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Key Points

- Israeli society is displaying unprecedented unity during this war and has come together with extensive volunteer efforts and aid from various organizations.
- Heroic stories are emerging, including a journalist's rescue by his father and a retired couple's ordeal during a 20-hour Hamas hostage situation.
- The war is impacting Israel's economy, with business limitations and ongoing challenges due to terrorist activity.
- Arab Israelis struggle with the aftermath of the conflict, as questions on ethical considerations and the proportionality of Israel's response arise.
- International support for Israel escalates, with the US dispatching additional military aid, and European leaders expressing steadfast support for Israel.
- Jewish Federations launched a \$500 million campaign, offering aid and resources for those affected, while maintaining close collaboration with Israeli authorities and partners on the ground.

Today is day 9 of Israel's War with Hamas and this update takes a slightly different approach. In addition to the latest developments, today we will provide links and information focusing on more behind-the-scenes developments and areas, to give readers a better sense of the feeling in Israel.

Israeli Society

Israeli society has been galvanized by the war, leading to extraordinary giving and unity. See more in these links:

- [Israelis are united as never before](#)
- [Israeli artists give their all to console, entertain amid Hamas war](#)
- [Legendary show Zehu Ze reunites for war effort](#)
- [How Israeli teens can help](#)
- See [this](#) ad from Israel's largest bank, as an example of how commercial entities are supporting the public.
- Jewish Federation partners are also involved in numerous volunteer efforts, including:
 - Many Jewish Agency Masa Fellows are participating in volunteer activities, including assembling food packages, babysitting, conducting deliveries and more.

- Kids studying at a vocational school supported by are helping survivors in the south. Students in the carpentry track created locks for safe spaces in apartments, to enhance their protection, while others in the culinary track prepared hot meals for families in the South.
- Also, JDC converted an employment center in the ultra-Orthodox 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 community services. JDC aims to replicate this model in similar centers throughout Israel.
- Across Israel, hundreds of thousands of citizens are taking part in a multitude of activities to assist soldiers, those evacuated from the south, and others in need. A few, almost random examples:
 - In the ultra-Orthodox city of Elad, youth are making 3,000 sandwiches a day for soldiers at a nearby IDF base.
 - In this writer's street in a city in the center of the country, a call went out on Saturday night from a resident who explained that her son was returning from the Gaza Front for just twelve hours bringing uniforms, socks and underwear from many soldiers in his unit. Dozens of families immediately volunteered to do laundry and he headed back to the front with clean clothes for the whole unit.
 - There are endless stories of soldiers entering restaurants, falafel stands and countless other businesses being told, "their money is no good here" with products and services being provided for free.
 - Makeshift donation centers have sprung up in shopping malls, parking lots, and multiple other venues. Tens of thousands of Israelis are bringing food, clothing, personal hygiene items, home-baked cakes and cookies to these hubs so other volunteers can get them to soldiers at the front.

Stories of Heroes

Every day, we are learning more details, particularly about the events on the first day of the war, and with them countless stories are emerging of heroism, sometimes from unlikely places. See a collection [here](#).

- Haaretz journalist Amir Tibon was rescued from the fighting by his 62-year old father, a retired major-general. See [here](#) for more on the story, and [here](#) for Amir Tibon's own retelling.
- Read [here](#) the account of journalist Nir Gontarz who traveled south to save his son at the Rave attacked by Hamas gunmen.
- One of the stories that has captured many Israelis' attention has been that of Rachel and David Edri, a retired couple, held hostage in their home by Hamas for 20 hours. Rachel "bought time" until rescue forces could arrive by, among other methods, cooking food for the terrorists. See more, including video footage, [here](#).

The Economic Impact of War

Conflict of this scale has, by definition, a significant impact on both the Israeli and the global economy. With so many reservists called up, key employees are out of pocket in many firms and businesses, and the Home Front Command has imposed restrictions on hours of operation for shopping malls and many other venues. Read below for more insight on this aspect of the war.

- [How has the war impacted Israel's economy so far?](#)
- [Terrorists stole credit cards from their Israeli victims](#)

- [Israeli fintech experts mobilize to thwart financial transfers to Hamas](#)

Arab Israelis

Arab Israelis face unique questions any time there is an escalation. The barbarism and horrific nature of the October 7th attack, has left many struggling. Read more here:

- [Israel's Arab citizens torn](#)
- [Jews and Arabs join forces to help war victims and prevent riots](#)
- [Paramedic Awad Darawshe, 23: Killed treating wounded at rave massacre](#)

Ethical Questions

A number of ethical questions have arisen in connection with Israeli's retaliation for the attacks of October 7th and as this conflict continues, we can anticipate that additional issues will come up. Here are 3 examples.

