



Ari Cicurel  
Assistant Director of Foreign Policy

Yoni Tobin  
Policy Analyst

Zachary Schildcrout  
Policy Analyst

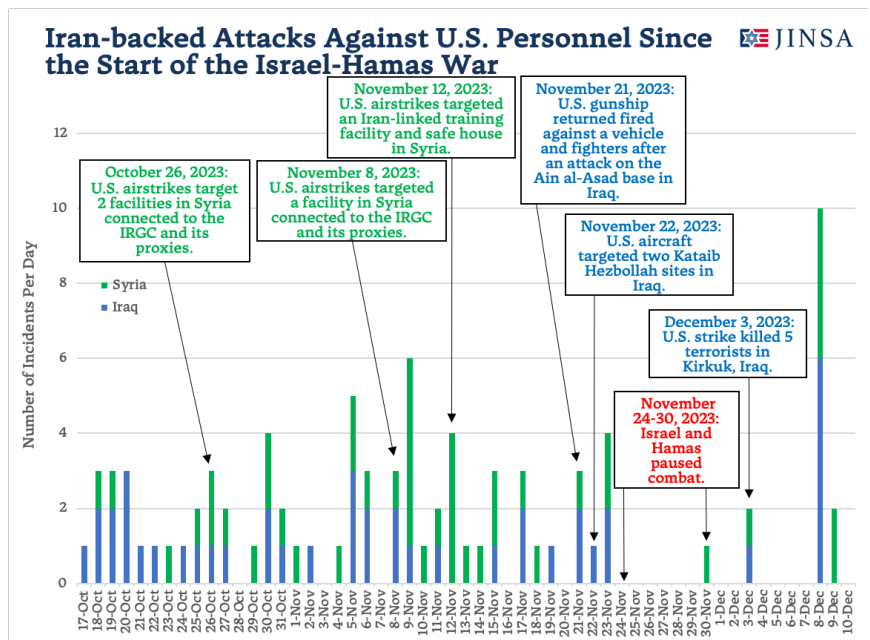
Anna Schafel  
Programs and Outreach Associate

# Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update December 11, 2023

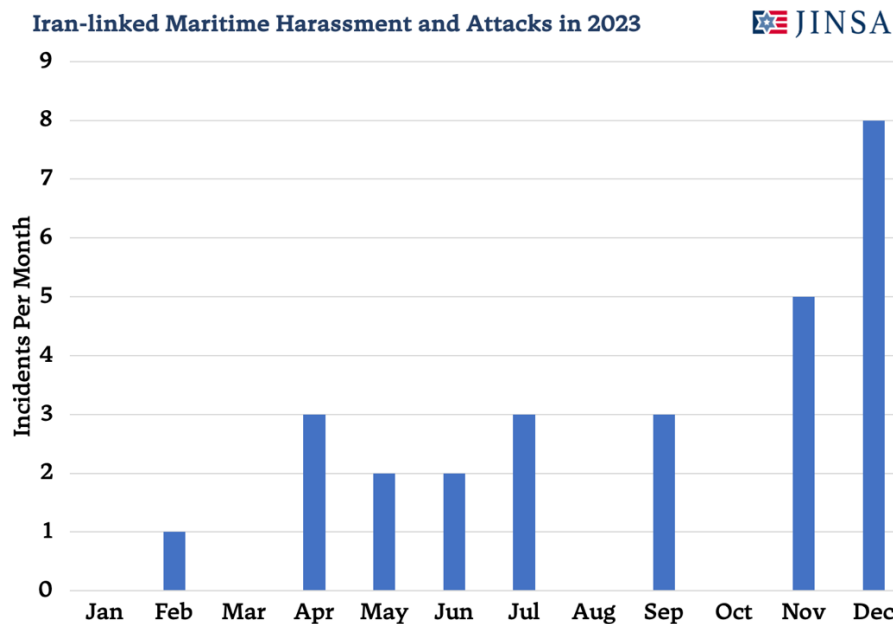
JINSA's [Israel at War](#) webpage is a dedicated resource for analysis, commentary, webinars, and media coverage about the 10/7 attacks and the ensuing Israel-Hamas conflict. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below.

## Analysis

- With the \$110 billion supplemental aid package for Israel and Ukraine stalled in Congress, the Biden administration has provided emergency authorization for the sale of tank rounds to Israel, bypassing the normal process requiring congressional approval.
  - » The emergency provision of 14,000 tank rounds worth \$106 million is a helpful measure, but Israel requires significantly greater rearmament against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.
- From December 8-9, Iran-backed groups launched the most attacks against U.S. personnel in Iraq and Syria in the shortest period since the Israel-Hamas war began: 10 attacks on December 8 and another two the following day.
  - » December 8 saw more attacks than any other day since the Iran-backed escalation began on October 17, and the combined 12 attacks from December 8-9 were more than any other two-day period since then.
  - » Mounting such a large escalation indicates that the six U.S. strikes against these groups have not deterred them or significantly degraded their ability to target U.S. positions, including the highly protected U.S. embassy in Baghdad.
  - » There have now been at least 87 attacks on U.S. personnel since the Iran-backed attacks on U.S. personnel in Iraq and Syria resumed on October 17.



- In a further expansion of the Houthis' maritime aggression during the Israel-Hamas war, the Iran-backed terrorist group announced that it will target any ship traveling to Israel and launched two drones over the Red Sea on December 9, which a French frigate then intercepted.
- » The eight incidents of maritime aggression that the Iranian regime and the Houthis have conducted in December have already surpassed the amount of incidents in any other month this year.



