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# Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update February 12, 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

- Israel's [operation](#) in Rafah that already resulted in the successful rescue of two hostages demonstrates that Rafah is the center of gravity of Hamas's remaining strength and the key to achieving both of Israel's main goals of freeing the hostages and destroying the terrorist group.
- The existence of an underground Hamas communications and intelligence compound beneath the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) headquarters in the Gaza Strip, on which *The Wall Street Journal* recently [reported](#), further substantiates Israeli officials' [claims](#) that "UNRWA's problem is not just a 'few bad apples' involved in the October 7 massacre" but rather that "the institution as a whole is a haven" for Hamas.
  - » Israeli officials [claimed](#) UNRWA officials must have known of the existence of the compound due to obvious spikes in electricity usage and the high likelihood that officials witnessed or heard the compound's construction.
- President Biden's recent [comments](#) that Israel's campaign in Gaza has been "over the top" indicate a gap between U.S. and Israeli leaders that appears likely to widen even further over Israel's pending operations in Rafah. U.S. pressure to stop or slow Israel's operations in Gaza would undermine its efforts to root out Hamas and recover hostages in Gaza.
- Shortly before the Senate advanced a [\\$95.34 billion aid package](#) that includes \$14 billion for Israel, JINSA released a [statement](#) that "it's long past time for Congress to act on a bipartisan basis to provide essential assistance to America's most dependable Middle East partner. Israel is now at war with one Iranian proxy, Hamas, and faces the prospect of an even more devastating war with another Iranian proxy, Hezbollah. It's critical that Congress send a definitive message that, despite internal divisions, U.S. leadership remains steadfast in supporting its friends who carry the burden of fighting our common enemies."
  - » On February 9, JINSA Vice President for Government Affairs Matt Kenney released a NatSec Brief that [examined](#) the similarities and differences between bill provisions supporting Israel—many of which closely track JINSA's previous recommendations.

# 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 February 11, a man in Jerusalem was injured in a stabbing [attack](#) and by shrapnel resulting from gunfire toward the attacker, who was “neutralized,” according to police.
- On February 11, Israel Police’s Lahav 433 major crimes unit [announced](#) that it detained a 40-year-old resident of the Israeli city of Beersheba on suspicion of “serious incitement to murder” Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the social media platform TikTok.
- On February 11, Israel Police and Israel’s internal security agency, the Shin Bet, [announced](#) in a joint statement that two residents of the Israeli town of Ein Mahil were indicted for conspiracy to commit acts of terrorism.
  - » One of the residents, Rami Habibullah, allegedly was in contact with Hamas operatives abroad and provided the operatives information about a security plant near his home as part of a plot to launch rockets at the plant. Habibullah allegedly worked with foreign operatives to recruit Arabs in Israel.
  - » The other resident, Khaled Saleh, was alleged to have been actively involved in terrorism and allegedly provided weapons for use in terrorist attacks.

