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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update November 20, 2023

JINSA's [Israel at War](#) webpage is a dedicated resource for analysis, commentary, webinars, and media coverage about the 10/7 attacks and the ensuing Israel-Hamas conflict. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below.

Analysis

- Amid growing international pressure for a ceasefire, U.S. and Israeli officials quickly [rejected](#) reports of an agreement for a multi-day pause in combat that would include the release of some of the Israeli hostages Hamas and other Palestinian terrorists have held in Gaza since October 7.
 - » Whereas a ceasefire would allow Hamas to rearm and prepare for further attacks against Israel, a pause in operations would enable Israel to achieve its objectives of returning the hostages to Israel and enabling civilians to evacuate areas of intense hostilities, while maintaining its ability to continue pursuing Hamas's elimination.
- Having vowed to target Israel-linked ships, the Houthis' [seizure](#) of a ship owned by an Israeli businessman in the Red Sea expands the Iran-backed terrorist group's involvement in the Iranian regime's efforts to target Israel.
 - » The seizure also underscores the continued inadequacy of U.S. deterrence against Iran-backed attacks across the region, including at least 61 [confirmed](#) rocket and drone attacks since October 17 which have caused roughly 60 injuries to U.S. troops and personnel.
 - Yet, the United States does not have “a clear definition of what we are trying to deter,” according to U.S. officials who spoke with [The Washington Post](#), despite the fact that “within the Defense Department there is growing doubt about the present approach.”

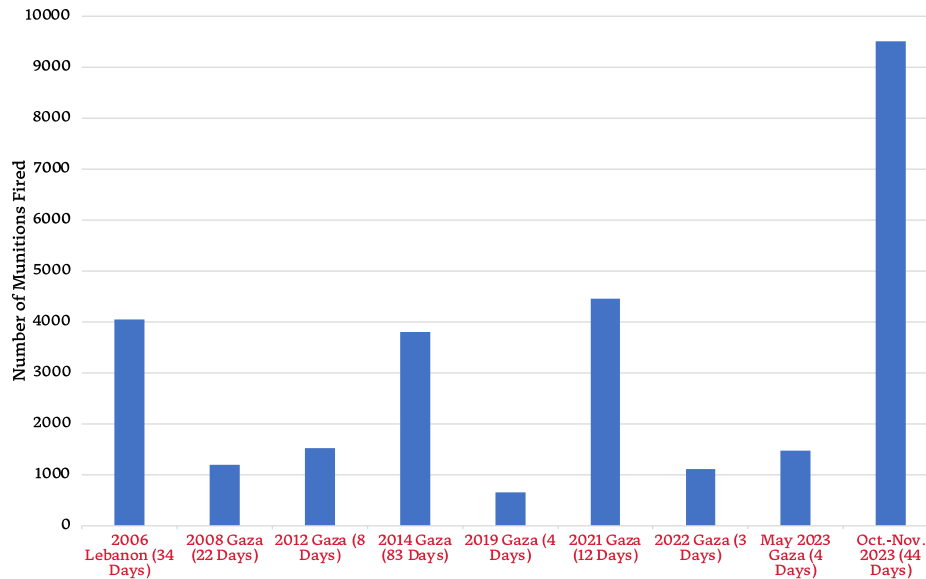
Last 24 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- Roughly [9,500](#) rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Gaza during the war.
 - » Rockets struck Sderot, and sirens [sounded](#) in Ashkelon, Sderot, Kibbutz Nirim, Kissufim, Mefalsim, Sassa, Shtula, Kiryat Shmona, Shlomi, Erez, Yad Mordechai, Netiv Ha'asara, Nir Am, [Tel Aviv](#), and other [locations](#) in southern and central Israel.

- Terrorists in Lebanon escalated their attacks on military and civilian locations in northern Israel with rockets, anti-tank missiles, and other projectiles over the last 72 hours. During a press conference on November 18, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [stated](#) that Hezbollah has fired at least 1,000 munitions at Israel since the October 7 attack.
 - » On November 20, Hezbollah [launched](#) 25 rockets and three drones in the span of an hour, with Iron Dome intercepting several of the rockets and three hitting an IDF post. There were no reported injuries in the attacks.
 - » On November 20, a number of projectile launches from Lebanon [struck](#) the Israeli villages of Arab al-Aramshe, Bar'am, and Biranit, causing no reported injuries. One projectile [caused](#) extensive damage at the IDF base in Biranit.
 - » On November 19, terrorists [launched](#) several anti-tank missiles and several mortar shells at different areas in northern Israel. The IDF said that the launches were not intercepted "according to protocol."
 - » On November 19, the IDF said that two rockets were [fired](#) from Lebanon at the northern Israeli communities of Kfar Giladi and Margaliot, landing in open areas and causing no damage or injuries.
 - » On November 19, the IDF [said](#) that its air defense missiles fired at several "suspicious aerial targets" that entered Israeli airspace from Lebanon. No further details were available, and the IDF stated that the incident had concluded.
 - » On November 19, the IDF said that 10 mortar shells were [fired](#) at the town of Shlomi near the Lebanese-Israeli border, landing in open areas and causing no reported injuries or damage.
 - » On November 19, the IDF said its air defenses [intercepted](#) an aerial target, reportedly a drone, that entered Israeli airspace from Lebanon.
 - » On November 18, the IDF said that its air defenses [intercepted](#) a "suspicious aerial target" over Lebanon.
 - » On November 18, a barrage of approximately 25 rockets was [fired](#) from southern Lebanon at the northern Israeli towns of Sassa and Shtula. The projectiles all landed in open areas, causing no damage or injuries.
 - » On November 18, the IDF said that its air defenses [intercepted](#) a surface-to-air missile fired at an unmanned Israeli aircraft along the Lebanese-Israeli border. The IDF said the missile did not cross into Israeli territory.
 - » On November 17, Hezbollah [wounded](#) four Israelis in an anti-tank guided missile attack near the northern Israeli city of Menara.
 - » On November 17, the IDF [said](#) that a drone from Lebanon crossed into Israel near Metula, which the IDF shot down.