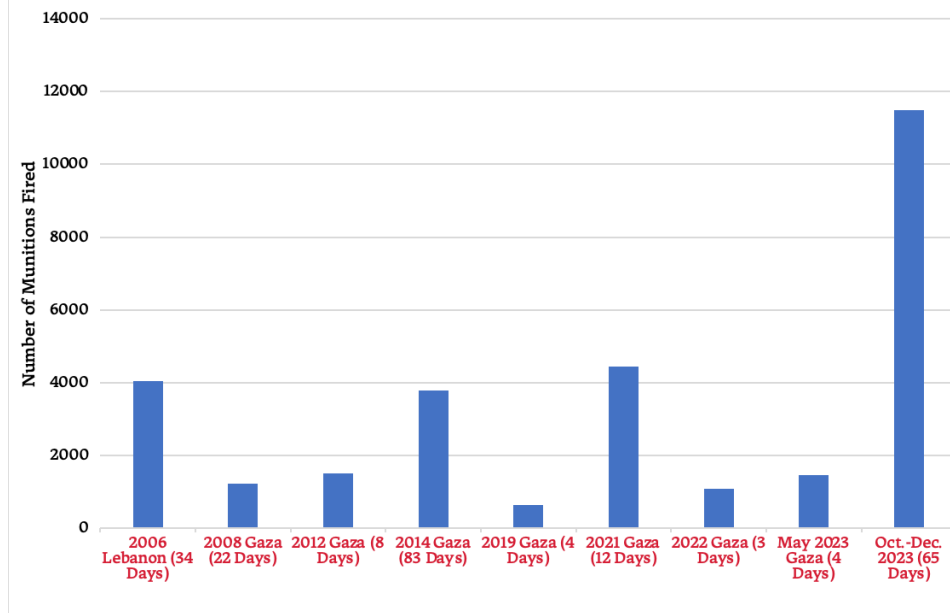
## Last 24 Hours

### *Attacks Against Israel*

- At least [11,500](#) rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Gaza during the war.
  - » Rockets struck [Holon](#), and sirens sounded in [Nir Oz](#), [Magen](#), [Netiv HaAsara](#), [Yad Mordechai](#), [Nitzanim](#), [Tel Aviv](#), and other central Israeli cities.
  - » On December 10, rocket sirens [sounded](#) in southern Israeli towns after a 20-hour period without rocket fire from Gaza, marking a new record for hours without rocket fire from Gaza since the war began, with the exception of the week-long truce earlier this month.
  - » On December 9, Hamas [launched](#) three rocket barrages from the designated humanitarian safe zone of al-Mawasi.
    - The first rocket barrage consisted of two rockets that misfired and landed in Gaza, and a second rocket barrage 20 minutes later consisted of two rockets that also misfired and landed in Gaza.
    - Several hours later, Hamas fired a barrage of “numerous rockets,” according to the IDF, into Israel.
  - » On December 8, Hamas [claimed](#) that it fired rockets toward Tel Aviv, but no sirens were triggered in the area due to the launch. Residents heard loud blasts as the rockets landed in the sea.

- Terrorists in Lebanon continued targeting Israel with drones, rockets, and other projectiles over the last 72 hours.
  - » On December 11, Ma'alot-Tarshiha in Israel's north came under fire from a [barrage](#) of at least eight rockets from Lebanon. The Iron Dome intercepted six incoming projectiles while two landed in unpopulated areas, according to the IDF. No injuries were reported.
  - » On December 10, the IDF said that Hezbollah [launched](#) several drones toward an IDF base in the Western Galilee that moderately wounded two soldiers and lightly injured two others due to shrapnel and smoke inhalation.
    - According to the IDF, the Iron Dome intercepted two of the drones.
  - » On December 10, alerts were [triggered](#) in Gornot HaGalil, Hanita, Shtula, Zarit, Goren, Ya'ara, Arab al-Aramshe, Shomera, Eilon, Idmit, and Even Menachem in Israel's north in response to a suspected drone infiltration from Lebanon, and rocket alarms sounded in Avdon, Ya'ara, Eilon, and Goren.
  - » On December 9, Hezbollah attacks [wounded](#) three IDF soldiers, one during the morning due to shrapnel, and two more in a separate later attack.
  - » According to the IDF, northern Israel came under fire from several [rockets](#) from Lebanon on December 9. No one was injured.
  - » On December 9, the IDF [said](#) that Misgav Am in Israel's north came under fire from several rockets from Lebanon, causing no injuries. The attacks [followed](#) a period of calm in the north lasting roughly 10 hours.
  - » The IDF [said](#) on December 8 that any army post near the northern Israeli community of Mattat took fire but did not indicate whether there were casualties. The IDF also [said](#) several unidentified projectiles were fired at Israel from southern Lebanon the night of December 8.
  - » On December 8, the IDF [said](#) that the Iron Dome air defense system intercepted a "suspicious aerial target" that crossed into Israeli airspace from Lebanon, triggering sirens in the Upper Galilee.
  - » The IDF [said](#) that rockets were fired from Lebanon toward several army posts close to the border on December 8.
- On December 8, an Israeli man was lightly wounded in a suspected shooting [attack](#) in the West Bank when Palestinian gunmen fired at an Israeli army post near Mevo Dotan in the West Bank, according to Hebrew-language media. The IDF later [said](#), "the soldier received initial medical treatment at the scene and was evacuated to a hospital to receive further medical treatment," and it set up roadblocks to launch a search for the attackers.
- On December 10, Israel's internal security service, the Shin Bet, [released](#) video from an interrogation of former Hamas communications minister Yousef al-Mansi in which al-Mansi strongly criticizes Hamas and condemns the October 7 attack.
  - » Al-Mansi described Hamas as "a group of crazy people that [Hamas leader in Gaza Yahya] Sinwar leads," and stated, "they destroyed the Gaza Strip. Set it back 200 years ... people in the Gaza Strip say that Sinwar and his group destroyed us. We must get rid of them." Al-Mansi further criticized Sinwar as having "delusions of grandeur" and "[feeling] like he is above everyone else."
  - » Al-Mansi also denounced Hamas's October 7 attack, saying the attack was "the opposite of Islam" and that "what they did is unacceptable according to logic, religion or intellect."

