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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update March 22, 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

- During a JINSA [webinar](#) on March 21, IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, a JINSA Distinguished Fellow, explained that Israel “understood that there was a huge gathering of a number of terrorists from Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Shifa [Hospital] ... We raided it in a different way. We reached the place without even one shot ... It was led by our ‘SEAL’ unit ... under the command of an armored brigade ... [Many of] the commanders of the north of [Palestinian] Islamic Jihad have been captured.”
 - » Amidror also noted that “there is enough food [in Gaza]. It’s very costly because the strong people took control of the food and they are selling it in the market at high prices. We brought in a lot of humanitarian help. ... The crisis described [contains] a lot of exaggeration by Hamas and those who are buying the Hamas lies.”
 - » IDF MG (ret.) Amikam Norkin, a JINSA Distinguished Fellow, argued that the assassination of senior Hamas operative Marwan Issa “was a very positive achievement for the IDF and the Shin Bet ... We attacked from the air [a] high-ranking terrorist in his room that is located more than 20 meters underground. Imagine what kind of intelligence you need ... I am not sure anyone around the world ever did such a mission.”

Last 48 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least 15,000 rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired at Israel from all fronts combined during the war, according to JINSA data.
- Israel's *i24 News* [reported](#) on March 20 that the hacker group Anonymous claimed to have successfully hacked multiple servers at Israel's Dimona nuclear research center.
 - » The hackers claimed to have wiped large amounts of the data from the servers and preserved around 7 gigabytes of files, including over 5,000 documents, approximately

5,000 emails, and 236 PowerPoint presentations, all of which it said it would “disclose” publicly.

Gaza

- On March 21, terrorists in Gaza [fired](#) a rocket toward Be’eri in southern Israel, which the Iron Dome intercepted.
- According to a Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research poll [published](#) on March 20, 71 percent of Palestinian respondents in the West Bank and Gaza support Hamas’s October 7 attack.
 - » In addition, 61 percent of respondents indicated approval of Gaza’s Hamas chief, Yahya Sinwar, and 70 percent expressed approval of Hamas.
 - » 94 percent of respondents said that Israel has committed war crimes during the current war, compared to 5 percent who believe that Hamas has committed war crimes. Additionally, 93 percent of respondents said that they do not believe Hamas committed the “atrocities” recorded on video on October 7.
 - » Asked about their preferences for who should control the Gaza Strip after the war, 59 percent—including 52 percent of respondents in the Gaza Strip—selected Hamas; 13 percent selected the Palestinian Authority (PA) without President Mahmoud Abbas; 11 percent selected the PA with Abbas; 3 percent selected one or more Arab country; 1 percent selected the UN, and; 1 percent selected the Israeli military.