Projectiles Fired Against Israel During Major Conflicts



IDF Operations

- On November 18, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and war cabinet minister Benny Gantz delivered remarks at a press conference.
 - » Prime Minister Netanyahu listed Israel's three primary missions in the war and said that Israel has [made](#) significant progress despite mounting international pressure.
 - Israel's three missions in the war, according to Netanyahu, are: first, "complete victory, to destroy Hamas"; second, "to return the hostages"; and third, "to ensure that after victory, Gaza will never again constitute a threat to Israeli citizens."
 - On the third objective, preventing Gaza from ever again posing a threat to Israeli civilians, Netanyahu said, "I will not allow into Gaza any factor that supports terrorism, pays terrorists or their families, or educates their children to murder Jews and [to seek] the destruction of Israel" and added that "the IDF will have complete freedom of action in Gaza against any threat. That is the only way to guarantee the demilitarization of Gaza."
 - Netanyahu said that Israel has "eliminated thousands of terrorists," including senior commanders, and has destroyed a number of tunnels and command posts, adding, "we move forward with full force."
 - Netanyahu stated that he "appreciates the support of the U.S." and noted that there is bipartisan support for Israel in the House and Senate, and that the United States is constantly sending Israel shipments of essential defense equipment and weapons systems.
 - However, Netanyahu cautioned that "there is growing pressure against us, in the U.S. and elsewhere," and "they also pressed us to agree to a full ceasefire. We refused. And I made clear that we would only agree to a temporary ceasefire and only for the return of our hostages."

- Netanyahu added, “together with my colleagues, I rebuff the pressure and make clear to the world: We will continue to fight until victory. Until we destroy Hamas. And until we bring our hostages home. We are insisting on our essential security and diplomatic interests... in the face of heavy opposition. When our enemies and our friends recognize our firm stance, when they hear it in international media interviews, and in discussions with leaders, we attain the necessary room for maneuver to continue the operation. This cannot be taken for granted.”
- Netanyahu said that he has given “U.S. media interviews almost every day to persuade the American public of the rightness of our path” and praised last week’s pro-Israel rally in Washington.
- Netanyahu sharply denounced a Palestinian Authority document which “denied that it was Hamas that carried out the horrible massacre at the nature festival near Gaza. It actually accused Israel of carrying out that massacre. This is a complete reversal of truth.”
- Netanyahu [said](#) that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas “in the past has denied the existence of the Holocaust, today is denying the existence of the Hamas massacre and that’s unacceptable,” adding that “my goal is that the day after we destroy Hamas, any future civil administration in Gaza does not deny the massacre, does not educate its children to become terrorists, does not pay for terrorists and does not tell its children that their ultimate goal in life is to see the destruction and dissolution of the State of Israel. That’s not acceptable and that is not the way to achieve peace.”
- » Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [stated](#), “in recent days, the defense establishment has identified a growing trend of Iran working to intensify attacks by the militias against Israel through its proxies in Iraq, Syria and Yemen. We are following, and will know how to act at the appropriate time, place and strength.”
 - Speaking about escalating tensions in the West Bank, Gallant said, “there are many attempts to carry out terrorist attacks against Israelis that are thwarted every day by the IDF and the Shin Bet.”
 - Gallant [said](#) in response to reporters’ questions that all Hamas members, including those outside of the Gaza Strip, are “dead men walking” and that “no difference between a terrorist with a Kalashnikov and a terrorist in a three-piece suit.”
 - Gallant [stated](#) in response to a question that questions about Israel’s political future will be addressed later and that he is fully focused on the war effort. Gallant added that “the results of this war” will shape Israel for decades to come.
- » War cabinet minister Benny Gantz [said](#) that while it is a priority to get hostages back, it does not “override” Israel’s obligation to destroy Hamas.
 - Gantz said Israel will take “decades if needed to destroy [Hamas]” and that “decades if needed to destroy this thing” — an apparent reference to Hamas. “We don’t have decades to bring the people home... So, yes, from my point of view, it is a priority to get the hostages back. But that priority doesn’t override our obligation” to destroy Hamas “however long it takes.”
 - Gantz said, “I want to bring back the elderly and the children. Nobody in Israel wants anything else.”
 - Gantz also [stated](#) that the IDF operation “is widening, and it will end only when we can guarantee security and bring the boys and girls home,” adding, “it will take as long as it takes. We are determined in this fight.”

