



Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update January 11, 2024

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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

- During a January 10 JINSA [webinar](#) about U.S. strategy toward Iran, former CENTCOM Commander and JINSA Generals and Admirals Program trip participant Gen Frank McKenzie, USMC (ret.) argued that “I think escalation is not good ... but the principal goal of our foreign policy cannot be prevention of escalation.”
 - » He added, “early action is usually better ... you want to demonstrate capability, and you want to show that you’re willing to use it ... the Iranians, as an example, have never doubted our capabilities. But they have always doubted our will.”
 - » JINSA President and CEO Dr. Michael Makovsky observed that “it always seems like we self-deter with the Iranians, no matter if it’s a Republican or a Democrat administration.”
 - » Noting the importance of post-war planning in Gaza, Gen McKenzie argued, “ Hamas can have no role in [Gaza’s] end-state. No role. But beyond that ... the objective has to be more than removing the military and political echelons of Hamas.”
- South Africa’s presentation at the International Court of Justice on January 11 of its allegations that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza underscored the spuriousness its claims.
 - » South African representative Tembeka Ngcukaitobi argued that Israel was guilty of both genocidal conduct and intent, but, as JINSA has [noted](#), the IDF’s efforts to protect Palestinian civilians are likely unprecedented. In the first month of the war, Israel [dropped](#) over 1.5 million pamphlets, made nearly 6 million calls, and sent nearly 4.4 million texts to Gazans warning them to evacuate from combat zones.
 - » Furthermore, South African Justice Minister Ronald Lamola [made](#) a number of provably false factual statements in his address, including alleging that Israel has exercised control over “civilian infrastructure” in the Gaza Strip since 2004 and that “entry and exit to Gaza is strictly prohibited, with Israel operating the only entry points.”
 - In fact, Israel has not [controlled](#) any territory inside the Gaza Strip since September 2005.
 - » Furthermore, the Gaza Strip shares a roughly eight-mile-long border with Egypt, and prior to the October 7 attacks, Israel had [permitted](#) over 15,000 Gazan residents to enter Israel daily for work.

Last 24 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least 13,000 rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been [fired](#) at Israel during the war.

Gaza

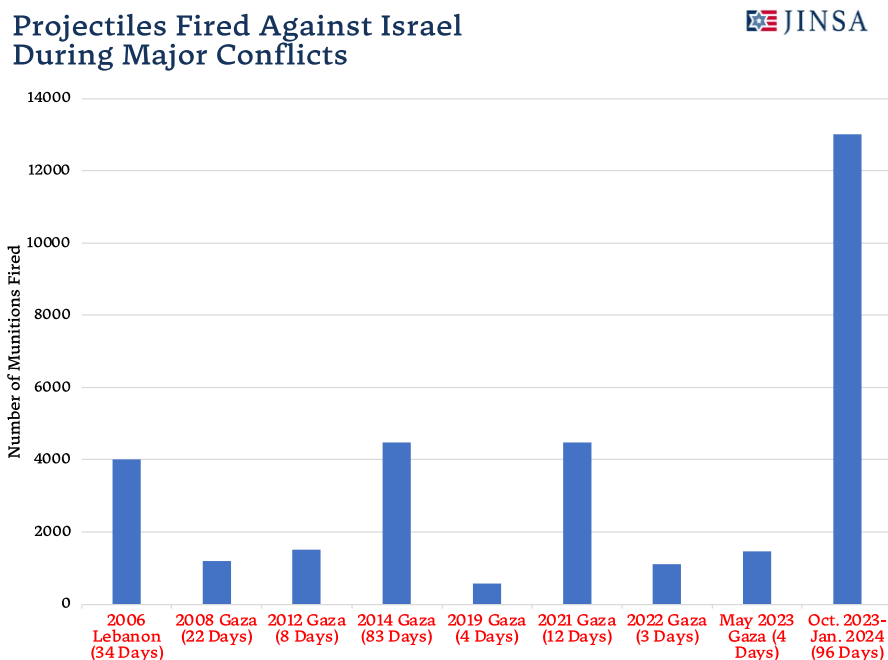
- Sirens sounded in [Kissufim](#).

Lebanon

- Sirens sounded in [Metula](#) and [Arab al-Aramshe](#).
- On January 11, terrorists in Lebanon [fired](#) three rockets toward Arab al-Aramshe in Israel's north, landing in open areas.
- On January 11, incoming drone alert sirens [sounded](#) in a number of communities across northern Israel.

