

Yahya Sinwar's Plan for the Invasion of Israel, as Detailed in a Hamas Document

Dr. Igal Shiri and Dr. Hayim Iserovich

July 13, 2026

Overview¹

- ▶ In October 2025, the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center² published a Hamas³ document brought back from the Gaza Strip by the IDF, handwritten by Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip. Dated August 24, 2022, it contained **precise instructions for the opening of the "decisive campaign" to destroy Israel**, from the deception phase in the weeks preceding the attack through the invasion of Israeli territory and instructions for documenting the atrocities committed against civilians and soldiers, as occurred during the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre.
- ▶ **Another document written by al-Sinwar on the same day presented the plan to invade Israel in greater detail**, including the rapid seizure of 25 junctions and more than 220 communities, kibbutzim, "small and large" cities and military installations. To that end he estimated that a force of ten thousand "well-trained fighters"⁴ would be required.
- ▶ The document included instructions to **"expel the settlers,"** primarily women and children, and to take men between the ages of 17 and 50 hostage.
- ▶ **The propaganda to sway international public opinion** is noted in the captured document through instructions to represent the attack as a "humanitarian" event to implement the Palestinian "right of return" narrative with the slogan, "We are returning to our homes."
- ▶ Al-Sinwar said the attack would surprise the "enemy" but he was prepared for Israel to use every means at its disposal to respond, including a **"nuclear bomb."** He added that would be "a battle of life or death."

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

² As of May 2026, The Amit Terrorism and Intelligence Research Institute.

³ The documents from the Gaza Strip mentioned in this study can be viewed at The Amit Terrorism and Intelligence Research Institute.

⁴ i.e., terrorist operatives.

► The document included an outline for a slide show entitled "The Liberation of Southern Palestine," although the slides themselves were not found. According to the document, the show gave the historical context of the *nakba*⁵ and a visual illustration of the invasion plan, including details of the junctions and communities that Hamas terrorists were to seize, the routes for the "evacuation" of the population and the method for taking control of the military outposts.

► The document gives a detailed description of an organized operational plan, inclusive to the level of the operatives in the squads responsible for breaching the border fence, a plan which had been devised more than a year before it was actually carried out in the October 7, 2023 invasion and massacre. The document is important because it shows that the attack was based on a structured operational concept of destruction, prepared meticulously and in secrecy, rather than on a collection of spontaneous or uncoordinated actions.

► **Although the document was written by al-Sinwar on the same day he drafted the second document containing the instructions for initiating the invasion, there are significant differences between them: this document places greater emphasis on mobilizing the international community by promoting the "right of return" narrative incorporating the historical context of the *nakba* and instructs operatives to "expel" women and children while taking only men hostage (in contrast to what actually occurred, when women, children and elderly people were taken hostage), without reference to documenting acts of atrocity against civilians and soldiers.**

► **The two documents also reflect al-Sinwar's high confidence in Hamas' ability to lead the campaign independently during its opening stages, although he hoped the surprise created by the attack would encourage other fronts to join the fighting. That was consistent with the discussions Hamas leaders were conducting with senior Hezbollah and Iranian figures at the time in an effort to recruit them to a multi-front campaign, while it was still not certain they would actually join the attack the movement was determined to carry out.**

Background

► In October 2025, a study by the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center revealed a document the IDF brought back from the Gaza Strip, handwritten by Yahya al-Sinwar, head of

⁵ The results of Israel's War of Independence.

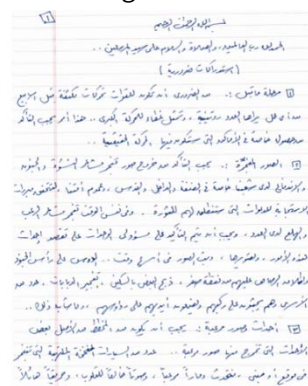
the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, on August 24, 2022. It contained al-Sinwar's precise instructions for initiating the campaign, from the deception phase in the weeks preceding the invasion through the breach of Israeli territory. **The main points were the following:**⁶

