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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update January 29, 2024

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. JINSA will release the Swords of Iron Update on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below.

Analysis

- As JINSA's Blaise Misztal and Ari Cicurel argued in a [NatSec Brief](#) after the deadly attack on January 28 that killed three U.S. service members and injured at least 34, "the killing of U.S. troops is a red line that demands a strong response. Failing to do so will result in more American casualties. To stop Iran-linked attacks, the United States will need to use force directly against Iranian regime targets as well as surge air defense assets to the Middle East that can better protect U.S. personnel and regional partners."
- The decision by roughly a dozen countries, including the United States, to suspend aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) over the weekend strongly suggests the veracity of Israeli allegations—including the names of participating staffers—that at least 12 UNRWA staffers were involved in the October 7 attack. UNRWA's claim that it will [run out](#) of funds by the end of February and be forced to suspend its operations in Gaza if countries do not resume funding suggests that the agency's operations in Gaza are in long-term jeopardy, given that ongoing UN and U.S. investigations into the allegations will likely take weeks if not months.
 - » Israel's allegations also [include](#) that approximately 10 percent of UNRWA staffers in Gaza are members of terrorist groups and that approximately 49 percent of staffers had close relatives with official ties to terrorist groups, representing the latest in a yearslong [pattern of evidence](#) indicating that members of the aid agency maintain close ties with terrorist organizations.
 - » UNRWA's decision to [terminate](#) 9 of the 12 staffers alleged to have been involved in the attack (according to UNRWA, one staffer is dead and the identities of the other two are still "being clarified") further substantiate Israel's allegations.
- Although the IDF continues to advance in its war against Hamas by wresting its territory and dismantling its infrastructure, [reports](#) that much of Hamas's tunnel network remains functional underscore that Israel will require substantial additional time to achieve its goals, namely demilitarizing the Gaza Strip and ensuring that no threats against Israelis can ever emanate from the territory.

- » Israel’s efforts are complicated by U.S. and international pressure to scale back its operations and by the immense strategic conundrum Israel faces in deciding whether to accept a deal to pause its military campaign – thus compromising its momentum – in exchange for the release of hostages.

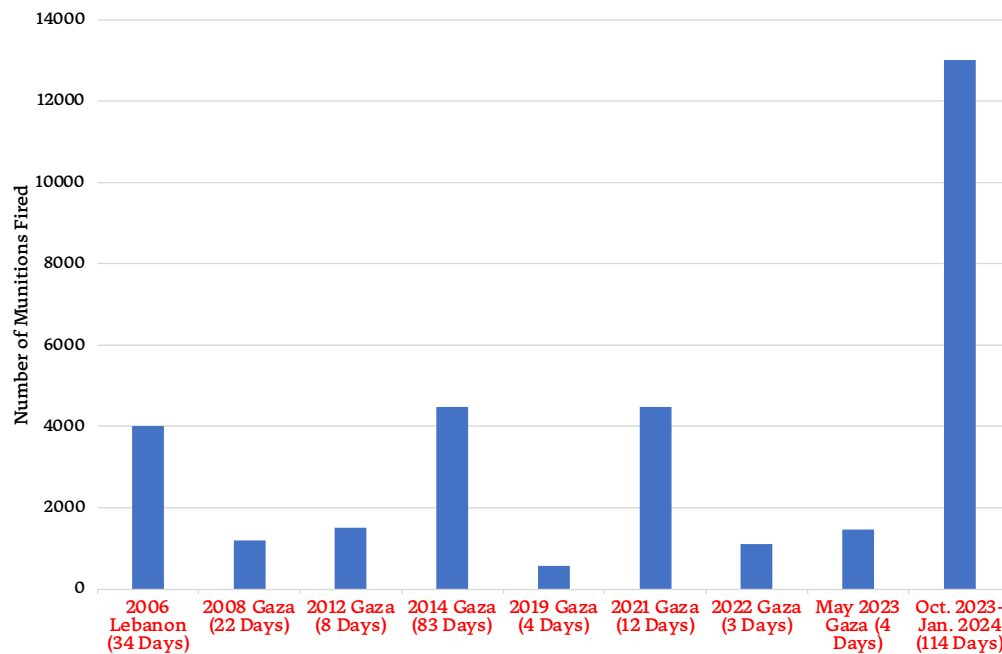
Last 72 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least 13,000 rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been [fired](#) at Israel during the war.
- On January 29, the IDF [said](#), “a short while ago, a terrorist carried out a car-ramming attack next to an army base in [Haifa],” and “afterward, the terrorist exited the car and attempted to attack IDF troops with a hatchet.”
 - » The IDF [named](#) the suspect as Wassim Abu al-Hoga, an Israeli citizen born in 1996 from the northern city of Tamra. Al-Hoga has a criminal record for transporting people in Israel illegally – likely Palestinians.
 - » The IDF soldier injured in the attack is in moderate-to-serious condition. The condition of al-Hoga, who was shot during the attack, was not disclosed.

