



October 11, 2023

### **Key Points**

- More than 1,200 Israelis killed, including some 170 soldiers
- Over 3,000 Israelis wounded – 480 still hospitalized; 6,000 rockets fired at Israel
- An estimated 150 Israelis being held hostage in Gaza
- National Emergency Government established with Netanyahu and Gantz
- Concern over second front heats up with exchanges across Lebanon border
- Biden pledges unwavering support against "pure unadulterated evil" Hamas wrought; Blinken to visit Israel
- Federations hold 115 solidarity events across North America

On Day 5 of Israel's war with Hamas the casualty rate has yet again risen significantly. Additional hostile acts by Hezbollah are stoking fears of a two-front war.

Late in the afternoon today, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and National Union Chair Benny Gantz announced the formation of a national emergency unity government. Five National Unity MKs will join the government as ministers without portfolio, and a new Security Cabinet will be comprised of Netanyahu, Gantz, and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, with Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer as well as National Unity MK Gadi Eizenkot (a former IDF Chief of Staff) serving as observers.

Yesterday morning, Israel's President Isaac Herzog met with President and CEO of Jewish Federations of North America Eric Fingerhut, along with the CEO of UJA Federation New York Eric Goldstein, and Jewish Federations Senior Vice President Rebecca Caspi, to discuss the emergency situation.

President Herzog said, "Israel is under attack and its people are grieving. But the Jewish state has always shown incredible resilience under fire and today is strong, determined, and united." The president specifically thanked global Jewry, and singled out the North American Jewish community for "standing shoulder to shoulder with Israel in its hour of need" and thanked us "for all you are doing to speak up, support and defend Israel on the global stage: In the corridors of power, the press, social media and throughout the public arena. We in Israel feel greatly comforted by the fact that the entire Jewish People is with us at this fateful hour."

In a massive display of unity with Israel, Jewish Federations have organized (or are planning) more than 115 solidarity gatherings in communities across North America. See more [here](#).

## **The Home Front**

The IDF reaffirmed that it has regained control of all cities in the country's south and successfully prevented multiple terrorist infiltrations of the border fence with Gaza in the last two days. In addition, a Hamas diver trying to enter Israel via the sea was killed. In the last 24 hours, there have been seven live engagements between troops and Hamas terrorists inside Israel, and IDF forces have neutralized 18 gunmen. The military continues to warn that some terrorists may remain inside Israel from earlier incursions.

IDF spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari clarified that, in the IDF's opinion, Hamas, in its initial attack on Saturday, "intended to occupy the area, not raid and return to Gaza."

As more bodies are discovered from Saturday's attack, the official death toll has risen above 1,200, and funerals are being held around the clock (see [here](#)). The IDF Rabbinate and other officials are struggling with the sheer quantity of bodies, significantly slowing both the identification process and the go-ahead for funerals (see details [here](#)). To accommodate the large number of military casualties, a new section has been opened at the national military cemetery on Mt. Herzl. Last night hundreds of volunteers showed up on site, following an urgent call to begin the somber task of digging fresh graves (see photo [here](#)).

See [here](#) for a page, in Hebrew, with information about soldiers who have fallen in the fighting. As details emerge, it is becoming clearer that terrible events were perpetrated by Hamas in the first day of the war, including rapes, beheadings, and the murders of many babies. In addition, towns that were temporarily overrun by terrorists saw homes and stores looted, buildings burned, and more. Estimated damage in one day is more than \$1 billion USD.

Updated figures indicate that at least 14 US nationals and two Canadian citizens were killed in the Hamas attacks, and that some 20 Americans and two Canadians are still missing.

Significant rocket fire continues across much of the country; earlier today, the city of Ashkelon reported direct hits to property, where two people were lightly injured. Five buildings in Sderot were also hit. Rockets have also been reportedly launched by Hamas drones. Early this evening, sirens sounded across northern Israel as Israeli airspace was breached.

For a fourth straight day, millions of Israelis ran to shelters as sirens blared. Schools and most businesses remained shuttered across the country. A large area around the Gaza Strip has been declared a closed military zone, to which entry by civilians is prohibited. See map [here](#).

In another sign of unity, members of the anti-judicial reforms protests movements have joined their IDF units, while others have organized and are collecting food, clothing, and other materials for soldiers as well as for the victims of the attacks.

## **Israeli Response**

At least 360,000 soldiers have been called up, thus boosting security in all areas of the country in preparation for a potential ground invasion of Gaza. See [here](#) for video footage of the IDF Chief of Staff Hertzi Halevi visiting troops who are readying for battle.

The IDF has already carried out strikes against more than 2,650 targets across the Gaza Strip since fighting began. Some 1,300 of those targets are multi-story buildings containing Hamas assets, including war rooms where the terror group manages the fighting against Israel. Overnight, the military hit the home of relatives of Mohammad Deif, the Hamas military commander, in Khan Younis, killing the commander's brother and other family members. See footage [here](#) of overnight air attacks and [here](#) for the Israeli Navy's attacks.