- ◆ Al-Sinwar instructed his operatives to carry out "intensive" activities in the Gaza Strip during the weeks preceding the attack, but they had to appear to the "enemy" as routine movements and therefore would not be perceived as preparations for an unusual attack.
- ◆ On the day of the invasion, the border fence was to be breached in three strategic sectors: the northern Gaza Strip, the eastern Gaza Strip and opposite the central Gaza Strip camps. He said it would be necessary to use bulldozers and heavy engineering equipment to breach the gates and clear obstacles to facilitate the entry of additional invading forces.
- ◆ The initial phase was to be completed within 10 to 15 minutes, and the forces were required to deploy in as many locations as possible while maintaining a dispersed deployment which would provide operational flexibility. He said each brigade commander would be able to summon, deploy and operate the forces in accordance with the instructions of the commander of the military[-terrorist] wing and the central operations headquarters.
- ◆ Three additional waves would follow, each with its own maps and objectives in accordance with the instructions held by the brigade commander responsible for the sector and according to developments on the ground. He determined the direction of advance for each of the military wing's five regional brigades.
- ◆ The other Palestinian terrorist organizations were to join the invasion beginning with the third wave. Contact with the commanders of the other organizations' military wings was to begin approximately 15 minutes after the start of the raid, and only then would they concentrate their forces in preparation for joining the fighting.
- ◆ In his assessment, the Hamas invasion would trigger a chain reaction leading to the outbreak of a multi-front campaign that would include fighting from Judea and Samaria and east Jerusalem, as well as from the Israeli Arab population, alongside Hezbollah's intervention from the north.

⁶ See the October 2025 ITIC report, [Instructions Given by Yahya al-Sinwar for the October 7, 2023 Attack and Massacre](#)

◆ According to al-Sinwar, the window of opportunity for success was between six and ten hours, during which the forces had to establish solid facts on the ground which would prevent Israel from launching a counteroffensive. He warned that if the opportunity were not exploited, Israel would be able to recover quickly and counterattack.

◆ He placed particular emphasis on psychological warfare, both to terrorize the Israeli public and to ignite the other fronts. He instructed his operatives to "document and broadcast the images as quickly as possible... stepping on the heads of soldiers, shooting at point-blank range, slaughtering people with knives, blowing up tanks, prisoners kneeling with their hands on their heads, and the like," as well as to burn entire neighborhoods and broadcast the images.



From the first document

► An additional document brought back from the Gaza Strip, also written by al-Sinwar on August 24, 2022 entitled "The Plan," contains more detailed instructions regarding the decisive stage of the invasion into Israel, including details of the order of battle and objectives, together with operational instructions concerning civilians and military forces, as well as psychological warfare.

The Plan to Invade Israel

The Invasion

► In the first document al-Sinwar referred in general terms to the deployment of forces during the invasion of Israeli territory to breach the border at three points within only 10 to 15 minutes. In the second document, he provided detailed specifications regarding the breach points and the required order of battle.

► According to the plan, the raid was to be carried out in a rapid, coordinated operation conducted simultaneously at 25 breaches along the border by 2,500 "fighters" who were to seize 25 junctions. Breaching the security fence was not viewed as an objective, but rather as the opening phase of a broader operation designed to disrupt command and movement

throughout the area to provide the invading forces with the freedom to maneuver inside Israeli territory and prevent the arrival of Israeli reinforcements

1 - Breach the security fence at 25 points opposite 25 junctions simultaneously, seize the junctions with separate, well-trained squads, each consisting of 100 fighters. Total: 2,500 fighters.

١ - اقتحام الخط الفاصل في ٢٥ مكان مقابل ٥٠ تقاطع طرق في وقت واحد .
والسيطرة على مواقع تقاطع الطرق بمجموعات منفصلة مدربة على محاربة
١٠٠ مقاتل . المجموع ٢٥٠٠ مقاتل .

From the document

Takeover of Communities and Military Bases

► The plan did not focus solely on breaching the border, but also detailed the takeover of civilian communities following the invasion. Although it is unclear whether the objective was realistic, al-Sinwar's target was to capture 221 "settlements" and assigned a dedicated force of ten terrorists to each community. He also designated eight "small communities," assigning 1,600 terrorists to them (200 for each community), while another 1,200 terrorists were to be responsible for seizing three "large cities," without, however, specifying their names.

