



October 12, 2023

Key Points

- More than 1,300 Israelis killed, including at least 220 soldiers, 22 US citizens and 2 Canadians
- Some 3,300 Israelis wounded, including 350 in serious condition
- Over 6,000 rockets fired at Israel
- An estimated 150 Israelis being held hostage in Gaza
- For those looking for help, critical information about the situation on the ground, or other assistance, see [this](#) resource page put together by Jewish Federations.
- See also [this](#) Jewish Federations update on requests for personal protective equipment which are circulating.

On Day 6 of Israel's war with Hamas the casualty rate has again risen, reaching 1300 Israelis killed.

In a massive display of unity with Israel, Jewish Federations have held (or are planning) some 120 solidarity gatherings in communities across North America, as part of an unprecedented effort to support Israel. See [here](#) for more.

The Home Front

Funerals took place across Israel yesterday, with many more scheduled for today as the country begins the heart-wrenching task of burying its dead. With such large numbers, many are attending multiple funerals and the IDF rabbinate, burial societies and others are working around the clock to enable an honorable funeral for every victim.

One of the fallen was Bruna Valeanu, a 24-year-old Brazilian-Israeli who was murdered at the Rave. Only Bruna's mother and sister live in Israel and they were concerned that there would not be a minyan (prayer quorum) at the funeral. A message was sent out on social media asking for volunteers to ensure that wouldn't happen. Instead of the 10 that they sought, an astonishing 10,000 people showed up for the funeral in Petach Tikva last night.

See [here](#) for a list of the names of those murdered that have been released so far, and [here](#) for a site in Hebrew with the names and photos of fallen soldiers.

Most people from the towns around Gaza have been evacuated, leaving authorities continuing the grim task of collecting bodies, and surveying the severe damage. In some

kibbutzim and towns, large portions of the population have been murdered and most houses, cars and other property destroyed. In some cases, it remains unclear whether the towns or kibbutzim will be rebuilt at all. Among other items, in Kibbutz Sufa, Hamas fighters left behind an ISIS flag (see photo [here](#)). At the same time, tales of heroism are emerging from the first day of fighting. Read some inspiring stories [here](#).

Rocket fire continues across the country but has slowed considerably. Seven houses in Sderot were hit causing considerable damage and four people have been injured, two seriously. For ten hours last night, not a single rocket was fired. This could be because Hamas is “pacing itself,” preparing for a protracted battle with Israel, and trying to save supplies; but could also be due to IDF efforts fighting the terror group.

According to the IDF, Hamas is showing signs of losing control, and its senior leadership may have lost communication with numerous commanders. Schools and most businesses are shuttered and a large area around the Gaza Strip remains a closed military zone, to which entry by civilians is prohibited. See map [here](#).

At the request of the Home Front Command and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel: During the upcoming Shabbat, Channel 14 will broadcast a “Gal Shaket” to be used for the Shabbat-observant public. During Shabbat, Home Front Command personnel will be on the channel, and when necessary, they will deliver life-saving instructions. The rest of the time the channel will be in silent mode. The silent broadcast will also provide a solution to the hearing impaired, with text instructions provided simultaneously on the Idan Plus TV system. Under the guidance of the chief rabbis of Israel, the channel must be turned and left on from before Shabbat begins.

Similarly, Israeli carrier El Al, which does not fly on Shabbat, announced it would be operating special flights on Shabbat to carry the large number of IDF reservists who are trying to fly back to Israel to join their IDF units. The company, whose majority stake is owned by an ultra-Orthodox Jew, received authorization from a number of rabbis to fly on Shabbat this week.

Israeli Response

With 360,000 reserve soldiers called, in addition to the regular standing army, almost every family in Israel is directly connected to the fighting. See video footage [here](#) of reserve soldiers preparing for battle earlier today.

Since Saturday, the IDF has already carried out strikes against more than 2,650 targets across the Gaza Strip. Overnight, attacks killed Muhammed Abu Shamala, a senior operative of Hamas’ naval forces whose house was used to store naval weapons; as well as Mustafa Shahin, a Hamas operative who filmed and broadcast the terror group’s murders in southern Israel on Saturday. See footage of IDF strikes overnight [here](#).

The IDF is using videos posted on the internet of the murders, attacks and kidnappings, to identify perpetrators with the help of facial recognition technology.

According to Hamas sources, some 1,200 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.

Israel’s Energy Minister Yisrael Katz confirmed that Israel will not reconnect Gaza’s electricity supply until the hostages held by Hamas are released. He stated, “Humanitarian aid to Gaza? No electrical switch will be turned on, no water pump will be

opened and no fuel truck will enter until the Israeli abductees are returned home. Humanitarianism in exchange for humanitarianism. No one can preach morality to us.”

While hopes remain high that a significant escalation on Israel’s northern border can be avoided, the IDF has considerably bolstered its forces across the region as a precautionary step. Early yesterday evening, there were reports of 15-20 manned paragliders crossing the border from Lebanon, sounding sirens across Israel’s north. While details around the event have not been released, the IDF confirms that there were no successful incursions.

The IDF maintains that there is no shortage of essential equipment for soldiers, although acknowledges some logistical challenges resulting from the unprecedented call-up and large number of reserve troops in active service (see photos [here](#)).