Lebanon

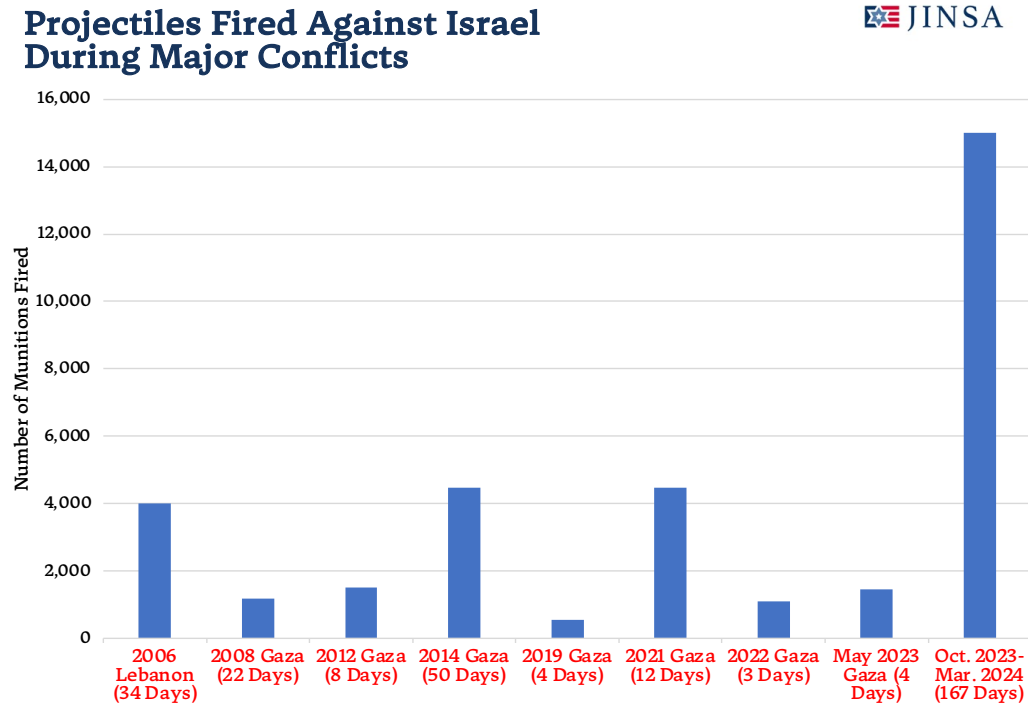
- Sirens sounded in [Betzet, Shlomi, Eilat, Adamant, Arab al-Aramshe, Manara, Zar’it, Avivim, Kiryat Shmona and other towns in northern Israel](#).
- On March 22, a suspected drone infiltration alarm [sounded](#) in the Western Galilee.
- On March 21, Israel’s *Ynet* outlet [reported](#), citing Arab outlets, that Hezbollah has bolstered its force deployments in the Dahieh area of Beirut and has been scrutinizing residents. The report noted that the Hezbollah-connected *Al-Akhbar* outlet reported earlier that Hezbollah discovered a Lebanon-based “Israeli spy ring.”
- On March 21, terrorists in Lebanon [launched](#) four projectiles toward the northern Israeli town of Metula in a barrage that included anti-tank missiles, causing no injuries but inflicting damage.
- On March 20, terrorists in Lebanon [fired](#) projectiles toward the northern Israeli towns of Har Dov, Yir’on, Misgav Am, and Margaliot.
- According to a March 21 [report](#) from Israel’s *Ynet* outlet citing an IDF spokesperson, Hezbollah uses ambulances to transport terror operatives and weapons around southern Lebanon. The report states that two Hezbollah operatives killed in an IDF strike in January were ambulance drivers.

Syria

- On March 22, a terrorist [shot](#) at a bus and wounded three people, one critically, in Dolev in the West Bank. Security forces [arrested](#) the perpetrator, named Abu Mazen, that day after a search via aerial assets.

Red Sea

- On March 21, the IDF [said](#) that Israeli air defenses intercepted a “suspicious aerial target” traveling toward Israel via the Red Sea. Eilat residents said that they heard a loud explosion.



IDF Operations

Gaza

- On March 22, the IDF [detailed](#) its ongoing operations against Hamas in central Gaza and in Khan Younis in southern Gaza. The IDF targeted a tunnel shaft and a Hamas building and killed numerous Hamas combatants in central Gaza, and in Khan Younis’s al-Qarara suburb, troops targeted two booby-trapped buildings and eliminated a cell of five Hamas members. The IDF added that it conducted roughly 40 airstrikes in Gaza during the previous day to assist ground forces.
- On March 21, Israel’s Strategic Affairs Minister and former JINSA Distinguished Fellow Ron Dermer [stated](#) that a Rafah offensive “will happen even if Israel is forced to fight alone. Even if the entire world turns on Israel, including the United States, we’re going to fight until the battle is won.”
 - According to Dermer, four Hamas battalions remain in Rafah, and have been joined by Hamas fighters from other parts of Gaza, amounting to around 25 percent of the group’s pre-war strength.
 - Dermer added, “We’re quite confident that we can do this in a way that would be effective - not only militarily, but also on the humanitarian side.”
 - Dermer further stated that leaving Hamas intact would invite attacks against Israel from across the region, which is “why the determination to take [Hamas] out is so strong, even if it leads to a potential breach with the United States.”