## Gaza

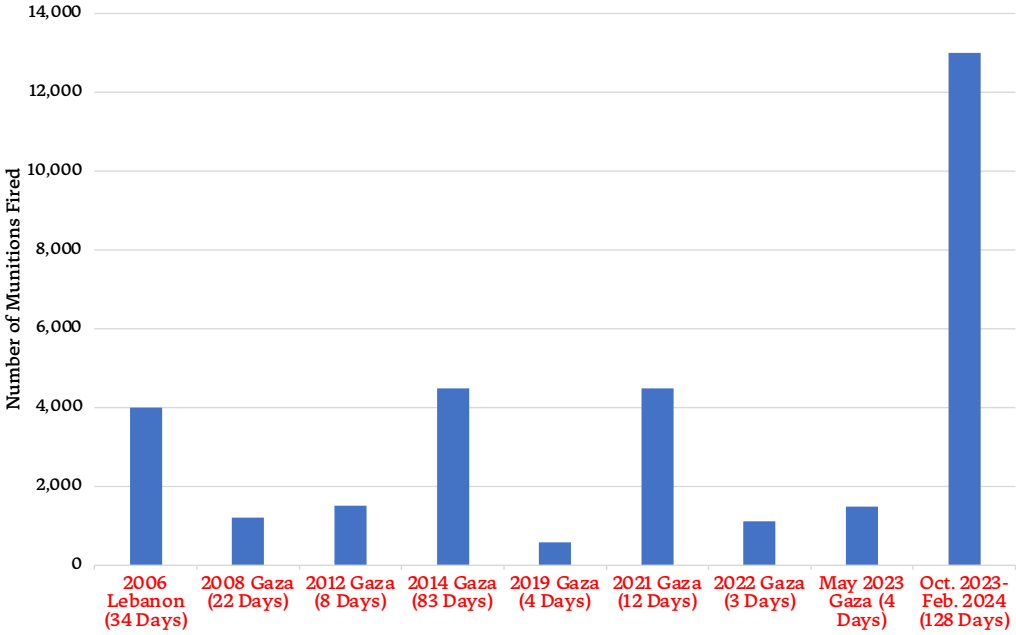
- Sirens sounded in [Ein HaBesor](#).
- On February 12, sirens [sounded](#) in the southern Israeli town of Ein HaBesor, indicating rocket fire from Gaza for the first time in 3 days and 21 hours.
- On February 11, IDF Arabic-language spokesman Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee [said](#) that according to information on a laptop uncovered in northern Gaza belonging to *Al Jazeera* journalist Mohamed Washah, the journalist is a “prominent commander” in the Hamas anti-tank missile unit. Adraee also said that Washah has conducted research and development for Hamas’s air unit since late 2022.
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on February 11, citing *Israel Hayom*’s correspondence with an unnamed senior IDF military intelligence official, that the official said there is “heavy suspicion” that Hamas’s intelligence infiltrated the IDF ahead of the October 7 massacre.
  - » The official also said, “[Hamas] Nukhba terrorists had information on the IDF’s most sensitive sites, including those within the army that are most classified,” and that “we must determine how this information reached them. We are talking about details that IDF commanders don’t talk about even to their closest friends.”

## Lebanon

- Rockets struck [Kiryat Shmona](#), and sirens sounded in [Kadarim](#), [Avivim](#), [Iftach](#), [Ramot Naftali](#), [Malkia](#), [Dishon](#), [Lehavot HaBashan](#), [Kfar Blum](#), [Shamir](#), [Kfar Szold](#), [Amir](#), [Neot Mordechai](#), [Sdeh Nechemia](#), [Gonen](#), [Zarit](#), and [Kiryat Shmona](#).
- On February 11, Israel’s *Ynet* [reported](#) that sirens sounded in the northern Israeli town of Kadarim. The sirens reportedly were set off by an Iron Dome missile interceptor being fired at an aerial target, and residents of the nearby city of Tiberias reported hearing a loud explosion.

- On February 10, a missile [fired](#) from Lebanon struck a building in the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona, causing property damage and no reported injuries.
- On February 10, terrorists in southern Lebanon [launched](#) three projectiles towards the northern Israeli town of Shlomi, which landed in open areas. No injuries were reported.
- On February 10, drone infiltration sirens [sounded](#) in over a dozen towns across northern Israel. The sirens were later [confirmed](#) by the IDF to be false alarms.
- Hezbollah [said](#) on February 10 that it captured an Israeli Skylark unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) that was in Lebanese airspace “in good condition.”
- On February 9, Hezbollah [said](#) that it fired dozens of Katyusha rockets toward the IDF’s Golan Heights-based Kela base. More than 30 rockets were fired, most of which struck unpopulated areas or the Iron Dome intercepted, inflicting no injuries or damage. The barrage triggered sirens in Kiryat Shmona.
- On February 9, terrorists in Lebanon [launched](#) numerous projectiles toward Menara, Mount Dov, and Malkia in northern Israel.

