outbound investment screening. The assessments will likely be concluded by the end of 2023. While the document did not name any specific countries the EU is concerned about, China accessing advanced semiconductors is a clear concern. The EU is also concerned about China's dominance of rare-earth metals, which are used to make some of the most advanced forms of clean energy technology. This is an extension of an earlier economic security strategy announced by the EU in 2023 that more closely ties economic development with national security.
- When the assessments are finished, there will likely be restrictions on technology sales between EU companies and some of their largest customers in China. It will also see certain EU industries protected from outside competition. For example, it is expected that certain EU industries, like electric vehicles (EVs), will be protected from increased Chinese competition as long as they invest to boost EU EVs. This has angered some in the EU because it benefits the largest EU states, which have the money to invest, but not the smaller ones.
- On November 22, 2023, the Netherlands will hold snap elections after Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the ruling centrist People's Party for Rule and Democracy (VVD) resigned and stepped away from politics. Despite initial polling suggesting far-right parties would do well in the snap elections, it now appears the political status quo will remain. Polls indicate that the top three parties will likely be coalition partners led by VVD, the centrist New Social Contract, and the center-left Labour Party. Individually, each party has around 20 percent of the vote, which would give them a majority in parliament.[8] However, there will still likely be lengthy coalition talks.
- The far-right Party for Freedom is polling poorly, despite Rutte's resignation being about excessive migration to the Netherlands. Also, the Farmer Citizen Movement (BBB) has dropped to a surprising fifth-place vote. BBB is a new party, running in its first general election after gaining the most seats in the March 2023 provincial elections. BBB has seen support drop since Rutte's cabinet quietly abandoned its policy to close down farms to support climate goals. BBB's primary campaign issue was opposition to those plans.

FOOTNOTES

- [hxxps://www.cnn.com/2023/09/23/europe/ukraine-biggest-counteroffensive-to-come-intl-hnk/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/23/europe/ukraine-biggest-counteroffensive-to-come-intl-hnk/index.html)
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Latin America Updates

- **Guatemala:** Roadblock protests diminish but other protests likely through January 2024 presidential inauguration
- **Panama:** Clashes with anti-mining protesters through November 2024
- **Haiti:** UN authorizes Kenyan security force by January 2024

Forward Look:

- Protesters from the 48 Cantones de Totonicapán continue to block some roads nationwide, but the number of roadblocks has diminished significantly. Protesters began blocking roads on October 2, calling for the resignation of Attorney General Consuelo Porras and other officials from the government of outgoing President Alejandro Giammattei. Porras has been leading the case to disqualify the political party of President-elect Bernardo Arevalo after Arevalo won the surprise presidential elections. Protesters accuse Porras of trying to undermine anti-corruption reform pushed by Arevalo that will implicate Giammattei officials and the revenue streams they control.
- The roadblocks have caused serious disruptions to supply chains, especially along the Pan-American Highway that runs across the region. While some roadblocks are likely until Arevalo's inauguration in January 2024, protesters have decided to consolidate around government buildings near the capital Guatemala City instead.[9]
- On October 24, 2023, security forces violently dispersed anti-mining protesters in the capital, Panama City. Led by the Sindicato Único Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria de la Construcción y Similares (SUNTRACS) union, protesters have been demonstrating since October 20, blocking some highways near the mine, which is around 75 miles from the capital. Protesters are against a copper mining contract signed by Canadian company Quantum. Protesters have complained about the payout to Panama and environmental damage, despite the contract recently being renegotiated to provide greater revenues to the state. Expect continued protests through November 2023.[10]
- On October 2, 2023, the UN Security Council approved the deployment of a one-year Kenyan police mission to Haiti. The 1,000-strong Kenyan police force will be backed by USD 100 million from the United States, as well as supplemental forces from Jamaica and the Bahamas. Haiti has not held elections since 2016 and is largely being ruled by decree by Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who only assumed office after President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated. Since then, Haitian police have largely been overrun by powerful gangs in the capital of Port-au-Prince and in other parts of the country. The police force will be responsible for returning security to local police so that elections can eventually be held. The Kenyan mission is expected to begin in January 2024 and will last for one year. Kenyan police are battle-hardened by missions to neighboring Somalia, but they have also been accused of human rights violations when dispersing protests. Kenya may use its successes in Haiti to launch similar missions for profit elsewhere. Neighboring Rwanda has similar agreements with its military for hire and is currently operating effectively in Mozambique and Benin.
- The agreement is subject to domestic political opposition in Kenya, which is holding up preparations for the deployment. However, judges are expected to ultimately approve the force.[11]