Projectiles Fired Against Israel During Major Conflicts

JINSA



Gaza

- Sirens sounded in [Ashkelon](#), [Kissufim](#), [Sderot](#), [Rishon Lezion](#), [Holon](#), [Bat Yam](#), and, for the first time in over a month, [Tel Aviv](#).
- A January 29 [report](#) in *The Wall Street Journal* indicated that Israeli intelligence believes approximately 1,200 UNRWA employees belong to terror groups, amounting to 10 percent of the organization’s staff in Gaza.

- *The New York Times* [reported](#) on January 28 that according to a dossier Israel shared with the United States detailing allegations that certain United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) employees were involved in the October 7 attack, one kidnapped a woman, one distributed ammunition, and another participated in a kibbutz massacre that killed 97 people.
 - » According to the report, Israel said that of the 12 UNRWA employees implicated, 10 are Hamas members and one is associated with Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Seven of the employees taught at UNRWA schools.
 - » A school counselor from Khan Younis and his son allegedly worked together to kidnap a woman, and a social worker from Nuseirat allegedly transported a dead IDF soldier to Gaza.
- On January 28, terrorists in Gaza [launched](#) two rockets toward the southern Israeli town of Sderot. One rocket was intercepted and the other landed in an open area outside the town, causing no reported injuries.
- On January 28, a rocket [fired](#) from Gaza toward the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon was intercepted. No injuries or damage were reported.
- According to a January 28 *New York Times* [report](#), many of the weapons that Hamas used on October 7 and against the IDF in Gaza came from the Israeli military, including munitions that did not detonate after Israel fired them toward targets in Gaza and arms stolen from IDF bases.
- The report cites experts who note that among Israel's weaponry are Vietnam-era missiles that can have a 15 percent failure rate.
- *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) on January 28 that up to 80% of Hamas's tunnel network is unscathed, according to U.S. and Israeli officials, and 20-40% has been damaged or taken out of commission.
 - » U.S. officials said that Israel's efforts to flood the tunnels with sea water have not been as successful as Israel anticipated.
 - » The report cites a senior Israeli military official as saying that some hostages are in a command center based in a tunnel below Khan Younis, as is Hamas leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar.
- On January 27, a rocket [fired](#) from Gaza toward Sderot landed in an open area outside the town, causing no reported injuries.
- On January 26, rocket sirens [sounded](#) in the city of Ashkelon for the first time since January 4. No damage or injuries were reported.
- On January 26, Hamas [said](#), "the (International) Court of Justice's [ICJ] decision is an important development which contributes to isolating Israel and exposing its crimes in Gaza."