## Projectiles Fired Against Israel During Major Conflicts



### IDF Operations

- The IDF continued expanding its ground operations in Gaza around Khan Younis over the last 72 hours.
  - » On December 11, the IDF [airdropped](#) seven tons of equipment to the 98th Division's Commando Brigade, marking the first time the IDF has airdropped equipment to its troops since the 2006 Lebanon War.
  - » On December 10, the IDF stated that it launched strikes on approximately 250 targets in the Gaza Strip over the previous 24 hours.
    - These targets [included](#) a Hamas compound in Khan Younis and several nearby tunnel shafts. The IDF also announced that its ground forces raided Hamas sites across Gaza and killed terrorists staging an ambush on troops.
    - The IDF's Golani Brigade [struck](#) a Hamas communications site next to a mosque in southern Gaza, and the elite Egoz unit eliminated a number of tunnel shafts in the Khan Younis area with precision-guided munitions and eliminated a Hamas cell in an airstrike.
    - In operations in the Shejaiya area of Gaza City, the 188th Armored Brigade [raided](#) a Hamas command center and located assault rifles, anti-tank missile launchers, grenades, and other military equipment.
  - » The IDF announced on December 10 that it killed [Emad Qariga](#), who assumed command of Hamas's Shejaiya battalion after its previous commander, Wissam Farhat, was killed by the IDF on December 2.
  - » On December 10, Israel's Artillery Corps began [operating](#) inside Gaza for the first time since the war began. The IDF said the Artillery Corps has fired over 100,000 artillery shells at targets in Gaza from inside Israel during the war.

- The IDF said troops from the 282nd Artillery Regiment’s 411th Battalion entered Gaza with M-109 howitzers to assist the 188th Armored Brigade, and that the troops conducted artillery shelling against over 20 buildings in the Shejaiya area of northern Gaza, including weapons depots and other Hamas infrastructure.
- » On December 9, the IDF [said](#) troops from its Givati Infantry Brigade had eliminated Hamas operatives and tunnel shafts, and that troops from its elite ground force Duvdevan unit located and destroyed a Hamas command room. The IDF’s Golani Brigade also [raided](#) a mosque where Hamas operatives were operating, eliminating Hamas operatives, and the IDF later destroyed the mosque and tunnels underneath in an airstrike.
- » On December 9, the IDF’s elite Maglan unit [killed](#) three Hamas operatives that attempted to fire rocket-propelled grenades at the unit.
- » The IDF [announced](#) on December 9 that it had captured Gaza City’s Palestine Square, where Hamas had paraded captured Israeli hostages prior to their release during the temporary ceasefire.
- » On December 8, troops of the Combat Engineering Corps’ 749th Reserve Battalion [destroyed](#) buildings of Gaza City’s Al-Azhar University in which the troops found explosive devices, parts of rockets, launchers, and other material, according to the IDF.
  - The IDF said, “the findings show that the Hamas terror organization used the university building for the purpose of fighting against our forces.”
  - In the Shati area, 14th Armored Brigade reservists [raided](#) a Hamas observation post and found 200 handheld radios, dozens of cameras, and a tunnel and weapons.
- » IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#) on December 8 that two soldiers were seriously injured during an attempt to rescue hostages in Gaza. He explained that “the troops raided a Hamas site, killed terrorists who took part in the abduction and holding of the hostages” but that the mission failed and did not free any hostages.
  - Hagari also said, “we will continue to act in a number of ways, operationally and with intelligence, with the Shin Bet, to return all the hostages home, and to obtain information on them.”
- The IDF targeted several terrorist cells in Lebanon that were responsible for targeting Israel over the last 72 hours.
  - » On December 11, the IDF [said](#) that it fired artillery toward the source of an earlier rocket barrage from Lebanon targeting Ma’alot-Tarshiha in Israel’s north.
  - » The IDF [said](#) on December 10 that in response to several attacks by Hezbollah targeting northern Israel, it used a fighter jet to strike several additional Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon. The military also said that it used an attack helicopter to neutralize an anti-tank missile squad in southern Lebanon readying an attack against Yiftah in Israel’s north, and that it shelled a southern Lebanese area near the Israeli city of Menara in response to suspicious movement.
  - » The IDF [said](#) on December 10 that it launched “widespread” airstrikes against Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon including rocket launching sites, military compounds, and additional infrastructure in response to attacks by the terror group. The military also said that it struck a squad in southern Lebanon that attempted an earlier anti-tank guided missile attack near the northern Israeli city of Zar’it.
  - » On December 10, video [emerged](#) showing Israeli airstrikes in southern Lebanon.