Elections

- **Argentina:** Presidential elections to proceed to run-off vote on November 19, 2023
- **Venezuela:** Recent political agreement between government and opposition already frayed ahead of 2024 elections

Forward Look:

- On October 22, 2023, Argentines voted in the presidential election. None of the candidates were able to secure an absolute majority of votes; as a result, there will be a run-off election on November 19, 2023, between the two leading candidates. Although polls pointed to the self-described "anarcho-capitalist" candidate Javier Milei winning, Sergio Massa was the leading candidate following the vote count with 36.6 percent of the vote.[12]
- The election process has been tense and overshadowed by Argentina's economic struggles with inflation and unemployment, as well as high-profile incidents of violent crime. Outsider Javier Milei has an energetic support base, with many Argentines unhappy with the policies of previous governments. However, Sergio Massa secured a plurality of the votes, defying the polls. It remains to be seen where the votes of candidates who did not advance to the run-off will go. The Juntos por Cambio party of defeated presidential candidate Patricia Bullrich and former president Mauricio Macri agreed to support Milei. The alliance will reportedly confirm a power-sharing agreement between libertarian candidate Milei, whose primary campaign issue is dollarizing the economy, and the tough-on-crime policies of Bullrich if Milei wins.
- However, the agreement has reportedly severed the Juntos por Cambio party, many of whom want to remain neutral in the election due to Milei's perceived sexism and cultural position. This could complicate campaigning for the remaining weeks.
- Before Venezuela's opposition held primary elections on October 22, 2023, the United States lifted some restrictions on oil production in Venezuela because the government of President Nicolás Maduro reached an agreement with the political opposition over the upcoming general elections, which must be held sometime in 2024. The easing of restrictions could see an additional 200,000 barrels of oil per day (BPD) enter the global market, which would help ease oil prices.[13]
- The agreement reached by Venezuela and the opposition contains 12 points, which include promises to give all candidates access to public and private media and to guarantee their free and safe movement throughout the country. The two sides have also agreed to update the voter registries, both inside and outside of the country, in order to ensure that Venezuelans who have emigrated—often anti-government voters—can vote. The agreement does not contain guarantees that opposition candidate María Corina Machado, who won the opposition primaries on October 22 by over 90 percent but is currently banned from running in the presidential election, will be allowed to run.[14] The United States expects Machado will ultimately be allowed to run and could withdraw the exemptions within the next six months if Venezuela does not comply with the terms of the agreement. The margin by which Machado won the primaries could be problematic for Maduro, and he may decide that abandoning the lucrative agreement is better than facing a genuine political challenge at the next election. On the other hand, for the opposition and the United States, Machado's margin of victory demonstrates her importance to any genuine political agreement in Venezuela. In response to Machado's victory, Maduro's government accused the opposition of inflating or miscounting votes. Considering past widespread political protests, should Machado's campaign be blocked by the Maduro government, protests and disruptions are likely to occur.

FOOTNOTES

- [9] hxxps://lahora.la-hora/2023/10/18/48-cantones-se-reunen-de-urgencia-para-definir-estrategias-pedido-de-renuncia-a-porras-se-mantiene/
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| Madagascar Elections

- **Madagascar:** Social unrest is likely as elections have been postponed until November 16, 2023.[15]

> Forward Look:

- The Constitutional Court postponed the first round of presidential elections from November 9 to November 16 after a leading candidate, former President Marc Ravalomanana, was injured in protests. The government of current President Andry Rajoelina has banned election-related protests, but an opposition coalition has been holding them almost daily since campaigning began in early October. Clashes between police and protesters have gotten violent and will likely continue in the coming weeks.
- Rajoelina took power from Ravalomanana during a coup in 2009, which led to widespread violence. A UN agreement ultimately saw both men step aside for one election cycle before Rajoelina defeated Ravalomanana again in the 2018 elections. A scandal over Rajoelina's French citizenship as well as continued economic inequality and a high cost of living mean the election will likely go to a second round on December 20. Expect continued social unrest.[16]

| African Political Developments

- Protests are likely in **Mozambique** related to fraudulent elections.
- **Liberia:** Incumbent President Weah will face challenger Boakai in a runoff election on November 14, 2023.