- Gantz [added](#) that he had met with hostages’ families earlier and that “everything we are doing is aimed first and foremost at bringing our boys and girls home.”
- During a November 17 press conference, Israeli National Security Council chairman Tzachi Hanegbi did not directly answer a question about a post-war strategy for Gaza, [saying](#), “the plan for the war is to eliminate Hamas. It’s the only way we can ensure that after[ward], we will not be threatened from Gaza, which is the number one goal that the cabinet has instructed the army to achieve.”
 - » He added, “the second goal, which is as sacred as the first one, is to release the hostages,” and “we’re not going to be quiet until we reach this goal.”
 - » Hanegbi also [said](#) on November 17 that the IDF is operating in the heart of Gaza and striking every target that it wants to. He said the military has killed thousands of terrorists, including Hamas leadership, and “all of the goals set by the security cabinet have been met, and as the prime minister said, ‘this is only the beginning.’”
 - » He said that “we’re determined to reach the end of the battle, and the end of the battle will be the end of Hamas,” and “we will not stop until all of Hamas’s and Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s military and leadership capabilities are eradicated.”
- The IDF continued to expand its ground and air operations in Gaza to target terrorist cells and infrastructure over the last 72 hours.
 - » On November 20, Israeli aircraft [killed](#) three Hamas company commanders.
 - » On November 19, the IDF [said](#) that one of its mixed-gender search-and-rescue battalions from the IDF Home Front Command, which is about forty percent female, has begun operating in the Gaza Strip for the first time.
 - » On November 18, the IDF [said](#) it was expanding its operations in the Gaza Strip.
 - The IDF [announced](#) that it struck and killed a terror cell responsible for rocket barrages into Israel and also struck dozens of targets across Gaza, striking Hamas operatives, command centers, rocket launch sites, and weapons production labs.
 - The IDF said it had initiated an offensive led by the 36th Division in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City and an offensive led by the 162nd Division in Jabaliya, and that the IDF Southern Command “continues expanding its operational activities in additional neighborhoods” and is working to “target terrorists and strike Hamas infrastructure.”
 - The 162nd Division is operating on the outskirts of Jabaliya in an area which “houses the command and control center of [Hamas]’s northern Gaza brigade, and is where one of the most significant terror strongholds is located, in which four Hamas battalions are operating,” according to the IDF.
 - The IDF added that “in parallel, additional troops are operating on the outskirts of Zeitoun, including Sheikh Ijlin and Rimal, clearing the areas from terrorists and striking terror infrastructure.”
 - The IDF also stated that its troops have encountered Hamas operatives operating “from within civilian areas and [attempting] to attack the troops using anti-tank missile and explosive devices.”
 - » On November 18, the IDF announced that its elite Duvdevan unit had [raided](#) several Hamas sites. The unit found weapons and other military equipment during its raid on a high school in Gaza, and also raided the home of a Hamas field commander, finding Hamas weapons and instruction booklets.

- » On November 18, Hamas confirmed that Ahmad Bahar, a senior operative and former vice president of the Palestinian Legislative Council, had been [killed](#) in a November 17 airstrike.
- » According to the IDF and the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) on November 19, the IDF's human intelligence (HUMINT)-focused Military Intelligence Directorate's Unit 504 and Shin Bet have [arrested](#) over 100 terror operatives in Gaza recently, including Nukhba forces members who participated in the October 7 attack.
 - In addition to conducting interrogations of suspects in Gaza, the IDF and ISA have taken 100 suspects to Israel for questioning.
 - Interrogations of members of the Nukhba forces' rocket array, sniper array, explosive experts, and logistics officers revealed intelligence about locations of Hamas tunnels and weapons as well as the group's operating methods.
 - The IDF and Shin Bet said, "the information from the interrogations of the terror operatives serves the forces operating on the ground and from the air in the Gaza Strip and is used to [provide them with] high-quality and up-to-date intelligence, which helps the continuation of the ground maneuver and fighting efforts."
- Over the last 72 hours, the IDF targeted terrorist cells in Lebanon that were responsible for attacks against Israel.
 - » The IDF said on November 20 that it [struck](#) a number of Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, including a Hezbollah operational compound, an operational post, infrastructure used to direct terror attacks, and a [cell](#) that was preparing to launch anti-tank missiles at Israel.
 - » The IDF said on November 19 that it [shelled](#) areas in southern Lebanon in response to earlier rocket launches from Lebanon.
 - » On November 19, the IDF [struck](#) several Hezbollah sites in southern Lebanon in response to earlier rocket and missile attacks, including a Hezbollah military compound, an observation post, and other terror infrastructure targets.
 - » On November 18, the IDF [struck](#) Hezbollah observation posts in southern Lebanon in response to earlier projectile attacks, [including](#) military compounds and observation posts, and later [released](#) footage of the airstrikes.
 - » On November 17, the IDF [struck](#) Hezbollah sites in southern Lebanon, including command posts, observation posts, and other terror infrastructure targets.
 - » The IDF [said](#) on November 17 that it fired artillery toward the source of the anti-tank guided missile attack targeting Menara and used fighter jets to strike Hezbollah sites.
- On November 17, Syrian state-run news agency SANA [reported](#) that Israeli airstrikes caused "material damage" to several sites near Damascus and that Syrian air defenses had intercepted some of the Israeli missiles.
 - » The U.K.-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said two foreign fighters from Iranian proxy groups were [killed](#) in the strikes and that the strikes destroyed a Hezbollah weapons depot and other sites near the Damascus airport.
- On November 19, the IDF and the Shin Bet [released](#) footage from Hamas's tunnel network under Shifa Hospital and also released [surveillance footage](#) from inside Shifa Hospital on October 7 showing Hamas terrorists bringing a Nepali and Thai national who were abducted from Israel into the hospital.
 - » The IDF said that the videos "prove beyond all doubt that buildings in the hospital complex are used as infrastructure for the Hamas terror organization, for terror activity.