► He also provided instructions for the treatment of the civilian population. Unlike the first document, in which he emphasized documenting atrocities, the plan in this document focused on the "expulsion of the settlers," primarily women and children, together with taking men between the ages of 17 and 50 hostage and the confiscation of documents and telephones. Regarding the large cities, he instructed that the population be evacuated "toward the sea," without explanation.

► The document indicates that the targets had been mapped in advance, with particular emphasis on the handling of the civilian population. Evacuating civilians and taking male hostages indicate the importance the plan attached to achieving an operational success. Indeed, the planning described in the document largely corresponds to the pattern of operations carried out during the October 7 attack. However, terrorist operatives abducted children, women and elderly people, not only men, and instead of carrying out the orderly evacuation described in the plan, those who were not abducted into the Gaza Strip were brutally executed.

► Al-Sinwar instructed combat squads to encircle and "neutralize" military bases. The objective of paralyzing the Israeli bases was to prevent, or at least delay, the IDF's ability to respond to the invasion. For example, al-Sinwar noted the need to neutralize the Tze'elim training base in the western Negev with 20 combat squads with an approximate total of 200 terrorists.

► According to the document, approximately 10,000 well-trained terrorists would be required for the invasion and the seizure of the communities and military bases. It also noted the need to maintain strict operational secrecy so none of the terrorists would know the overall objective of the plan.

2 - Expulsion patrols: Each patrol consists of 10 fighters. One patrol opposite each settlement.

Required strength: $10 \text{ fighters} \times 221 \text{ settlements} = 2,210 \text{ fighters}$. The objective is to expel the settlers together with their vehicles. Priority should be given to children and women. Men between the ages of 17 and 50 are to be taken hostage. All telephones and any other documents they carry on their persons are to be confiscated.

3 - Fighting in the small communities: $200 \text{ "fighters" for each of 8 communities} = 1,600 \text{ fighters}$.

Evacuate the settlers from those communities using their own vehicles and buses toward the north.

4 - Evacuation of the large cities: $400 \text{ fighters} \times 3 \text{ large cities} = 1,200 \text{ fighters}$. Evacuation toward the sea.

5 - Neutralization of the military bases: Encircle them with combat squads. For example, the Tze'elim training base is to be surrounded by 20 squads, each consisting of 10 "fighters," for a total of 200 fighters. Objective: destruction of the base.

6 - Total: 10,000 well-trained fighters. None of them is to know the overall objective of the plan.

- ٢- دوريات ترحيل . كل دورية من ١٠ قتالية مقابل كل مستوطنة .
العدد المطلوب ١٠ قتالية x ٢٠١ مستوطنة = ٢٠١٠ قتال .
الموجة طرد المستوطنين باستعمال سياراتهم . الادوية للأطفال
والنساء . مخبز الرجال من ١٧-٥٠ أخرى . الاستيلاء على الموبايل
أو أي أدراجه تخيلونه .
- ٣- ترحيل المدن الصغيرة : ٢٠٠ قتال مقابل ٨ مدن = ١٦٠٠ قتال
ترحيل المستوطنين بسياراتهم وباصاتهم نحو الشمال .
- ٤- ترحيل المدن الكبيرة : ٤٠٠ قتال x ٣ مدن = ١٢٠٠ قتال
توجيههم نحو الجب .
- ٥- تجميع المناضلة العسكرية . بإحضار مجموعات قتالية حول كل
منطقة . مثلاً بتعليم (تأدية تدريب) في سفوف : احاطة بـ ٢٠ مجموعة
كل مجموعة من ١٠ قتالية . المجموع ٢٠٠٠ قتال .
نصف موقع برنج .
- ٦- المجموع ١٠٠٠٠ قتال مجموع مدرسية تدريباً فائز الألفاء . لا يعلم
أي منهم الهدف العام بنقطة .

From the document

► According to IDF investigations, the first assault wave during the October 7, 2023 invasion and massacre, which lasted approximately half an hour beginning at 6:29 a.m., consisted of 1,175 terrorists. A second wave of 600 terrorists joined them, followed by a third wave of 1,325 Hamas terrorists together with 580 terrorists from the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and unidentified organizations. Twenty-seven breached the border fence at the outset of the invasion. In total, the border fence was breached at 114 breaches locations and the terrorists used 59 infiltration routes. Contrary to the instructions in the document calling for the expulsion of women and children and the abduction only of men between the ages of 17 and 50, the terrorists followed the instructions contained in the first document by carrying out massacres documented in real time and abducting 251 soldiers and civilians, including young children, women and elderly people (*Haaretz*, August 1, 2024; Israeli media, February 27, 2026).