Lebanon

- Rockets struck [Kiryat Shmona](#), and sirens sounded in [Arab al-Aramshe](#), [Kiryat Shmona](#), [Margaliot](#), [Rosh Hanikra](#), [Shlomi](#), [Shomera](#), and [Zar'it](#).
- On January 29, Hezbollah [claimed](#) to have fired Burkan rockets—which can carry heavy warheads—at the IDF's Biranit army base. The IDF [said](#) that day that two soldiers were injured in a Hezbollah projectile attack near the Lebanese-Israeli border and were taken to the hospital in good condition.

- On January 29, Hezbollah [fired](#) two anti-tank missiles toward IDF bases near the northern Israeli town of Shomera, causing no reported damage or injuries.
- On January 29, Hezbollah [launched](#) several projectiles into northern Israel which landed in open areas, causing no reported injuries or damage. Hezbollah claimed credit for the attack, which it said targeted IDF positions near the Lebanese-Israeli border.
- On January 28, terrorists in southern Lebanon [fired](#) at least three rockets toward the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona, which landed in open areas. No injuries were reported.
- On January 28, Hezbollah [fired](#) several rockets toward the northern Israeli towns of Margalioth and Zar'it, all of which landed in open areas. No injuries were reported.
- On January 28, the IDF [launched](#) interceptor missiles at two hostile aerial targets—likely drones—over northern Israel. No damage or injuries were reported.
- On January 27, sirens indicating a drone attack [sounded](#) in a number of northern Israeli communities. No damage or injuries were reported.

West Bank

- On January 29, soldiers shot and killed a terrorist who [attempted](#) to stab IDF troops stationed near the town of Tuqu. No soldiers were injured in the attack.

IDF Operations

- On January 26, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#), “like every country, Israel has a basic right to defend itself ... The World Court in the Hague justly rejected the outrageous demand to deprive us of this right,” adding, “but the mere claim that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians is not only false, it's outrageous, and the willingness of the court to even discuss this is a disgrace that will not be erased for generations.”
 - » Netanyahu also [said](#), “Israel’s commitment to international law is unwavering. Equally unwavering is our sacred commitment to continue to defend our country and defend our people,” and “the vile attempt to deny Israel this fundamental right is blatant discrimination against the Jewish state, and it was justly rejected. The charge of genocide leveled against Israel is not only false, it’s outrageous, and decent people everywhere should reject it.”
 - He insisted that “we will continue to facilitate humanitarian assistance, and to do our utmost to keep civilians out of harm’s way, even as Hamas uses civilians as human shields.”
 - He said, “on the eve of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, I again pledge as prime minister of Israel—Never Again” and pledged that Israel will “continue to do what is necessary to defend our country and defend our people.”
 - A Hebrew version of Netanyahu’s statement did not mention humanitarian aid and said Israel is fighting a “just war” against “the Hamas monsters who murdered, raped, beheaded and kidnapped our citizens.”
 - » Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [said](#), “the [ICJ] in The Hague went above and beyond, when it granted South Africa's antisemitic request to discuss the claim of genocide in Gaza, and now refuses to reject the petition outright.”

- Gallant also [said](#), “those who seek justice, will not find it on the leather chairs of the court chambers in The Hague—they will find it in the Hamas tunnels in Gaza, where 136 hostages are held, and where those who murdered our children are hiding.”
- He added, “they will find it in the ‘Spirit of the IDF,’ a document that outlines the values and conduct of our moral and professional soldiers.”