- » The IDF [fired](#) artillery toward sources of earlier rocket fire from Lebanon on December 9, and it used tanks to shell an area close to Metula in Israel's north "to remove a threat."
- » On December 9, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to strike several Hezbollah sites in southern Lebanon in response to attacks, [including](#) a command center, rocket launching sites, military compounds stationed by manned personnel, and additional infrastructure.
- » On December 9, the IDF [said](#) that it fired artillery toward the source of earlier rocket fire from Lebanon that targeted Israel's Misgav Am in the north.
- » On December 9, the IDF said that it used fighter jets to [strike](#) several Hezbollah targets overnight, including operational centers. It also shelled the source of earlier rocket fire targeting Israel.
- » On December 8, the IDF [said](#) that it fired artillery toward the source of an earlier attack on an army post near Mattat.
- » On December 8, a medical source [told](#) AFP that "Israeli artillery fire targeted the vicinity of a Lebanese army post in Ras el-Naqura, lightly injuring three soldiers."
  - The Lebanese army also said on December 8 that "the military hospital in the town of Ain Ebel was bombed by the Israeli enemy, causing material damage but no casualties."
- » The IDF [said](#) on December 8 that it struck multiple Hezbollah sites in southern Lebanon with artillery in response to rocket attacks on northern Israel during the previous hour. Those attacks triggered sirens in the Galilee.
- » The IDF [said](#) on December 8 that it fired artillery toward the source of earlier rocket fire from Lebanon that targeted army posts.
- » On December 9, Israeli National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi [told](#) Israel's *Channel 12* that "[Israeli] residents will not return [to the north] if we don't do the same thing" to Hezbollah as Israel is doing to Hamas.
  - He added, "we can no longer accept [Hezbollah's elite] Radwan force sitting on the border. We can no longer accept [UN Security Council] Resolution 1701 not being implemented," which [requires](#) disarmament of all groups in Lebanon other than the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).
- » In response to a question about whether war in Lebanon is imminent, Hanegbi responded, "the situation in the north must be changed. And it will change. If Hezbollah agrees to change things via diplomacy, very good. But I don't believe it will."
- » He also said that Israel must work to guarantee for Israel's displaced northern residents "that the situation in the north has changed."
- » Hanegbi elaborated that Hezbollah's Radwan Unit on Israel's border presents a particularly dangerous threat because "within minutes," it could perpetrate a massacre similar to what Hamas committed on October 7.
- » He added further, "we are making clear to the Americans that we are not interested in war [in the north], but that we will have no alternative but to impose a new reality in the north" should the Hezbollah threat remain. He also said that "Israel will act" against the threat from the Houthis in Yemen if no one else in the international community does.
- Syrian state-run SANA news agency [reported](#) on December 10 that the IDF launched airstrikes on targets in the Damascus area, causing "material losses." The news agency stated that Syrian air defenses intercepted some of the Israeli missiles.

- On December 9, Reuters [reported](#), citing two sources, that Israel launched a drone strike against a target in the Quneitra region of southwestern Syria. The drone strike killed three members of Hezbollah and a Syrian individual with them, according to the report.
  - » Israel's *Kan* network reported that Hezbollah announced that the strike [killed](#) Hassan Ali Dakdouk, the son of Hezbollah's operational leader in southern Syria, Ali Mussa Dakdouk.
- The IDF conducted operations in Hebron, Nablus, Tubas, and the Jordan Valley region in the West Bank.
  - » On December 10, the IDF, Shin Bet, and Israeli Border Police [arrested](#) 21 suspected terrorists in coordinated raids.
    - 14 of the suspected terrorists were arrested in Tubas, and the rest were arrested in Hebron, Nablus, and the Qalandiya refugee camp near Ramallah. The IDF confiscated guns, ammunition, grenades, and other explosive devices during the raids.
  - » On December 9, the IDF, Shin Bet, and Israeli Border Police [arrested](#) eight suspected terrorists across the West Bank in a coordinated raid. One soldier was injured in the raid.
  - » On December 8, the IDF [arrested](#) two suspected terrorists in the Far'a refugee camp near Nablus and arrested five other suspected terrorists in the Jordan Valley region of the West Bank, confiscating weapons and ammunition. The IDF said its troops killed a number of gunmen in the Far'a refugee camp after being fired upon.
  - » On December 10, the IDF said it has [arrested](#) approximately 2,200 suspected terrorists in the West Bank since the war began, roughly 1,180 of whom are affiliated with Hamas.
- On December 11, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) in a video statement that "in the past few days, dozens of Hamas terrorists have surrendered before our forces," adding, "it will take more time, the war is still in full force, but this is the beginning of the end of Hamas."
- On December 10, the IDF [announced](#) that it has struck over 22,000 targets across Gaza since the war began and has struck over 3,500 targets since the end of the temporary ceasefire on December 1.
- On December 10, *The Times of Israel* [cited](#) a senior IDF officer as saying there are "signs of Hamas breaking" as "the extent of the destruction and damage creates command-and-control problems [for Hamas]. There are areas in the Gaza Strip that Hamas no longer controls militarily ... Despite the achievements, we are not close to the end of the fighting. We continue to operate with great intensity, and work to dismantle entire battalions of Hamas."
- On December 10, Israeli National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi [told](#) Israel's *Kan* network that widely-circulated pictures of Gazans in their underwear being detained by the IDF do not "serve anything," and "I think that you won't be seeing images like this in the future."
  - » Hanegbi added that detained Gazans must strip to their underwear while being detained so that "we can see they don't have explosive vests."
  - » *The Wall Street Journal*, in a December 10 report, [cited](#) IDF Spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari as saying that detained men believed to be terrorists were taken into custody for further questioning, while those determined to be noncombatants were released.

