

Ari Cicurel Assistant Director of Foreign Policy

Yoni Tobin Policy Analyst

Zachary Schildcrout Policy Analyst

Anna Schaftel Programs and Outreach Associate

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

Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update

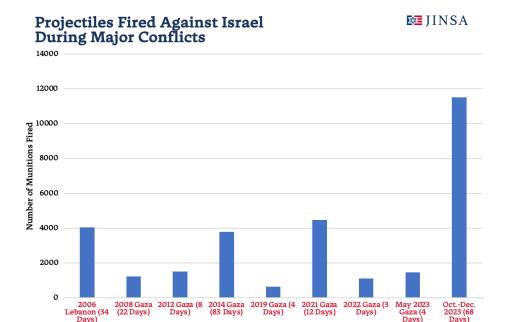
December 14, 2023

- While previous statements from U.S. officials had noted concerns regarding the flare-up along the Israel-Lebanon border, a statement from U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin on December 13 was notable for placing the blame squarely on Hezbollah.
- A recent Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research poll demonstrating that 57 percent of Gazan respondents and 82 percent of West Bank respondents support Hamas's decision to launch its October 7 attack underscores that the United States and Israel will face tremendous obstacles implementing post-war plans for Gaza's governance that meet Israel's security needs.
 - Additional poll results demonstrating that 92 percent of West Bank Palestinians and 81 percent of Gazan Palestinians seek Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas's resignation call into question the legitimacy of the Biden administration's stated goal to implement PA rule in the Gaza Strip.
- Hamas has continued to exploit a humanitarian safe zone in the al-Mawasi area of Gaza to launch at least 116 rockets, 38 of which have misfired and landed in Gaza. Israel has committed not to strike the al-Mawasi area, but Hamas's presence in the area and ability to launch attacks from there undermine Israeli efforts to neutralize the terrorist group.

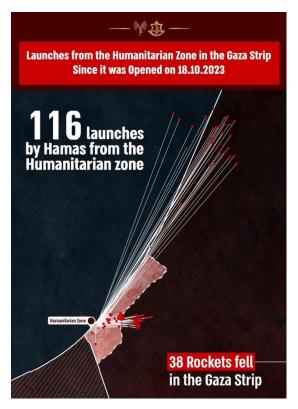
Last 24 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least 11,500 rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Gaza during the war.
 - Sirens sounded in the southern Israeli towns of Sufa, Nir Yitzhah, Kissufim, and Nahal Oz.
 - » On December 13, six rockets launched from Gaza were intercepted over the Israeli city of Ashdod. A rocket fragment struck a supermarket, causing property damage and causing one woman to be treated for an anxiety attack. No further injuries or damage were reported.



- Terrorists in Lebanon continued to launch rockets at northern Israel over the last 24 hours.
 - » Sirens <u>sounded</u> in the northern Israeli towns of Kiryat Shmona, Kfar Giladi, Misgav Am, Margaliot, Manara, and Tel Hai.
 - » On December 14, terrorists <u>launched</u> an unspecified projectile from southern Lebanon at the town of Shomera in northern Israel.
 - » On December 13, the IDF <u>said</u> that the Yiftah area in northern Israel came under fire from several rockets from southern Lebanon, which <u>landed</u> in unpopulated areas. Earlier that day, an unspecified number of rockets launched from southern Lebanon landed in open areas near Rosh Hanikra and other unspecified areas in northern Israel.
- On December 13, Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh <u>said</u> in a televised speech that "any arrangement" for a post-war Gaza that excludes Hamas or other "resistance factions" is "a delusion."
- A poll published on December 13 <u>showed</u> that 57 percent of Gaza respondents and 82 percent of West Bank respondents support Hamas's decision to launch the October 7 massacre. According to the poll, only 10 percent of respondents believe Hamas has committed war crimes in the war.
 - » 88 percent of respondents–92 percent in the West Bank and 81 percent in Gaza–<u>seek</u> Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas's resignation.
 - » 44 percent of West Bank respondents said they support Hamas, and 42 percent in Gaza.
- On December 14, Israeli media outlets <u>reported</u> that Hamas senior official Mousa Abu Marzouk said that Hamas may consider recognizing Israel as a state as part of a solution to the conflict, saying, "you should follow the official stance. The official stance is that the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] has recognized the state of Israel."
- On December 13, the IDF <u>announced</u> that since October 18, when it designated the al-Mawasi area in southern Gaza as a humanitarian safe zone to which civilians can flee, Hamas has fired 116 rockets from the zone towards Israel, of which 38 landed inside the Gaza Strip.



