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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update October 30, 2023

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

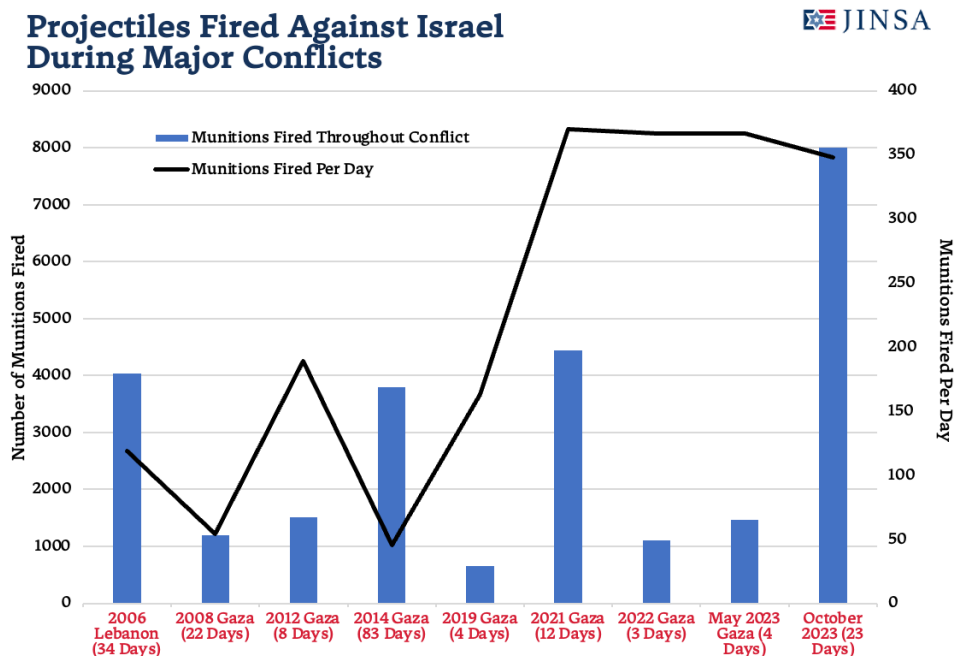
- Antisemitic protests increasingly endanger Jews and Israelis around the world, most recently a pogrom involving hundreds of pro-Palestinian rioters searching for Jewish or Israeli passengers at a Russian airport on October 29 that had the potential to become a deadly incident. Antisemitic riots could strain Israel's ties with other nations, in particular Russia, with whom it has kept open relations to deconflict its airstrikes in Syria.
- On October 28, JINSA President and CEO Michael Makovsky [appeared](#) on *Fox News* to discuss the U.S. domestic response to the war. Makovsky spoke about the rise in antisemitism in the United States since the war began and the U.S. response to Iranian-backed aggression against U.S. troops and personnel in the Middle East.
 - » Makovsky also discussed recent U.S. policy towards Iranian-linked attacks and Iranian involvement in Hamas's October 7 attacks on Israel, stating about President Biden that "it would help U.S. interests especially if he would really adjust his policy, finally, on Iran after this October 7 massacre."
 - Makovsky added that "there have been something like over 100 attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria during [Biden's] tenure. We've responded five times. And they're meek responses. The Iranians are not afraid of us. I think if we want to contribute to a more stable Middle East and also signal to people back home where we stand, I think it's very important the president get very tough on Iran."

Last 48 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least [8,000](#) rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Gaza during the war.
 - » Sirens sounded in Sderot, Haifa, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Be'er Sheva, Tel Aviv, Netivot, Netiv Ha'asara, as well as other locations in southern Israel.

- Terrorists in southern Lebanon fired rockets that struck northern Israel.
 - » On October 29, ten rockets from southern Lebanon [flew](#) into Israel, with one hitting a building in Qiryat Shmona but causing no casualties.
- Several rockets were [fired](#) from Syria toward northern Israel on October 29.



