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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update November 2, 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

- A gradual uptick in projectile attacks from Lebanon, primarily with anti-tank guided missiles but also surface-to-air missiles, may suggest that Hezbollah and other Iranian proxies in southern Lebanon are pursuing a “goldilocks” escalation strategy—inflicting increasing damage but remaining below the threshold that would elicit a strong Israeli response.
 - » As JINSA Distinguished Fellow and former Israeli National Security Advisor Major General (ret.) Yaakov Amidror [told](#) *The Washington Times* on October 17, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah “sees what’s going on in Gaza, and the last thing he wants is that that will be the same situation in Beirut.”
- [Reporting](#) from Israel’s *Channel 13* that Hamas terrorists who infiltrated on October 7 had maps and the addresses of senior IDF officers provides further evidence that Hamas acquired significant intelligence about Israel and conducted intricate planning before launching the attack.

Last 24 Hours

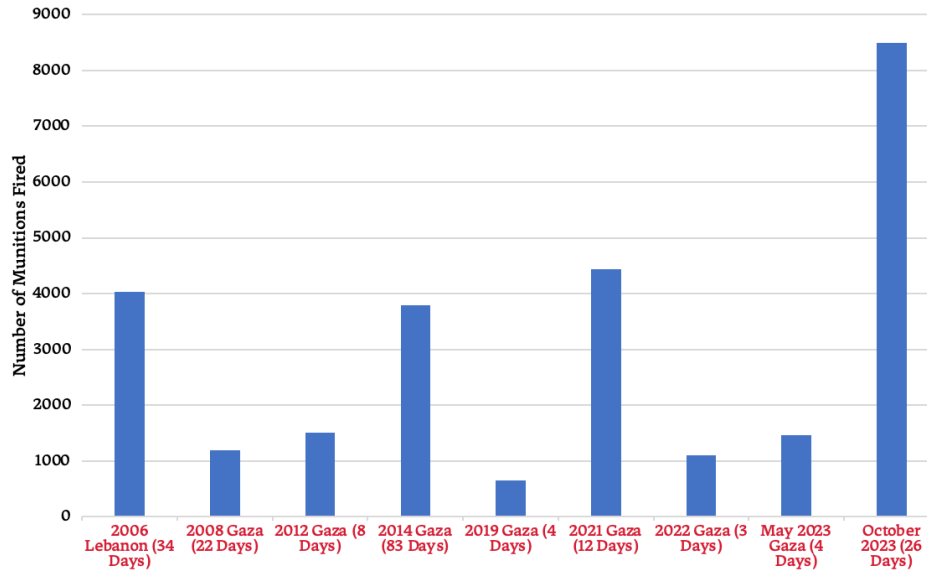
Attacks Against Israel

- At least [8,500](#) rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Gaza during the war.
 - » Sirens [sounded](#) in Holit, Nirim, Ashdod, Nitzan, Ashkelon, Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Bat Yam, Holon, Rishon Leziyon, Netiv Ha’asara, Carmia, Zikim, Ein Hashlosa, Bnei Darom, Gan Hadarom, Gan Yavne, Kfar Aviv, Nir Galim, Ben Zakai, Beit Ezra, Shtulim, Hatsor, Ezer, Sde Uziyahu, Azikram, Givati, Emunim, Neve Mivtah, Misgav Dov, Meishar, Mavki’im, Ge’a, Biztraon, as well as other locations in southern Israel.
 - » During an October 24 [interview](#) translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) and published on November 1, Hamas political bureau member Ghazi Hamad

[said](#), “Israel is a country that has no place on our land,” and “we must remove it because it constitutes a security, military and political catastrophe to the Arab and Islamic nation. We are not ashamed to say this.”