- [Should Israeli hospitals refuse medical treatment to Hamas terrorists?](#)
- [Cutting off electricity and water to Gaza: Ethical or excessive?](#)
- Many are discussing the issue of "proportionality" in Israel's response. See [here](#) for a discussion, from British television that includes a forceful response as to why the call for "proportionality" is baseless.

In the international community, many are asking questions about Israel's action. Below are two questions, and suggested answers:

Question: Are Palestinian civilians being targeted by Israel?

Answer: Israel was attacked by one of the most barbaric, immoral, inhuman organizations that the world has ever known - one that vows to wipe the entire country off the face of the earth. Hamas is a group that purposely targets civilians with documented plans to commit horrific atrocities. These plans were implemented and included beheadings, burning people alive, killing dozens of babies, raping women, taking Holocaust survivors and others as captives. This evil organization was elected by the people of Gaza.

Nonetheless, Israel is a humane, law-abiding country, and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reflect those values. Despite the terrible crimes committed, and the unprecedented threats against the Jewish state, Israel is NOT targeting civilians, and is even warning Palestinians before it strikes Hamas' terror and military targets; losing the element of surprise as the price it must pay for keeping Gazan non-combatants out of harm's way.

Israel has repeatedly warned Gaza's civilian population to evacuate certain areas to avoid being caught in the violence. Cynically, disturbingly, and once again demonstrating their complete disregard for human life and civilian populations, Hamas has ordered residents not to leave and to stay in place, despite the warnings that Israel has given, potentially condemning some of their own people to die. And now, evidence has emerged of Hamas blocking the safe corridors created by Israel, forcing their own civilian population to remain in the fighting zone and become human shields and propaganda pawns.

Question: Why is Israel cutting off electricity and other supplies to Gaza?

Answer: Hamas, elected by the people of Gaza, is the authority in charge of the Strip, and responsible for the well-being of its citizens. If the hostages are released, Israel has said that it will immediately resume electricity and other supplies, even though, in the past, the regime has diverted large quantities of provisions and aid for military and terror

purposes, while its wealthy leadership has squandered urgent resources for themselves.

For example, we have seen again and again that emergency supplies of much-needed diesel fuel (used to power generators for hospitals, among other purposes) has been redirected to Hamas' rocket program and other military uses. It should also be noted that in regular times, Israel only supplies 10% of Gaza's water and 50% of its electricity (a further 25% comes from solar power, and the rest from Egypt and other sources). In short:

- Israel is fighting an unprecedented war against a barbaric enemy that has committed horrific atrocities not seen since the Holocaust.
- Hamas was elected by the people of Gaza and is responsible for their welfare.
- Hamas purposely targets civilians and continues to do so.
- Israel does not, and will not, target non-combatants, and gives warning to civilians before attacks.
- Israel will resume supplies to Gaza if Hamas releases the 126+ hostages it abducted including young children, women and many elderly civilians; even though it is well-known that Hamas will almost certainly redirect those resources for military purposes.

Philanthropic Responses from North America and Israel

- Jewish Federations are raising funds at lightning speed for urgent needs in Israel towards our \$500 million [goal](#).
- Business magnate Mike Bloomberg has committed to matching all donations to Magen David Adom. As of Wednesday, Bloomberg had matched \$7.5m in new gifts.
- See more on North American philanthropy for Israel during the war, [here](#).
- Israeli philanthropist Ofer Yannay has established a Help Center for IDF soldiers, and also launched a campaign to raise national spirits, including full page ads in all of the country's weekend newspapers with the slogan, "Am Yisrael will win."

The Home Front

Funerals took place across Israel, as the country continues to bury its dead. Professor Erdan Segal of the Weizmann Institute published data showing that last week's massacre was the deadliest terror attack anywhere in the world proportionate to the size of the country. Per millions of citizens, the attack was at least thirteen times as deadly as the attacks of 9/11. See [here](#) for an account of those involved in the grim task of identifying victims.