Source: Israel Defense Forces

IDF Operations

- The IDF continued to expand its operations in southern Gaza over the last 24 hours.
 - On December 14, the IDF's 460th Armored Brigade battled Hamas operatives in the Kamal Adan Hospital in northern Gaza after terrorists fired upon the troops from a building in the hospital complex. Approximately 70 Hamas operatives ultimately surrendered to the IDF and handed over firearms and equipment.
 - On December 13, troops from the 55th Brigade's Reconnaissance Battalion killed several Hamas operatives who fired on them from a school in Khan Younis.
 - The Hamas operatives fired guns and launched rocket-propelled grenades at the soldiers, and IDF troops subsequently found underground terror infrastructure under the school.
 - The IDF eliminated Hamas observation posts and terror tunnel shafts in Khan Younis with airstrikes.
- The IDF launched strikes against terrorists in Lebanon who had conducted attacks against Israel in the last 24 hours.
 - On December 14, the IDF conducted strikes against Hezbollah targets responsible for attacking the northern Israeli community of Shtula.
 - On December 14, the IDF struck Hezbollah terrorist infrastructure and military compounds in southern Lebanon. That same day, Lebanese media outlets reported that Israel struck targets in southern Lebanon near the villages of Aitaroun and Maroun al-Ras.

- » On December 13, the IDF struck Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon, including several terror cells along the Lebanese-Israeli border, after earlier rocket attacks from Lebanon.
- » On December 13, the IDF said that it struck a southern Lebanon-based Hezbollah cell, and it used a fighter jet to strike a Hezbollah site. The IDF launched strikes earlier as
- The IDF said that it struck the source of the earlier rocket attack targeting Yiftah on December 13.
- The IDF continued operations in Jenin in the West Bank.
 - » According to Israeli media reports, the IDF, the Shin Bet, and the Israeli Border Police continued their now three-day-long raid on terrorist targets in Jenin, which has yielded hundreds of arrests.
 - The Palestinian Authority's Wafa news agency reported on December 13 that two people were killed overnight in Jenin in an Israeli drone strike.
 - The IDF announced it had taken disciplinary action against several soldiers who were filmed singing Hanukkah songs and the Jewish prayer of Shema Yisrael in a Jenin mosque, after the footage circulated online. The soldiers were removed from operational duty, and the IDF said, "the behavior of the soldiers in the videos is serious and is completely contrary to IDF values ... the soldiers will be disciplined accordingly."
- On December 14, Israel's Channel 12 reported that Israel is preparing to present the United States with a schedule for drawing down the intensive phase of the war in Gaza by the end of January.
 - » According to the report, after the end of the intensive phase, the IDF will take several weeks to withdraw its forces from the heart of Gaza and deploy its troops on defensive lines both inside and outside Gaza.
 - Following this stage, which is expected to last through most of 2024, Israel will conduct localized raids and operations in order to overthrow Hamas.
 - The report also stated that Israel "is aiming to maintain control over Gaza for the foreseeable future."
- On December 14, the IDF dropped leaflets across Gaza offering a sum of \$400,000 for information leading to the location of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar and \$300,000 for help in locating his brother Mahmoud. The leaflets also said that a sum of \$200,000 would be offered for information leading to the finding of Rafeh Salama, commander of Hamas' Khan Younis Brigade, and that details leading to the finding of Hamas military operations leader Mohammed Deif would be rewarded with \$100,000.
- On December 13, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said that "Israel will continue the war against Hamas with or without international support," adding, "a ceasefire at the current stage is a gift to the terrorist organization Hamas, and will allow it to return and threaten the residents of Israel."
 - Cohen also called on the international community to "effectively and aggressively" act to protect global shipping from continued Houthi attacks.
- During a December 13 interview with Sky News, Israel's Ambassador to the United Kingdom Tzipi Hotovely said, "the answer is absolutely no" when asked whether the Palestinians will have a state.
 - She also said, "I think it's about time for the world to realize that the Oslo [Accords] paradigm failed on the 7th of October and we need to build a new one," and "the reason

- the Oslo Accords failed is because the Palestinians never wanted to have a state next to Israel. They want to have a state from the river to the sea."
- She asked the interviewer, "why are you obsessed with a formula that never worked, that created these radical people on the other side?"
- Hotovely argued further that Gazans should be "re-educated" as German and Japanese citizens were following World War II, saying, "those two societies turned out to be good Western countries," while "under the UN name, the UNRWA schools are becoming terror schools. If you have the UN involvement, forget about refugee camps. Why should they be refugees after 70 years of having an independent life? They could've built their own life, but they didn't."
- » She rejected the idea that Israel seeks to mimic China's policy of putting Uyghurs into "re-education camps," and said, "obviously, we're not interested in governing the Palestinians, but we are interested in making sure that Gaza won't become another terror hub."
- » She insisted that "we will demilitarize Gaza ... and we believe that together with our allies and with the moderate Arab countries we can build a better future."