West Bank

- On January 11, Israeli Police and the Shin Bet [announced](#) that they had foiled a terrorist plot by two East Jerusalem-based supporters of the Islamic State.
 - » Authorities said they had arrested a 21-year-old and a 23-year-old from the neighborhood of Jabel Mukaber who were planning an attack involving using an explosive device to kill Israeli security forces.
 - » Authorities said they found Islamic State propaganda videos on the suspects' electronic devices.



IDF Operations

Gaza

- On January 11, the IDF [carried out](#) a series of strikes in Khan Younis and Maghazi.

- » In Maghazi, IDF aircraft struck three Hamas gunmen IDF troops had identified exiting a tunnel.
- » IDF troops identified another eight Hamas operatives en route toward a school in Maghazi, killing them with sniper fire.
- » In Khan Younis, the IDF carried out an airstrike against three Hamas operatives exiting a building that housed a weapons cache.
- » The IDF also carried out an airstrike against two Hamas operatives who were attempting to plant an explosive device in Khan Younis.
- On January 10, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu released a video address on X in which he [outlined](#) Israel's efforts to protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza.
 - » Prime Minister Netanyahu said that "Israel has no intention of permanently occupying Gaza or displacing its civilian population. Israel is fighting Hamas terrorists, not the Palestinian population, and we are doing so in full compliance with international law."
 - » Netanyahu added, "the IDF is doing its utmost to minimize civilian casualties while Hamas is doing its utmost to maximize them by using Palestinian civilians as human shields. The IDF urges Palestinian civilians to leave war zones by disseminating leaflets, making phone calls, providing safe passage corridors, while Hamas prevents Palestinians from leaving at gunpoint, and often with gunfire."
 - » Netanyahu concluded that once Israeli objectives are achieved, "Gaza can be demilitarized and deradicalized, thereby creating a better future for Israelis and Palestinians alike."
- On January 10, the IDF [said](#) it finished operations in Khuza'a, near Khan Younis, during which troops from the 5th Reserve Brigade killed several members of Hamas and destroyed its infrastructure, including rocket launchers, observation posts, weapons stores, and roughly 40 tunnel shafts and subterranean networks.
 - » The IDF added that substantial amounts of terrorist infrastructure were located in schools and other civilian buildings.
- On January 10, IDF Arab-language spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee [said](#) that the IDF raided Hamas military wing deputy chief Marwan Issa's luxury home in Gaza, which has a pool, large yard, and expensive furniture.
 - » Adraee said, "this is further evidence of the complete disconnect between the Hamas leadership, including the leaders of the military wing, who live a life of luxury and enjoy great wealth, and a large segment of the Gaza population that issues distress calls for donations and international aid," and "Hamas leaders are in heaven and Gaza residents are in hell."
- Israeli war cabinet member Benny Gantz [said](#) on January 10 that "the achievements of the IDF continue to grow," and "in large parts of the Strip, Hamas is effectively no longer in control." He added, "we need to continue; if we stop now, Hamas will resume its control," and "we are deep in the middle of dismantling the terror infrastructure."
 - » Gantz also said, "the most important thing is returning the hostages; it is prioritized over all elements of fighting," and "to the hostages, if you can hear me, I want you to know that we're doing everything we can to bring you back to your loved ones."
 - » Addressing rumors about a potential hostage deal negotiated with Qatari and Egyptian help, Gantz said, "I've heard all sorts of rumors about deals, but there is always movement and activity, and as soon as there is something ready we will update you."

- On January 10, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [announced](#), “we are continuing to operate with determination, above and below ground in Khan Younis. The forces found a tunnel there, where hostages resided in difficult conditions under the ground.”
- On January 10, the IDF [announced](#) that two *Al Jazeera* journalists killed in a January 7 IDF airstrike in southern Gaza were terrorists who were “actively involved in attacks against IDF forces.”
 - » Hamza Wael Dahdouh and Mustafa Thuria, who were killed in an Israeli airstrike on their vehicle near the southern Gazan city of Rafah after they were seen operating a drone, were senior members of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Hamas, respectively.
 - The IDF said that Dahdouh was a member of PIJ’s engineering unit and previously served as deputy commander of the rocket force in PIJ’s Zeitoun Battalion and released a photo showing his name on a PIJ document.
 - The IDF said Thuria was a deputy commander of Hamas’s Gaza City brigade, according to intelligence materials found by the IDF in Gaza.
- On January 10, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society [said](#), “four members of the Palestinian Red Crescent ambulance crews were martyred due to the targeting by the occupation [Israel] of an ambulance vehicle on Salah al-Din Street, at the entrance of Deir al-Balah.” However, as JINSA Policy Analyst Yoni Tobin has [noted](#), Hamas operatives have admitted that Hamas uses ambulances to evacuate fighters.