IDF Operations

- The IDF stated that it launched ground operations and airstrikes on at least [600](#) targets in Gaza in the last 24 hours, including weapons storage sites, hideouts, and staging grounds.
 - » On October 30, the IDF began a [“major advance”](#) into Gaza City, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. This advance involved Israeli infantry battalions, tanks, artillery units, and combat engineers, according to the IDF, and also involved the IDF blocking a major road connecting northern Gaza to southern Gaza.
 - » The IDF announced that it killed five senior terrorist operatives in the past 24 hours, including:
 - [Tisir al-Jouti](#), a senior member of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, on October 30, as well as members of his family in an airstrike on Rafah;
 - [Jamil Baba](#), a commander of Hamas’s naval forces;
 - [Muhammad Safadi](#), a commander of a Hamas anti-tank unit in the Tafah brigade;
 - [Muwaman Heagazi](#), a senior operative in Hamas’s anti-tank unit in the Tafah brigade;
 - [Muhammad Awadallah](#), a senior member of Hamas’s munition production unit.
 - » The IDF [dropped](#) numerous leaflets in the Gaza Strip warning terrorists to surrender on October 29. The leaflets said, “disarm, raise your hands, if possible – wave a white flag. Act in accordance with the IDF’s instructions and there will be no need to bring food and water with you – we will take care of that.”

- » The IDF continued to [expand](#) its ground operation in Gaza. IDF tanks were seen on the outskirts of Gaza city and had cut off the Salahedin road connecting the northern and southern Gaza Strip.
 - According to the IDF, Israeli ground forces directed an Israeli airstrike that killed more than twenty terrorists, and in a separate incident, ground forces identified an anti-tank position near the Al-Azhar University in Gaza City that Israeli aircraft then destroyed.
 - On October 29, the IDF claimed that [ground troops](#) in Gaza, including tanks, struck anti-tank guided missile positions, observation posts, and other Hamas infrastructure and killed several gunmen on the Gaza beach.
- IDF Spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari [claimed](#) that Israel “will pursue” Hamas’s Gaza leader Yahya Sinwar “until we get to him.”
- On October 28, Prime Minister Netanyahu [held](#) his first [press conference](#) since the war began alongside Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Minister without portfolio Benny Gantz.
 - » Netanyahu announced that “this is the second stage of the war whose goals are clear — to destroy Hamas’ governing and military capabilities and to bring the hostages home,” and “broadening the ground offensive does not clash in any way with our ability to return the hostages.” Netanyahu also claimed that the war will be “long and hard, and we are ready. It is our second War of Independence. We will fight to defend the homeland. We will fight and we will not withdraw.”
 - » Gallant said that rescuing the hostages “is not a secondary mission” and reiterated that “over the last day, we advanced to a new stage.”
 - » Gantz added, “there is no diplomatic time limit, only an operational clock.”
- The IDF [stated](#) that it launched strikes on Hezbollah targets in Lebanon in the last 24 hours.
 - » On October 29, the IDF [struck](#) an anti-tank guided missile squad in southern Lebanon before it could fire into Israel and [conducted](#) airstrikes against southern Lebanon in response to rocket attacks.
- On October 29, the IDF stated that it [launched](#) strikes on military targets in Syria in the last 24 hours.
 - » On October 29, Israeli fighter jets [struck](#) rocket launchers in Syria used to target the Golan Heights hours earlier.
- On October 29, Israel [reopened](#) the second of three water pipelines into Gaza, allowing 28.5 million liters of water to flow per day, according to Israel’s Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT). Israel had shut off the pipelines, which amount to nine percent of Gaza’s water supply, on October 9. .
- A report from [The New York Times](#) on October 30, citing dozens of interviews with Israeli, Arab, European, and American officials, indicated that Israel’s signals intelligence Unit 8200 stopped listening to Hamas hand-held radios a year ago because it was seen as a “waste of effort” and that U.S. intelligence agencies had largely stopped collecting information on Hamas, believing that Israel had contained the terrorist group. Israel found hand-held radios on the bodies of terrorists who infiltrated Israel on October 7.

Casualties and Hostages

- Over [1,400](#) people in Israel have been killed and another [5,431](#) have been injured in the war.
 - » [312](#) 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, 8,005 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 20,240 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, 108 people have been [killed](#), and an additional nearly 1,900 have been [wounded](#) in the West Bank.
- The IDF [said](#) that it has arrested more than 1,000 people in the West Bank, 700 of whom are Hamas affiliates, since October 7.
- The IDF [claims](#) that it has killed at least 1,500 infiltrators from Gaza since the start of the war.
- According to the IDF spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, the families of 239 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

- Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi [threatened](#) on X that the “Zionist regime’s crimes have crossed the red lines, which may force everyone to take action. Washington asks us to not do anything, but they keep giving widespread support to Israel. The U.S. sent messages to the Axis of Resistance but received a clear response on the battlefield.”
- There were [reported but unconfirmed attacks](#) on October 29 and 30 by Iran-backed groups against facilities in Syria hosting U.S. personnel, including a facility at the Green Village site near the al-Omar oil field and a facility near al-Shaddadi.
 - » On October 29, the United States conducted further [airstrikes](#) against these groups in al-Bukamal in the Deir Ezzor region of Syria, according to initial reports by Syrian media.
- Senior members of Hamas, including Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, [met](#) with Lebanese intelligence chief Abbas Ibrahim on October 30 to discuss the ongoing war.