> Forward Look:

- Mozambique's largest opposition party, Renamo, will likely continue nationwide protests after local election results saw Renamo lose all its seats amid credible allegations of fraud. The ruling Frelimo party of President Filipe Nyusi allegedly won 64 out of 65 municipalities, including ones where early voting figures indicated they would lose decisively.[17] This included the capital, Maputo, where the media reported a Renamo victory for several hours before retracting. The fraud accusations included suspending the internet during vote tallying, stuffing ballots, voter intimidation, and deliberate miscounting of votes. Courts have ordered several juries to re-count or annul votes.
- The widespread protests could escalate into social unrest, especially as Mozambique has seen some of its largest protests in years following the death of a popular rapper in early 2023. Those protests were violently dispersed by security forces. Mozambique holds general elections in 2024, and the credible allegations of fraud and the ongoing protests and legal challenges will keep the issue relevant for weeks.
- Results from Liberia's first round of presidential elections have been announced and will send incumbent President George Weah to a runoff against former VP Joseph Boakai on November 14, 2023.[18] The election has been a source of concern in Liberia, which suffered through a brutal civil war and was attempting for the first time to hold elections without UN peacekeepers who stabilized the country in its aftermath. Civil society figures toured the country ahead of the election, urging youth to maintain peace no matter the results in a campaign that thus far seems to have been effective. Though opinion is clearly split on whether Weah has fulfilled his campaign promises or the country "needs rescue" as Boakai's campaign slogan claims, it is unanimous that the country must avoid another descent into violent conflict. No major incidents of election violence were reported surrounding the first round or after the announcement of the results.

| Chinese Retaliation to Trade restrictions

- **China** is likely to escalate its economic retaliation against U.S. trade and economic restrictions.
- In October 2023, **China** reported tax investigations and arrests of key foreign nationals from pivotal U.S. allies Taiwan and Japan.

> Forward Look:

- In mid-October 2023, the United States announced updates to its consequential 2022 CHIPS and Science Act, which aims to restrict private companies from selling advanced technology to China. The new restrictions include closing loopholes China had been using to secure the technology while also updating the forms of technology to be restricted.
- Days later on October 20, 2023, China announced a partial export ban on some graphite products. Under the new restriction, enterprises must go through China's scrutiny process and obtain export permits for graphite, a key material for EV batteries, starting December 1, 2023. China is the world's top graphite producer; with the United States, South Korea, and Japan among the top importers, the move could create disruptions for global EV manufacturers. The restrictions came after an announcement in July of similar export curbs on gallium and germanium products used in computer chips and other components.[19]
- China's graphite export ban is widely considered retaliation for the United States' expanded controls on sales of advanced semiconductor chips to China that were announced a week earlier.
- Experts in rare-earth metals say this is a significant escalation from China since it controls so much of the supply, whereas it is an alternative supplier of gallium and germanium. This could prompt a U.S. retaliation specifically related to EVs. For example, the United States could ban Chinese EV batteries altogether, as opposed to providing heavy subsidies for batteries produced without Chinese inputs per the terms of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).
- China is likely using its dominance of rare-earth metals, most of which are needed in advanced technology and clean energy technology, to retaliate against U.S.-led trade restrictions, which deny China access to technology it cannot yet produce itself.
- On October 20, China raided the Shanghai campus of WPP, the conglomerate that owns Japan's GroupM. The arrested, including one senior advertising executive, are accused of receiving large bribes while working at the company. Some of those arrested were reportedly Japanese nationals, which differs from previous arrests that mainly targeted local workers at foreign companies.
- On October 23, China launched an investigation into Foxconn Technology Group, Apple's most important partner and one of the largest employers in China. China's tax authorities are conducting audits of Foxconn subsidiaries in Guangdong and Jiangsu provinces and the company's land use in Henan and Hubei provinces.
- While the allegations that Foxconn paid bribes could have merit, they are equally likely in response to Foxconn's participation in U.S.-led trade restrictions.[20] Foxconn has been one of the most notable companies to move some operations out of China. However, China remains its largest customer base, and China may be pressuring Foxconn to avoid complying with U.S. policy.