This is further proof of the cynical use that the Hamas terror organization makes of the residents of the Gaza Strip as a human shield for its murderous terror activities.”

- » The videos show a tunnel shaft with a winding staircase down to a depth of around ten meters and then reaches the tunnel network, which extends another roughly fifty-five meters until reaching a door the IDF said was used by Hamas to shoot through.
- » The footage also shows Hamas terrorists inside the hospital as well as stolen IDF vehicles being brought to the medical center.
- » With regard to the footage of hostages at the hospital, IDF spokesperson Rear Adm. Hagari said that “these findings prove that the Hamas terror organization used Shifa Hospital on the day of the massacre itself as terror infrastructure.”
 - Hagari said that the hostages were later taken by Hamas to hideouts and have yet to be located.
- On November 19, the IDF [announced](#) it carried out two major “brigade-level raids” across the West Bank in which it arrested 38 Palestinians.
 - » One raid was carried out in the Jenin refugee camp and the other in the Balata refugee camp, according to the IDF. 20 people were arrested from the two camps and 18 were arrested elsewhere across the West Bank.
 - » The IDF said that its troops clashed with Palestinian gunmen in both refugee camps.
- On November 17, the IDF said it [suspended](#) a soldier who was filmed throwing a stun grenade in a mosque of the West Bank village of Budrus during a prayer session.

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people in Israel have been [killed](#), and another 6,900 have been injured in the war.
 - » [388](#) Israeli soldiers have been killed.
 - 65 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - Two IDF soldiers were [killed](#), and four were seriously wounded during combat operations in Gaza on November 14.
 - IDF spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#) on November 19 that the pathology report of the death of IDF Cpl. Noa Marciano, whose body was found earlier this week at Shifa Hospital, showed that Marciano was killed by Hamas, rather than in an IDF airstrike, as Hamas claimed.
 - » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 32 [American](#) nationals, 34 [Thai](#) nationals, 39 [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 [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.
- Though *The Washington Post* [reported](#) on November 18 that Israel and Hamas [reached](#) a “tentative U.S.-brokered deal” to pause fighting for five days in exchange for at least 50 hostages in Gaza, including women and children, U.S. National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson [posted](#) on X, “we have not reached a deal yet, but we continue to work hard to get to a deal.”