- Citing several unnamed U.S. and Israeli governmental and intelligence sources, *NBC News* [reported](#) on March 21 that “Israel has secured a trove of intelligence on Hamas during its military offensive in Gaza, giving it a detailed picture of the internal workings of the militant organization,” including from electronic devices such as hard drives, laptops, and cell phones.
 - » According to sources, the trove of intelligence probably facilitated Israel’s assassination of high-ranking Hamas operative Marwan Issa.
 - » The report also noted that, per sources, “U.S. spy agencies have shifted resources and stepped up intelligence gathering in Gaza to help Israel in its fight against Hamas, including providing signals intelligence — information gleaned from electronic eavesdropping on communications.”
- Citing Israel’s *Kan* outlet, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on March 21 that the IDF is building a facility the size of two soccer fields to conduct security inspections of Palestinians returning to the northern Gaza Strip and to store humanitarian aid.
- According to images that the United Nations Satellite Center (UNOSAT) collected on February 29, 35 percent of the Gaza Strip’s buildings, or 88,868 buildings, have been damaged or destroyed during Israel’s war against Hamas, [reports](#) from March 21 indicated.
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on March 21, citing anonymous senior Israeli military officers’ correspondence with Israel’s *Walla* outlet, that because of the initial delay in supplying soldiers with the necessary equipment after October 7, troops are keeping their military supplies upon release from duty to use if needed later.
 - » According to an officer, “the call-up [at the start of the war] was traumatic. There were huge shortages,” and “everyone was afraid of entering Gaza without the proper equipment, so they started fundraising for donations.”
- On March 21, the IDF [said](#) that during its operations in Shifa Hospital, it had killed roughly 140 operatives of terror groups, and Shayetet 13 and 401st Armored Brigade soldiers had discovered terror infrastructure and weapons caches. The IDF [updated](#) the total number of gunmen killed during the operation to approximately 150 on March 22.
 - » The IDF also detailed its ongoing operations in central Gaza, where Nahal Brigade troops killed approximately 20 Hamas combatants during the previous day, and in Khan Younis, where the 7th Armored Brigade began an operation targeting Hamas in al-Qarara.
- On March 20, Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) in a video statement that he will “soon approve the plan to evacuate the civilian population from the war zone.” He also said, “while we are preparing to enter Rafah, which will take some time, we continue to operate with all our might,” and “we continue to operate in Khan Younis, in the central camps, for the elimination and capture of senior Hamas officials as we just did in Shifa Hospital, while eliminating hundreds of terrorists.”
- On March 20, IDF spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [announced](#) that the IDF operation at Shifa Hospital has been successful thus far and would continue for several more days.
 - » The IDF and Shin Bet security agency later [said](#) on March 21 that soldiers had detained approximately 650 terrorists during the operation, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operatives and brothers Hussam and Wissam Salameh, and Hamas operatives Amr Asida, Mahmoud Qawasmeh, and Hamdallah Hassan Ali.

