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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update October 13, 2023

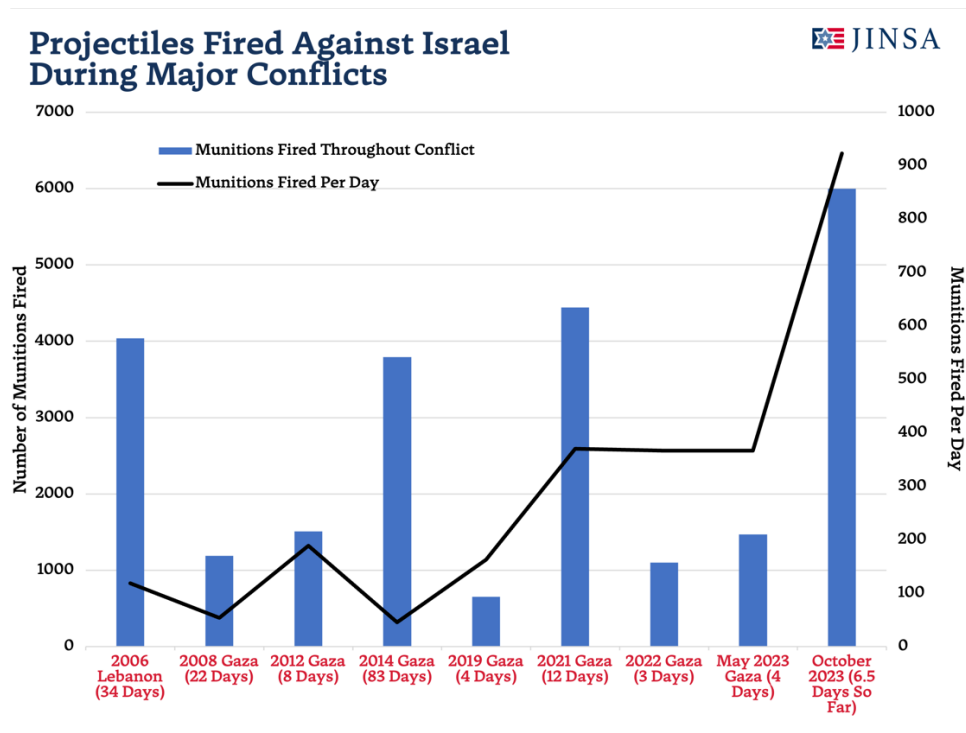
On October 7, Hamas launched an unprovoked and unprecedented multi-pronged attack on Israel by land, air, and sea. JINSA issued a NatSec Brief with an [early assessment](#) of the war on October 8 and has produced daily updates during the war. JINSA also held a [webinar](#) yesterday about lessons learned from past Israel-Gaza wars with JINSA Director of Foreign Policy Jonathan Ruhe, JINSA Distinguished Fellow LTC Geoffrey S. Corn, USA (ret.), and JINSA Hybrid Warfare Policy Project Member Lt Gen Thomas "Tom" Trask, USAF (ret.). Below are updated information and analysis, which JINSA will continue to produce throughout the conflict.

Last 24 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least 6,000 rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been [fired](#) from Gaza during the war.
 - » There were roughly 1,000 rockets targeting Israel in the last 24 hours.
 - On Friday, at least [seven](#) rockets hit Sderot and several more [struck](#) Ashkelon, which faced at least three [bombardments](#) in the span of forty-five minutes. No injuries were reported. Infiltration sirens sounded in the southern kibbutz Nahal Oz.
 - Sirens [sounded](#) in northern Israel, near Tzfat and east of Haifa. The IDF confirmed it had intercepted one rocket over Haifa. Hamas [claimed responsibility](#) in what appeared to be the furthest location in Israel Hamas had targeted since the war began.
- At least three rockets were [fired](#) from Lebanon into Israel on October 12, with [sirens](#) sounding on the Lebanese border in the towns of She'ar Yeshuv, HaGoshrim, and Dafna.
- On October 12, two Israeli policemen were shot and injured, one moderately and one seriously, after a [terrorist attack](#) at the Shalem police station in Jerusalem, and on October 13, a terrorist was shot and [killed](#) near Ashkelon by Israeli forces.
- On October 12, the Israeli Foreign Ministry [warned](#) that rallies planned for October 13 inspired by Hamas' call for a "Day of Rage" across the globe present risks to Jews, and Israelis abroad should take caution.
 - » On October 13, a teacher in Arras, France, was [killed](#) in a terrorist attack by an individual known to authorities for ties to radical Islamism.