Gaza

- During a January 26 [interview](#) with *The Wall Street Journal*, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel’s three goals of destroying Hamas, securing the release of the hostages, and guaranteeing that Gaza can never threaten Israel “are achievable” but “will take many months.”
 - » He also said that the third goal requires “durable demilitarization, which can only be carried out and sustained by Israel” and “deradicalization.”
 - » Netanyahu argued that the IDF’s campaign in Gaza is progressing “better than many expected,” noting that “it took the U.S. and its allies nine months to defeat radical forces in Mosul,” even though that city is “smaller than Gaza and did not have the massive terror underground infrastructure.”
 - » He insisted, “we seek to minimize casualties, both of our own soldiers and Gaza’s civilians.”
 - » He argued that anti-Israel protests across the Western world, particularly on U.S. college campuses, are “a problem not just for Israel but also for America” and said, “I’m obviously concerned by these demonstrations. America is the vanguard of freedom and the guarantor of liberty in this century. If a younger generation emerges in America that supports the head-choppers, it is a problem for civilization.”
 - » He also said, “in any future agreement, the Palestinians should have all the power to govern themselves and none of the powers to threaten Israel,” meaning “Israel must retain overall security control over territory west of the Jordan River, and that includes Gaza.”
 - » He noted further, “some in the United States believe that the obstacle to peace with the Palestinians is—me. They don’t realize that I reflect the view of most Israelis.”
- According to a January 29 [report](#) from Israel’s *Army Radio*, the IDF is planning to increase troop activity in northern Gaza in the coming weeks due to signs—such as renewed rocket fire into Israel—that Hamas is attempting to reconstitute its military presence in the area.
 - » The report states that the IDF believes that approximately 2,000 Hamas combatants remain in northern Gaza and are operating under the control of local commander Izzadin al-Haddad. According to the report, Hamas’s main leadership in Gaza has effectively been cut off from the rest of the group.
 - » The report also alleges that IDF operations will include brigade-level raids on areas in northern Gaza where Hamas activity persists, including broad operations where necessary rather than the smaller and more confined operations the IDF has undertaken in recent weeks.
 - » A defense official cited in the report blamed the lack of civilian management of northern Gaza for the group’s increasing reemergence in the north, stating that “if there were a party able to deliver the goods for the north, Hamas would become irrelevant.”
- On January 29, the IDF [published](#) an evacuation map requesting that civilians relocate from large portions of the western part of Gaza City, including the Shati refugee camp, further south into central Gaza. The evacuation request suggests renewed fighting in the areas, which also include Shifa Hospital.
- On January 29, the IDF shot and killed [four](#) Hamas operatives preparing to launch an attack on troops outside al-Amal Hospital in the southern Gazan city of Khan Younis. Palestinian

media outlets [reported](#) that day that an IDF drone with loudspeakers broadcast an evacuation warning for residents near the hospital, which urged them to move to the al-Mawasi safe zone.

- On January 28, IDF paratroopers and ground troops [raided](#) a number of terror facilities in the area of Khan Younis, including a Palestinian Islamic Jihad compound. IDF soldiers killed dozens of terror operatives, including one armed with a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG), and seized weapons caches, military equipment, and other technology.
- On January 27, the IDF [said](#) it killed multiple Hamas operatives as intense fighting in Khan Younis continued.
 - » The IDF conducted airstrikes against three Hamas operatives attempting to plant explosives near IDF troops.
 - » The IDF said Maglan and Egoz commandos raided several Hamas sites in Khan Younis, including a weapons cache, and “eliminated many armed terrorists at close range.”
 - » Givati Brigade troops also killed “a large number” of Hamas terrorists, including seven operatives who fired RPGs at IDF troops from a building.
- Citing Israel’s *Kan* broadcaster, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on January 26 that the IDF has informed Israeli politicians that Hamas is reestablishing civil control in areas in the northern and central parts of Gaza from which some IDF troops have evacuated.