- The Salameh brothers are commander of PIJ’s observation and intelligence unit for Gaza City, and chief of the group’s propaganda for Gaza City, respectively.
- The three Hamas operatives are the leader of the Nablus unit, the mastermind of the 2014 abduction and killing of three Israeli teenagers, and a planner of West Bank attacks, respectively.
- Local Palestinian sources, according to Israel’s *Maariv* outlet, reported that the IDF also [arrested](#) Khaled al-Batash, a member of PIJ reportedly in charge of the group’s “economic and administrative apparatus,” at the hospital.
- » Emphasizing IDF humanitarian efforts at the hospital, Hagari stated that the IDF has brought in generators for the hospital’s emergency room and [provided](#) 1,800 liters of water, 3.8 tons of food, and a truck of fuel to the hospital. According to the IDF, 3,700 Palestinian civilians were evacuated from the medical complex.
- » IDF troops located weapons, including RPGs and nearly a dozen rifles, from the hospital’s premises. Soldiers also [uncovered](#) over \$3 million in cash at the facility that the IDF alleged was intended to be used to finance terror activity.
- » IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen Herzi Halevi [stated](#) that day, “So far the results [of the Shifa operation] are good, but look, we’re aiming for the senior officials ... Marwan Issa, the arrest of senior officials, this is very, very important to put pressure on Hamas, it is very important to put pressure on the negotiations as well ... We came here to arrest many operatives, with an emphasis on senior officials, and kill those who fight. We prefer detainees, they are important cards, [for] investigations.”
- Reuters [reported](#) on March 20 that during a video call that day, Netanyahu insisted to U.S. Republican senators that Israel’s campaign to defeat Hamas will continue. Senator John Barrasso (R-WY) recounted, “we asked ... him for an update and we got it on the war, on the release of the hostages and in the efforts to defeat Hamas. We told him Israel has every right to defend themselves and he said that’s exactly what they continue to do.”

Lebanon

- On March 21, the IDF used a helicopter to [target](#) terrorists near Tayr Harfa, and used fighter jets to target terror assets near Yaroun, Yarine, Ayta ash-Shab, Meiss El Jabal, and Houla.
- On March 21, the IDF said fighter jets [struck](#) a building used by Hezbollah in Kfar Kila. The IDF said another building in Dharya was struck the previous night.
- In response to the March 21 projectile attack against Metula, the IDF [fired](#) artillery toward the origin site of the attack.
- In response to projectile attacks targeting Har Dov, Yir’on, Misgav Am, and Margalioth on March 20, the IDF [launched](#) strikes against the launch sites.
- On March 20, Israel’s Air Force [carried out](#) airstrikes against Hezbollah sites near Houla and Hezbollah observation posts near Kfar Kila and Yaroun, and the IDF launched strikes against Hezbollah military sites near Qantara and Ghandouriyeh.

West Bank

- The IDF [said](#) on March 21 that it concluded a counter-terror operation in Nur Shams in the West Bank that began the previous night. The operation started with an airstrike against assailants throwing explosives toward soldiers, and the IDF said that it detained suspects, discovered explosives under roads, eliminated gunmen, and confiscated weapons.

- » The IDF [said](#) that during the operation, it fired toward assailants throwing stones, explosives, and launching fireworks. According to Palestinian health officials, a 16-year-old boy was killed in the raid.
- On March 21, the Magen David Adom ambulance service [said](#) it treated three people for shock after an explosive device was thrown at a bus in the southern West Bank.
- On March 21, Israel's Border Police [detained](#) a Palestinian man in Aqbat Jabr refugee camp near Jericho who was allegedly planning to carry out a suicide bombing in the "immediate time frame."
- On March 21, a Palestinian man who [attempted](#) to enter a checkpoint with a knife in his bag was shot in the lower body by IDF soldiers. It's unclear what prompted the soldiers to open fire.
- The IDF said Military Police [launched](#) an investigation on March 21 into the fatal shooting of a Palestinian man near the settlement of Elazar. The man, 63-year-old Sameh Muhammad Abd al-Rai Zaytoun, was shot by an IDF reservist after he "aroused suspicion" at a bus station. According to Hebrew-language media, Zaytoun, a convert to Judaism, had his hands in the air when he was shot. A small knife was found in his bag.
- On March 20, the IDF [said](#) that it targeted terrorists in an airstrike against a car in Jenin in the northern West Bank. The PA health ministry said that the strike killed three people.
 - » Later that day, the IDF and Shin Bet security agency [acknowledged](#) that the strike killed Ahmed Barakat, whom Israel accused of killing Israeli citizen Meir Tamari in May 2023 near Hermesh in the West Bank. The strike also killed vehicle co-occupant Muhammad Hawashin, a PIJ commander in Jenin, who orchestrated an attempted suicide bombing in Israel on March 11 with Barakat, among other attacks.