- » The *Post* subsequently updated its article to say that the United States was “close” to an Israel-Hamas deal to release some hostages.
- » After publication of the story, and after Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman al-Thani told reporters that “minor” obstacles are blocking a deal, U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser Jon Finer said on Sunday that the parties were “closer” to a hostage release deal.
- » On November 19, Israeli officials [reportedly](#) denied Egyptian reports that a hostage deal will involve a pause in fighting at 11:00 AM local time.
- In [response](#) to a question during the press conference on November 18 about whether he rejected the proposed hostage swap for the release of 50 hostages, Netanyahu said, “there was no deal on the table” and said he could not elaborate further, but added, “we want to get back all the hostages. We’re doing the utmost to bring back the most possible, including in stages, and we are united on this.”
- Israel [announced](#) on November 19 that some members of the war cabinet are scheduled to meet with the families of hostages on November 20.
 - » The war cabinet includes Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, Minister without portfolio Benny Gantz, Minister without portfolio Gadi Eisenkot, Minister for Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer, and parliamentarian Aryeh Deri.
 - » Gantz and Eisenkot held a meeting with hostages’ families on November 19.
- Reports on November 17 indicated that representatives of the families of those killed and kidnapped on October 7, including Eyal Waldman, whose daughter and her boyfriend Hamas murdered, have [submitted](#) a complaint to the International Criminal Court alleging that Hamas and other Gazans committed crimes against humanity.
 - » Waldman said that the complaint includes evidence of what occurred on October 7.
 - » According to Waldman, the families’ representatives requested that the court issue arrest warrants for Hamas that will prevent them from traveling—the court did so for Russian President Vladimir Putin in March 2023.
 - » Waldman said that the court’s chief prosecutor Karim Khan and his team treated the families “with great professionalism” and listened carefully and that “he understands that crimes against humanity were committed. He said an investigation was underway against the heads of Hamas.”
 - » He also said that although the court seeks an invitation from Israel to further the investigation, Israel might not do so because “Israel does not have faith in this international court.”
 - » However, he said that “what was important was [presenting] the documentation of the crimes that were committed, of the crimes against humanity, and the effort to get arrest warrants issued for the heads of Hamas.”
- According to unverified figures from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry, at least 13,000 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza and over 30,000 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.”
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, 212 people have been [killed](#) and an additional 2,800 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, terrorists in Gaza currently hold [236](#) individuals as hostages.
 - » So far, [four](#) hostages in Gaza have been released, [one](#) has been rescued by the IDF, and [four](#) have been [found](#) dead.
- 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, 23 [Thai](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 3 [British](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, 3 [Romanian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals have been taken hostage.
- Reports on November 17 [indicated](#) that Hamas released a video of 86-year-old Aryeh Zalmanovich, who has been held hostage in Gaza after he was kidnapped from Nir Oz on October 7.
- A group of families of the hostages who marched from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem this week [held](#) a Kabbalat Shabbat service in front of the Knesset on November 17, calling on the government to act to secure the release of the hostages held by Hamas.
- On November 17, a group of Israelis [held](#) birthday celebrations in Tel Aviv’s “Hostage Square” for hostages 57-year-old Raz Ben Ami and 9-year-old Emily Hand.
- Israel’s *Channel 12* network [reported](#) on November 17 that Israeli Police now estimates that 364 people were killed at the Re’im music festival on October 7 and that forty of the festival’s attendees were taken hostage.
 - » Previous estimates had placed the festival’s death count at roughly 270.
- On November 19, Israel Police [denounced](#) a November 18 article in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz that cites an anonymous police official as saying that an IDF helicopter pilot “apparently harmed a few partygoers who were in the area” of the Re’im festival on October 7. The police clarified that its investigation focused only on police operations, not the IDF, so there is not “any indication about the harm of civilians due to aerial activity there.”
 - » The police further urged news outlets to “take responsibility for their publications and only base stories on official sources.”
 - » Several social media users misinterpreted the reporting, alleging that the article proved Israeli complicity in hundreds of civilian deaths at the festival.
- Israeli National Security chairman Tzachi Hanegbi [said](#) during a November 17 press conference that Israel will only accept a ceasefire if a “massive” number of hostages are released, as opposed to a “manipulative release” by Hamas to advance its PR.
 - » He clarified that any such ceasefire “will be very limited and short because afterward we will continue advancing toward our goals for the war” and that the war cabinet unanimously believes that only pressure on Hamas will secure the release of hostages.
 - » He also said, “we’re in the 42nd day of the war, and we have not agreed to order the IDF to halt its advancement even for one minute.”
 - » Hanegbi added that Netanyahu and the war cabinet rejected an earlier proposal to free 10 hostages, including eight Thai workers, and another to free 15 hostages, both put forward after the October 20 and 22 hostage releases, because they regarded a

temporary ceasefire for a small number of hostages when roughly 240 are still in Gaza as unacceptable.

Humanitarian Efforts

- During the [press conference](#) on November 18, Netanyahu said that Israeli aid efforts, including its acceptance of an “American request to allow two fuel tankers a day to enter the southern Gaza Strip,” are prudent measures to enable working water and sewage pumps in Gaza “without which there would be an eruption of epidemics.”
- The IDF [announced](#) on November 18 that, as has been the case on a near-daily basis since November 4, Israel would open a humanitarian corridor along Salah a-din road to southern Gaza.
 - » The announcement on X said that the corridor would be open until 4pm and that residents of the Gaza City neighborhoods of Tel el-Hawa, Sabra, West Zeitoun, Shejaiya and Tuffah were urged to use the corridor.
- France’s Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu [said](#) on November 19 that a helicopter carrier sent by France to Egypt to provide medical support for wounded Gazans had arrived.
 - » The carrier will serve as a floating hospital and contains two operation rooms, forty beds, an X-ray scanner, and a lab, and will primarily be for emergency care, according to Lecornu.
 - » Lecornu added that the carrier will enable medical workers to evacuate wounded Palestinians from the Gaza border and airlift them to the carrier.
- On November 19, the Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry [said](#) that 30 premature babies had been evacuated from Shifa Hospital to hospitals in Egypt.
 - » Earlier reports indicated that a World Health Organization team had been dispatched to facilitate the effort.
- On November 18, Israeli media outlets [reported](#) that a plane carrying wounded Palestinian children arrived in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates for medical treatment.
 - » The plane reportedly had 15 occupants, including injured Palestinian children and their family members, who first entered Egypt through the Rafah crossing and then flew to Abu Dhabi.
 - » The United Arab Emirates has pledged to accept 1,000 Palestinian children in their country for treatment.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On November 20, the former head of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Mohsen Rezaee, [warned](#) that “new war fronts” could open if Israel continues its offensive in Gaza. He added, “the axis of resistance will play a bigger role in the future and the Zionist regime will definitely lose in this war.”
- On November 19, the Iranian-backed Houthis [seized](#) a Bahamian-flagged ship, the *Galaxy Leader*, in the Red Sea while it was en route to India from Turkey. The vessel was reportedly being leased to a Japanese shipping company.
 - » The Houthis have vowed to target Israel-linked vessels, and though the ship had no Israelis aboard it, the ship was reportedly registered under a British company owned by Israeli national Abraham Ungar.