- An Israeli embassy employee in Beijing was [attacked](#) and hospitalized on Friday. It is not clear who carried out the attack.
- Reports from October 11 [alleged](#), according to researchers at cybersecurity firm Group-IB, that the Palestinian hacking group AnonGhost conducted an operation to send a fake nuclear attack threat through the Red Alert application in Israel by exploiting vulnerabilities in the application.
 - » According to *Cybernews*, the hackers [disseminated](#) false messages to the application’s users that said a “nuclear bomb is coming,” per screenshots reportedly posted to AnonGhost’s Telegram channel.



IDF Operations

- The IDF stated it has launched strikes on [2,687](#) targets in Gaza since the war began.
- The IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes against at least 750 targets belonging to Hamas and other terror groups in Gaza throughout Thursday night.
- Syrian media [reported](#) on October 12 that Israel had conducted an airstrike near the Damascus International Airport and [Aleppo International Airport](#), as noted in JINSA’s update about the war [yesterday](#).
- On October 12, an IDF airstrike in Gaza killed Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades leader Sami al-Abd al-Hassani, the terrorist group [confirmed](#).
- The IDF released a [video](#) showing its airstrikes destroying dozens of drone launch sites located on the roofs of residential buildings in Gaza.
- On October 13, the IDF released a statement calling for Gaza City residents to [move south](#) in the Gaza Strip for their own safety.

- » The IDF sent a [message](#), along with a map, to Palestinians saying “civilians of Gaza City, evacuate south for your own safety and the safety of your families and distance yourself from Hamas terrorists who are using you as human shields. In the following days, the IDF will continue to operate significantly in Gaza City and make extensive efforts to avoid harming civilians.”
 - It was not immediately clear how the message was conveyed to Gaza residents.
- » A similar statement, as relayed to the United Nations by IDF liaisons, included an Israeli call for “the entire population of Gaza north of Wadi Gaza [to] [relocate](#) to southern Gaza within the next 24 hours.”
- » Hamas responded to the Israeli warning by telling Palestinians to stay put, with a senior leader [urging](#) Gaza residents to “remain steadfast in your homes and to stand firm in the face of this disgusting psychological war waged by the occupation.”

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,300 people in Israel [have died](#) and another 3,200 have been injured in the war.
 - » 257 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - » According to the IDF’s latest press release on October 13, the families of 120 individuals have been [notified](#) that their loved ones were taken hostage.
 - » The Hamas attack killed numerous foreign nationals, including at least twenty-seven [American](#) nationals, twenty-one [Thai](#) nationals, seventeen [British](#) nationals, ten [Nepalese](#) nationals, seven [Argentinian](#) nationals, eleven [French](#) nationals, four [Russian](#) nationals, three Chilean [nationals](#), seven [Ukrainian](#) nationals, two [Peruvian](#) nationals, a [Canadian](#) national, a [Cambodian](#) national, and a [Brazilian](#) national.
- According to the Gaza Health Ministry, 1,537 [people](#) have been killed in Gaza and 6,612 have been injured during the war.
- According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, thirty-six people have been [killed](#) and an additional 610 have been [injured](#) in the West Bank, including twenty-one injuries on October 12.
- Foreign nationals also [remain missing](#), including at least twenty Americans, twenty French nationals, fifteen Argentinian nationals, six Russian nationals, three Canadian nationals, five Philippines nationals, three Austrian nationals, three Brazilian nationals, two Italian nationals, one Chilean national, two Paraguayan nationals, two Peruvian nationals, two Sri Lankan nationals, two Tanzanian nationals, and one Irish national.
 - » Several German nationals, eleven Thai nationals, two Colombian nationals, and two Mexican nationals have been taken hostage by Hamas.

Iranian Involvement

- On October 12, Iran’s Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian arrived in Beirut and [met](#) with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on October 13.
 - » The foreign minister reportedly [said](#) upon arriving, “I offer congratulations from the Palestinian people on Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, which is a response to Netanyahu’s war crimes.”

- » Iran state-run agency IRNA reported that Adollahian [said](#) that “the continuation of aggression, war crimes and the siege of Gaza, the opening of other fronts is a real possibility” and that “Iran strongly continues its political and media support for the Palestinian resistance.”
- » Abdollahian also reportedly [met](#) with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati and Foreign Minister Abdallah Bouhabib during the visit.
- » Abdollahian had already [visited](#) Iraq and plans to travel to Syria. The Israeli airstrikes against Syrian airports on October 12 may have caused him to push forward his Lebanon trip.