At least 265 families have now been notified officially of the death of family members. Tragically, there are still over a thousand victims awaiting final identification and burial. This process is extremely difficult due to the fact that bodies have been badly mutilated, beheaded and burned beyond recognition. Forensic teams are working hard to identify them using DNA or dental records. In addition, some 120 families have been notified of the positive identification of their loved ones as hostages in the hands of Hamas.

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.

View dramatic footage [here](#) from an IDF helicopter involved in rescuing injured soldiers during the initial fighting last Saturday.

Two-thirds of the residents of the city of Sderot in the south have already left their homes, and the remaining third have been urged by the IDF to leave today ahead of an expected ground war.

Rocket fire has slowed considerably, but has been punctured by barrages, including to Tel Aviv and other locations in the center of the country. See [here](#) for video of the impact of a rocket that fell in the town of Bat Yam, just outside of Tel Aviv yesterday.

While schools and most businesses in Israel are shuttered, there are some signs that elements of normalcy may be returning. The Ministry of Education has announced that commencing Monday, there will be a gradual return to in-person schooling, in safer areas. Meanwhile the Ministry of Health announced that non-elective surgeries would recommence in areas not directly affected by the fighting. A large area around the Gaza Strip remains a closed military zone, to which entry by civilians is prohibited. See map [here](#). Last night, the area within 4 kilometers of the northern border was also closed to all but residents, who were ordered to remain in close proximity to shelters and safe rooms.

Israeli Reponse

On Saturday, a small group of Israeli ground forces briefly entered the Gaza Strip. Based on precise intelligence information, they recovered the bodies of an undisclosed number of Israelis who had been captured by Hamas during last week's incursion.

Israeli forces appear to be poised for a ground invasion of Gaza. See video [here](#) of troop preparations underway, and photos [here](#).

Following the IDF warning issued to Gazan civilians to evacuate the north of the Strip, Israel estimates that more than 600,000 of the area's one million residents have left their homes. Israel opened three "humanitarian corridors" to provide safe passage for civilians. Sadly, and cynically, Hamas has placed roadblocks on these two routes, to stop civilians from leaving the area. See video images of Hamas road blocks [here](#), and still photos [here](#). At one point, Hamas announced that Israel never issued a call for Gazans to leave, prompting IDF Spokesman Daniel Hagari to appear on Al Jazeera TV where he told Gazans to leave the area immediately, in his own voice.

While a full-scale escalation has not erupted in the north, Hezbollah continues to provoke Israel. Yesterday and today, the terror group fired mortar shells and rockets into Israeli territory as well as multiple anti-tank rockets at IDF positions near the border. The IDF retaliated with artillery fire towards the source of fire in Lebanon. In addition, rockets were fired at Israel from Syria today. Israeli media have described the attacks in the north as "more a show of solidarity with Hamas than an actual intent to enter the war." Nonetheless, the frequency of attacks in the north appears to be increasing.

Overnight, the IDF carried out ongoing airstrikes against hundreds of Hamas targets in Gaza. Among the targets were terror tunnels, multi-story buildings housing Hamas assets, military compounds, residences of senior Hamas members used as military command centers, weapons storage warehouses, and communications rooms.

According to Hamas sources, some 2,329 Palestinians – many of them Hamas representatives – have been killed in Israeli strikes, in addition to the 1,500 terrorists killed during the initial invasion into Israel on Saturday.

Following the formation of the national unity government in Israel, the Likud party

announced that Yisrael Beitenu Party chair Avigdor Liberman, a former minister of defense, would also join the emergency government. This has not yet been confirmed by Liberman.

International Response

On Saturday night, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke to US President Joe Biden for the fifth time since fighting began. The Prime Minister updated the President on latest developments, and the President reiterated the United States' firm backing of Israel in the current war. The US has now dispatched a second aircraft carrier, the USS Eisenhower along with its entire carrier group to further bolster Israel in this dark hour; and the United Kingdom is also sending an aircraft carrier.

The Prime Minister also spoke with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis today. The European leaders expressed their unswerving support for Israel.

A bipartisan delegation of United States senators led by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer arrived in Israel earlier today and have met with President Isaac Herzog and other leaders.

Jewish Federations

Jewish Federations have launched an unprecedented \$500 million campaign to support Israel. See more [here](#).

For those in Israel – or with family or friends there – who are 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 information page on requests for personal protective equipment which are circulating and [this](#) update regarding volunteering.

Readers can access a Jewish Federations toolkit of resources [here](#).

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