**Projectiles Fired Against Israel During Major Conflicts**



*IDF Operations*

**Gaza**

- The IDF [announced](#) on February 12 that it successfully rescued two Israeli hostages, Fernando Merman, 60, and Luis Har, 70, in a raid in Rafah. Shin Bet, police counterterrorism, and naval commando personnel carried out the operation in a building in Rafah in which Hamas held the two hostages captive. The Air Force carried out simultaneous airstrikes, which killed dozens, according to the Hamas-controlled health ministry in Gaza.

- » On October 7, Merman and Har were [abducted](#) from Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak. They [said](#) that they were held in the home of a family in Rafah, according to Israel's *Ynet* news outlet.
- On February 12, the IDF [said](#) that it struck "significant" targets in airstrikes in Rafah's Shaboura area.
- Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [told](#) *Fox News* on February 11 that the U.S. response to an October 7-like attack would be "at least as strong as Israel's [response]" if not stronger. Netanyahu also stated, when asked about President Joe Biden's recent statement that Israel's military response to the October 7 attack has been "over the top," that he does not "know what he meant by that."
  - » Netanyahu stated, "we were attacked in the worst attack on Jewish people since the Holocaust. That October 7 massacre was equivalent to 29 9/11s in one day and the equivalent of 50,000 Americans slaughtered—burned, maimed, raped, beheaded—and 10,000 Americans taken hostage, including mothers and children. So, what would America's response be? I would say it would be at least as strong as Israel's and many Americans tell me, 'We would have flattened them. We would have turned them into dust.'"
  - » Regarding criticisms of Israel's combat operations, Netanyahu said that Israel is "proceeding ... as no other army has on earth, and taking precautions to prevent civilian casualties."
  - » Netanyahu added, "victory is within reach. Three-quarters of Hamas [battalions are] destroyed, 18 out of 24; we're not going to leave the other six. It's like you leaving a quarter of ISIS in Iraq in place and saying 'well, they can have their territory, it's ok.' Obviously, ISIS would re-establish itself. Hamas-ISIS will re-establish itself too if we don't finish its last remaining bastion."
  - » Netanyahu stated that he agrees with the United States that Israel needs a plan to "vacate the civilian population" of the southern Gazan city of Rafah, one of the last remaining Hamas strongholds.
- On February 11, Netanyahu [said](#) to *ABC News*, "we're going to get the remaining Hamas terrorist battalions in Rafah, which is the last bastion," and "those who say that under no circumstances should we enter Rafah are basically saying lose the war. Keep Hamas there."
  - » He also [said](#) that Israel will grant "safe passage for the civilian population so they can leave" before the IDF begins its ground operation in Rafah and insisted that "victory is within reach. We're going to do it. We're going to get the remaining Hamas terrorist battalions and Rafah, which is the last bastion, but we're going to do it."
  - » Netanyahu noted that "we are working out a detailed plan to [help evacuate civilians from combat areas in Rafah]," and "we're not cavalier about this."
- On February 11, the IDF [said](#) that 98th Division soldiers continued combat against Hamas in Khan Younis, and the 162nd Division conducted raids in central and northern Gaza. The IDF also said that the Air Force and Navy conducted strikes against Hamas throughout Gaza.
  - » Operational achievements included eliminating Hamas cells that had launched anti-tank missiles toward troops, killing additional Hamas operatives in ground raids, and seizing weapons.
- On February 11, the IDF [detained](#) approximately 20 terrorist operatives who had been hiding in Al-Amal Hospital in the southern Gazan city of Khan Younis. The operatives were brought to Israel for further questioning.