- Hamad threatened Israel further, “we must teach Israel a lesson, and we will do it twice and three times. The al-Aqsa Deluge [the name Hamas gave its October 7 onslaught] is just the first time,” and added, “will we have to pay a price? Yes, and we are ready to pay it. We are called a nation of martyrs, and we are proud to sacrifice martyrs.”
- Hamad also insisted, “we are the victims of the occupation. Period. Therefore, nobody should blame us for the things we do. On October 7, October 10, October one-millionth, everything we do is justified.”
- » On November 1, the IDF [shared](#) a video of an interrogation of a Hamas Nukhba unit commando, who [said](#), “our only mission was to kill, not to kidnap. Kill every person we see and return to Gaza.” The Hamas member described massacring civilians and setting houses on fire.
- » *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on November 1 that the IDF now assesses that 3,000 terrorists took part in the October 7 massacre, not counting citizens of Gaza who crossed the fence following the terrorists.
- Israel’s *Channel 13* [reported](#) that Israel found maps and the addresses of senior IDF officers who live in border communities among the bodies of Hamas terrorists who had infiltrated on October 7.
- In the last 24 hours, terrorists in Lebanon escalated their attacks against northern Israel, particularly by using anti-tank and surface-to-air missiles.
 - » On November 2, a terrorist [launched](#) anti-tank missiles from Lebanon towards an IDF post near Manara in northern Israel. No casualties or damage were reported.
 - » On November 2, a terrorist cell tried to [launch](#) anti-tank missiles from southern Lebanon into the town of Livne in northern Israel, but was thwarted by the IDF.
 - » On November 2, a surface-to-air missile was [fired](#) from Lebanon towards an Israeli drone and other projectiles were launched towards Har Dov and Mount Hermon in northern Israel, landing in fields and causing no damage to the drone or any reported injuries.
 - » On November 2, Hezbollah [claimed](#) that it shot down an Israeli drone over southern Lebanon with a surface-to-air missile. The IDF has not responded to the claim.
 - » On November 1, a terrorist cell in Lebanon tried to [launch](#) anti-tank missiles towards the area of Meiss El Jabal in northern Israel.
 - » On November 1, sirens also [sounded](#) in Shtula, which is located on Israel’s northern border.

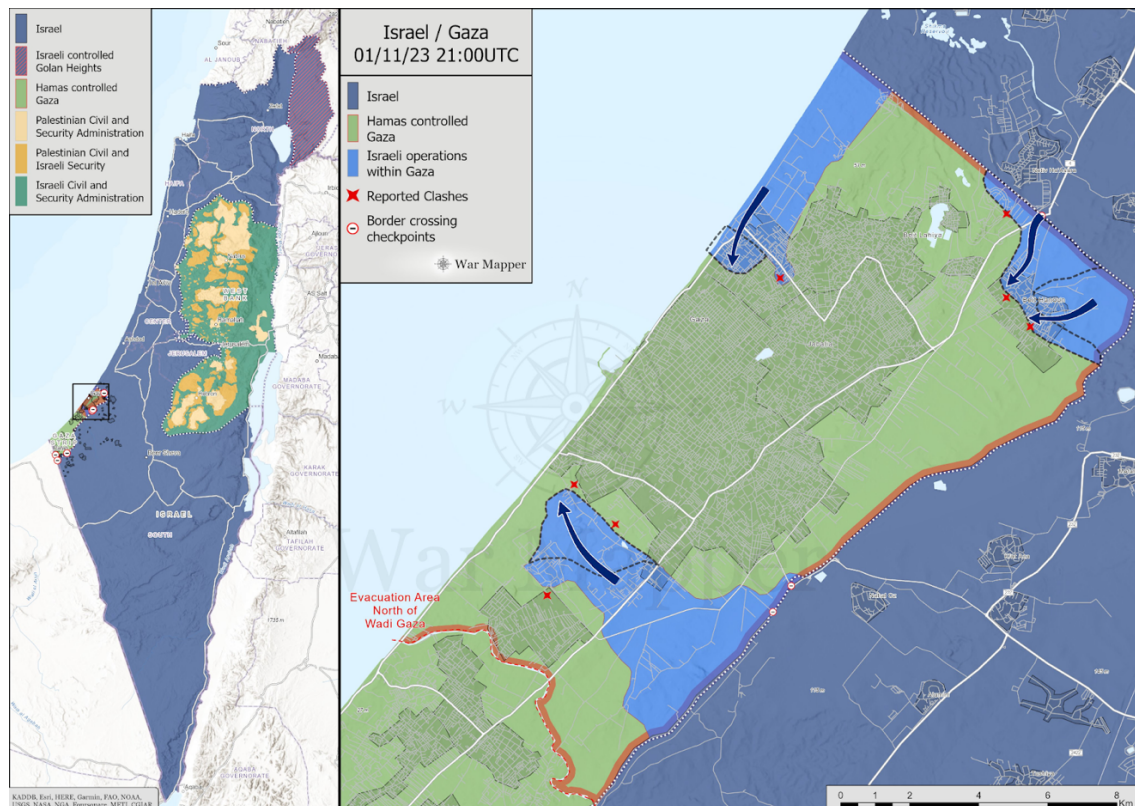
Projectiles Fired Against Israel During Major Conflicts