Humanitarian Efforts

- A *Wall Street Journal* [report](#) on March 21 indicated that Israel is developing a plan for Palestinian leaders and businessmen who do not have connections to Hamas to assist with distributing aid in Gaza. This program could eventually develop into a Palestinian-led governing authority.
 - » However, Prime Minister Netanyahu does not reportedly support the plan because some of the Palestinians involved would be affiliated with Fatah, a rival to Hamas that controls the Palestinian Authority.
- On March 21, Commander of U.S. Central Command GEN Michael "Erik" Kurilla [testified](#) before the House Armed Services Committee that the construction of a pier to provide humanitarian aid to Gaza will involve building a floating pier at sea and a pier secured to the shore in Gaza. Ships would offload aid at the floating pier and U.S. Army boats would transfer it to the shore in Gaza. He emphasized that no U.S. troops would set foot in Gaza and that protecting U.S. forces is a "top priority."
- According to a March 21 Reuters [report](#), "officials from 36 countries and UN agencies are gathering in Cyprus to discuss how to expedite aid to Palestinians in Gaza via a sea route launched last week."
 - » Cyprus's foreign minister, Constantinos Kombos, said, "we are discussing how we can max up operational capacity both in terms of departure and means of transport and also in relation to the reception and distribution methodology."

- According to a March 21 [report](#) from Israel’s *Ynet* outlet citing Israeli officials, Israel has “unequivocally determined” that Gaza is “not suffering a humanitarian crisis.”
 - » The report states that Israel has permitted approximately 17,400 aid trucks to enter the Gaza Strip, including over 10,300 trucks carrying more than 218,000 tons of food, since the war began. In addition, approximately 40 humanitarian airdrops have been conducted.
 - » According to the report, the “daily average number of trucks carrying food to the Gaza Strip before the war was around 70, and since the beginning of March, the average has grown to over 125 — marking an 80% rise.”
 - » The report also notes that “Israel said it has bolstered personnel, extended working hours, and acquired additional scanners to increase throughput at the border crossings, enabling it to now inspect a combined number of 44 aid trucks per hour at both [Kerem Shalom and Nitzana] crossings.” The report added that “initiatives include the opening of the 96th Crossing in northern Gaza” to increase aid flows.
 - » Officials told *Ynet* that any humanitarian issues stem from problems with distribution inside Gaza, and that on some days, approximately 300 trucks carrying food and other aid entered the Gaza side of the border after passing inspection but were not taken in by anyone.
- A number of countries announced in recent days that they will be providing additional funds to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).
 - » Finland [announced](#) on March 22 that it would be resuming funding to UNRWA after previously pausing aid due to Israel’s [assertions](#) of widespread UNRWA-Hamas ties and its allegations that roughly a dozen UNRWA staffers participated in the October 7 attacks.
 - Finland’s Foreign Trade and Development Minister Ville Tavio said that some of the funds would be earmarked for risk management.
 - » Portugal announced on March 21 that it will be [supplying](#) \$10.89 million to UNRWA in a one-off contribution in addition to approximately \$1.08 million in funds already allocated to the agency this year.
 - » Saudi Arabia [announced](#) on March 20 that it will donate \$40 million to UNRWA in the coming weeks.
- Israel’s *Ynet* outlet [reported](#) on March 20 that “the United States decided to bring Qatar in to participate in the construction and management of the temporary pier in Gaza, that will bring humanitarian aid into the Strip, despite Israel’s objections.”
 - » The report quoted an unnamed Israeli official as saying, “Qatari involvement in a port in Gaza would be a dream come true for Hamas and it is too bad that Israel missed the gravity of the situation in time to stop it.”
 - » The report also noted that an Israeli representative did not attend a recent video meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Cypriot, Qatari, British, Emirati, EU, and UN representatives to discuss the maritime route for humanitarian aid delivery.
- On March 20, U.S. Central Command and the Royal Jordanian Air Force [conducted](#) a joint airdrop of humanitarian aid into northern Gaza, dropping 6,000 pounds of food, including rice, flour, milk, pasta, and canned foods.