Lebanon

- On January 29, the IDF [conducted](#) artillery shelling against Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon in response to earlier missile fire attacks. Hezbollah-affiliated *Al Manar* reported that the IDF was [shelling](#) areas near the town of Ayta al-Shab along the Lebanese-Israeli border.
- On January 28, Hezbollah [announced](#) the loss of three members in Israeli airstrikes, bringing the total number of Hezbollah operatives killed since the war began to 174.
- On January 28, the IDF [said](#) fighter jets carried out strikes on Hezbollah sites in the southern Lebanese villages of Zibqin and Houla, adding that IDF troops also shelled various sites in southern Lebanon to “remove threats.”
- On January 28, the IDF [conducted](#) airstrikes against a number of Hezbollah targets in the southern Lebanese towns of Ayta ash-Shab, Dhayra, and Marwahin, including a command-and-control center, observation posts, and other military infrastructure.
- On January 27, the IDF [launched](#) airstrikes against several Hezbollah targets in the southern Lebanese towns of Ayta ash-Shab, Blida, and Marwahin in response to earlier rocket attacks.
- The IDF [announced](#) on January 27 that it was “increasing readiness” along the northern border with Lebanon, and that “the [IDF’s] Northern Command held intensive training sessions last week to strengthen competence and readiness for the moment of decision.”
 - » The drills involved combat engineers, tanks, artillery, and other infantry forces and simulated urban warfare in Lebanon, including in winter conditions.
 - » The IDF said it has conducted over 100 days of drills, including 40 battalion-level exercises, since the war began.
- On January 27, the IDF [intercepted](#) a suspicious aerial target that approached Israeli airspace from Lebanon, setting off suspected drone infiltration alarms in communities across the Upper Galilee. The target, which is believed to have been a drone, was shot down in Lebanese airspace.

- » Earlier in the day, an undisclosed projectile [fell](#) in an open area near Shlomi, a town close to the Lebanese border.
- On January 26, the IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes on Hezbollah sites in the southern Lebanese towns of Beit Lif and Deir Aames, killing four of the terror group's operatives.

Syria

- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on January 29 that Syrian state-run media said that an Israeli operation south of Damascus killed “a number of Iranian advisers.” The report also cites Iran's *Tasnim* news, which said Israel “targeted an Iranian advisory center in the Sayyida Zeinab area.”
 - » Iran's ambassador to Syria gave a contradictory account, saying that the strike did not inflict Iranian casualties and did not target an advisory center.
 - » Director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights Rami Abdel Rahman said, “Israeli strikes targeted a base belonging to Hezbollah and Iran's Revolutionary Guards, killing seven people.”

West Bank

- On January 29, the IDF announced that it had [conducted](#) overnight raids across the West Bank, detaining 19 terror suspects and killing a gunman who opened fire on soldiers in the town of Yamun.
 - » Troops located improvised explosive devices (IEDs) hidden beneath roads in Jenin and arrested terror suspects in Jenin, Nablus, and the Askar and Balata refugee camps. According to Palestinian media sources, a Palestinian man died after sustaining a head injury during clashes with troops in the town of Dura.

Humanitarian Efforts

- *The New York Times* [reported](#) on January 27 that U.S. negotiators are nearing a deal for Israel to halt its operations in Gaza for roughly two months and for Hamas to free more than 100 hostages.
 - » The deal reportedly involves two phases: a 30-day pause during which Hamas would release women, elderly, and wounded hostages, and a second 30-day pause during which Hamas would release soldiers and male civilians.

Post-War Gaza Planning

- Citing three unnamed sources, *Axios* [reported](#) on January 28 that Saudi, Jordanian, Egyptian, and Palestinian Authority (PA) officials met in the Saudi capital of Riyadh 10 days ago to discuss post-war plans for Gaza involving the PA. According to the report, Saudi national security adviser Musaed bin Mohammed al-Aiban hosted the meeting, on which U.S. and Israeli officials were briefed.
 - » The Saudi, Egyptian, and Jordanian representatives said that the PA must undergo substantial reforms, including decentralizing presidential power by transferring greater amounts to the prime minister.
- On January 27, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz [posted](#) on X that “UNRWA will not be a part of the day after [the war in Gaza] ... We have been warning for years: UNRWA

perpetuates the refugee issue, obstructs peace, and serves as a civilian arm of Hamas in Gaza.”