IDF Operations

- Israeli airstrikes continued to target terrorist sites in Gaza while IDF ground forces continued to advance in Gaza and reached the outskirts of Gaza City.
 - » On November 2, the IDF announced that it had conducted numerous strikes in Gaza utilizing its ground, air, and naval forces, and had [eliminated](#) dozens of Hamas terror targets.
 - These targets included Hamas observation posts, anti-tank missile squadrons, missile launching posts, command posts, and naval vessels.
 - The IDF also announced that it killed an unspecified number of terrorists and thwarted infiltration attempts into Israel, and it also engaged terrorists in multiple firefights in northern Gaza.
 - » On November 1, commander of the IDF’s 162nd Division Brigadier General Itzik Cohen [said](#) Israeli troops are “at the gates of Gaza City” and told reporters that “Hamas chose this war, we did not choose this war.”
 - He added that his troops’ goal is “to go and decisively finish Hamas” and that “we have destroyed much of Hamas’s abilities, attacked its strategic facilities, all of its array of explosives, its underground tunnels and other facilities we completely destroyed.”
 - He pledged that Israel will win this “long task.”
 - » On November 1, IDF Spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari [said](#) the IDF ground forces broke through Hamas’s defensive lines in northern Gaza and that “the ground operation is progressing as planned.”
 - He added that the IDF accomplished this “with advance planning, precise intelligence, and joint attacks [from the land, air, and sea].”

- » On November 1, the IDF [said](#) that it killed the commander of Hamas’s anti-tank guided missile array, Muhammad A’sar, in an airstrike, who was “responsible for all of Hamas’s anti-tank missile units throughout the Gaza Strip, commanded the units in routine times and assisted their activity in emergencies.”
- » IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi [said](#) in a missive to IDF troops that “we are advancing in the stages of the war, and operating on the ground inside the enemy’s territory, supported by precise and heavy fire. The activity will continue and intensify according to the stages of the war and its objectives ... So far we have inflicted heavy losses on the enemy and damaged terrorist infrastructure. We search for, find and kill those who participated in the murderous massacre against us and those who sent them.”
- » Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [said](#) in a press conference on November 1 that the IDF is “advancing” towards defeating Hamas and that, thus far, “more than 10,00 munitions were dropped on Gaza City, thousands of targets were hit, thousands of sites were destroyed, [and] thousands of terrorists were eliminated.”
 - Gallant added that though the war is exacting “a heavy price” and that Israel “must hit the enemy for the sake of those who have fallen, for the sake of the living, for the people of Israel and for the State of Israel.”



Credit: War Mapper ([@war_mapper](#))

- The IDF targeted terrorist cells in Lebanon that had or were preparing to launch attacks against Israel in the last 24 hours.
 - » On November 2, the IDF [struck](#) a terrorist cell in Lebanon as well as two anti-tank missile launching posts in Lebanon in response to the cell attempting to fire anti-tank missiles into northern Israel.

- » On November 2, the IDF [struck](#) targets, including a terrorist cell, in Lebanon in response to a surface-to-air missile attack from Lebanon fired at an Israeli drone.
- » On November 1, the IDF [struck](#) two terrorist cells, missile launching posts, and Hezbollah military infrastructure in southern Lebanon in response to earlier strikes launched from southern Lebanon into Israel.
- According to Israeli media sources, on November 1, Israeli security forces [killed](#) two terrorists in the West Bank city of Jenin and another terrorist in the West Bank city of Tulkarm.
- The IDF exposed a [network](#) of “catfishing” social media profiles whose operators sought to build relationships with Israeli soldiers in order to extract information from them for Hamas.