- » The IDF said it acted on intelligence regarding Hamas's use of the premises, and that it coordinated with hospital staff to avoid disrupting the hospital's operations. The IDF said its troops scanned the hospital's premises in an "accurate and selective way" and that no hospital staff or patients were injured in the operation.
- » After the raid, the IDF helped [facilitate](#) the delivery of over 20 oxygen tanks and other medical equipment to the hospital in conjunction with local officials and an unnamed international aid organization.
- On February 10, the IDF [discovered](#) a Hamas data center that included an electrical room and living areas for Hamas operatives under the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) headquarters in Gaza City.
- On February 10, the IDF and Shin Bet, Israel's security agency, [said](#) that an Israeli airstrike in Rafah killed three Hamas members: Ahmed Al-Yaaqoubi, security operative for the terror group's officials and a senior officer of Hamas secret police in Rafah; senior official and military operative Iman Rantisi; and another secret police officer.
- The IDF [said](#) on February 10 that it continued intense combat against Hamas in Khan Younis and central and northern Gaza. Operations included airstrikes against Hamas targets, killing and capturing Hamas members, and raids resulting in weapons seizures.
- Border Police [said](#) that a Palestinian woman who had been caught trying to illegally enter Israel on February 9 had been one of the 240 prisoners Israel freed in a November hostage deal with Hamas, and has ties to the terror group.
- On February 9, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#), "it is impossible to achieve the war goal of eliminating Hamas and leave four Hamas battalions in Rafah," and "on the other hand, it is clear that a massive operation in Rafah requires the evacuation of the civilian population from the combat zones."

## Lebanon

- On February 12, the IDF [conducted](#) airstrikes against Hezbollah operatives and infrastructure in southern Lebanon, including a vehicle with Hezbollah operatives in the town of Maroun al-Ras; Hezbollah military infrastructure in Odaisseh and Khiam; and two buildings and a military facility in Tayr Harfa and Maroun al-Ras.
- On February 12, Lebanese security sources [told](#) AFP that a local Hezbollah official was seriously wounded in an Israeli airstrike in the southern town of Bint Jbeil.
- On February 11, the IDF [struck](#) a number of Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon, including a rocket launching post, an observation post, and other military infrastructure. IDF troops also opened fire on a terror suspect in the Kafr Kila area of southern Lebanon that day.
- On February 10, the IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes against a number of Hezbollah targets in the southern towns of Bint Jbeil and Markaba, including a command-and-control center, a site used by the Hezbollah air defense unit, and an observation post.
- On February 10, the IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes against Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon, including three Hezbollah command-and-control centers in Ayta ash-Shab and Naquora and two other sites in Khiam and Marwahin.
- On February 10, the IDF [conducted](#) artillery shelling against sites in southern Lebanon used to launch projectile attacks against Israel earlier that day.

- On February 10, a senior Hamas member, Basel Salah, who is charged with recruiting and managing members of the terror group, including in the West Bank, [survived](#) an alleged Israeli airstrike that targeted him in Jadra, Lebanon.
- On February 9, Israel [responded](#) to Hezbollah's earlier rocket attack against northern Israel by striking the launcher in Qalaat Debba in southern Lebanon, as well as an additional building Hezbollah used in Khiam.
- On February 9, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to strike Hezbollah targets, including a gathering of the terror group's operatives in Maroun al-Ras and three Hezbollah buildings in Yohomor and Naqoura.
- On February 9, the IDF [said](#) that it responded to earlier projectile attacks against Menara, Mount Dov, and Malkia with artillery.

## Syria

- On February 10, Syrian state-run media *SANA* [reported](#) that Israeli missiles launched toward the area of Damascus caused "material losses." The report added that Syrian air defenses intercepted some of the missiles in the alleged strike.

## West Bank

- On February 12, the IDF [said](#) they had arrested 17 suspects in overnight operations in the West Bank and stopped an attempted stabbing attack against an IDF soldier in Husan.
- On February 11, during a joint 12-hour operation [conducted](#) by the IDF and the Shin Bet, eight suspects were arrested in Beit Ummar, and IDF soldiers confiscated dozens of illegal vehicles, military equipment, Molotov cocktails, and other weapons.
  - » Overnight, IDF troops also [arrested](#) six suspects throughout the West Bank.