Humanitarian Efforts

On December 13, Egypt announced that, in accordance with Israel, it would increase the volume of fuel sent daily into Gaza from 129,000 liters to 189,000 liters. Egypt also announced that due to Israel's opening of the Kerem Shalom crossing for inspecting aid trucks entering into Gaza, the number of aid trucks entering Gaza daily would increase from 60 trucks to 80 trucks a day.

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,245 people in Israel have been killed, and another 6,900 have been injured in the war.
 - » 445 Israeli soldiers have been killed.
 - 116 IDF soldiers have been killed during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - On December 14, the IDF announced the death of Master Sgt. (res.) Elisha Loewenstern, 38, from Harish.
 - 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, a Tanzanian national, and a Turkish national.
- According to unverified figures from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry, at least 18,608 people have been killed in Gaza, and 50,594 have been injured during the war.
 - » On December 4, 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, at least 288 people have been killed, and an additional 3,573 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 nine have been found or declared 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.
- On December 13, the Facebook page of Kibbutz Nahal Oz announced that its officials were informed that Tanzanian national Joshua Mollel, 21, who had been missing since October 7. was murdered in Gaza. Hamas is holding his body.
- On December 13, the family of Tal Chaimi, 41, of Nir Yitzhak announced that authorities informed them Chaimi was killed in the October 7 attack and that terrorists are believed to be holding his body.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On December 14, a missile fired from territory controlled by the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen missed the MV Maersk Gibraltar, a Hong Kong-flagged container ship, as it sailed through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, according to a U.S. official.
- Referring to U.S. plans to potentially form a multinational coalition to safeguard shipping in the Red Sea amid repeated Houthi attacks against vessels in international waters, Iran's Defense Minister Mohammad Reza Ashtiani told the state-run ISNA news agency. "if they make such an irrational move, they will be faced with extraordinary problems."
 - » He added, "nobody can make a move in a region where we have predominance."

U.S. and International Response

On December 14, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan will arrive in Israel to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Isaac Herzog, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, Minister Without Portfolio Benny Gantz, and additional Israeli leaders at the Tel

- Aviv-based Kirya military headquarters. According to a statement from the Prime Minister's office, Sullivan is a quest of Israeli National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi.
- On December 13, President Joe Biden met with the families of American hostages held in Gaza at the White House for roughly two hours. Thirteen family members attended in person, and three others attended by phone.
 - According to hostage family member Jonathan Dekel-Chan, during the meeting, "we got further affirmation that the Biden administration — the president, the secretary of state — are completely committed to gaining the release of all the hostages, including the Americans among them. They're doing absolutely everything they can, through every channel and with every tool that they have to accomplish that."
- During a press conference on December 13, White House National Security Council Spokesperson John Kirby noted the map that the IDF published notifying civilians in Gaza which neighborhoods it plans to conduct operations and argued, "that's basically telegraphing your punches. There are very few modern militaries in the world that would do that. I don't know that we would do that."
 - » Kirby added, "we are seeing them act on that intent [to reduce civilian casualties] in positive ways," including increased use of ground forces, "which allows you to be more precise."
- Kirby also said during the same press briefing that President Biden's remarks the previous day that Israel's bombing in Gaza is "indiscriminate" "reflected the reality of global opinion. which also matters. Our support for Israel is not diminished, but we have had concerns and we have expressed those concerns about the prosecution of this military campaign, even while acknowledging that it is Hamas that started this and that it's Hamas that is continuing it."
 - Kirby said, "the president is very grateful for the time that [family members of Americans held hostage in Gaza] afforded him [during their meeting]. He was moved by their stories, by the love they feel, by the hope they still harbor and he harbors that hope too. and he ... is acting on that."
 - Kirby said that Hamas is "in violation of the deal it negotiated in Doha" by continuing to hold young women hostage and added that "we know what [Hamas has] proven capable of doing to voung women."
 - He argued further that a unilateral ceasefire with Hamas "is not the answer," but "if [Hamas] really cared about the Palestinian people the way they claimed to, they would [surrender the 10/7 perpetrators, release the hostages, and lay down their weapons]. That they haven't done it speaks volumes."
 - » Kirby noted that the United States still seeks to augment entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and protect civilians and is discussing with Israel and the UN implementation of additional humanitarian corridors with "brief daily pauses."
 - Noting that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said earlier on December 13 that Israel will probably open the Kerem Shalom crossing for humanitarian aid, Kirby said, "this will be the first direct entry of aid from Israel into Gaza since the 7th of October, so it's not insignificant," and "the pending opening of Kerem Shalom is one example of what's to come out of there, but there needs to be more."
- U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin released a statement on December 13 that "condemned the actions of Lebanese Hizballah that threaten communities in Israel and called for calm along the blue line."