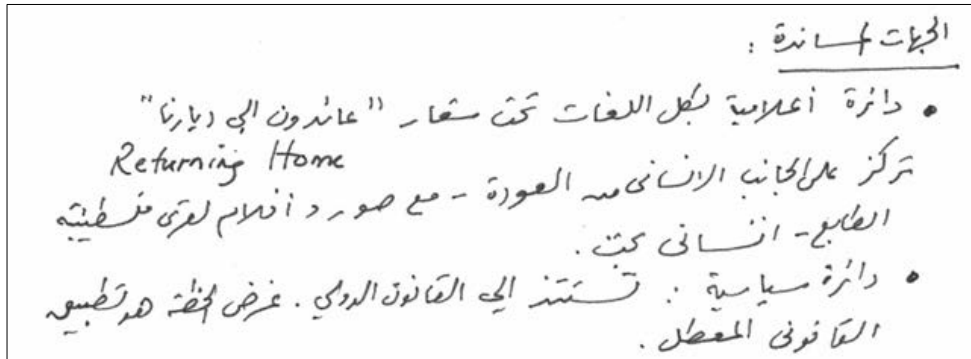
The Propaganda Narratives

► Al-Sinwar emphasized the "public discourse" aspect by representing the invasion as a "civilian, humanitarian, national" operation to achieve the Palestinians' "rights." To that end, he instructed the media department to promote the attack in several languages with the slogan "Returning Home," even writing it in English. For al-Sinwar, the invasion represented the realization of the Palestinian narrative of the "right of return,"⁷ emphasizing the "human" dimension of the "return to Palestine" using images and videos of Palestinian villages.

► He also instructed the Hamas political bureau to claim that international law was not being implemented and the objective of the attack was to enforce it in the Palestinian context.

Supporting bodies:

- Media Department: Publish the slogan "Returning Home" in all languages
Focus on the human aspect of the return, using images and videos of Palestinian villages.
The impression to be conveyed: purely humanitarian.
- Political Department: Rely on international law. The objective of the plan is to implement the law which is not being implemented.



From the document

The Israeli Defense Concept

► In the first document, al-Sinwar warned that the window of opportunity for achieving the surprise effect of the invasion was six to ten hours, during which Israel's ability to launch a counteroffensive had to be impeded. In the present document, al-Sinwar said Israel would in any case mount a powerful response, and **he did not rule out the possibility that it would use nuclear weapons**. Nevertheless, he did not abandon his messianic vision and emphasized

⁷ The so-called Palestinian "right of return" to their places of residence before 1948, that is, the destruction of the State of Israel.

that it would be a "battle of life or death," even if the price was the destruction of the Gaza Strip.

Defense plan: The enemy will not hesitate to use all the means and weapons at its disposal, not only through attack but also by other means. It may even use a nuclear bomb. But first it will be surprised by the attack and descend into chaos. As an additional precaution, a popular operation should be organized to return to the villages and symbolically reoccupy them. This campaign is a battle of life or death, and there will be life, with Allah's help.

ملف خطة الدفاعية، لن يتوانى العدو عن استعمال كافة أسلحته، ليس بالفرات فقط، بل ربما بقنبلة نووية. ولكنه أولاً سيفاجأ بالاجتياح والاحتلال. يجب تنظيم عمليات شعبية للعودة إلى القرى واحتلالها رمزياً. المعركة حياة أو موت. ستكون حياة أم موت.

From the captured document

Slide Show Documenting the "Liberation of Southern Palestine"

► In the second part of the document there is a description of 13 slides from a presentation written in October 2021 entitled "Gaza, the National Pride" and "The Liberation of Southern Palestine." However, the slides themselves were not recovered. The English title of the presentation file was **Transport Project Gaza** Ezza, which may refer to a "transfer project," given the intention to empty entire areas of their Israeli inhabitants.