Lebanon

- On January 10, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to strike a Hezbollah command center and rocket launcher in southern Lebanon.
- On January 10, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi [said](#) during an assessment with commanders in central Gaza, “I see the capabilities here ... after what you have done, there is no village in Lebanon, there are no fortified areas in Lebanon that you cannot enter and dismantle. We will put you in the necessary places, you will do what is necessary there.”

West Bank

- On January 11, Israeli forces [operating](#) in the northern West Bank village of Jaba’ killed Majdi Abd al-Latif Fashafsha, a wanted senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative, and arrested another wanted Palestinian.

Humanitarian Efforts

- According to [reports](#) from January 10, citing Israel’s *Channel 13*, a Qatari-backed plan that the Israeli security cabinet was reportedly supposed to discuss the evening of January 10, would involve Israel allowing Hamas leaders to leave Gaza in exchange for the gradual release of all hostages and a full withdrawal of IDF troops from the strip.
- On January 10, World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus [said](#) that the organization canceled a mission to northern Gaza for the sixth time because its visitation requests had not been approved and it had not received adequate security assurances.
 - » During a virtual press conference in Geneva, the Director-General said that “intense bombardment, restrictions on movement, fuel shortage and interrupted communications make it impossible for WHO and our partners to reach those in need,” and “we call on Israel to approve requests by WHO and other partners to deliver humanitarian aid.”

- On January 10, the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), the Israeli agency responsible for implementing Israeli policy regarding Palestinian civilian issues in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, [announced](#) that Israel is working to boost the flow of aid going into Gaza but that “there is no food shortage in Gaza.”
 - » COGAT’s Coordination and Liaison Administration to Gaza head Col. Moshe Tetro said, “before the war there was an average of 70 trucks carrying food entering Gaza every day. The average last week was 110 trucks.”
 - » Tetro also noted that “in terms of food, the reserves in Gaza are sufficient for the near term,” but that “if there are any organizations that would like to bring more food, we are happy to facilitate it — to the south and to the north.”
 - » Tetro added that “the problem lies with the international organizations processing and receiving the aid.”

Post-War Gaza Planning

- On January 11, Israel’s *Channel 13* news [reported](#) that a senior IDF officer had held talks with Egypt focused on increasing humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip and the future of the Philadelphi Route, which runs along the entirety of Egypt’s border with the Gaza Strip.

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people in Israel have been [killed](#) and at least 11,000 have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 520 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 189 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 33 [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 23,357 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza and 59,410 have been [injured](#) 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, 342 people have been [killed](#) and an additional 4,148 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, one was [mistakenly](#) killed by the IDF, and one was [killed](#) during an IDF attempt to rescue him.
 - » 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](#) 136 hostages, according to Israeli government spokesperson Eylon Levy, a figure that includes the dead bodies of 25 hostages and four abducted prior to October 7.
 - » Many of the hostages are foreign or dual nationals, including up to 8 [American](#) nationals, 6 [German](#) nationals, 13 [Thai](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 3 [British](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals.
 - » According to IDF spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the 136 hostages [includes](#) two Israeli civilians and the bodies of two IDF soldiers held in Gaza since 2014 and 2015.
- On January 10, Hamas political bureau member Osama Hamdan [said](#) in a press conference that Hamas will not return any hostages “alive” unless Israel agrees to Hamas’s conditions.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- U.S. intelligence officials have assessed that there is an increased risk of Hezbollah targeting Americans in the Middle East or potentially even in the United States, according to a January 11 [report](#) in *Politico* citing four U.S. intelligence sources.
- On January 11, Iran [confirmed](#) that it [seized](#) the *St Nikolasa*, a Marshall Islands-flagged tanker with Iraqi crude bound for Turkey. Armed intruders boarded the vessel offshore of the Omani city of Soha.
 - » The United States had seized the same vessel in September 2023 when it sailed under the name [Suez Rajan](#) in a sanctions enforcement operation for carrying illicit Iranian oil. Following the U.S. seizure of the vessel, Iran had [warned](#) that the U.S. action “will not go unanswered.”
- According to Iraqi Kurdistan’s counterterrorism service, on January 10, defense systems [intercepted](#) an armed drone above northern Iraq’s Erbil airport. U.S. and other forces are stationed at the airport. The Iran-backed militia consortium Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility.
- On January 10, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei [posted](#) on X in Hebrew that “the crimes of the Zionist entity will not be forgotten. Even after the disappearance of this entity from the face of the earth, these crimes and the murder of thousands of children and women will be recorded in the books.”