U.S. and International Response

- The United States [reportedly](#) delivered roughly 500 U.S. small diameter bombs (SDB) to Israel on October 12, with approximately 500 more of the precision-guided munitions expected to arrive on October 13. The United States is also reportedly providing roughly 100,000 rounds of 7.62 small-arms ammunition.
- Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [announced](#) on October 13 that a new tranche of American munitions had arrived in Israel, without giving further details.
- During a press conference with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel on October 12, Blinken [said](#), “I come before you not only as the United States Secretary of State, but also as a Jew. My grandfather, Maurice Blinken, fled pogroms in Russia. My stepfather, Samuel Pizar, survived concentration camps – Auschwitz, Dachau, Majdanek.”
 - » Blinken [said](#) further, “this was just one of Hamas’s countless acts of terror – in a litany of brutality and inhumanity that, yes, brings to mind the worst of ISIS. Babies slaughtered. Bodies desecrated. Young people burned alive. Women raped. Parents executed in front of their children, children in front of their parents. How are we even to understand this, to digest this?”
 - » Blinken [reiterated](#) U.S. support for Israel by reassuring, “you may be strong enough on your own to defend yourself – but as long as America exists, you will never, ever have to. We will always be there, by your side.”
 - » Blinken [noted](#) that the United States is “supplying ammunition, interceptors to replenish Israel’s Iron Dome, alongside other defense materiel. The first shipments of U.S. military support have already arrived in Israel, and more is on the way.”
- During a press conference with Israeli President Isaac Herzog in Israel on October 12, Blinken [said](#), “The United States stands with Israel today, tomorrow, every day.”
 - » Blinken also [said](#), “here in the Middle East, there is the path of integration, cooperation, normalization, and equal measures of justice, opportunity, dignity for all peoples, including the Palestinians. Or there’s the path that Hamas has shown to the world these last few days: terror, destruction, malice, a path that leads to nowhere for anyone except to the darkest places in our souls.”
- President Biden [spoke](#) with Emirati President Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan on October 12 to discuss the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas.

- On October 12, Secretary Blinken [spoke](#) with Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita about Hamas' attacks, efforts to impede escalation in the region, and securing the release of hostages.
- Secretary Blinken [told](#) *ABC News* on October 12 that the United States is determined to "explore every possible option" to free American hostages in Gaza and that the U.S. is working with third-party countries "who may have leverage with Hamas to use that leverage in favor of getting the hostages home."
- On October 12, the U.S. State Department [announced](#) forthcoming visits by Secretary Blinken to Qatar, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan as part of his current Middle East tour.
- On October 11, the U.S. State Department issued a Level 3 travel [advisory](#) for Israel and the West Bank, indicating that Americans should reconsider travel to these locations.
- On October 13, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin traveled to Israel and met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.
 - » During his meeting with Netanyahu, he [stressed](#) that the United States will "have your back" and told the prime minister, "as you know, I was the guy that initially put the ISIS campaign together and I know a lot about ISIS, and this is worse than what I saw with ISIS."
 - » Standing alongside Gallant at a press conference, Austin [said](#), "this is no time for neutrality, or for false equivalence, or for excuses for the inexcusable... anyone who wants lasting peace and security for this region must condemn and isolate Hamas."
- The UN Security Council will [meet](#) on October 13 in New York to discuss the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas after Brazil, currently holder of the rotating presidency of the council, called a meeting.
- *AFP* reported on October 13 that Russian President Vladimir Putin [said](#) on Russian television that an Israeli ground operation in Gaza would lead to "absolutely unacceptable" civilian casualties.
- On October 12 during a televised address, French President Emmanuel Macron [denounced](#) Hamas's "blind murderous hatred" and "absolute cruelty," and he said further that Israel reserves the right to "[eliminate] terrorist groups, including Hamas, with targeted actions but preserving the civilian population," and the "only response to terrorism is one that is... strong but fair."
- On October 12, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz [promised](#) to crack down on support for Hamas within Germany.
 - » The German Defense Ministry [agreed](#) to fulfill an Israeli request to use two Heron TP drones under lease by Germany's military in Israel for training German personnel, and the ministry agreed to discuss Israeli requests for ammunition for its German-made warships.
- On October 13, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [arrived](#) in Israel along with European Parliament President Roberta Metsola.
 - » Von der Leyen [expressed](#) Europe's "solidarity with the Israeli people in the wake of the horrific Hamas terrorist attack" in an October 13 social media post.