► The opening slides showed the historical context of the *nakba* and the "occupation of southern Palestine," as well as the situation in "Palestine 1948" alongside the current situation (at the time the presentation was prepared) in the Gaza Strip. The objective was to create a "justification" for the invasion plan by linking it to the Palestinian narrative of the "return to the occupied areas of southern Palestine."

► The next slides illustrated the invasion plan. They included details of 223 "settlements" designated as targets, including 212 kibbutzim with 165,000 inhabitants (although the heading states 221, the total number of communities corresponds to the figure of 212), in addition to eight "small cities" with 390,000 inhabitants, three large "Palestinian" cities with 560,000 inhabitants and military areas.

► Three of the slides focused on 50 junctions which were to be seized at the outset of the invasion, with details of the squads assigned to the mission of "capturing" and controlling the junctions. Thus it can be understood that the seizure of the junctions and the communities was

regarded as key and a prerequisite for the success of the raid and for advancing to the subsequent stages.

► The next focused on the seizure of the communities and military bases. Regarding the "capture" of the kibbutzim, the slides included a description of the methods of "evacuation," apparently referring to the "expulsion" of the inhabitants, noting that the first evacuation would be carried out via the shortest route.

► Written in blue ink beneath the presentation is the word "Saved" (apparently referring to the presentation file), dated August 24, 2022.

► The slides show that the concept of the "Liberation of Southern Palestine" was not an ideological slogan, it was translated into operational planning which included mapping the population, communities, junctions and military areas, and assigning operational squads to key locations throughout the area

Gaza, the national pride

Transport Project Gaza Ezza October 2021 V2, 95 MB

The Liberation of Southern Palestine

Slides 1-6: The *nakba*, the occupation of southern Palestine, population density in the Gaza Strip.

Slide 7: Palestine 1948: The residential areas are divided into 46 Nature Regions. We are now focusing on the Southern District, Region No. 6, which consists of 11 areas that are to be emptied.

Slide 8: Gaza Strip area: 365 sq. km. Population: 2,050,000.

Occupied area: 14,235 sq. km. Population: 1,090,000.

Slide 9: Details regarding 223 settlements:

1. Kibbutzim: 221. Population: 165,000.
2. Small cities: 8. Population: 390,000.
3. Large Palestinian cities: 3. Population: 560,000.
4. Military areas.

Slide 10: Junctions (Important) – Total: 50.

Slide 11: Details of the 212 settlements (population: 165,000).

Slide 12: Their kibbutzim: approximately 25 squads. Each squad will be assigned one junction. A total of 25 squads will be assigned 25 junctions.

Slide 13: Details regarding each of the 25 squads.

Slide 14: The 25 junctions must be captured and controlled.

Slide 15: Evacuation routes.

Slide 16: Example of the longest route.

Slide 17: Stages of the evacuation, shortest route first. Evacuate (Important).

Slide 20: Evacuation of the small cities of settlers.

Slide 25: Evacuation of the occupied large Palestinian cities.

Slide 27: Seizure of the military bases.

Slide 35: Final slide.

Transport Project Gaza ٤٣٣٤ October 2021 V2
95 MB

غزة العزة
تقرير جنوب فلسطين

- شركة ١-٦ . النكبة . احتلال جنوب فلسطين . تناقض السكان في قطاع غزة
- شركة ٧ . فلسطين ١٩٤٨ : مقسمة مدينتي التوزيع السكاني إلى ٤٦ إقليم طبيعي (Natural Regions) .
تتركز الآن على الإقليم الجنوبي قسم ٦ ، يكون من ١١ منطقة ، المطلوب إظهارها .
- شركة ٨ : مصادرة القطاع ٦٥-٧ كم . السكان ١,٠٥٠,٠٠٠ المنطقة المحتلة ١٤,٢٥٠ ألف السكان ١,٠٩٠,٠٠٠
- شركة ٩ : تفصيل ٢٢٢ مخططة
١) كثافة عدد السكان ١٦٥,٠٠٠
٢) مدن صغيرة لعدد ٨ السكان ٩٠,٠٠٠
٣) مدن كبيرة فلسطينية ٣ السكان ٥٦,٠٠٠
٤) مناطق عسكرية
- شركة ١٠ - تقاطع الطرق (م) - عدد ٥٠
- شركة ١١ - تفصيل ١٢ مخططة (مجموع السكان ١٦٥,٠٠٠)
- شركة ١٢ - جمعنا هم ٢٥ مجموعة ، كل مجموعة مخططة في نقطة تقاطع .
٢٥ مجموعة مخططة في ٢٥ نقطة تقاطع .
تفصيل كل مجموعة في ٢٥ .
- شركة ١٣ - تفصيل كل مجموعة في ٢٥ .
- شركة ١٤ - مائة . المطلوب إظهار درجته تقاطع الطرق ٢٥ .
- شركة ١٥ - طرق الترحيل (المسارات)
- شركة ١٦ - مثال - لا طول طريق
- شركة ١٧ - مراحل الترحيل . الزقار أولًا evacuation (م)
- شركة ١٨ - ترحيل المدن الصغيرة للمخططة .
- شركة ١٩ - ترحيل المدن الكبيرة الفلسطينية المحتلة
- شركة ٢٠ - السيطرة على المواقع العسكرية
- شركة ٢١ - آخرها .