U.S. and International Response

- On October 30, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh [rejected](#) the idea of having “the Palestinian Authority go to Gaza and run the affairs of Gaza without a political solution for the West Bank, as if this Palestinian Authority is going aboard an F-16 or an Israeli tank” and indicated that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas would not accept it either. Instead, he indicated that “the West Bank needs a solution, and then link Gaza to it within the framework of a two-state solution.”
- The United Nations Security Council will [hold](#) an emergency meeting on October 30 at the request of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), according to UAE spokesperson to the UN Shahad Matar, who wrote on social media that “the UAE has requested an emergency UNSC meeting to be convened as soon as possible in light of Israel’s announcement that it is ‘expanding ground operations’ in Gaza.”
- On October 29, newly-elected Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) announced on *Fox News* that the House of Representatives will [advance](#) “a stand-alone Israel funding bill this week” divorced from Ukraine aid.
 - » Johnson said that he believes the measure will have wide bipartisan support and that Republicans will back a similar measure in the Senate this week.
 - » President Biden has backed a proposed \$106 billion aid package including assistance for both Israel and Ukraine.
- On October 29, President Biden [announced](#) on X that he spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and discussed efforts to ensure the release of hostages abducted by Hamas, as well as the need to help Americans leave Gaza and “significantly increase” the entry of humanitarian aid to Gaza.
 - » Biden also “reiterated that Israel has every right to defend its citizens from terrorism and a responsibility to do so in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law which prioritizes the protection of civilians.”
- President Biden also [announced](#) on X that day that he spoke to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi to express appreciation for Egypt’s role in facilitating the transit of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.
 - » He also said, “we reaffirmed our commitment to work together and discussed the importance of protecting civilian lives, respect for international humanitarian law, and ensuring that Palestinians in Gaza are not displaced to Egypt or any other nation.”
- Vice President Kamala Harris [met](#) with an unspecified number of family members of Americans taken hostage by Hamas on October 28. Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs Roger Carstens also attended the meeting.
- VP Harris appeared on *CBS’s 60 Minutes* on October 29, during which she discussed the war in Israel, among other topics. Vice President Harris [said](#), “we have absolutely no intention” of sending U.S. troops to fight in Israel or the Gaza Strip, and in response to the question “what is the message to Iran?” Harris [stated](#), “don’t. One word. Pretty straightforward.”
- During an October 29 appearance on *CBS News’ Face the Nation*, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan [said](#) the Biden administration supports Israel’s right to self-defense.
 - » Sullivan stated, “what a lot of people are calling for is just a stop to Israeli military action against terrorists period. Just stop, no more. Israel cannot go after terrorists who conducted this largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust, and who continue to fire

rockets and continue to attack Israel. We have taken the position that Israel has a right to defend itself against terrorist attacks. That is different from what Secretary Blinken spoke about, which was a humanitarian pause. A pause in the fighting, for example, so that there's a period of time where there can be safe passage of hostages.”