## Humanitarian Efforts

- Reuters [reported](#) on February 11 that, according to a senior Biden administration official, negotiators have made "real progress" towards finalizing a hostage release deal. The official described the deal as "pretty much there," but cautioned that "significant" gaps have yet to be closed.
  - » Hostage negotiations were reportedly the main focus of a roughly 45-minute phone call that day between President Biden and Prime Minister Netanyahu.
- On February 11, Jordanian state-run media *Al Mamlaka* aired a video of Jordan's King Abdullah [participating](#) in an aid airdrop to Jordanian field hospitals in Gaza.
  - » The report stated that Jordan is the only country that is airdropping aid to the Gaza Strip, and that Jordan has conducted 11 airdrops, including two conducted with the Dutch and French air forces, to deliver medical aid to two medical facilities in Gaza.
- On February 9, United Nations data [indicated](#) that almost 10% of children in Gaza under the age of five are acutely malnourished. In northern Gaza, the rate is up to 16.2%.

## Post-War Planning

- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on February 9, citing two unnamed senior diplomats, that Saudi, Emirati, Qatari, Jordanian, Egyptian, and Palestinian Authority ministers decided during a February 8 meeting in Riyadh to advance plans for a common political framework

to rehabilitate Gaza and create a Palestinian state once the Israel-Hamas war ends. The ministers also called for a ceasefire.

### *Casualties and Hostages*

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
  - » 566 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
    - 229 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, 28,176 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 67,784 have been injured during the war.
  - » On October 25, 2023, 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, 386 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 4,400 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, [three](#) have been [rescued](#) by the IDF, [seven](#) have been [found](#) dead, three have been [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.
- Israel has said that terrorists in Gaza currently [hold](#) 134 hostages, and according to IDF spokesman Rear Adm Daniel Hagari, the IDF has [notified](#) the families of 31 of the 136 hostages that their loved ones died, including two who were 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.

- On February 9, an IDF investigation [concluded](#) that Yossi Sharabi, whom Hamas abducted on October 7, likely died in a building collapse near another building that the IDF struck, although the investigation did not dismiss the chance that he was murdered by terrorists.

#### *Iranian Involvement and Response*

- On February 12, the Iran-backed Houthis [launched](#) at least two missiles from Yemen at the *Star Iris*, a Marshall Islands-flagged and Greek-owned bulk carrier, while the ship was transiting the Red Sea. The ship was reportedly hit, causing damage to its starboard side.
- On February 11, Iran-backed militia [launched](#) six drones at the Conoco oil field in eastern Syria, where U.S. personnel are located. U.S. air defenses intercepted all of the projectiles.
- On February 11, in a televised speech marking 45 years since the Islamic Revolution, Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi [called](#) on the United Nations to expel "the Zionist regime [Israel]" from the United Nations, as the crowd chanted "Death to Israel."
- On February 11, Iran's Foreign Minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, [arrived](#) in Damascus, Syria, to discuss the Israel-Hamas War.
- On February 10, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian [met](#) separately with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah at an undisclosed location in Lebanon and with Lebanese caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati in Beirut.

