



Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update October 28, 2023

Ari Cicurel
Assistant Director of Foreign Policy

Zac Schildcrout
Policy Analyst

On October 7, Hamas launched an unprovoked and unprecedented multi-pronged attack on Israel by land, air, and sea. JINSA has launched a webpage dedicated to its commentary, webinars, and media coverage about [Israel At War](#). An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below, which JINSA will regularly produce.

Analysis

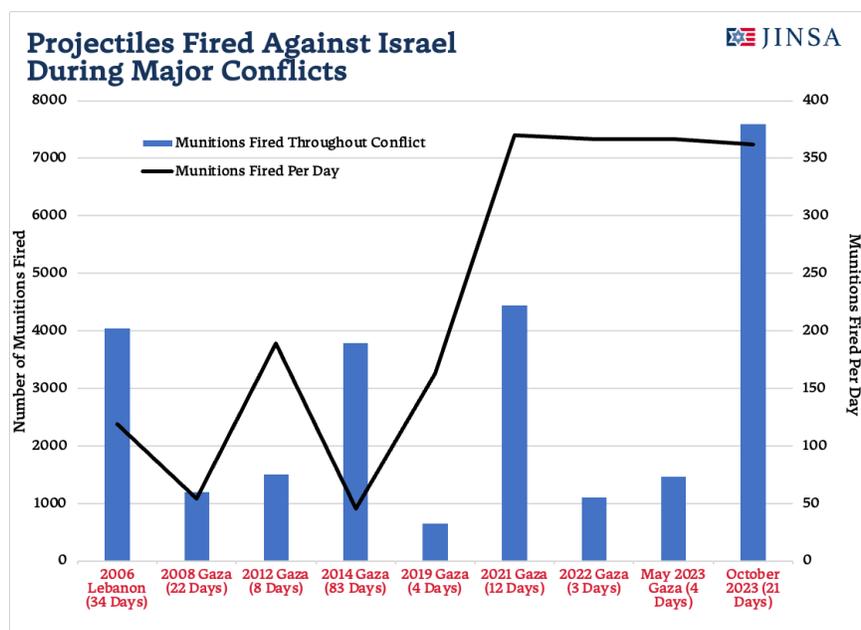
- Although Israel expanded its ground operations into Gaza overnight and comments from Israel Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi indicated that the war has entered a new phase involving ground forces, this effort has not been confirmed to be the main thrust of the full-scale ground incursion for which Israel has been preparing. The increased targeting of Hamas's extensive network of tunnels under Gaza along with the expanded ground operation may be efforts to better shape the battlefield in Israel's favor for when it does begin the larger ground incursion.
- Only three days after French President Emmanuel Macron [argued](#) that "France is ready for the international coalition against ISIS—in which we are engaged in our operations in Iraq and Syria—to also fight against Hamas," France's decision to support a United Nations resolution calling for a "humanitarian truce" between Israel and Gaza marks an about-face in France's position toward the war. France's decision underscores the rapidity at which international opinion about Israel's operations against Hamas can change.
 - » Furthermore, France's vote in favor of a resolution calling for a ceasefire contradicts the French UN ambassador's subsequent [claim](#) that "Israel has the right to defend itself and the duty to do so in accordance with international law."
- Recent [reporting](#) that Hamas has stockpiled ample fuel, ammunition, explosives, food, water, and medicine for itself, as well as the IDF's [revelation](#) that Hamas's headquarters are located beneath the al-Shifa hospital in Gaza, indicate that Hamas has prepared thoroughly for a long war with Israel, not only continuing its unlawful practice of using Gazan civilians as human shields but depriving them of essential supplies.

Last 24 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least [7,600](#) rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Gaza during the war.
 - » Sirens sounded in Tel Aviv, Kiryat Ono, Holon, Bat Yam, Ashkelon, Beersheba, Kissufim, Dimona, Netiv Ha'asara, as well as other locations in southern Israel.

- » According to an October 27 *New York Times* [report](#), Hamas has reportedly stockpiled ample supplies to help sustain its fight against Israel—all while Gazan civilians struggle to obtain basic necessities—including “hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel for vehicles and rockets; caches of ammunition, explosives and materials to make more; and stockpiles of food, water and medicine.”
- The IDF stated that [mortar fire](#) from Lebanon targeted military and civilian locations in northern Israel.
 - » Sirens sounded in the Upper Galilee communities of Misgav Am and Margalioth.
- On October 27, several rockets [fired](#) from Lebanon toward Israel landed in Syria.