- An interim report that a UN review group submitted to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on March 19 [said](#), “UNRWA has in place a significant number of mechanisms and procedures to ensure compliance with the Humanitarian Principle of neutrality, and the group has also identified critical areas that still need to be addressed,” according to a spokesman for Guterres.
 - » The spokesman’s statement also said, “the review group will now develop concrete and realistic recommendations on how to address these critical areas to strengthen and improve UNRWA.”

Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations

- On March 21, Secretary of State Blinken met with Egypt’s President Abdel Fatah el-Sissi in [Cairo, Egypt](#) and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in [Jeddah, Saudi Arabia](#) to discuss a ceasefire and hostage deal as well as the potential establishment of a Palestinian state.

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 594 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 251 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - As of March 15, 1,480 IDF soldiers have been [injured](#) during ground combat in Gaza, including 310 who have been severely injured.
 - » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 34 [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 31,988 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 74,188 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.”
 - » On March 21, Senator Josh Hawley (R-MO) [said](#) that during a virtual meeting that day with Senate Republicans, Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu assessed that the number of people killed in Gaza was approximately 28,000.
 - » Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) on March 10 that Israel has killed approximately 13,000 Hamas operatives over the course of the war.
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, 436 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 4,700 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 deceased hostage bodies.
 - » Israeli officials have confirmed the [deaths](#) of at least [34](#) of the 134 hostages captured on October 7, as well as two additional hostages who were abducted prior to October 7.
 - » Many of the hostages are foreign or dual nationals, including up to 5 [American](#) nationals, 6 [German](#) nationals, 13 [Thai](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 3 [British](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On March 21, between 8:50 a.m. and 11:40 a.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) one unmanned surface vessel (USV) and two anti-ship ballistic missiles from Yemen toward the Red Sea. Forces in the U.S.-led coalition neutralized all of the projectiles.
- On March 21, four armed individuals on a skiff [approached and shot](#) at a vessel 109 nautical miles south of Yemen’s Nishtun, according to British security firm Ambrey. Armed security on the vessel reportedly returned fire.
- On March 21, Assistant Secretary of Defense Celeste Wallander [indicated](#) that the Houthis have launched “at least 50 attacks against commercial shipping and naval vessels.”
 - » JINSA [data](#) indicates the Houthis have launched at least 100 attacks on commercial and naval vessels.
- On March 21, *Bloomberg* [reported](#) that the Houthis reached a deal with China and Russia not to attack their ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.
- On March 20, between 10:10 a.m. and 7:40 p.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) a drone and one USV from Yemen. A [French helicopter](#) destroyed the drone and U.S. forces destroyed the USV.

U.S. and International Response

- On March 22, the UN Security Council (UNSC) [voted against](#) a U.S.-proposed resolution, calling for “an immediate and sustained ceasefire” lasting six months, according to text reviewed by [Reuters](#).