Casualties and Hostages

- [1,538](#) people in Israel have been killed and at least another [5,431](#) have been injured in the war.
 - » [333](#) Israeli soldiers have been killed.
 - Eighteen IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza.
 - » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 32 [American](#) nationals, 30 [Thai](#) nationals, 21 [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, over [9,000](#) people have been killed in Gaza, and more than [32,000](#) have been injured during the war.
 - » On October 25, President Biden [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.”
 - » Hamas’s figures do not differentiate between terrorists and civilians and do not distinguish between those killed in Israeli operations or Palestinian rockets that misfire and land in Gaza.
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, [133](#) people have been killed, and an additional 2,274 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 242 individuals have been [notified](#) that their loved ones were taken hostage.
- Foreign nationals also remain missing, including at least 11 [American](#) nationals, 9 [French](#) nationals, 15 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 9 [Ukrainian](#) nationals, 8 [Russian](#) 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 8 [German](#) nationals, 20 [Thai](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals have been taken hostage.
- Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Affairs [announced](#) on November 2 that it would help facilitate the crossing of nearly 7,000 foreign nationals from over 60 countries out of Gaza and into Egypt.
- According to [CNN](#), citing an Egyptian government official, over 361 foreign nationals have departed Gaza through the Rafah crossing, including 76 en route to Cairo while the rest remain at the border crossing to complete paperwork.
 - » Of the 76 foreign nationals en route to Cairo, the breakdown is reportedly as follows:
 - 29 from Austria, 12 from Australia, 1 from the United Kingdom, 12 from Jordan, 5 from Saudi Arabia, 4 from Italy, and 13 from Japan.
- On November 2, an Israeli man was [shot to death](#) near the West Bank town of Bayt Lid. No further details were immediately available, but the IDF announced it had launched a manhunt for the perpetrators.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On November 1, at least one drone [struck](#) the al-Tanf base in Syria, causing one minor injury. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, a front for Iran-backed militia, took credit for the attacks.
 - » Secretary General of the Iraqi Al-Nujaba militia Akram al-Kaabi reportedly wrote on X that “the Islamic resistance in Iraq had decided to liberate Iraq from the military presence of the United States,” and “great events are on the way.”
 - » Social media [reports](#) also indicated a possible attack on U.S. personnel at the al-Omar oil facility.
- On November 2, Iranian Member of Parliament Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, a member of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Relations Committee, [stated](#) in response to the U.S. strike on an IRGC-linked weapons depot last week that “Iran will respond to these attacks globally,” and added, “we will target the U.S. from locations they cannot fathom.”
- On November 1, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force Esmail Qaani [visited](#) Lebanon to coordinate with Hezbollah.
- On November 1, Iranian Member of Parliament Ahmad Hossein Fallahi told Iranian media [that](#) dozens of Iranian ex-IRGC officers and parliamentarians may enter the conflict and also threatened an escalation of Iranian attacks on U.S. troops and personnel in the region.
 - » Fallahi said that “some 150 Iranian lawmakers, many of whom are ex-IRGC officers who have fought in Syria, have expressed their readiness to be deployed to Gaza to fight against Israel.”
 - » Fallahi added, “the United States has 150 bases in the region within the reach of Iranian forces. We will target them if America makes a wrong move.”
- As JINSA noted in its October 31 [update](#), Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah plans to deliver a speech on November 3.

U.S. and International Response

- President Joe Biden, while [delivering](#) remarks at a farm in Minnesota on November 1, praised the opening of the Rafah Crossing between Egypt and Gaza to allow for wounded Palestinians and foreign nationals to enter Egypt. Biden also affirmed Israel’s right to defend itself, but in a way that attempts to minimize civilian casualties, and [called](#) for a “pause” in the war to try to get more hostages out of Gaza.
 - » Biden said, “Israel has the right to respond and a responsibility to defend its citizens from terror. And it needs to do so in a manner that is consistent with international humanitarian law, that prioritizes protection of civilians. We’ve all seen the devastating images from Gaza, Palestinian children crying out for lost parents.”
 - » Biden [added](#), “the loss of innocent life is a tragedy. We grieve for those deaths, we continue to grieve for the Israeli children whose mothers were brutally slaughtered by Hamas terrorists” and that “the United States is going to continue to drive humanitarian support for innocent people in Gaza who need help and they do need help.”
 - » Biden [stated](#) in response to a heckler’s calls for a ceasefire, “I think we need a pause. A pause means giving time to get the prisoners out.”
 - Though it was not immediately clear what Biden meant by “prisoners,” the White House later clarified he was referring to hostages held by Hamas and other groups in Gaza.
- When asked by a reporter about hostages held in Gaza, Biden responded that hostage recovery is a top priority for his administration, stating he “continues to work around the clock to reunite those families” and that “we are not going to give up, period. And I am optimistic.”
- On November 1, Biden [posted](#) on X, “today, thanks to American leadership, we secured safe passage for wounded Palestinians and for foreign nationals to exit Gaza. We expect American citizens to exit today, and we expect to see more depart over the coming days. We won’t let up working to get Americans out of Gaza.”
- On November 1, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller [said](#), “as a general principle, internet access needs to remain viable for people of Gaza” and that restoring internet access is also vital because the U.S. government is utilizing email to communicate with U.S. citizens in Gaza about exit plans from Gaza.
 - » Miller also noted that Secretary Blinken will visit Israel and Jordan over the weekend and will discuss with Israel its plans to meet its military objectives, increasing and sustaining humanitarian aid to Gaza, containing the war, and securing the release of hostages.
 - » Miller further stressed that “our expectation is that in conducting this military campaign that [Israel] do so in full compliance with international law.”
- Miller [noted](#) on November 1 that 400 U.S. citizens sought to leave Gaza, and “an initial group of foreign nationals, including U.S. citizens, departed Gaza through Rafah today.”
 - » He also said that fifty-nine trucks carrying humanitarian aid crossed into Gaza through Egypt on October 31, and the United States aims to increase the quantity to 100 trucks per day, in line with UN goals.
 - » Miller also [noted](#) that the Hamas-controlled border authority oversees all civilian departures on the Gaza side of Rafah crossing.
- Jordan [announced](#) on November 1 that it was recalling its ambassador to Israel, Rasan al-Majali, and also requested that Israel’s ambassador to Jordan, Rogel Rachman, not return to Jordan after he briefly traveled to Israel this week.