- » The office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) in a Hebrew statement that “we strongly condemn the Iranian attack against an international ship. The ship, owned by a British company and operated by a Japanese company, was hijacked on Iranian whim by the Houthi militia in Yemen. On board the ship are 25 crew members of different nationalities, including: Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Filipinos and Mexicans. No Israelis were present on the ship. This is another act of Iranian terrorism which expresses a leap forward in Iran’s aggression against the citizens of the free world, and creates international implications regarding the security of global shipping lanes.”
- » Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani [said](#) in response to the seizure that “we have repeatedly announced that the resistance forces in the region represent their countries and make decisions based on the interests of their country and nation. They act spontaneously.”
- On November 19, Islamic Republic of Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei [said](#) that Israel has suffered a “defeat” in its war against Hamas, stating that “the defeat of the Zionist regime [Israel] in Gaza is a fact.”
- On November 17, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian [said](#) that American presence in the region “would fail to make the resistance group [Hezbollah] cautious in its decision-making.”
 - » Amir-Abdollahian also claimed that Iran’s proxies make their own decisions and the groups are not indifferent “towards the killing of their Muslim and Arab peers in Palestine.”
- On November 17, [reports](#) suggested that the al-Harir base in Iraq was targeted with an armed drone while hosting U.S. troops, according to a statement from Iraqi Kurdistan’s counter-terrorism service.
 - » According to U.S. defense officials, Iran-backed forces have [conducted](#) 61 attacks on U.S. personnel since Oct. 17.

U.S. and International Response

- On November 18, U.S. President Joe Biden published an [op-ed](#) in *The Washington Post* that addressed the U.S. approach to international crises, including Russia’s war against Ukraine and, chiefly, Israel’s war to defeat Hamas following the terror group’s October 7 massacre.
 - » Describing Hamas’s actions as “pure, unadulterated evil” and denouncing Russian President Vladimir Putin for his “aggression” in Ukraine, the president argued that the “overarching question” is, “will we relentlessly pursue our positive vision for the future, or will we allow those who do not share our values to drag the world to a more dangerous and divided place?”
 - » He compared Hamas and Putin, arguing that both “are fighting to wipe a neighboring democracy off the map” and “hope to collapse broader regional stability and integration and take advantage of the ensuing disorder. America cannot, and will not, let that happen. For our own national security interests — and for the good of the entire world.”
 - » After highlighting the grisly details of Hamas’s actions on October 7, noting that he is working relentlessly to secure the release of hostages held in Gaza, and acknowledging that Hamas has threatened to repeat its terrorist acts, the president said that “the Palestinian people deserve a state of their own and a future free from Hamas” and that images of suffering in the Gaza Strip are heartbreaking.

- » Biden argued that “a two-state solution is the only way to ensure the long-term security of both the Israeli and Palestinian people. Though right now it may seem like that future has never been further away, this crisis has made it more imperative than ever.” To achieve that, the president argued:
 - Gaza cannot be used as a base for terrorism;
 - Palestinians in Gaza must not be forcibly displaced, Israel must not reoccupy, blockade, put the territory under siege, or reduce its size, and “after this war is over, the voices of Palestinian people and their aspirations must be at the center of post-crisis governance in Gaza;” and
 - Following the war, a “revitalized” Palestinian Authority should rule the West Bank and Gaza.
- » Biden threatened to withhold U.S. visas from West Bank settlers who attack Palestinians, saying, “I have been emphatic with Israel’s leaders that extremist violence against Palestinians in the West Bank must stop and that those committing the violence must be held accountable. The United States is prepared to take our own steps, including issuing visa bans against extremists attacking civilians in the West Bank.”
- » The president emphasized that “the international community must commit resources to support the people of Gaza in the immediate aftermath of this crisis, including interim security measures, and establish a reconstruction mechanism to sustainably meet Gaza’s long-term needs.” He also stated, “it is imperative that no terrorist threats ever again emanate from Gaza or the West Bank.”
- » Biden outlined his administration’s steps to “to prevent this conflict from spreading and escalating further,” including the deployment of two U.S. carrier groups to the region, efforts to impede Hamas’s finances, and military responses to Iran-backed strikes targeting U.S. troops in the Middle East. He further underscored his visit to Israel during wartime—the first president to do so.
 - He noted that during the trip, he “worked closely with the leaders of Israel and Egypt to reach an agreement to restart the delivery of essential humanitarian assistance to Gazans” and now roughly 100 trucks carrying aid enter Gaza via Egypt per day, and Israel has implemented humanitarian corridors for civilians to flee fighting. Hamas, by contrast, exploits its civilians as human shields, the president argued.
- » Biden argued further that a ceasefire would only allow Hamas to rebuild its capabilities and that “an outcome that leaves Hamas in control of Gaza would once more perpetuate its hate and deny Palestinian civilians the chance to build something better for themselves.”
- » He said that Americans “must, without equivocation, denounce antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of hate and bias. We must renounce violence and vitriol and see each other not as enemies but as fellow Americans.”
- *The Washington Post* [reported](#) on November 19 that a growing number of U.S. Defense Department officials are growing frustrated with the administration’s approach to dealing with Iranian proxy attacks on U.S. troops and personnel in Iraq and Syria.
 - » The report cited one official as saying, “there’s no clear definition of what we are trying to deter. Are we trying to deter future Iranian attacks like this? Well, that’s clearly not working.”
 - » National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson told *the Washington Post* that President Biden “will never hesitate to take action to protect U.S. forces” and is “fully