FOOTNOTES

- [15] <https://www.africanews.com/2023/10/12/madagascar-postpones-presidential-election-by-a-week/>
[16] <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20231010-madagascar-president-launches-re-election-bid-amid-accusations-of-an-institutional-coup>
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Indian State Elections

- Five Indian states will head to the polls in November to elect state parliaments. Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Telangana will hold elections at different points in November, but all five will be tallied and results announced on December 3. Individual election dates are as follows:
 - Chhattisgarh: First round November 7; second round November 17
 - Mizoram: November 7
 - Madhya Pradesh: November 17
 - Rajasthan: November 23
 - Telangana: November 30 [21]
- Of the five states, one state legislature is currently controlled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP); two are controlled by the main opposition, Indian National Congress (INC); and two are controlled by more minor state-level parties. The BJP is heavily favored to triumph in national elections in April or May 2024, but results in state elections could still shed light on potential outcomes in that poll. Further victories for the INC could indicate growing, though still relatively weak, opposition to the BJP's policies and could indicate increased chances that the INC and its allies capture a wider share of national parliamentary seats in 2024.

Forward Look:

- While not common, violence has broken out during past election seasons in India. Policies of the ruling BJP, which some see as nationalist and anti-Muslim, could increase the chances of violent unrest.
- India's government often enacts protectionist trade policies in the run-up to elections to keep prices stable. Last week, authorities indefinitely extended export restrictions on sugar as supplies remained low. This was likely done to keep voters from blaming Prime Minister Modi and the BJP for price instability.[22]

Potential for Conflict Across Middle East

Forward Look:

- The presence of Iranian proxies in Lebanon, to the north of Israel; in Syria and Iraq, within close proximity to U.S. forces; and in Yemen near Saudi Arabia has prompted concerns that war in Gaza could spread across the region. Since the conflict began in early October, there have been repeated clashes between Israeli and Hezbollah forces in Lebanon. Hezbollah has far more advanced weaponry than Hamas and could escalate its attacks once an Israeli ground incursion into Gaza begins.
- Similarly, U.S. forces in Syria and Iraq have seen frequent drone attacks, which could escalate as well. Houthi forces in Yemen could restart rocket attacks on the Saudi government and energy infrastructure. These are the most likely sources for escalation, aside from Israel and Gaza, because Iran would be able to deny culpability and the attacks would likely be minor enough that U.S.-allied states could decide they do not warrant a major military retaliation. Iran adopted similar tactics after the killing of its infamous General Qassem Soleimani in January 2020.[23]
- Iranian cyber activity would likely be carried out in a similar form (via proxies) and easily deniable.
- However, if U.S. and Israeli forces attribute the attacks to Iran or find evidence it played a role in the October 7 attacks, then military targeting of Iran would also be a possibility, albeit unlikely. This could prompt an even wider escalation that would see Iran likely close the strategic Strait of Hormuz, effectively severing the world's most important energy supply line.