- » Jordan's Foreign Minister, Ayman al-Safadi, said in a statement that the recall and quasi-expulsion was due to "Jordan's position of rejection and condemnation of the raging Israeli war on Gaza, which is killing innocent people and causing an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe."
- » The statement added that "the return of the ambassadors will be linked to Israel stopping its war on Gaza and stopping the humanitarian catastrophe it is causing and all its measures that deprive the Palestinians of their right to food, water, medicine, and their right to live safely and stable on their national soil."
- A Cypriot government spokesman [said](#) on November 1 that Cyprus will ship by sea humanitarian assistance to Gaza that UN personnel will distribute.
 - » According to spokesman Constantinos Letymbiotis, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke by phone with Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides, and Netanyahu viewed the plan positively.
 - » The Cypriot ships will reportedly contain medical supplies, food, and clothing. They will reportedly depart from the Cypriot port of Limassol.
- During a November 1 conversation with International Committee of the Red Cross president Mirjana Spoljaric, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen [demanded](#) that the organization visit the 240 hostages that Hamas abducted and is holding in Gaza.
 - » Cohen said, "the Red Cross has no right to exist if it does not succeed in visiting the hostages being held captive by the Hamas terror group," and "the Red Cross must act decisively and with a clear voice and utilize all leverage it has to push for a visit to the hostages as soon as possible."
- In the wake of [Colombia's](#) and [Chile's](#) decisions to recall their ambassadors to Israel in protest of Israeli "massacres" during its defensive war against Hamas in Gaza, Israel's Foreign Ministry spokesman Lior Haiat [said](#), "citizens of Colombia, Chile and other Latin American countries are also among the victims of the heinous attack," and "the State of Israel is fighting a war that was imposed on it; a war against a terrorist organization that uses the citizens of the Gaza Strip as human shields."
 - » Haiat also said that Colombia and Chile should "explicitly condemn the Hamas terrorist organization, which slaughtered and abducted babies, children, women and the elderly," and "Israel expects Colombia and Chile to support the right of a democratic country to protect its citizens, and to call for the immediate release of all the abductees."
- On November 1, White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre [stated](#) that the Biden administration would develop a strategy to counter Islamophobia and that "there is no place for hate in America against anyone. Period ... For too long, Muslims in America, and those perceived to be Muslim, such as Arabs and Sikhs, have endured a disproportionate number of hate-fueled attacks and other discriminatory incidents."
- On November 1, French authorities [opened an investigation](#) after a video circulated on social media of a crowd of people on the metro in Paris chanting, "F*** the Jews and f*** your mother, long live Palestine. We are Nazis and proud of it."
- During a November 1 [phone call](#) between German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Scholz "renewed Germany's unwavering solidarity with Israel" and "underlined the importance of protecting civilians and humanitarian supplies for the people of the Gaza Strip."
 - » Netanyahu thanked Scholz and provided a situational update.

- On November 2, German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser [banned](#) activity by or in support of Hamas and dissolved the Samidoun network, which she said “supports and glorifies” groups such as Hamas. The network handed out pastries on October 7 in support of Hamas’s heinous attack that day.
- Newly confirmed U.S. Ambassador to Israel Jack Lew will [travel](#) to Israel with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on November 3, according to U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller. Lew will remain in Israel to begin work as ambassador.
- On November 1, during an emergency special session of the United Nations General Assembly, Russia’s representative to the United Nations Vasily Nebenzya [said](#) that Israel does not have a right to defend itself against Hamas: “The only thing they can muster is continued pronouncements about Israel’s supposed right to self defense, although as an occupying power, it does not have that power as confirmed by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice handed down in 2004.”

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- Matt Kenney, [Emergency Supplemental Funding for Israel – The Current State of Play](#), November 1, 2023
- Webinar: [Derailed or Delayed: Prospects for Israel-Saudi Normalization After 10/7](#) with JINSA Director of Foreign Policy Jonathan Ruhe, JINSA Randi and Charles Wax Senior Fellow John Hannah, and Princeton Professor Dr. Bernard Haykel, October 31, 2023
- 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