- On December 13, the U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned several Hamas officials: Gazabased members Ismail Barhum and Nizar Awadallah; West Bank-based Hassan Al-Wardian; Lebanon-based Ali Baraka and Maher Obeid; and Turkey-based Haroun Nasser Al-Din, Jihad Yaghmour, and Mehmet Kaya. The United Kingdom sanctioned Hamas co-founder Mahmoud al-Zahar and head of external relations Ali Baraka, as well as five others.
 - U.S. Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian Nelson said, "Hamas continues to rely heavily on networks of well-placed officials and affiliates, exploiting seemingly permissive jurisdictions to direct fundraising campaigns for ... funneling those illicit proceeds to support its military activities in Gaza."
 - The British Foreign Office said that Baraka "has publicly defended the October 7 attacks and sought to justify the taking of hostages." British Foreign Secretary David Cameron explained, "Hamas can have no future in Gaza," and "today's sanctions on Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad will continue to cut off their access to funding and isolate them further."
 - Cameron also said, "we will continue to work with partners to reach a long-term political solution so that Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace."
- According to reporting on December 13 by Barak Ravid of Axios, the United States has delayed providing the licenses for 20,000 M16 rifles to Israel because of concerns about Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank. The U.S. State Department is conducting another review of the sale, several weeks after the deal was approved.
 - » According to a U.S. official who spoke with Ravid, "[t]his deal isn't moving anywhere at the moment. We need more assurances from Israel about the steps it is going to take to curb attacks by violent settlers and to make sure no new U.S. weapons will reach settlers in the West Bank."
 - » According to the report, Israel has assured the Biden administration and Congress that the rifles would not go to civilian teams in the West Bank.
- On December 13, CNN reported, citing senior U.S. officials, that the United States has no plans to condition military aid to Israel despite President Biden's comments on December 12 that Israel is engaged in the "indiscriminate bombing" of civilians in Gaza and President Biden's comments on November 29 that conditioning aid to Israel is a "worthwhile thought."
- On December 13, U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters that Israel informed the United States that photos of Palestinian men being detained in Gaza in their underwear should not have been taken or distributed, and that such photos will not be taken in the future.
- During a December 14 news conference in Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin said there is a "catastrophe" in Gaza, and "everybody here and around the world can see and look at the special military operation [in Ukraine] and at what is happening in Gaza and feel the difference." He argued further, "there is nothing like this in Ukraine," and claimed that Ukraine is run by "Nazis."
- On December 13, British Foreign Secretary David Cameron announced a travel ban on Israeli settlers responsible for attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank.
- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian spoke on December 13 and "agreed to expedite the work on completing the coordination of a new grand interstate treaty, which has reached a high degree of readiness," according to a statement from Lavrov's office.
- On December 13, Pope Francis called again for a ceasefire and for the release of the hostages taken captive by Hamas on October 7, stating, "may both sides involved have

courage to take up the negotiations again, and I ask everyone to take on the urgent job of getting humanitarian aid to the population of Gaza. They are at the end of their rope and really need it. Free all the hostages immediately who saw some hope in the ceasefire a few days ago. May this great suffering for the Israelis and the Palestinians end. Please no to arms and yes to peace."

On December 13, Iraq arrested several attackers who launched rockets at the U.S. embassy last week, with the prime minister's office indicating that "preliminary information indicates that some of them are connected to certain security services."

Rising Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Protests, and Attacks

- On December 14, Danish police made several arrests in a coordinated operation carried out "on suspicion of preparation for a terrorist attack."
- On December 13, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution condemning the testimony of the presidents of Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on campus antisemitism, denouncing their actions as "evasive and dismissive" and urging them to resign.
 - » University of Pennsylvania President Liz Magill resigned on December 9.
- On December 13, an 11-foot menorah outside of the Chabad Center in Oakland, California, was torn apart in an act of vandalism, with many of the pieces thrown in the nearby lake.
- On December 13, a 13-year-old boy was charged by police after sharing his plans to carry out a mass shooting targeting a synagogue in Canton, Ohio, on social media. According to court documents, he created a "detailed plan," which he shared on social media and the app Discord, targeting Temple Israel in Canton.
- On December 13, the IDF and Israeli Postal Company websites were hacked by pro-Palestinian hackers. The sites were temporarily taken offline to thwart the hackers and have since returned to their normal function.
- On December 12, two Jewish students at Brown University reported that someone broke into their apartment, which had an Israeli flag displayed in their window, and left a note on their kitchen counter saying, "Those that live for death will die by their own hand."

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- VADM John Bird, USN (ret.), Jacob Olidort, and Ari Cicurel, "Deterrence Is More Than Deployments: The Effects, and Limitations, of the Administration's Naval Movements in the Middle East," RealClearDefense, December 14, 2023
- Jacob Olidort and Yoni Tobin, <u>EU Foreign Policy Chief Defames Israel With</u> Baseless Claims, December 13, 2023
- LTG H. Steven Blum, ARNG (ret.) and Jacob Olidort, "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