- A [report](#) in the *New York Times* on January 27 indicated that the United States is leading a group of 10 nations to craft solutions that would end the war and create a stable government in Gaza. Solutions they are exploring include:
 - » “Transferring power within the Palestinian Authority from the incumbent president, Mahmoud Abbas, to a new prime minister, while letting Mr. Abbas retain a ceremonial role;”
 - » “Sending an Arab peacekeeping force to Gaza to bolster a new Palestinian administration there;” and
 - » “Passing a U.N. Security Council resolution, backed by the United States, that would recognize the Palestinians’ right to statehood.”
- In response to questions about a January 28 conference on potential Jewish settlements in Gaza, which multiple cabinet members [attended](#), Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) on January 27 that cabinet members and lawmakers are free to express their opinions but that his position opposing Jewish settlement in Gaza “has not changed” and that Israel has no plans to authorize Jewish settlement in Gaza.
- During a January 27 interview with *Al Arabiya*, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, Deputy PA Prime Minister and spokesperson for PA President Mahmoud Abbas [said](#) that following the war, the PA “is ready to hold general elections, and if Hamas wins, the president will hand over the Authority.”

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people have been [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 557 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 220 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 26,637 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza and 65,387 have been injured during the war.
 - » On October 25, President Biden [cautioned](#) against trusting Gaza Health Ministry casualty figures, stating: “I have no notion that the Palestinians are telling the truth about how many people are killed ... I have no confidence in the number that the Palestinians are using.”
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, 375 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 4,366 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, [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 [include](#) two Israeli civilians and the bodies of two IDF soldiers held in Gaza since 2014 and 2015.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On January 29, according to [reports](#) citing a U.S. defense official, an attack occurred that day at the U.S.-led coalition base in al-Shaddadi, Syria.
- On January 29, the Houthis [claimed](#) to attack the USS *Puller* in the Gulf of Aden, without offering evidence, but U.S. defense officials indicated that there was no reported attack on the ship.
- On January 29, Iran [executed](#) four men that it accused of plotting with Israel’s Mossad to blow up a missile plant in Iran, according to Iran’s judiciary. The four individuals were from Iran’s Kurdish region and were arrested in August.
- On January 28, an Iran-backed group [launched](#) a drone attack that killed three and [injured](#) at least 34 U.S. service members at the Tower 22 facility in Jordan along the border with Syria.
 - » The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella of Iran-backed militias, [claimed](#) responsibility for attacks against three U.S. bases in Syria, including at Al Tanf, which is near the Iraqi and Jordanian borders.
 - » On January 29, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani [denied](#) that Iran supported the militias responsible for the attack.
 - » Reports on January 29 [indicated](#) that Iran-backed groups have evacuated some military positions along the Syria-Iraq border in anticipation of a U.S. strike.
- On January 26, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an alliance of Iran-backed militias Iraq, [released a statement](#) threatening continued attacks against U.S. forces, calling the U.S. agreement to hold talks “an attempt to reshuffle the cards ... and buy time ... The Islamic

Resistance’s response will be to continue its operations ... against the foreign presence ... until their true intentions and seriousness of their commitment to withdraw their forces is proven.”

- On January 26 at approximately 7:45 p.m. local time, the Houthis [struck](#) the Marshall Islands-flagged, Bermuda-owned MV *Marlin Luanda* with an [anti-ship ballistic missile](#) in the Gulf of Aden. The commercial ship was carrying Naphtha, a highly flammable liquid hydrogen mixture, and the attack caused a fire to break out on board. U.S., French, and Indian naval ships responded and extinguished the fire.
- On January 26 at approximately 1:30 p.m. local time, the Houthis [fired](#) one anti-ship ballistic missile toward the Arleigh-Burke class destroyer USS *Carney* in the Gulf of Aden. The *Carney* successfully shot down the missile.