War in Gaza Update

- For weeks, Israel has amassed troops along the border of the Gaza Strip amid a call-up of more than 350,000 reservists, the largest in the country's history.[24]
- However, an invasion—which most analysts believed to be imminent—has yet to materialize. According to several recent reports, this is due in part to pressure from the United States, which wants a delay in order to negotiate for the release of the more than 200 Israeli and foreign nationals that remain held by Hamas and Islamic Jihad.[25] To date, four hostages, including two dual U.S.-Israeli nationals, have been freed.
- Despite the apparent postponement of the land invasion, Israel has given no indication that it intends to slow the pace of its air and artillery strikes. Meanwhile, rocket fire from the Gaza Strip continues to target Israeli cities—including the Tel Aviv area, where five people were injured by missile strikes on October 24, 2023.
- At least 38 Lebanese and Palestinian militants, including 30 Hezbollah fighters, have been killed in clashes with Israeli forces along the Lebanese border since Hamas' assault, along with six Israeli soldiers. The fighting has also triggered the evacuation of more than 40 Israeli communities in the northern part of the country.[26]

Forward Look:

- Despite the delay of the Gaza invasion and ongoing hostage negotiations, domestic support for an invasion remains strong, making it still overwhelmingly likely in some form. Senior Israeli Defense Force (IDF) officials have also repeatedly publicly stated their readiness for a large-scale ground operation, further pressuring the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to order the attack.
- An invasion would necessarily cause a sharp increase to already-high Palestinian civilian casualties, which may trigger international pressure to limit its scope and duration.
- Israeli ground invasions of the Gaza Strip in the past—including the 2008-2009 and 2014 Gaza Wars—lasted several weeks, and a similar length campaign should be expected, especially given that senior Israeli officials have ruled out a long-term reoccupation of Gaza.
- High casualties among Israeli forces are also likely due to the densely urbanized fighting environment and weeks, if not months, of preparations undertaken by Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Heavy losses among Israeli troops could also quickly sap domestic support for a long engagement.
- Protests in the Middle East condemning Israel's strikes on Gaza peaked on October 17-18, 2023, after Hamas claimed an Israeli missile struck al-Ahli Hospital, killing hundreds. Although this assertion was immediately disputed and subsequently largely disproven, mass demonstrations condemning the supposed incident were seen in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait, among other countries.[27]
- However, since this time, protests condemning Israel have shrunk in scope, with the most prominent occurring mainly on Friday afternoons in capital cities and large metropolitan areas. These should be expected to continue, and they will likely intensify temporarily following any escalation of the conflict.

FOOTNOTES

[21] <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2023/oct/09/five-assembly-elections-polling-from-nov-7-30-counting-on-dec-3-2622257.htm>

[22] <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/india-extends-curb-sugar-exports-domestic-prices-2023-10-18/>

[23] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-5345885>

[24] <https://www.cbsi.com/news/world/israel-reservists-17003046>

[25] <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/hamas-hostages-israel-gaza-41432124>

[26] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog-october-26-2023/>

[27] <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/20/middleeast/protests-palestinian-gaza-middle-east-int/index.html>



APPENDIX A:

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 the occurrence of an event or development. Ranges are used to avoid a false impression of accuracy. This scale is a standard that aligns 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%

APPENDIX B:

Traffic Light Protocol for Information Dissemination

TLP: RED

HOW IT IS 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.

HOW IT IS SHARED

Recipients may NOT share TLP: RED with any parties outside of the specific exchange, meeting, or conversation in which it is originally disclosed.

TLP: AMBER

HOW IT IS USED

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 IT IS SHARED

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.

TLP: GREEN

HOW IT IS 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.

HOW IT IS SHARED

Recipients may share TLP: GREEN information with peers and partner organizations within their sector or community but not via publicly accessible channels.

TLP: CLEAR

HOW IT IS USED

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 IT IS SHARED

Recipients may share TLP: CLEAR information without restriction, subject to copyright controls.

About ZeroFox

ZeroFox (Nasdaq: ZFOX), an enterprise software-as-a-service leader in external cybersecurity, has redefined security outside the corporate perimeter on the internet, where businesses operate and threat actors thrive. The ZeroFox platform combines advanced AI analytics, digital risk and privacy protection, full-spectrum threat intelligence, and a robust portfolio of breach, incident, and takedown response capabilities to expose and disrupt phishing and fraud campaigns, botnet exposures, credential theft, impersonations, data breaches, and physical threats that target your brands, domains, people, and assets. Join thousands of customers—including some of the largest public-sector organizations, as well as finance, media, technology, and retail companies—to stay ahead of adversaries and address the entire lifecycle of external cyber risks.

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