According to Hamas sources, some 900 Palestinians – most of them Hamas militants – have been killed in Israeli strikes, in addition to the 1,500 terrorists killed during the initial invasion into Israel on Saturday. According to the UN, 260,000 Gazans have been internally displaced due to the fighting.

Brig. Gen. Omer Tishler, the Israel Air Force's chief of staff, earlier today said, "We are attacking the Gaza Strip on an unprecedented scale, because what happened here is something that has never happened before. There is an enemy here firing rockets, raiding a civilian population. We are never going back to that.... We do not act like the other side; we do not attack the civilian population. Behind every attack (of ours) there is a (Hamas) target."

Meanwhile, reports indicate that Hamas' supply of fuel has now run out and the entire Strip is without regular electricity.

In the country's north, additional attacks have stoked fears of a second-front opening, this time between Israel and Iranian-backed Hezbollah. Yesterday, some 15 rockets were fired into Israel from Lebanon. Earlier today, the IDF carried out a drone strike against a Hezbollah post in southern Lebanon in response to an anti-tank guided missile attack on an Israeli military post on the border. The IDF also launched artillery strikes against the source of the rocket fire. Last night, rockets were launched from terror forces in Syria towards the Golan Heights. See [here](#) for details on the threat of a multi-front war. Haifa's Rambam Hospital, in preparation for possible conflict in the north, has opened its three-level, fortified, underground hospital wards. Other hospitals are following suit.

Israel's Minister of Interior announced today that nationwide municipal elections scheduled for October 31 will be delayed by three months due to the war.

### **International Response**

In a live address, US President Joe Biden pledged his country's unwavering support for Israel, saying, "There are moments in this life, when pure unadulterated evil is unleashed on this world... This is what they mean by human tragedy, an atrocity at an unprecedented scale. It brings to mind the worse rampages of ISIS... Sadly, for the Jewish people it's not new. This attack has brought to the surface painful memories, scars left by a millennium of antisemitism and genocide of the Jewish people.... In this moment, we must be crystal clear, we stand with Israel."

Biden also announced that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken would visit Israel tomorrow in an act of solidarity. Yesterday evening, a plane carrying advanced armaments from the US landed at the Nevatim Airbase in southern Israel. This move will facilitate significant military operations and increase preparedness for other scenarios. It has also been confirmed that the US is considering sending a second aircraft carrier to the Eastern Mediterranean, in addition to the USS Gerald Ford and its accompanying fleet of warships and missile ships. See [here](#) for a piece on the importance of the US

naval support for Israel.

Also yesterday, the leaders of the world's leading democracies, US, Germany, Britain, France, and Italy issued a joint statement condemning the attacks on Israel by Hamas and expressed their "steadfast and united support" for Israel. "Over the coming days, we will remain united and coordinated, together as allies, and as common friends of Israel, to ensure Israel is able to defend itself, and to ultimately set the conditions for a peaceful and integrated Middle East region," said the statement by US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

## **Federation Partners on the Ground**

### **The Jewish Agency for Israel**

The Jewish Agency for Israel's Fund for the Victims of Terror has received a \$5 million donation from the Breakthrough Foundations established by Israeli philanthropists Julia and Yuri Milner, representing the largest-ever single gift to the Fund. The Fund provides \$1,200 grants in the immediate aftermath of an event with victims eligible for long-term rehabilitation grants of up to \$6,300 later on

To date, 70 emergency financial aid grants have been distributed and staff have started to visit the evacuated communities in order to assess needs. In the coming days, each such community will be assigned a VOT liaison.

Nearly 1,500 olim have been evacuated from Jewish Agency absorption centers in the south to safer locations elsewhere in Israel. Approximately 30% of Aliyah candidates (outside of Israel) have cancelled or paused their Aliyah process.

Yesterday, 11 elderly Amigour residents were evacuated to the Dead Sea. Tomorrow, in accordance with a governmental request, another 50 will be relocated to Arad. Also, 2,500 food baskets will be distributed to Amigour residents with the help of volunteers.

More than 5,700 Masa Israel Journey Fellows are currently in Israel, and a small number have decided to return home. Those in programs in the South have been relocated to safer locations elsewhere in Israel. Masa is actively connecting Fellows in need of professional support with numerous mental health experts proficient in various languages. Some 40 Fellows are in the process of making Aliyah.

Jewish Agency Shlichim are helping to organize events in their communities, while several who have lost family members or friends have asked to share their stories in their communities before returning home.

The Jewish Agency is collecting videos and other materials about its activities on the ground, which can be accessed [here](#).

### **World ORT**

Yesterday, an update briefing by World ORT on Zoom was hacked by anti-Israel activists, forcing the organizers to end it abruptly. The call was rescheduled for earlier today.

The Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) is hosting daily webinars sponsored by Jewish Federations and the Jewish Agency. A rotating team of top analysts of Israeli military affairs, the US-Israel relationship, Israel's political system and the country's diverse society, will speak every **Sunday to Thursday from 11:00 - 11:30 am ET by Zoom**.

Join [here](#).

Jewish Federations issued a [statement](#) on the current fighting.

**Our Israel Office, having activated emergency protocols, is working closely with our partners on the ground and is close contact with the Government of Israel and the IDF. We will continue to update as the situation develops.**