U.S. and International Response

- After the Iran-backed attack that killed three and injured at least 34 U.S. service members in Jordan on January 28, President Biden [indicated that](#) “we know it was carried out by radical Iran-backed militant groups operating in Syria and Iraq” and vowed to “hold all those responsible to account at a time and in a manner our choosing.”
 - » U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin released a [statement](#) that he was “outraged” at “repeated” attacks from Iran-backed militias and that the United States “will respond at a time and place of our choosing.”
- Republican leaders have [pushed](#) for a U.S. military response to the January 28 attack in Jordan.
 - » Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) called for “serious, crippling costs” to Iran, “not only on front-line terrorist proxies, but on their Iranian sponsors who wear American blood as a badge of honor.”
 - » Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) argued, “the only answer to these attacks must be devastating military retaliation against Iran’s terrorist forces, both in Iran and across the Middle East.”
 - » Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) called on Biden to “strike targets of significance inside Iran.”
- Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) [tweeted](#) “Target Tehran,” and later clarified that he was calling for strikes against Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.
- According to a January 28 *NBC News* [report](#) citing three current U.S. officials and a former U.S. official, the Biden administration is discussing using weapons sales as leverage over Israel to compel it to scale back its operations in Gaza and provide more aid to Palestinian civilians.
 - » The report alleges that the review comes after weeks of private conversations urging Israel to change its fighting tactics in Gaza, minimize civilian casualties, and open more humanitarian corridors to provide aid to civilians in Gaza have yielded fewer results than U.S. officials hoped.
 - » The report states that at the request of the White House, the Pentagon has begun a review of which armaments could be used to increase leverage.
 - Officials reportedly have discussed withholding 155 mm artillery rounds and Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) tailkits from Israel.

- According to the report, U.S. officials have also discussed slowing the delivery of air defenses, but the report states that the United States is “not likely” to do so.
- » The report further states that administration officials have also discussed the possibility of increasing weapons shipments to Israel as a means of incentivizing Israeli policy changes.
- » In response to the report, a White House National Security Council spokesperson [said](#) that day that “Israel has a right and obligation to defend themselves against the threat of Hamas, while abiding by international humanitarian law and protecting civilian lives, and we remain committed to support Israel in its fight against Hamas. We have done so since October 7, and will continue to. There has not been a change in our policy.”
- On January 27 at approximately 3:45 a.m. local time, the United States [struck](#) a Houthi anti-ship missile in Yemen that was prepared to launch against vessels in the Red Sea.
- On January 27, a British warship, the HMS *Diamond*, [destroyed](#) a Houthi drone that had targeted the U.K. vessel.
- On January 26, President Biden [spoke](#) by phone with Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to discuss “the ongoing war in Gaza and their efforts to secure the immediate release of all remaining hostages held by Hamas,” according to a White House readout.
- On January 26, a U.S. State Department spokesperson [told](#) *The Times of Israel*, “we continue to believe that allegations of genocide are unfounded and note the [ICJ] did not make a finding about genocide or call for a ceasefire in its ruling and that it called for the unconditional, immediate release of all hostages being held by Hamas.”
 - » The spokesperson also said, “the court’s ruling is consistent with our view that Israel has the right to take action to ensure the terrorist attacks of October 7 cannot be repeated, in accordance with international law.”
 - » They said further, “we have consistently made clear that Israel must take all possible steps to minimize civilian harm, increase the flow of humanitarian assistance, and address dehumanizing rhetoric.”
- Following the U.S. suspension of aid to UNRWA on January 26 in the wake of Israeli allegations that members of UNRWA participated in the October 7 attack, Germany, the second largest donor to UNRWA, [the United Kingdom](#), [Scotland](#), [Finland](#), [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Italy](#), the [Netherlands](#), [Switzerland](#), [France](#), [Japan](#), [Austria](#), and [Estonia](#) have also suspended aid to UNRWA.
 - » On January 27, Commissioner-general of UNRWA Philippe Lazzarini urged countries to reconsider suspending aid to UNRWA and [argued](#) that “it is shocking to see a suspension of funds to the Agency in reaction to allegations against a small group of staff, especially given the immediate action that UNRWA took by terminating their contracts and asking for a transparent independent investigation.”
 - » On January 29, an UNRWA spokesperson [indicated](#) that “if the funding is not resumed, UNRWA will not be able to continue its services and operations across the region, including in Gaza, beyond the end of February.”
 - » On January 28, the Palestinian Authority [denounced](#) the decisions of donor countries to suspend aid to UNRWA, calling it a form of “collective punishment” and “deplorable double standards.”
- On January 27, a British Foreign Office spokesperson released a [statement](#) that “[w]e respect the role and independence of the ICJ. However ... we have considerable concerns