- On October 29, hundreds of [rioters](#) conducted a pogrom looking for Israelis or Jews by storming the main airport in Makhachkala, the capital of Russia’s predominantly Muslim Dagestan region in the North Caucasus, after rumors spread about an airplane that arrived from Israel. The rioters questioned people in the airport and passengers on aircraft if they were Jewish and asked to see their passports.
 - » At least twenty people were injured and sixty people arrested in the riot.
 - » National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson [posted](#) on X that “[t]he U.S. unequivocally stands with the entire Jewish community as we witness a worldwide surge in antisemitism.”
 - » U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism Deborah Lipstadt [posted](#) on X, “[w]e are deeply concerned by the dramatic increase in antisemitic incidents around the world over the past three weeks ... violent incidents throughout the world in October have included harassment of and attacks on Jewish individuals, and defacement of and attacks on Jewish sites. Targeting Jewish communities with hate, intimidation, or violence in relation to the conflict in the Middle East is intolerable and antisemitic — and without justification.”
 - » Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy [posted](#) on X, “[t]his is not an isolated incident in Makhachkala, but rather part of Russia’s widespread culture of hatred toward other nations, which is propagated by state television, pundits, and authorities. The Russian foreign minister has made a series of antisemitic remarks in the last year. The Russian President also used antisemitic slurs.”
- The International Criminal Court’s (ICC) chief prosecutor Karim Khan told reporters in Cairo, Egypt on October 29 that the ICC may pursue a case against Israel for blocking humanitarian aid deliveries into Gaza.
- Khan [stated](#), “impeding relief supplies as provided by the Geneva Conventions may constitute a crime within the court jurisdiction ... I saw trucks full of goods, full of humanitarian assistance stuck where nobody needs them, stuck in Egypt, stuck at Rafah,” he said, adding, “these supplies must get to the civilians of Gaza without delay.”
- Police at Cornell University were called to the school’s kosher dining hall, and the local Hillel [warned](#) students to avoid the premises on October 29 after anonymous antisemitic social media posts under the pseudonyms of “hamas,” “jew evil,” “jew genocide,” and “hamas warrior” promulgated hate speech and threatened to “kill jews,” “shoot up” the building, and stab Jews.
- On October 29, at least 35,000 people participated in a pro-Palestinian [march](#) in Madrid, Spain, during which participants called for a ceasefire.
- On October 29, roughly 5,000 people [protested](#) in Athens, Greece to end what they called the “massacre” of Palestinians in Gaza and against the Greek government’s abstention during a United Nations Security Council Resolution on October 27 that called for a ceasefire.
- On October 28, Republican presidential candidates indicated their support for Israel at the Republican Jewish Coalition (RJC) annual event.
 - » Former President Donald Trump [said](#), “the United States will stand with Israel 100% - without hesitation, without qualification and without any apology. We're not going to be

apologizing.” He added, “if you spill a drop of American blood, we will spill a gallon of yours.”

- » Governor Ron DeSantis (R-FL) [said](#), “Israel values life. The Hamas terrorists worship death. Don’t tell me there’s a moral equivalency here, because there is not. I don’t care what imbeciles on college campuses say. I don’t care what liars in the media say. I don’t care what reprobates at the United Nations say. We stand with Israel. We stand with the people of Israel.”
 - » Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley [said](#), “we need to commit ourselves to ensure that good defeats evil. That means fighting antisemitism in Congress and on college campuses, and it means giving Israel everything she needs to destroy Hamas. Eliminate Hamas once and for all. Finish them.”
 - » Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) [said](#), “we need to stop sending pallets of cash and unrequited love to Iran.... We need a new president and administration that doesn’t speak with a forked tongue, saying they support Israel in the day while they delay Israel at night.”
 - » Former Governor Chris Christie (R-NJ) [said](#), “the world knew what was going on in Germany in the 1930s and they said, ‘It’s not our problem. It’s not as bad as you say.’ It was American isolationism that led to those excuses. Nobody in this room does not want America to be first. All of us do. It is how America becomes first that is the argument in our party right now. Do we become first by turning our back on the rest of the world? Do we become first by saying, ‘Well, this problem, this hate, this murder, this terrorism is not our problem?’ Don’t be fooled, everyone.”
 - » Presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy [said](#), “I am a George Washington, America-first conservative, and I believe the U.S.-Israel relationship is strongest when it is grounded in American self interest, as I believe it is and will be strongest when it is. Not in fleeting sympathy. That is better for America. That is better for Israel.”
 - » Governor Doug Burgum (R-ND) [said](#), “Hamas is a proxy of Iran. Hezbollah is a proxy of Iran.... In business terms you all understand, Joe Biden thinks that if we go after the subsidiary, it’s OK to leave the parent company alone—the one that’s providing all of the funding.”
- On October 27, *The New York Times*, citing a senior Saudi official and Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), [reported](#) that Saudi officials told their American counterparts that an Israeli ground offensive into Gaza would be “extremely harmful” to regional stability and could have catastrophic consequences.

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel At War

- Blaise Misztal, “[Israel’s Strategic Challenge](#),” *War on the Rocks*, October 30, 2023
- 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 Senior 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

- LTC Geoffrey Corn (ret.), "[The Disproportionate Confusion about Proportionality](#)," *Lawfire Blog*, October 26, 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