prepared to take further measures as needed at any given moment to protect our people.”

- A November 17 U.S. State Department press [statement](#) attributed to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the designation of the Iran-backed group Kata’ib Sayyid al-Shuhada (KSS) and its Secretary General Hashim Finyan Rahim al-Saraji as Specially Designated Global Terrorists, as well as an additional six people associated with Kata-ib Hizballah, a U.S.-designated Iran-backed terrorist organization.
 - » The statement referred to Iran as the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism and said that the United States “remains committed to using all available tools to counter Iran’s support for terrorism and degrade and disrupt the ability of Iran-backed groups to conduct terrorist attacks.”
- While visiting Israel over the weekend, senior prosecutors from the United States, Germany, France, Argentina, and Austria [discussed](#) strategies for holding Hamas operatives accountable for the October 7 massacre. Nationals from each country were murdered that day.
 - » During the visit, the prosecutors met with Israeli State Attorney Amit Eisman and other Justice Ministry officials to discuss the inherent challenges in putting Hamas on trial for its crimes.
 - » Delegation participant Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares said, “[Hamas’s] despicable crimes were directed not only against Israelis but against humanity in its entirety,” and “we will do everything in our power to fight this organization and its people everywhere they are.”
- On November 19, China’s foreign ministry [announced](#) that officials from the Palestinian Authority, Indonesia, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the secretary-general of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation would be visiting China on November 20-21.
 - » According to Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning, “during the visit, China will have in-depth communication and coordination with the joint delegation of foreign ministers of Arab and Islamic countries to promote a de-escalation of the current Palestinian-Israeli conflict, protecting civilians, and justly resolving the Palestinian issue.”
- On November 19, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [spoke](#) with French President Emmanuel Macron by phone to discuss the war. President Macron also called Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas that day to discuss the war.
 - » Macron [told](#) Netanyahu on the call that there have been “too many civilian losses,” according to a French readout, and stressed, “there is absolute necessity to distinguish terrorists from the population,” and also emphasized “the importance of achieving an immediate humanitarian truce leading to a ceasefire.”
 - Macron also conveyed to Netanyahu his “great concern over the escalation in violence against Palestinian civilians” in the West Bank.
 - » Macron told Abbas in their call that he condemned violence against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and also emphasized “the need for the Palestinian Authority and all countries in the region to unequivocally and with the greatest firmness condemn the terrorist attack carried out by Hamas in Israel on October 7.”
- On November 18, European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell [said](#) while delivering remarks at a conference in Bahrain that the Palestinian Authority is the only body that could govern Gaza after the war.
 - » Borrell opined that “Hamas cannot be in control of Gaza any longer,” adding, “so who will be in control of Gaza? I think only one could do that - the Palestinian Authority.”

- On November 17, the Portuguese foreign ministry [said](#) that IDF bombing killed three of its citizens—a parent and two children—and two of their relatives.
 - » Portugal’s top diplomat, Augusto Santos Silva, expressed “disgust” to Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen. According to Portugal’s foreign ministry, the five killed were on a list given to Israel and Egypt of 16 Portuguese citizens and relatives to be evacuated from Gaza.
 - » Silva argued that Israel “is not on the right path” and that “we need to stop these bombings now.”
 - » Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa told a Palestinian envoy earlier this month that “you blame the Israelis, but this time someone from your side started it,” and “the Palestinian side started it. You can’t blame Israel, you shouldn’t have started it.”
- Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan [said](#) in a November 17 statement while in Germany that “Israel’s attacks on Palestinian lands must end and that the reaction from the whole world against human rights violations is important,” and “a ceasefire must be established immediately.”
- On November 17, Bahrain’s Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, [publicly condemned](#) Hamas’s October 7 terrorist attacks against Israel, saying, “The attacks on October 7 were barbaric, they were horrific. They were indiscriminate. They killed women, children, the elderly, it did not matter.”
 - » He also criticized Israel’s actions: “I unequivocally condemn the air campaign that resulted in the death of over 11,000 people in Gaza, 4,700 of which are children. Now both of these actions have led to the death of innocents... both are reprehensible, both must stop, and both are things that we must deal with, with the greatest care, moving forward, because what we need to do is break the cycle.”