IDF Operations

- The IDF escalated its airstrikes against terrorist targets in Gaza overnight, which it said included targeting 150 underground sites, and [expanded](#) its ground operations in Gaza involving IDF infantry, combat engineering forces, and tanks.
 - » Reports [indicated](#) that the IDF began a limited ground incursion into the Gaza Strip on October 27 alongside heavy bombardment of Hamas targets in Gaza’s north. IDF spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#), “the Air Force is striking underground targets very significantly,” and “in addition to the attacks that we carried out in recent days, ground forces are expanding their activity this evening. The IDF is acting with great force... to achieve the objectives of the war.”
 - On October 28, the IDF dropped leaflets [warning](#), “to the residents of the Gaza Strip: The Gaza governorate (Gaza City) has become a battlefield. Shelters in northern Gaza and Gaza governorate are not safe” and urging residents to “evacuate immediately.”
 - » U.S. and Israeli officials [reportedly](#) told [ABC News](#) that the current operations are not the presumably forthcoming full-scale ground offensive.
 - » Yet, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant also [said](#) that the IDF has "entered a new stage in the conflict...the operation will continue until new orders are given" and that

Israel “accomplished [completed] a phase in the war. We will continue to be strong and precise. And hunt down every terrorist.”

- Hagari also added that “the expansion of the IDF’s operational activity furthers the war’s goals.”
- » On October 28, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi said in a recorded [video](#) that “this war has stages, and today we moved into a new phase ... Our forces are currently carrying out ground operations in the Gaza Strip ... which serve to achieve all the war’s objectives: dismantling Hamas, security at the borders, and supreme efforts to return all the hostages back home ... The objectives of the war require ground entry ... In order to expose the enemy and destroy it, there is no other way but to enter its territory with great force.
- » The IDF [said](#) that its strikes killed Issam Abu Rukbeh, head of Hamas’s aerial forces, who reportedly orchestrated the October 7 infiltration via paragliders and drone attacks targeting the IDF. Rukbeh was responsible for [managing](#) Hamas’s drones, paragliders, aerial detection systems, and air defenses.
- » Overnight on October 28, the IDF launched an [airstrike](#) that killed the commander of Hamas’s naval forces of the Gaza City Brigade, Rateb Abu Sahiban, who commanded a failed Hamas infiltration attempt on October 24.
- » Overnight as the IDF airstrikes escalated, two major Palestinian mobile networks, Jawwal and Paltel, announced that their phone and internet services were [down](#) in Gaza.
- The IDF [revealed](#) through recorded calls of terrorists, infographics, and 3D illustrations that Hamas has used a labyrinth of tunnels underneath Shifa Hospital, the largest hospital in Gaza, as an underground headquarters and arms depot for years, including during the 2014 Operation Protective Edge.



- On October 28, the IDF prevented and neutralized projectile attacks from Lebanon.

- » An Israeli drone [struck](#) a terror cell in southern Lebanon that the IDF said had been preparing to fire anti-tank missiles.
- » The IDF [intercepted](#) a surface-to-air missile fired from Lebanon that targeted an Israeli drone, which remained unharmed.

Casualties and Hostages

- Over [1,400](#) people in Israel have been killed and another [5,431](#) have been injured in the war.
 - » [309](#) Israeli soldiers have been killed.
 - » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 32 [American](#) nationals, 24 [Thai](#) nationals, 35 [French](#) nationals, 17 [British](#) nationals, 10 [Nepalese](#) nationals, 7 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 16 [Russian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, 4 [Chinese](#) nationals, 3 [Brazilian](#) nationals, 3 [Belarusian](#) nationals, 3 [Chilean](#) nationals, 3 [Philippines](#) nationals, 2 [Ukrainian](#) nationals, 2 [Peruvian](#) nationals, 5 [Canadian](#) nationals, a [Cambodian](#) national, a [Colombian](#) national, an [Irish](#) national, an [Italian](#) national, a [Spanish](#) national, a [Swiss](#) national, a [Turkish](#) national, and an [Austrian](#) national.
- According to unverified figures from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry, at least [7,326](#) people have been killed in Gaza, and at least [18,000](#) have been injured during the war.
 - » President Biden, on October 25, [cautioned](#) against trusting Gaza Health Ministry casualty figures, stating: “I have no notion that the Palestinians are telling the truth about how many people are killed ... I have no confidence in the number that the Palestinians are using.”
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, [111](#) people have been killed and over 1,900 have been wounded in the West Bank.
- The IDF [claims](#) that it has killed at least 1,500 infiltrators from Gaza since the start of the war.
- According to the IDF’s latest press release, the families of [229](#) individuals have been notified that their loved ones were taken hostage.
- Foreign nationals also remain missing, including at least 9 [Ukrainian](#) nationals, 3 [Canadian](#) nationals, 3 [Philippines](#) nationals, 2 [Austrian](#) nationals, 3 [Italian](#) nationals, 2 [Paraguayan](#) nationals, 5 [Peruvian](#) nationals, 2 [Sri Lankan](#) nationals, 2 [Tanzanian](#) nationals, a [Chilean](#) national, an [Azeri](#) national, and a [Nepalese](#) national.
 - » At least 12 [German](#) nationals, 17 [Thai](#) nationals, 15 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 12 [American](#) nationals, 6 [Russian](#) nationals, 6 [French](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals have been taken hostage.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On October 27, IDF aircraft [intercepted](#) a projectile over the Red Sea, which appeared to be a drone heading toward Israel, hours after two projectiles struck Egypt that the IDF claimed came from the Red Sea, an apparent reference to Yemen.