Analysis

- The Biden administration's rapid deployment of small diameter bombs to Israel is critical for Israel's ability to minimize collateral damage.
 - » This is particularly important considering terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah frequently place their weapons arsenals, launchpads, and command-and-control sites in civilian locations, such as residential buildings, hospitals, schools, and mosques.
 - » JINSA had [recommended](#) that the United States expedite the delivery of SDB and other precision munitions to Israel [since 2018](#), as well as [resupply](#) the [obsolete and depleted](#) U.S. stockpile of U.S.-owned weaponry in Israel, called War Reserve Stockpile Ammunition (WRSA-I), which Israel can draw upon in an emergency.
- Israel's explicit warning on October 13 that residents of Gaza City should evacuate within 24 hours, and that all Gazan residents should move to the southern part of the Gaza Strip and not remain north of Wadi Gaza, makes almost certain a large-scale Israeli ground operation into Gaza in the coming days.



Source: [New York Times](#)

- Hamas, by conversely telling residents of Gaza to remain where they are, appears to be trying to preemptively ensure a high rate of civilian casualties to aid its information warfare and lawfare campaigns to delegitimize Israeli operations.
 - » These campaigns, as JINSA has [previously noted](#), aim to undermine Israel in the court of public opinion, complicate its tactical planning, and generate international pressure for Israel to restrict or terminate its operations prematurely.
 - » In a JINSA [webinar](#) on October 12, LTC Geoffrey Corn (ret.), former Chief of International Law for U.S. Army Europe, observed that Hamas' information campaign is equally, if not more, important to its mission as its military and terrorist operations.

- Abdollahian’s visits to Iraq, Lebanon, and soon Syria underscore the Iranian regime’s ongoing efforts to coordinate the senior leaders of its self-proclaimed “Axis of Resistance” that seeks to encircle Israel with its terrorist proxies like Hamas and Hezbollah.
- Israel has already faced over 6,000 rockets since October 7, surpassing the total in any of its wars since at least 2006, including the 2014 Gaza War that lasted eighty-three days and 2006 Lebanon War that lasted thirty-four days.
 - » After launching 3,000 rockets at Israel on October 7, Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza have slowed their rate of fire to roughly 400 rockets per day during the four and a half days since. The slower rate of fire could indicate preparation for a long war.
 - » Given the high rate of fire from Hamas on the first day of the war, Israel has still faced more projectiles per day than any other conflict since at least 2006.
- During JINSA’s [webinar](#) yesterday, JINSA Director of Foreign Policy Jonathan Ruhe discussed lessons from past Israel-Gaza conflicts with JINSA Distinguished Fellow LTC Geoffrey S. Corn, USA (ret.) and JINSA Hybrid Warfare Policy Project Member and former Vice Commander, United States Special Operations Command Lt Gen Thomas “Tom” Trask, USAF (ret.).
 - » Lt Gen Trask (ret.) noted that [JINSA’s 2021 Gaza Assessment](#) “predicted that conflict would probably not be too far down the road.... The IDF’s strategy [in 2021] was simply to reduce the capabilities inside Gaza... operationally, it didn’t really change the situation on the ground.”
 - For Lt Gen Trask (ret.), “the interesting thing to me in the most recent conflict is the lessons that were learned by Hamas. They realized that tunnels didn’t work—they had to find other ways to attack.... Hamas realized that they couldn’t use the same methods of communication.... the fact that they were able to surprise the Israelis through a ground incursion through the border was surprising to me.”
 - » LTC Geoffrey S. Corn, USA (ret.) argued that “self-defense is not a tit-for-tat equation... there’s no rule that says if they fire ten rockets you have to fire ten rockets... I can take self-help... to eliminate the threat to my national security.”
 - LTC Corn (ret.) also stressed that “Human shields are a war crime... I think that in many cases, Hamas uses civilians because they want Israelis to attack the target... so they have visceral images that they can use in their strategic information campaign to convince people that the IDF is indifferent to [casualties].... The way information is actually gathered to IDF strikes is objective evidence that civilians in the area know about them and know to evacuate.... The international response to the conflict is bigotry of dual expectations... We face it as well... There are many cases where the respect for the law requires us to make compromises in military action, but we do that because it’s central to who we are.”
 - LTC Corn (ret.) also pointed out that “you’re talking about some of the most blatant war crimes in the charter of the International Criminal Court [by Hamas]... and there have been crickets [from the court].”