- » Secretary of State Antony Blinken had indicated that the U.S. resolution would call for “an immediate ceasefire tied to the release of hostages.”
- » Eleven UNSC members voted for the resolution, but three nations voted against it, including Russia and China, who have veto power as permanent members. Algeria also voted against the resolution, and Guyana abstained.
- On March 22, Secretary of State Antony Blinken traveled to Israel and [met](#) separately with Prime Minister Netanyahu and minister without portfolio [Benny Gantz](#).
- On March 21, reports indicated that U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will [meet](#) with Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in Washington. Gallant will reportedly present a list of weapons requests, including short-term needs for the war as well as long-term items, such as F-35 and F-16 jets.
 - » Israeli MG Eyal Zamir, who is in charge of Israel’s weapons purchases, will reportedly join Gallant in Washington.
- On March 20, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#), citing two U.S. officials, that the Biden administration will pitch Israel on a plan to secure the Egypt-Gaza border as an alternative to a full-scale ground operation in Rafah.
- On March 20, U.S. Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) [confirmed](#) that he is considering asking Prime Minister Netanyahu to address Congress.
- On March 20, Reuters [reported](#) that Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) declined a request from Prime Minister Netanyahu to speak with the Senate Democratic Caucus. Schumer reportedly said that such conversations should not take place “in a partisan manner.”
- On March 20, nearly 70 former senior U.S. national security officials and diplomats signed a letter [urging](#) President Biden to push for greater humanitarian access in Gaza by using tougher measures against Israel, “including restrictions on provision of [U.S] assistance [to Israel] consistent with U.S. law and policy.”
 - » The signatories to the letter included former U.S. National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, former U.S. counterterrorism czar Richard Clarke, former USAID Administrator J. Brian Atwood, and former U.S. Ambassador to Slovenia Nancy Ely-Raphel.
- On March 20, a U.S. official [confirmed](#) that Israel had submitted its written assurances that it would not use U.S.-provided weapons to violate international law. The written pledge was required by a new State Department policy.
- On March 20, the U.S. Treasury Department [sanctioned](#) three procurement networks and six individuals in Germany, Iran, Oman, and Turkey that “supported Iran’s ballistic missile, nuclear, and defense programs.” The networks provided Iran with antennas for military purposes and materials for use in building missiles.
- On March 21, Israel’s *Ynet* news outlet [reported](#) that U.K. Foreign Secretary David Cameron has warned Israeli officials that Europe may impose an arms embargo on Israel if it does not allow [aid visits](#) to Hamas prisoners.
 - » According to the March 21 [report](#), during a March 17 meeting between officials from all of Israel’s security agencies, there was “unanimous agreement among all officials that visits must not be allowed.”
 - Part of the British demands include Israel providing the prisoners’ names and basic information on their conditions, over which Israeli officials are reportedly divided.

- Officials from the internal security agency Shin Bet and the Foreign Ministry reportedly support doing so, while members of Israel’s political leadership, including National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, oppose doing so.

Rising Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Protests, and Attacks

- On March 21, a burning object was [thrown](#) at the Embassy of Israel in The Hague, Netherlands. No one was injured, and Dutch police apprehended a suspect.
- On March 21, Denmark’s PET security and intelligence service [warned](#) that the threat of terrorism against Denmark and its interests abroad had increased due to the Gaza War and a series of Quran burnings in Denmark last year.
- On March 21, police in Newton, Massachusetts, [said](#) they are investigating seven recent acts of vandalism targeting homes displaying pro-Israel signs as individual hate crimes.
- London’s metropolitan police [said](#) that a London house fire on March 20, in which four people were wounded, is being investigated as a potential antisemitic hate crime after the suspected arsonist made a number of threatening and antisemitic comments.

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- Webinar: [Gaza Update 3/21](#), IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, IDF MG (ret.) Amikam Norkin, and Blaise Misztal, March 21, 2024
- Jonathan Ruhe, [Egypt Must Do More to Aid Gazans](#), March 19, 2024
- Webinar: [Report Rollout: The Day After: A Plan for Gaza](#), with John Hannah, Elliott Abrams, Lewis Libby, Rob Danin, and Jonathan Ruhe, March 15, 2024
- Webinar: [Gaza Update 3/14](#), with IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, and Jonathan Ruhe, March 14, 2024
- Webinar: [Until They All Come Home: Congressional Efforts to Help Free U.S. Hostages in Gaza](#), with Senator Ted Budd (R-NC) and Michael Makovsky, March 13, 2024
- Yoni Tobin and Myles Behar, [Egypt-Gaza Tunnels Pose Threat to Israel’s War Aims](#), March 12, 2024
- John Hannah, Elliott Abrams, and Lewis Libby, “[The Day After: A Plan for Gaza](#),” *Fox News*, March 7, 2024
- The Gaza Futures Task Force, [The Day After: A Plan for Gaza](#), February 29, 2024
- The Gaza Futures Task Force, [The Day After Action Plan](#), February 29, 2024