- On December 9, Hanegbi [told](#) Israel's *Channel 12* that "the Americans have not set any deadline" for Israel to end its operation in Gaza, stating, "yesterday they denied setting a deadline. They understand that they can't tell the IDF how long it needs to achieve the goals... the assessment [that achieving the goals of the war in Gaza] cannot be measured in weeks is correct, and I'm not sure it can be measured in months."
  - » Hanegbi also said in the interview that the IDF is closing in on Hamas centers of command in the northern Gaza areas of Jabaliya and Shejaiya, and that hostage rescue operations are very risky "because [hostages] captors are waiting with their finger on the trigger," adding that "military pressure could produce another halt in the fighting."
- On December 8, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#), "our troops are operating in the heart of Hamas's 'centers of gravity' in south and northern Gaza simultaneously, in Jabaliya, Shejaiya, and in the Khan Younis area," and "we are engaged in fierce battles with Hamas terrorists, who hide underground. We are killing many terrorists, and seeing more and more terrorists surrendering in battle, and turning themselves into our forces."
  - » Hagari added that the IDF had arrested over 200 suspects over the previous 48 hours and explained that "dozens of them have been handed over for interrogation by the Military Intelligence Directorate's Unit 504 and Shin Bet in Israel, including Hamas commanders and Nukhba operatives."
- Israel's *Walla* network [reported](#) on December 8, citing a senior Israeli official, that Israel needs another six to eight weeks to conclude its intensive operations in Gaza and that the Biden administration has told Israel it wants it to conclude its operations "sooner."
  - » According to the official, Israel needs three to four weeks to conclude its military offensive in Khan Younis and an additional three to four weeks to conclude the entirety of the first stage of the war against Hamas in Gaza.
  - » The official reportedly stated that while the U.S. government has not given Israel a hard deadline to end its operations, the Biden administration would like Israel to finish intensive operations by the end of December.

### *Humanitarian Efforts*

- On December 11, Israel's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) [posted](#) on X a photo of aid trucks backlogged at the Rafah crossing along the Egyptian-Gazan border, with the caption calling on the UN to "do better" in its efforts to process aid.
  - » The post noted that Israel has opened the Kerem Shalom crossing along the Israel-Gaza border, enabling it to double the amount of truck inspections, but that "the aid keeps waiting at the entrance of Rafah. The UN must do better."
- On December 9, the IDF [released](#) a video of Hamas operatives taking supplies from residents of Gaza in the Shejaiya area of Gaza City.
  - » In the video, Hamas operatives can be seen taking supplies, loading the supplies into a vehicle and beating the civilians from whom they stole the supplies. The video then shows the vehicle traveling to a Hamas site.
- COGAT military liaison to the Palestinians, Col. Elad Goren, [told](#) *The Times of Israel* on December 8 that Israel has identified approximately 150 shelters in Gaza, in addition to the safe zone of al-Mawasi, that the IDF will not target pending changes in operations.

- On December 8, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [spoke](#) with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) President Mirjana Spoljaric Egger about the hostages held by Hamas and the humanitarian situation in Gaza.
  - » According to a State Department readout, Blinken and Egger “discussed efforts to strengthen civilian protections and expand the flow of humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza” and that Blinken “reiterated the call for the immediate release of all hostages and highlighted the need for the ICRC to be granted access to the remaining hostages.”
- On December 8, United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) director Thomas White [wrote](#) on X that “civil order is breaking down in #Gaza – the streets feel wild, particularly after dark – some aid convoys are being looted and UN vehicles stoned. Society is on the brink of full-blown collapse,” but UNRWA “continues to serve the population with what limited aid we have.”

### *Casualties and Hostages*

- Approximately 1,245 people in Israel have been [killed](#), and another approximately 6,900 have been injured in the war.
  - » 433 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
    - 104 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
    - 133 IDF soldiers are currently [being treated](#) for serious injuries, 218 are being treated for moderate injuries, and 231 are being treated for light injuries.
    - On December 11, the IDF [announced](#) the deaths of five soldiers killed while fighting in Gaza by an explosive device in the Khan Younis area: Maj. (res.) Roman Bronshtein, 46, from Bat Yam; Cpt. (res.) Eliya Yanovsky, 24, from Jerusalem; Master Sgt. (res.) Ari Yehiel Zenilman, 32, from Jerusalem; Sgt. Maj. (res.) Etay Perry, 36, from Modin; Maj. (res.) Eviatar Cohen, 42, from Kfar Saba. The IDF also [announced](#) the deaths of Sgt. Maj. (res.) Gideon Ilani, 35 from the West Bank settlement of Asa’el, who was killed while fighting in Gaza, and Maj. Gal Becher, 34, from Oranit, who was killed in a military-related traffic collision in southern Israel.
    - On December 10, the IDF [announced](#) the death of Lt. Nethanel Menachem Eitan, 22, from Jerusalem, who succumbed to wounds he had sustained while fighting in Gaza.
    - On December 9, the IDF [announced](#) the deaths of five soldiers, four of whom were killed while fighting in Gaza, and one who succumbed to wounds sustained on October 7. The four soldiers who were killed while fighting in Gaza were: Master Sgt. (res.) Liav Atiya, 25 from Beersheba, Master Sgt. (res.) Omri Ben Shachar, 25, from Givatayim, Staff Sgt. Jonathan Dean Jr Haim, 25, from Ramat Gan, and Sgt. Maor Cohen Eisenkot, 19, from Eilat. Sgt. Eisenkot was the nephew of former IDF chief of staff and current war cabinet observer minister Gadi Eisenkot. Staff Sgt. Haim Meir Edan, 20, from Rehovot, died of a wound sustained on October 7.
    - On December 8, the IDF [announced](#) the deaths of two reservists killed while fighting in Gaza, including Master Sgt. (res.) Naftali Yonah Gordon, 32, of the 188th Armored Brigade’s 53rd Battalion, from Jerusalem, and Sgt. First Class (res.) Omri Rot, 25, a tank commander in the 188th Armored Brigade’s 53rd Battalion, from Katzrin. Another 53rd Battalion soldier was seriously injured that day.

- » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 31 [American](#) nationals, 34 [Thai](#) nationals, 39 [French](#) nationals, 19 [Russian](#) nationals, 12 [British](#) nationals, 10 [Nepalese](#) nationals, 9 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 6 [Canadian](#) nationals, 4 [Philippines](#) nationals, 4 [Austrian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 4 [Chinese](#) nationals, 3 [Brazilian](#) nationals, 3 [Belarusian](#) nationals, 3 [Italian](#) nationals, 3 [Peruvian](#) nationals, a [Cambodian](#) national, a [Chilean](#) national, an [Irish](#) national, a [Spanish](#) national, an [Australian](#) national, an [Azeri](#) national, a [Honduran](#) national, a [Swiss](#) national, and a [Turkish](#) national.
- According to unverified figures from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry, 17,975 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and approximately 51,300 have been injured during the war.
  - » On December 9, Israeli National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi [said](#) in a television interview that Israel has killed at least 7,000 terrorists during the war.
  - » On December 4, the Associated Press and AFP [reported](#), citing an IDF official, that roughly 15,000 Palestinians have died since the war began and that roughly 5,000 of those killed were terrorists.
  - » 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, 255 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 3,515 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.
- So far, [105](#) hostages in Gaza have been released, [one](#) has been rescued by the IDF, and [seven have](#) been [found](#) dead.
  - » 81 Israeli hostages have been released.
  - » 46 hostages with foreign nationalities—some also holding Israeli citizenship—have been released.
    - Thus far, 23 [Thai](#) nationals, 6 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 5 [German nationals](#), 3 [French](#) nationals, 4 [Russian nationals](#), 1 [Dutch](#) national, 1 [Filipino national](#), 1 [Mexican](#) national, 1 [Uruguayan](#) national, and 1 [American](#) national have been released.
    - Hamas has released [36 children](#) and still holds two as hostages.
- Terrorists in Gaza currently [hold](#) 138 hostages, including 114 men, 20 women, and two children. 10 hostages are 75 and older, 127 are Israeli, and 11 are foreign nationals, including eight from Thailand.
  - » Many of the hostages are foreign or dual nationals, including up to 9 [American](#) nationals, 6 [German](#) nationals, 13 [Thai](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 3 [British](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals.
- During a December 10 interview with Israel’s *Channel 13*, freed captive Bilal Ziyadne, 18, [said](#) that Hamas told him and three family members on October 7 that they were being kidnapped even though they were Arab. Ziyadne stated, “I told them we were Arabs. They said to us, even though we’re Arabs, they’re kidnapping us.”

- » Ziyadne said he and his Bedouin Arab family members were given a mattress, pillow, and blanket and “normal food.” Many freed Israeli captives have reported sleeping on the ground and being fed minimal amounts of food.
- On December 9, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#) that civilian hostage Sahar Baruch, 25, was murdered by Hamas while being held captive in the Gaza Strip. Hamas had released a video showing Baruch’s body, making unverified claims as to the cause of his death.

### *Iranian Involvement and Response*

- On December 10, Israel [confirmed](#) it had foiled an Iranian terror plot against Israeli and Jewish targets in Cyprus.
  - » Two Iranian suspects were [arrested](#) by Cypriot authorities in connection to the plot, both of whom were political refugees who had been in contact with a person with ties to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).
- On December 10, Iran’s state-run *Islamic Republic News Agency* [reported](#) that Iran has deployed a drone, known as “Karrar,” that can launch air-to-air guided missiles.
  - » The report, which cited the head of the Iranian Army, Maj. Gen. Abdolrahim Mousavi, said that Iran will deploy dozens of the Karrar drones. Mousavi added that the drone has a range of up to 1,000 km (roughly 620 miles).
- Marking the largest escalation since the Israel-Hamas war began, Iran-backed groups [conducted](#) at least [12 attacks](#) against US personnel in Iraq and Syria from December 8-9, including against the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad for the first time since 2021.
- Following the U.S. veto of a UN Security Council resolution endorsing a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, Iranian diplomat Hossein Amir-Abdollahian [said](#) on December 9 in a call with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that “as long as America supports the crimes of the Zionist regime [Israel] and the continuation of the war... there is a possibility of an uncontrollable explosion in the situation of the region.”
- On December 9, Yahya Saree, a military spokesperson for the Iran-backed Houthis, [posted](#) on X that “if Gaza does not receive the food and medicine it needs, all ships in the Red Sea bound for Israeli ports, regardless of their nationality, will become a target for our armed forces.”
  - » That day, the Houthis [launched](#) at least two drones over the Red Sea. The French frigate *Languedoc* later intercepted them.

### *U.S. and International Response*

- On December 12, the United Nations General Assembly is set to [vote](#) on a resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.
- On December 9, President Biden approved an approximately \$106 million emergency sale of nearly [14,000 tank rounds](#) to Israel. The emergency designation means that the sale will bypass the congressional review that normally occurs for foreign military sales.
  - » On December 10, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken [defended](#) the emergency sale to Israel of nearly 14,000 rounds of tank ammunition, and called for quick congressional approval of more than \$100 billion in aid for Israel, Ukraine, and other national security priorities.