- President Biden sent a War Powers Resolution [notification](#) to Congress yesterday after ordering U.S. airstrikes against two facilities linked to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its proxies in Syria.
 - » Biden’s notification explained, “[t]he strikes were intended to establish deterrence and were conducted in a manner to limit the risk of escalation and avoid civilian casualties. I directed the strikes in order to protect and defend our personnel, to degrade and disrupt the ongoing series of attacks against the United States and our partners, and to deter Iran and Iran-backed militia groups from conducting or supporting further attacks on United States personnel and facilities ... The United States stands ready to take further action, as necessary and appropriate, to address further threats or attacks.”

U.S. and International Response

- After the IDF announced that it was expanding ground operations in Gaza, Coordinator for Strategic Communications at the U.S. National Security Council John Kirby refused to comment on the operation during a call with reporters and [added](#) that “we’re not drawing red lines for Israel ... We’re going to continue to support them,” but “since the very beginning we have, and will continue to have, conversations about the manner that they are doing this.”
- On October 27, the United Nations General Assembly [adopted](#) a nonbinding resolution that Jordan introduced (120 in favor, 45 abstentions, and 14 against) endorsing an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. The resolution failed to mention or condemn Hamas and its October 7 attack.
 - » The United States voted against the resolution. U.S. ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield explained, “it is outrageous that this resolution fails to name the perpetrators of the October 7th terrorist attacks: Hamas.”
 - Thomas-Greenfield urged the protection of Palestinian and other civilians in Gaza.
 - » Though Canada introduced an amendment to the resolution that condemned Hamas, less than two-thirds of the assembly voted for it, and it was not adopted.
 - Pakistan’s UN ambassador Munir Akran criticized Canada’s proposed amendment: “If Canada was really equitable, it would agree either to name everybody — both sides who are guilty of having committed crimes — or it would not name either as we chose.”
 - » In response to the resolution’s adoption, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen called the document “despicable” and said, “Israel intends to eliminate Hamas just as the world dealt with the Nazis and ISIS.”
 - » Israel’s ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan said, “this is a dark day for the UN and for mankind,” and “today is a day that will go down as infamy. We have all witnessed that the UN no longer holds even one ounce of legitimacy or relevance.”
 - » Hamas and the Palestinian Authority (PA) praised the resolution. The PA’s foreign ministry said that Israel’s operations in Gaza have reached “a new peak of brutality,” and the vote reflects “a solid international position rejecting Israel’s unhinged aggression.”
 - » France’s ambassador to the UN Nicolas de Rivièrè [wrote](#) on X, “given the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, France voted in favor of the resolution calling for a humanitarian truce, put to the vote by Jordan on behalf of the Arab group. Nothing can justify the suffering of civilians.”
 - He [wrote](#) further, “However, France regrets that essential elements are missing: an unequivocal condemnation of Hamas terrorist attack against Israel; and that Israel

has the right to defend itself and the duty to do so in accordance with international law.”

- New U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson [spoke](#) with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the phone on October 27, during which Johnson said that “[t]he House of Representatives stands with Israel and [he] reaffirmed our strong support.”
 - » Johnson has expressed support for [separating](#) U.S. aid packages for Israel and Ukraine and indicated that the “consensus among House Republicans is that we need to bifurcate those issues” and that “we’re not going to abandon them,” speaking about the Ukrainians.
- On October 27, the anti-Zionist group Jewish Voice for Peace organized a [protest](#) that resulted in New York City’s Metropolitan Transit Authority shutting down the city’s Grand Central station.
- On March 28, thousands in London [held](#) a “March for Palestine” outside the Houses of Parliament after passing British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s Downing Street office.
- At a mass [rally](#) in Istanbul on March 25, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan claimed that “The main culprit behind the massacre unfolding in Gaza is the West.”

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- Ari Cicurel, [United States Undermines Deterrent Value of Its Strikes Against Iran-linked Targets](#), October 27, 2023
- Webinar: [Gaza Update](#) with JINSA Vice President for Policy Blaise Misztal, JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, and JINSA Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, October 27, 2023
- John Hannah and Blaise Misztal, [“Israel-Hamas war: It’s not too late to salvage peace with Saudi Arabia,”](#) *The Jerusalem Post*, October 26, 2023
- Gabriel Noronha [Testimony](#) before the House Financial Services Committee, “Understanding the Iranian Regime’s Access to Money Around the World and How They Use It to Support Terrorism,” October 26, 2023
- Gabriel Noronha [Testimony](#) before the House Financial Services, “How America and Its Allies Can Stop Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran from Evading Sanctions and Financing Terror,” October 25, 2023