Today, the IDF announced that it has already successfully:

- Provided hundreds of heavy weaponry units to IDF units.
- Supplied 24,000 tons of infrastructure materials (asphalt, gravel, and earthworks).
- Employed over 60 construction companies to assist the IDF.
- Established 5 factories for the production of protective equipment.
- Rented hundreds of generators.
- Prepared approximately 1,500 buses for transporting IDF soldiers, focused mainly on reserve forces.
- Delivered over 1,000 carriers, semi-trailers, trucks, and around 1,200 rental vehicles to combat forces.
- Distributed a wide variety of equipment including baby food to the residents of the city of Sderot.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and National Union Chair Benny Gantz formalized the national emergency government last night. Appearing together, the Prime Minister said:

“Citizens of Israel, this evening we have formed a national emergency government. The people are united and today its leadership is also united. We have put aside every other consideration because the fate of our country is at stake. We will work together, shoulder to shoulder, for the citizens of Israel and for the State of Israel... I would like to stand by the soldiers, and the security service and rescue personnel, who are working around the clock in all sectors. The entire people of Israel are behind you. I say to you, citizens of Israel, to my colleagues here, and to all of you the words of the prophet Isaiah: 'They helped every one his neighbor; and every one said to his brother: 'Be of good courage.' The people of Israel live – and together we will win.”

Minister Gantz added:

“Our standing here, shoulder to shoulder, is a clear message to our enemies, and more importantly, a message to all citizens of Israel – we are all together, we are all mobilizing. Ours is not a political partnership but a shared fate. All citizens of Israel share a common fate, and together we will shape our fate and reality. At this time, we are all soldiers of the State of Israel. This is the time to come together and win. This is not the time for difficult questions, it is the time for crushing responses on the battlefield. I would like to turn to all citizens of Israel and tell them that the enemy will be destroyed, security will be restored the killing fields in which our heroes fell will be rebuilt and the entire State of Israel will flourish anew and be strengthened.”

International Response

Last night, a first shipment of equipment for the IDF from the US Government arrived in Israel and is already being deployed.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken landed in Israel on Thursday morning to express the solidarity of the United States with Israel. Among other meetings, he has met with Prime Minister Netanyahu, and will meet with the families of American citizens abducted by Hamas. In their meeting, Netanyahu said to Secretary Blinken, "Just as ISIS was crushed, so too will Hamas be crushed. And Hamas should be treated exactly the way ISIS was treated."

Meanwhile US President Joe Biden is said to be considering re-freezing the \$6 billion dollars that was released in August for Iran.

Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant met with 31 NATO defense ministers who were gathering in Brussels earlier today. Gallant spoke of the atrocities committed by Hamas against children, women, men and the elderly and told the assembled ministers, "We have been hit hard. Yet make no mistake – 2023 is not 1943. We are the same Jews, but we have different capabilities. The State of Israel is strong. We are united, and powerful." Gallant also presented an unreleased and uncensored video of some of the horrific acts committed by Hamas against Israeli civilians and soldiers, as well as foreign nationals who were either kidnapped or killed.

Last night, Israel's President Isaac Herzog spoke with the United Kingdom's King Charles III, who called to express his condolences and "deep shock at the criminal and barbaric actions of the terrorist organization Hamas in its attack on the citizens of Israel."

Federation Partners on the Ground

The Jewish Agency for Israel

- Some 40 more grants were distributed by the Jewish Agency's Fund for the Victims of Terror yesterday, and more are expected to be distributed very soon.
- The Agency has also convened a Roundtable with the National Emergency Forum to discuss bringing medical volunteers from overseas, including doctors and paramedical professionals.
- At the same time, the Agency is preparing an evacuation plan for communities in the north should that become necessary.
- The 1,480 olim who have been evacuated from Jewish Agency absorption centers in the South to safer locations elsewhere in Israel will remain on respite until at least Monday.
- The Agency is also working on finding alternate flights for Olim that were scheduled to arrive and have had their flights cancelled. All new Olim are being given an information kit to help them on arrival.
- Masa participants are participating in volunteer activities, including assembling food packages, helping with babysitting, conducting deliveries, and more.
- All participants in the Agency's Haredi Mechina Program in Moshav Ora returned to their program yesterday, and some other Mechinot will resume by the end of the week.

The **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)**:

Some of JDC's response to the current situation in recent days included the following:

- A first group of 170 families at risk in the south of Israel were approved to receive vouchers for food, household items, toys and medicines. This assistance is aimed at helping recipients who were struggling financially before the crisis, make emergency purchases such as water, toys, and other supplies for shelters and safe rooms.
- JDC professionals visited centers throughout Israel, housing Holocaust survivors from the communities bordering the Gaza Strip, who were evacuated after the tragic attacks. JDC staff met with elderly Holocaust survivors to assess their needs and determine responses.
- Youth studying at a vocational school supported by JDC volunteered to use their skills to support survivors in the south of Israel. Students studying in the carpentry track created locks for safe spaces in apartments, to enhance their protection, and students studying in the culinary track prepared hot meals for families in the South.
- JDC, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, converted a JDC-initiated employment center in the Haredi city of Bnei Brak into a volunteer hub. So far 500 Haredi volunteers have signed up and are staffing call centers, visiting elderly, and supporting vital community services. JDC aims to replicate this model in other JDC-initiated employment centers throughout Israel.
- The JDC cafeteria in Jerusalem has been repurposed to support the major relief efforts taking place in Israel. Professionals in our Israel office are volunteering their time to make food for forensic police officers working around the clock to identify the bodies of civilians and soldiers who fell victim to the recent terrible attack.

The **Jewish People Policy Institute** (JPPI) is providing daily in-depth and inside analysis, 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 Sunday to Thursday, 11:00 - 11:30a.m. EDT by Zoom. Join [here](#).

For those looking for opportunities to volunteer and assist Israel, please see [this](#) guide, prepared by Jewish Federations.

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.