١٤٢
٢٥ أغسطس ٢٠٢٢

From the document

Hamas As the Force Leading the Invasion

► **The two documents show al-Sinwar viewed Hamas as the organization which would lead the decisive campaign against Israel even if it had to do so alone.** In the first document, which was primarily operational, he said Hamas' military-terrorist wing would lead the first two waves of the invasion and operatives from the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip would join in the third wave. He also assumed the Hamas invasion would trigger a chain reaction leading to a multi-front conflict involving fighting from Judea and Samaria, eastern Jerusalem and among Israel's Arab population, with Hezbollah's intervention from the north, which would encourage the "collapse of the enemy."

► In the second document, he made no reference to the involvement of external actors, focusing instead on the tactical actions of Hamas terrorist operatives from the invasion through the "expulsion of the settlers," accompanied by activities in the media and international arenas which were also intended to be led by Hamas' "political" branches.

► That reflected al-Sinwar's growing confidence in Hamas' ability to launch the campaign on its own, which took shape primarily after the Sword of Jerusalem, the name Hamas gave to Israel's Operation Guardian of the Walls in May 2021. According to the Hamas leadership, as reflected in public statements and documents brought back from Gaza, the campaign ended in a "clear victory" and a "magnificent divine triumph." In a letter sent to Isma'il Haniyeh, head of the Hamas political bureau, on May 30, 2021, al-Sinwar declared that the "legendary force" had shattered Israel's image, adding that "it is now clear to everyone that there is a predatory, deadly tiger called Hamas and the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, and that when it becomes angry and decides to be deadly, it has the courage to make that decision and is prepared to go further than people imagine and is willing to make sacrifices."⁸

► However, the date of the two documents, August 24, 2022, **corresponds to the Hamas leadership's understanding at the time that it was uncertain whether additional actors would participate, especially Iran and Hezbollah.** Based on the documents disclosed to date, senior Hamas figures were in the midst of discussions with Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah and the head of the Palestine Branch of the Iranian Qods Force, Muhammad

⁸ See the April 2026 ITIC report, [Operation Guardian of the Walls as a watershed moment in Hamas' strategy for the "destruction of Israel," as reflected in documents found by the IDF in the Gaza Strip](#)

Saeed Izadi (Hajj Ramadan), concerning the nature of the campaign. In a letter from June 2022, apparently sent by al-Sinwar to Haniyeh, Haniyeh was asked during his meetings in to present three possible scenarios for a "major strategic campaign that will change the face of the region and the rules of the game:" A major strategic campaign involving all components of the "resistance axis"⁹ except Iran. Hamas will play the central role in the campaign, while Hezbollah will participate partially, together with forces from the other arenas. Hezbollah will not participate directly, at least not in the initial stage. The main burden will fall on Hamas, joined by forces from the "resistance axis" and fedayeen from Jordan and Syria.

► In a letter sent by Haniyeh in early July 2022 following his meetings in Lebanon, he said Nasrallah and Izadi expressed support for the first scenario. However, they reiterated that before any progress could be made, the available means had to be examined carefully and the obstacles and challenges fully understood.¹⁰

⁹ Iran, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

¹⁰ See the July 2026 Amit Institute report, [Hamas' Perception of Hezbollah's Role in the Multi-Arena Hostilities as Reflected in Documents from the Gaza Strip](#)