about this case, which is not helpful in the goal of achieving a sustainable ceasefire ... Israel has the right to defend itself against Hamas in line with IHL [international humanitarian law] ... Our view is that Israel's actions in Gaza cannot be described as genocide, which is why we thought South Africa's decision to bring the case was wrong and provocative."

- » The statement added, "[w]e are clear that an immediate pause is necessary to get aid in and hostages out, and then we want to build towards a sustainable, permanent ceasefire, without a return to the fighting."
- On January 26, ahead of Holocaust Remembrance Day, President Biden [said](#) that it was "more pressing than ever" to commemorate the Holocaust amid an "alarming rise" in antisemitism and following Hamas's October 7 massacre, "the worst atrocity committed against the Jewish people in a single day since the Holocaust."
 - » Biden said, "We cannot remember all that Jewish survivors of the Holocaust experienced and then stand silently by when Jews are attacked and targeted again today. Without equivocation or exception, we must also forcefully push back against attempts to ignore, deny, distort, and revise history. This includes Holocaust denialism and efforts to minimize the horrors that Hamas perpetrated on October 7, especially its appalling and unforgivable use of rape and sexual violence to terrorize victims."
- After the ICJ ruling about Israel's operations in Gaza on January 26, the European Union [released](#) a statement that "[o]rders of the International Court of Justice are binding on the parties and they must comply with them. The European Union expects their full, immediate and effective implementation."
- On January 26, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock [said](#) that Israel must "adhere" to the temporary measures ordered by the ICJ that day, which she stated "were binding under international law." Baerbock also called on Hamas to release all hostages in its captivity.
- According to January 26 reports, citing sources familiar with the visits, Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani will [travel](#) to Paris in the coming days to meet with CIA Director William Burns, Mossad chief David Barnea, and Director of the Egyptian General Intelligence Directorate Abbas Kamel. The prime minister will then travel to Washington to meet with top U.S. officials, according to the report.
- On January 26, Argentinian President Javier Milei, speaking at a Holocaust remembrance event in Buenos Aires, [said](#) he plans to travel to Israel in the "coming weeks" as one of his first international trips since taking office and that Argentina will "not remain silent in the face of Hamas terror."

Rising Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Protests, and Attacks

- On January 28, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, former House speaker, [called](#) for the FBI to investigate pro-Palestinian protesters for allegedly being Russian "seeds or plants" financed by Moscow, and argued, "for them to call for a cease-fire is Mr. Putin's message. Make no mistake, this is directly connected to what he would like to see. Same thing with Ukraine. It's about Putin's message. I think some of these protesters are spontaneous and organic and sincere. Some, I think, are connected to Russia."
- On January 28, activists, including several of the relatives of those held hostage by Hamas, [blocked](#) the Kerem Shalom border crossing to prevent aid from entering Gaza.

- On January 27, *Sky News* [apologized](#) after one of its anchors, Belle Donati, compared Israeli member of Knesset Danny Danon’s comments in support of the voluntary relocation of Gazans to the Holocaust.
- On January 26, the police chief in Rome, Italy, [ordered](#) pro-Palestinian activists to postpone a rally planned for Holocaust Remembrance Day. Palestinian organizers disregarded the order.
- On January 25, two Israeli children [snuck](#) under the Gaza border fence, attempting to plant an Israeli flag on the Gazan side at the direction of an adult gathered at a nearby settler activist celebration of Tu Bishvat. The IDF dispersed the illegal gathering, and the children returned back under the fence.

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