- Blinken said, “Israel is in combat right now with Hamas. And we want to make sure that Israel has what it needs to defend itself against Hamas.”
- » President Biden has also asked Congress to [approve](#) the sale of 45,000 tank shells for Israel’s Merkava tanks, worth roughly \$500 million, which is not part of the emergency sale or the \$110 billion supplemental request for aid to Israel and Ukraine that is currently being considered in Congress.
- On December 10, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) [said](#) in an interview on CBS’s Face the Nation, “I don’t know how you can have a permanent ceasefire with Hamas, who has said before October 7 and after October 7, that they want to destroy Israel and they want a permanent war. I don’t know how you have a permanent ceasefire with an attitude like that ... I think Israel has the right to defend itself and to go after Hamas, not the Palestinian people.”
  - » On December 5, Senator Sanders had released a [letter](#) to his colleagues claiming that “it is appropriate to support defensive systems that will protect Israeli civilians against incoming missile and rocket attacks, but ... it would be absolutely irresponsible to provide [Israel] an additional \$10.1 billion in unconditional military aid.”
    - The letter overlooked that defensive systems such as Iron Dome cannot defend Israeli civilians from future ground attacks similar to Hamas’s October 7 massacre and that the IDF has taken repeated measures to limit civilian casualties, as detailed in this [NatSec Brief](#) by JINSA’s Director of Research Jacob Olidort and Policy Analyst Yoni Tobin.
- According to [reports](#) from December 9, a Pew Research Center survey found that 65 percent of Americans place substantial blame on Hamas for the war, and 35 percent blame the Israeli government. It also found that Democrats are more than twice as likely than Republicans to blame Israel.
  - » 46 percent of adults aged 18 to 29 indicated that Hamas has substantial responsibility, as opposed to 60 percent of older respondents.
- According to [reports](#) from December 8, citing unnamed Israeli officials, the Biden administration has told Israel that it must conclude the war against Hamas in Gaza by the end of 2023.
  - » An anonymous Israeli official said, “[the United States] advised us not to go into Gaza, but we did,” and “we went into Gaza because that was the only way we could destroy Hamas and free our hostages. They told us, don’t go into the terror tunnels. But if we don’t go into the terror tunnels, there’s no way we can destroy Hamas. They told us not to go into the hospitals despite them being used by Hamas as command and control centers, but we went into those hospitals, and we did what we needed to do.”
  - » The official also said, “we’ll do what we need to do to reach decisive victory.”
- On December 9, the French frigate *Languedoc* [shot down](#) two drones that the Iran-backed Houthis launched over the Red Sea.
- On December 8, the UN Security Council [met](#) to vote on whether to urge an immediate ceasefire in Gaza in the wake of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’ invocation of Article 99 of the UN charter, which [states](#) the secretary-general “may bring to attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.” Thirteen members voted in favor of the resolution, the United Kingdom abstained, and the United States voted against it, thereby [vetoing](#) it.

- » The council had rejected four previous resolution drafts, but the latest called the humanitarian situation “catastrophic,” “[demanded] an immediate ceasefire,” urged protection of civilians and for Hamas to immediately release the rest of its hostages, and called for greater humanitarian aid to Gaza.
- » Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu [praised](#) the U.S. veto of the resolution as “correct” and said, “other countries too need to understand that it is impossible to support the elimination of Hamas on one hand, and on the other hand call for the halting of the war, which would prevent the elimination of Hamas.”
- » Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen [posted](#) on X that the “invocation of Article 99, after it was not used for the war in Ukraine or for the civil war in Syria, is another example of Guterres' biased and one-sided stance. A ceasefire at this time would prevent the collapse of the Hamas terrorist organization, which is committing war crimes and crimes against humanity, and would enable it to continue ruling the Gaza Strip.”
- » During the meeting, Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan [said](#) during a UN Security Council meeting, “why is this draft resolution not directed at Yahya Sinwar and Ismail Haniyeh?,” and “do you not know who was responsible for ending the previous ceasefire and reigniting hostilities?”
  - He added that Hamas is “solely responsible” for the humanitarian conditions in Gaza, and the Security Council should hold it “fully accountable.”
- » Deputy U.S. Ambassador to the UN Robert Wood [said](#) during the meeting, “while the United States strongly supports the durable peace, in which both Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace and security, we do not support calls for an immediate ceasefire.”
  - He also [said](#), “we again think that the best thing that we can do, all of us, for the situation on the ground, is to let the quiet, behind-the-scene diplomacy that is happening, continue,”
- » During the meeting, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres [said](#), “some 130 hostages are still held captive. I call for their immediate and unconditional release, as well as their humane treatment and visits from the International Committee of the Red Cross until they are freed.” He also said, “at the same time, the brutality perpetrated by Hamas can never justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.”
- » The U.K.’s representative to the UN, Barbara Woodward, said the United Kingdom [abstained](#) because it “cannot vote in favor of a resolution which does not condemn the atrocities Hamas committed against innocent Israeli civilians.”
- » On December 8, while speaking on behalf of a group of diplomats visiting Washington, D.C. from Arab and Islamic countries, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan [said](#), “our message is we believe it is absolutely necessary to end the fighting [in Gaza] immediately,” and the UN Security Council should adopt a resolution endorsing a ceasefire.
- » Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan [claimed](#), “Since October 7, the security council has become an Israel protection and defense council ... Another world is possible, but without America.”
- Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offered [different](#) versions of a call that took place between them on December 10. According to Russian media, Russian President Vladimir Putin [criticized](#) Israel for the humanitarian

situation in Gaza, and an Israeli statement said that Netanyahu [condemned](#) the cooperation between Russia and Iran.