Rising Antisemitism and Protests

- On November 19, a grenade was found [strapped](#) to a utility pole across the street from a synagogue in Lakewood, New Jersey. A state bomb squad was called to the scene and determined that the device was inert.
 - » Ocean County Prosecutor Bradley Billhimer told local news outlets that “the device was found to be inert and nonexplosive. There is no danger to the public and this remains an active and ongoing investigation.”
- On November 19, tens of thousands of supporters of the Jamaat-e-Islami party [attended](#) a rally in Lahore, Pakistan to criticize Israel’s military campaign in Gaza. The protestors reportedly shouted anti-Israel and anti-American slogans and called for jihad.
- Two murals denouncing antisemitism in Milan, Italy, were [defaced](#) within a 24-hour span of being painted on November 17-18.
 - » One mural which depicted Anne Frank holding an Israeli flag was defaced and the words “Free Gaza” were painted over it.
 - » The other mural, depicting a young boy from the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943 being held at gunpoint by Hamas, was defaced and the image of the young boy whited out.
- On November 19, the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, [announced](#) it had fired the head of the university’s sexual assault center, Samantha Pearson, after Pearson signed a letter condemning Canadian parliamentarian Jagmeet Singh for stating that Hamas terrorists committed rape during the October 7 attack.

- On November 18, an estimated 200 pro-Palestinian protestors [forced](#) their way into an administrative building at the University of Michigan.
 - » The protestors stormed the building, which houses offices for University of Michigan President Santa Ono, calling for the administration to divest from Israel and waved Palestinian flags.
 - » 40 people were arrested, and two police officers were injured in the incident.
- On November 18, the California Democratic Party was forced to [cancel](#) evening events during its state convention in Sacramento after the convention was disrupted multiple times by protestors calling for a ceasefire.
- On November 18, 20 members of the neo-Nazi group “Blood Tribe” [marched](#) in downtown Madison, Wisconsin. They chanted, “there will be blood,” and “Israel is not our friend,” and [stopped](#) in front of both the Wisconsin State Capitol and a historic local synagogue, Gates of Heaven.
- X owner Elon Musk was sharply [criticized](#) by the White House in response to his November 15 endorsement of an antisemitic post. On November 18, Musk announced new measures to crackdown on antisemitism on his platform.
 - » On November 15, Musk wrote “you have said the actual truth” in response to a tweet stating, “Jewish communities [sic] have been pushing the exact kind of dialectical hatred against whites that they claim to want people to stop using against them. I’m deeply disinterested in giving the tiniest shit now about western Jewish populations coming to the disturbing realization that those hordes of minorities that support flooding their country don’t exactly like them too much.”
 - » On November 17, White House spokesperson Andrew Bates said in response to Musk’s post that “it is unacceptable to repeat the hideous lie behind the most fatal act of antisemitism in American history at any time, let alone one month after the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust.”
 - » Bates added, “we condemn this abhorrent promotion of antisemitic and racist hate in the strongest terms, which runs against our core values as Americans. We all have a responsibility to bring people together against hate, and an obligation to speak out against anyone who attacks the dignity of their fellow Americans and compromises the safety of our communities.”
 - » On November 18, Elon Musk separately announced that X will [suspend](#) users who use certain terms, including “decolonization” and “from the river to the sea.” Musk also stated that “similar euphemisms” will result in suspension, as will “clear calls for extreme violence” and “anyone calling for a genocide.”
- On November 17, three people were [arrested](#) at an anti-Israel protest outside of Union Station in Washington, D.C., for defacing the train station with paint.
- The Department of Education [opened an investigation](#) on November 17 into six university campuses and one school district over incidents of antisemitism and Islamophobia.
 - » The universities under investigation are the University of Pennsylvania, Cornell University, Columbia University, Lafayette College, Wellesley College, and The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York. The Maize Unified School District in Kansas is also a subject of the investigation.
- On November 17, a Jewish school in Toronto, the Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy, was [evacuated](#) after receiving a bomb threat.

- » The threat came hours after the Vaughan Islamic Center in Toronto received a similar threat.
- On November 17, a building in Melbourne, Australia, was outfitted with antisemitic [caricatures of Jewish men](#) that depicted long noses.
- On November 17, sixteen pro-Palestinian protesters from The People's Group were [arrested](#) in NewsCorp's New York City headquarters.
- On November 16, The University of Pennsylvania campus was [branded](#) with a series of posters comparing hostage victims to cows.

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- Yoni Tobin, [U.S. Aid to Gaza Almost Certain to End Up in Hamas Hands](#), November 6, 2023
- Thomas Trask and Jacob Olidort, "[The Case for Upgrading Israel's 'Major Non-NATO Ally' Status](#)," *RealClearDefense*, November 6, 2023
- Yaakov Amidror, "[Initial Lessons From the October 2023 War](#)," *Jerusalem Strategic Tribune*, November 1, 2023