U.S. and International Response

- On January 10, while visiting Bahrain to meet with Bahrain's King Hamad and other Bahraini officials, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [called for](#) Houthi attacks to stop, stating that the United States has "repeatedly tried to make clear to Iran, as other countries have, as well, that the support that they're providing to the Houthis, including for these actions, needs to stop."
- On January 11, U.S. special envoy Amos Hochstein [traveled](#) to Beirut to meet with Lebanese officials "in an effort to advance discussions to restore calm" along the Lebanese-Israeli border, according to a White House National Security Council spokesperson.
 - » The spokesperson stated, "the United States has made clear it does not support the ongoing conflict spreading into Lebanon and continues to exhaust all diplomatic options to see Israeli and Lebanese civilians return to their homes and live in security and stability."
- On January 11, South Africa [presented](#) its [case](#) at the International Court of Justice accusing Israel of committing genocide during its operations in Gaza.
 - » South African Justice Minister Ronald Lamola [alleged](#) that "the violence and the destruction in Palestine did not begin on October 7, they have experienced violence for the last 76 years ... In the Gaza Strip since 2004 Israel exercises control over land crossings, civilian infrastructure. Entry and exit to Gaza is strictly prohibited, with Israel operating the only entry points ... Gaza is still considered to be under occupation by international law."
 - » Adila Hassim, an attorney presenting the case for South Africa, [claimed](#), "South Africa contends that Israel has transgressed Article II of the convention, by actions which show a systematic pattern of conduct from which genocide can be inferred ... Palestinians in Gaza are being killed by Israeli weaponry and bombs from air, land and sea. They are also at immediate risk of death from starvation and disease, due to the destruction of Palestinians towns, the limited aid being allowed in, and the impossibility of distributing aid as the bombs fall. This makes life impossible."
 - She argued, "it is not necessary for the court to come to a final view whether Israel's conduct constitutes genocide but only whether some of the acts might possibly be considered within the convention's provisions ... It is clear that at least some, if not all, of these acts do fall within the convention provisions ... Israel has also deliberately imposed considerations on Gaza calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the people."
 - » Tembeka Ngcukaitobi, a lawyer for South Africa, [claimed](#) that the "destruction of Palestinian life in all its manifestations" is a result of "genocidal rhetoric" by senior Israeli officials, including:
 - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repeatedly referencing the biblical imperative for the Jewish people to "remember what Amalek did to you," and Ngcukaitobi observed that King Saul was commanded to kill every Amalekite man, woman, and child;
 - Defense Minister Yoav Gallant describing Palestinians as "human animals," though in fact, Gallant only [said](#) that Israel was "fighting against human animals," referring to Hamas;
 - National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir saying that those who supported Hamas's 10/7 attack should be targeted by IDF operations in Gaza;

- President Isaac Herzog’s [statement](#) that “it’s an entire nation out there that is responsible” and his signing of an artillery shell that would be used by the IDF in Gaza; and
- Allegedly inflammatory comments by Israeli musicians, journalists, and others about “erasing” Gaza.
- Ngcukaitobi further [argued](#) that “any suggestion that Israeli officials did not mean what they said, or were misunderstood by soldiers on the ground, should be rejected by this court.”
- » Blinne Ni Gharalaigh, another lawyer for South Africa, [claimed](#) that “huge swaths of Gaza are being wiped from the map. Experts warn that deaths from deprivation and disease risk outstripping deaths from war.”
- » Prof. Vaughan Lowe of Oxford University [argued](#) that Article 51 of the UN charter, which permits a country to defend itself from attack, does not apply to Israel’s war in Gaza because Israel remains “in occupation of Gaza” due to its control of its access points.
 - Lowe further contended that “Israel says it aims to destroy Hamas. But months of bombing, flattening entire residential blocks, cutting off food and water to an entire population cannot credibly be argued to be a manhunt for Hamas.”
- » On January 11, Israel’s *Haaretz* [reported](#), citing sources in the Israeli Justice Ministry, that Israel believes the International Court of Justice could issue injunctions against Israel, but that the court will not issue a formal order to stop the fighting in Gaza.
 - The sources said that the injunctions could include demanding Israel increase humanitarian aid flows into Gaza, forming an investigative panel to scrutinize Israeli conduct, or issuing an order for Israel to permit Palestinians to return to their homes in northern Gaza.
- On January 11, U.S. State Department spokesman Matt Miller [reiterated](#) that the United States is opposed to the International Court of Justice hearing proceedings against Israel for alleged violations of the 1949 Genocide Convention.
 - » Miller said in a statement that “allegations that Israel is committing genocide are unfounded. In fact, it is those who are violently attacking Israel who continue to openly call for the annihilation of Israel and the mass murder of Jews,” adding, “genocide is one of the most heinous acts any entity or individual can commit, and such allegations should only be made with the greatest of care.”
 - » Miller added, “Israel has the right to defend itself against Hamas’ terrorist acts — acts that Hamas has vowed to repeat again and again until Israel is completely destroyed. Israel is operating in an exceptionally challenging environment in Gaza, an urban battlespace where Hamas intentionally embeds itself with and hides behind civilians.”
- Western intelligence officials suspect that Qatar knew more about Hamas’s attack on 10/7 than they have indicated, according to a [report](#) in *Politico* on January 11. One anonymous European official told Politico that they are “still looking into it” and that there is “smoke” but no smoking gun.
- On January 10, Jordan hosted a summit in the southern city of Aqaba with Egyptian President Abdel Fatah el-Sissi and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.
 - » According to a joint Egyptian-Jordanian press release, el-Sissi and Jordan’s King Abdullah [reiterated](#) their calls for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to be unified under a Palestinian government, and called for a “decisive stance” by the international community to pressure Israel into a ceasefire to end its “aggression” in Gaza.