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

- A February 12 [report](#) in *NBC* indicated that President Biden called Prime Minister Netanyahu an "a\*\*hole" on three occasions. Biden also expressed frustration with his "inability to persuade Israel to change its military tactics in Gaza" and Netanyahu's rejection of ceasefire deals that the U.S. president believed were good for Israel.
- A February 11 [report](#) in *The Washington Post* claimed that President Biden has moved closer to a breach with Prime Minister Netanyahu than at any point since the war began, and several Biden aides have urged the president to be more critical of Netanyahu.
- On February 11, President Biden and Prime Minister Netanyahu spoke over the phone for 45 minutes, their first [call](#) since Biden's remarks on February 9 that Israel's operations in Gaza were "over the top."
  - » According to a White House [readout](#), Biden "reaffirmed our shared goal to see Hamas defeated and to ensure the long-term security of Israel and its people" and "discussed ongoing efforts to secure the release of all remaining hostages held by Hamas."
    - Biden restated his view that Israeli operations in Rafah should not proceed without a "credible and executable plan for ensuring the safety of and support for the more than one million people sheltering there" and also "emphasized the need to capitalize on progress made in the negotiations to secure the release of all hostages as soon as possible."
  - » Later that day, Netanyahu [claimed](#) that he told Biden, "there will always be Israeli security control, and if it requires our presence inside, then there will be a presence inside, and if it requires us going in anywhere, as the IDF is capable of arriving anywhere, at any time, this was stated here and will be maintained in the future."



- On February 11, the Senate voted 67-27 to [advance](#) a \$95.34 billion foreign aid supplemental spending bill that includes funding for Israel, Gaza, the West Bank, Ukraine, Taiwan, and other partners in the Indo-Pacific, but does not include border provisions.
  - » The bill includes \$14 billion in aid for Israel, \$9.5 billion for humanitarian assistance in Gaza and the West Bank, \$61 billion for Ukraine, and \$4.83 billion to support Taiwan and other partners in the Indo-Pacific.
- On February 11, U.S. Senator John Fetterman (D-PA) [told](#) reporters, “It’s been incredibly easy to be on the right side, and I believe the right side is with Israel. It’s my job as a senator to be on the right side on any issue. And after what happened, especially after October 7, there’s really only one clear right side and that’s with Israel.”
- On February 10, the U.S. credit rating agency Moody’s [announced](#) that it lowered Israel’s rating from A1 to A2 and downgraded its outlook for Israel’s economic future from “stable” to “negative.”
- On February 10, between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. local time, the United States [struck](#) two unmanned surface vessels (USV) and three anti-ship cruise missiles in Houthi-controlled territory north of Al Hudaydah, Yemen, that were prepared to target ships in the Red Sea.
- On February 9 between 3 a.m. and 9:40 p.m. local time, the United States [struck](#) two USVs, four anti-ship cruise missiles, and one land attack cruise missile that were prepared to target ships in the Red Sea.
- On February 8, Jon Finer, a deputy national security adviser in the Biden administration, [told](#) Arab-American leaders at a closed-door meeting in Michigan that he did not have “any confidence” that Israel’s government was willing to take “meaningful steps” toward Palestinian statehood.
  - » He also said, “we are very well aware that we have [made] missteps in the course of responding to this crisis since Oct. 7.”
- On February 12, an appeals court in the Netherlands upheld an appeal by human rights organizations and [ordered](#) the Dutch government to stop exporting F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel within seven days.
- On February 12, the European Union (EU)’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borell [argued](#) that “nobody else can do what UNRWA is doing, allegations need to be verified ... let’s wait for the investigations to take place.”
  - » His comments came amid allegations that UNRWA staff participated in the October 7 attack and revelations that there were Hamas tunnels underneath UNRWA headquarters in Gaza.
- On February 11 and 10, several world leaders expressed concern or opposition about the likely imminent Israeli operations in Rafah.
  - » On February 11, the EU’s Borell [claimed](#) that Israeli operations in Rafah would cause “unspeakable humanitarian catastrophe” and cause “grave tensions with Egypt.”
  - » On February 11, the United Kingdom’s Foreign Minister David Cameron [posted](#) on X that he was “deeply concerned about the prospect of a military offensive in Rafah.”
  - » On February 11, Dutch Foreign Minister Hanke Bruins Slot [argued](#) that an Israeli operation in Rafah would be “unjustifiable.”
  - » On February 10, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) [issued](#) similar statements warning against Israeli operations in Rafah.