- On December 8, the European Union (EU) [said](#) that it added Hamas military commander Mohammed Deif and his deputy Marwan Issa to its sanctions list, linking them to Hamas's October 7 massacre in Israel.

### *Rising Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Protests, and Attacks*

- On December 11, Austrian police [arrested](#) a 16-year-old for allegedly planning to attack a synagogue in Vienna.
- Roughly 4,000 people attended a [march](#) against antisemitism in Brussels on December 10.
- Police estimated that 3,200 people attended a [march](#) against antisemitism in Berlin, while the organizers claimed there were roughly 10,000 people in attendance.
- Roughly 15,000-20,000 people [attended](#) the weekly pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel rally in London on December 9.
- On December 9, over 70 members of Congress [signed](#) a letter demanding the removal of the presidents of Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
  - » The letter, led by Representative Elise Stefanik (R-NY) and Representative Jared Moskowitz (D-FL), said, “testimony provided by presidents of your institutions showed a complete absence of moral clarity and illuminated the problematic double standards and dehumanization of the Jewish communities that your university presidents enabled.”
  - » The letter continued, “there is no context in which calls for the genocide of Jews are acceptable rhetoric. Their failure to unequivocally condemn calls for the systematic murder of Jews is deeply alarming.”
  - » On December 9, University of Pennsylvania President Liz Magill [resigned](#), following widespread backlash and criticism towards her handling of antisemitism on campus and her recent Congressional testimony in which she insisted calling for the genocide of Jews did not necessarily violate the campus code of conduct.
- Speaking to the *Harvard Crimson* on December 8, Harvard University President Claudine Gay [apologized](#) for her remarks during a December 5 congressional hearing, saying she “got caught up in what had become at that point, an extended, combative exchange about policies and procedures.”
  - » Gay added, “what I should have had the presence of mind to do in that moment was return to my guiding truth, which is that calls for violence against our Jewish community — threats to our Jewish students — have no place at Harvard, and will never go unchallenged.”
  - » During the December 5 hearing, when asked whether calling for the genocide of Jews would run afoul of Harvard's code of conduct, Gay said that it is context-dependent, and when “speech crosses into conduct, that violates our policies.”
- On December 9, an elderly Jewish man in Beverly Hills, California, was [assaulted](#) by a man who yelled antisemitic comments at him and beat him with a belt. Beverly Hills Police arrested Jarris Jay Silagi, 44, of Los Angeles, for the assault.
- On December 7, a Jewish man in Brooklyn, New York, was [violently assaulted](#) by a man who yelled antisemitic slurs.

- A man named Mufid Fawaz Alkhader was arrested for firing a shotgun into the air outside a synagogue in Albany, New York on December 7 and was subsequently [charged](#) with possession of a firearm by a prohibited person, according to FBI spokesperson Sarah Ruane. Albany Police Chief Eric Hawkins said the incident is being investigated as a hate crime.
- On December 7, a Jewish woman in London, England, was [brutally beaten](#) and robbed by two attackers. London police are investigating whether the assault was a hate crime.

## Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- Jacob Olidort and Lt Gen (ret.) Steven Blum, “[Communication of intent and the importance of language to deterrence](#),” *Military Times*, December 7, 2023
- Jonathan Ruhe, Yoni Tobin, and Jordan Bridwell, [Iran on Nuclear Precipice as Oversight Dwindles](#), December 7, 2023
- Webinar: [Gaza War Update](#), with IDF Major General (ret.) and JINSA Distinguished Fellow Yaakov Amidror and JINSA Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF Major General (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, December 7, 2023
- Ari Cicurel and Zac Schildcrout, [Failure to Deter Houthi Attacks Endangers Global Shipping](#), December 6, 2023
- Yoni Tobin,  [Hamas War Crimes Harm Palestinians and Israelis Alike](#), December 6, 2023
- Jonathan Harounoff, “[The Pandemic of Academic Antisemitism](#),” *JNS*, December 6, 2023
- Webinar: [Reflections From Law Enforcement Trip to Israel](#), with JINSA Homeland Security Program Director Steven Pomerantz, Executive Director and CEO of the National Sheriffs’ Association Jonathan Thompson, and President of the National Sherriff’s Association Sheriff Greg Champagne of St. Charles Parish, Louisiana, December 5, 2023
- Yoni Tobin, [The United States Must Re-Designate the Houthis as Terrorists](#), December 5, 2023
- Ari Cicurel, [First Preemptive U.S. Strike Since 10/7](#), December 4, 2023
- Zac Schildcrout, [10/7 Attack Highlights Need to Sanction Iran-Backed Terrorists](#), December 1, 2023
- Webinar: [Flying Blind? Electronic Warfare’s Impact on Civilian Planes](#), with JINSA Vice President for Policy Blaise Misztal, Former Deputy Commander of U.S. Central Command Lt Gen Thomas Bergeson, USAF (ret.) and Former Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, U.S. Air Force Lt Gen Joseph Guastella, USAF (ret.), November 29, 2023
- Webinar: [Britain’s Reaction to Israel-Hamas War](#), with JINSA President and CEO Michael Makovsky, Editorial Board Member and Opinion Columnist at The Wall Street Journal Joseph Sternberg, and former president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews Jonathan Arkush, November 27, 2023
- Michael Makovsky, “[What Israel Needs](#),” *The National Interest*, November 24, 2023