- » The press release also [stated](#) that the officials reject “any attempt to reoccupy parts of Gaza” and any displacement of Palestinians.
- On January 10, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock [traveled](#) to Beirut, Lebanon, to discuss the war with Lebanese officials, including Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati. During the visit, Baerbock pledged approximately \$16 million in security assistance to bolster the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).
 - » Baerbock also said the LAF must be able to exercise “effective control” over southern Lebanon and “contain armed militias and terrorist organizations,” a reference to Hezbollah.
 - » Furthermore, Baerbock argued that an escalation between Israel and Hezbollah would be a “catastrophe” for both Israel and Lebanon and called for Hezbollah to withdraw approximately 15 miles north to the Litani River as required by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701.
- On January 10, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani [said](#) that Iraq seeks the exit of U.S.-led forces from the country but does not have a deadline. He told Reuters, “there is a need to reorganize this relationship so that it is not a target or justification for any party, internal or foreign, to tamper with stability in Iraq and the region.”
 - » He added, “let’s agree on a time frame (for the U.S.-led coalition’s exit) that is, honestly, quick, so that they don’t remain long and the attacks keep happening,” and “this (end of the Gaza war) is the only solution. Otherwise, we will see more expansion of the arena of conflict in a sensitive region for the world that holds much of its energy supply.”
 - » However, a January 9 [report](#) in *Politico* said that, according to a January 6 State Department cable that the outlet viewed, al-Sudani’s senior advisers told U.S. officials that his words were “an attempt to satisfy domestic political audiences” and that al-Sudani “remained committed” to continued coalition presence in Iraq.

Rising Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Protests, and Attacks

- On January 11, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) began proceedings on charges filed by South Africa against Israel, calling for the court to charge Israel with genocide.
 - » Several hundred people [held](#) a rally in solidarity with Israel outside The Hague in the Netherlands, where the ICJ is located.
 - » Dozens of anti-Israel protesters also [gathered](#) outside The Hague to hold their own rally.
- On January 10, U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona [held](#) a roundtable with Jewish and Muslim students at Dartmouth College to discuss antisemitism and Islamophobia on college campuses.
- On January 9, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights [opened](#) an investigation into Brown University over the school’s alleged discrimination against Jewish students.

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- Webinar: [Deterring Iranian-linked Aggression](#), with Gen Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., USMC (ret.) and Dr. Michael Makovsky, January 10, 2024
- Jonathan Ruhe and Yoni Tobin, [Iran Accelerates into the Nuclear Gray Zone](#), January 10, 2024

- Webinar: [Hamas, Iran, and the Future of Jihadism Post-10/7](#), with Dr. Jacob Olidort, Dr. Aaron Zelin, and Dr. Cole Bunzel, January 8, 2024
- Morgan Lorraine Viña and Yoni Tobin, [Actions by the United Nations Undermine Israel's Right to Self-Defense](#), January 5, 2024
- VADM Mark Fox, USN (ret.) and Jacob Olidort, " [Bahrain: Bold Partner for Middle East Peace](#)," *RealClearDefense*, January 5, 2024
- Gen Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., USMC (ret.), " [Lesson of the Strike That Killed Soleimani](#)," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2024
- Sander Gerber and Robert Wexler, " [To solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: First confront Iran](#)," *The Hill*, January 4, 2024