- However, on February 11, Israel’s *Army Radio* [reported](#) that Egyptian officials told Israel that it would not oppose Israeli operations in Rafah if they avoid civilian casualties. According to the report, while Egypt would issue public condemnations, it would not prevent the IDF from operating.
- On February 10, UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini [posted](#) on X, “UNRWA did not know what is under its headquarters in Gaza” and claimed that Israel had “not informed UNRWA officially about the alleged tunnel.” Lazzarini said that UNRWA left the compound on October 12, five days after Hamas conducted the October 7 terrorist attack, and that UNRWA has “not used that compound since we left it nor are we aware of any activity that may have taken place there.”
  - » On February 10, Israel’s Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) [posted](#) on X, “Oh, you knew. Digging a tunnel takes longer than 4 months. We invited senior @UN officials to see, and during past meetings with you and other UN officials, we stated Hamas’s use of UNRWA’s headquarters. You chose to ignore the facts so you can later try and deny them.”
  - » That day, Israel’s Foreign Minister Israel Katz called for Lazzarini to [resign](#) and said that Lazzarini’s statement denying knowledge of the tunnel underneath the UNRWA headquarters was “not only absurd but also an affront to common sense.”
  - » Also on February 10, Israel’s Ambassador to the United Nations Gilad Erdan [posted on X](#) that Israel revealed the presence of Hamas tunnels under UNRWA locations and urged UNRWA to search its facilities, but UNRWA refused.
- On February 10, UN special rapporteur for the Palestinians Francesca Albanese [posted](#) in French on X that “the victims of 7/10 were not killed because of their Judaism, but in response to Israel’s oppression.”
  - » That day, Israel’s Foreign Minister Israel Katz [called](#) for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to fire her.
- On February 9, a spokesperson for Norway’s foreign ministry [said](#) that “due to the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, there may be additional funds from Norway to UNRWA throughout the year” in addition to the 275 million crowns, or \$26 million, it pledged on February 7, which is its usual annual payment.
- On February 9, journalist Barak Ravid [wrote](#) on X, “a White House official tells me Biden was referring to Israeli military operations in Gaza when he said last night that the response was ‘over the top.’”
- On February 9, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman [said](#) to U.S. Secretary of State Blinken that normalization of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia cannot occur this year barring a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas achieved within weeks, *The Times of Israel* noted, citing the *Wall Street Journal’s* reporting.

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

- On February 11, thousands of people [participated](#) in an anti-Israel march in Rabat, Morocco, organized by leftist parties and Islamist movements.
- On February 11, close to 800 anti-Israel protesters [held a demonstration](#) in New York’s Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), forcing the museum to close early.

- On February 11, Israeli police [removed](#) about 40 protesters from the Kerem Shalom Crossing after they set up tents to block humanitarian aid from entering the Gaza Strip.
- On February 10, thousands of people [gathered](#) at Tel Aviv’s Habima Square to protest against the current Israeli government, calling for the release of the hostages held by Hamas and immediate elections.
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on February 9, citing Israel’s *Channel 12*, that several Israeli embassies have bolstered security in light of intelligence assessments that revealed attack plans against them, including in the Netherlands, India, and Sweden.
  - » This comes after someone placed an explosive device outside the Israeli embassy in Stockholm on January 31. The Israeli ambassador described the incident as an “attempted terror attack.”

## Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- Matthew Kenney, [The Fight For Emergency Funding for Israel in Congress Intensifies](#), February 9, 2024
- Yoni Tobin, [U.S. Should Leverage Middle East Partners to Boost Space Capabilities](#), February 9, 2024
- Webinar: [Gaza Update 2/8](#), with IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror and Michael Makovsky, February 8, 2024
- Webinar: [Antisemitism in a Post-10/7 America](#), with Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY), Sander Gerber, and Michael Makovsky, February 7, 2024
- Ari Cicurel, [Iran Projectile and Malign Activity Tracker Update](#), February 9, 2024