



October 9, 2023

KEY POINTS

- More than 700 Israelis killed, over 2,300 wounded, and roughly 150 being held hostage in Gaza
- Nearly 5000 rockets fired at Israel, including heavy barrages today toward major population centers
- IDF says it has regained control of all areas in Israel, but numerous Hamas terrorists believed to remain at large within Israel's borders. 300,000 reservists called up for duty
- Our core partners are providing emergency support, mental health and trauma relief, and supporting victims of terror
- Yesterday, Jewish Federations held a webinar with reports from the IDF Spokesperson, Jewish Federations' partners in Israel and others. View a recording [here](#)
- Join UJA-Federation of NY tomorrow at 12pm ET for a virtual briefing with former prime minister of Israel Naftali Bennett. [Register here](#)

On Day 3 of Israel's war with Hamas the casualty rate has risen dramatically, and Israel has drafted hundreds of thousands of reserve soldiers.

Cities and Towns in the South

Throughout the morning Monday, battles continued to be fought between Israel Defense Forces (IDF) troops and Hamas terrorists in at least eight cities and towns across Israel's south. It was believed that numerous Hamas gunmen remained uncaptured from the original invasion on Saturday, and others had continued to sneak across the breached border through multiple holes in the fence, underground tunnels, and other methods. In the city of Sderot, large numbers of troops from the Paratroopers Brigade were combing the streets and searching house to house for additional terrorists (see photos [here](#)). At 11:30 AM Israel Time the IDF announced that it believed that it has regained control of all areas inside Israel, but warned that some Hamas gunmen may remain hidden in towns.

Tragically, yesterday, the death toll from Saturday's surprise Hamas attack rose above 700 in what is now being labelled as the day that saw the most Jews murdered since the Shoah. This number includes soldiers, civilians, American Israelis, Arab Israelis and numerous foreign workers from Thailand. In the largest-casualty event, a significant

number of Hamas terrorists surrounded some 4,000 young people who were attending an outdoor “nature dance party.” The gunmen then fired indiscriminately on the crowd. At least 240 people, mainly teens and young adults, were mowed down. Late yesterday, a group who had fled the party and hid in fields overnight were rescued by the Israel Air Force. See footage [here](#).

Israeli citizens have been shocked to the core by video images, call recordings, and screen shots of whatsapp messages, emerging from Gaza that show terrorists roaming the streets of Israeli towns, entering houses and shooting the inhabitants. Some footage depicts streets littered with bodies, and others show harrowing scenes of young families (including babies), the elderly, and others being kidnapped by gunmen and driven over the border as hostages.

The Home Front

Rocket fire from Gaza against Israeli civilian targets has continued incessantly over the past 48 hours. While most were short-range rockets aimed at towns in Israel's south, dozens were also fired at cities in the country's center earlier today, including Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Rishon LeTzion, Modi'in and more. While most rockets fell in unpopulated areas, or were intercepted by the Iron Dome, at least 80 landed in populated areas. Once again, millions of Israelis ran multiple times to shelters, as explosions were heard across the country, on an ongoing basis, throughout the day. Rocket fire continues at the time of writing.

In a worrying concerning development, IDF soldiers, backed by helicopters, engaged and killed a number of terrorists that infiltrated into Israel from Lebanese territory. Troops are continuing to search the area.

Schools remain closed throughout the country, with gatherings of more than 50 people banned country-wide. Office workers have been instructed to work from home.

Most stores (other than essential services) remain shuttered as economic activity slows, and Israeli stocks and bonds slipped on global markets. The Bank of Israel (equivalent of the US Federal Reserve) began to sell some of its significant foreign currency reserves in a bid to prop up the Israeli Shekel which slid to its lowest level against the USD in many years.

While Ben Gurion Airport remains open, many international carriers have suspended flights to Israel. Israeli airlines El Al and Arkia are picking up the slack, adding more flights to assist hundreds of Israelis trying to return to Israel, including many young people who have been called up for reserve service.

According to media reports, discussions continue towards forming a national emergency government which could include Yair Lapid, Benny Gantz, Avigdor Liberman and others.

For those in Israel with missing friends or relatives, a new hotline has been set up, which can be reached by dialing 105 from inside the country. In addition Prime Minister Netanyahu has appointed Brig. Gen Gal Hirsch to coordinate hostages and missing persons on behalf of the government.

US Support

The United States Navy's powerful Ford Carrier Group, which includes an aircraft carrier and multiple support ships, is steaming towards the region, in a clear sign of support for Israel, and a signal warning against those who may consider a wider escalation. US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin announced that munitions will be sent to Israel and

that this “underscores the United States’ ironclad support for Israel.” In a second phone conversation in as many days, President Joe Biden told Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that more assistance to Israel will be forthcoming in the coming days.

Israeli Response

At least 300,000 soldiers have been called up in the largest recruitment of reserve troops in decades (see footage [here](#)). Some Israeli media are reporting that a ground operation is likely to begin in the coming days. The IDF is working to clear any remaining terrorists from southern Israeli towns, and has begun to evacuate most residents of the South to the center and north of the country, in order to give the military greater freedom of operation.

The IDF also continues to hit Hamas targets in multiple air strikes, including terror tunnels, Hamas officials, weapons facilities, and other sites. So far, 1200 targets have been struck. See [here](#) for footage of the IDF attacking terror tunnels in the Bet Hanoun area. Hamas says that at least 500 Palestinians have been killed in over the past 48 hours.

On Monday morning, Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant imposed a complete siege of Gaza, including cutting electricity to the region.

See [here](#) for the text of remarks made last night by IDF Spokesperson RDML Daniel Hagari.

Federation Partners on the Ground

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC):

Within hours of the initial ambush in Israel’s south, JDC activated its emergency response team and action plans. JDC’s main focus has been on vulnerable seniors, people with disabilities, children and young adults at risk, families in financial distress, and the unemployed. Activities have included:

- Providing emergency support for people with disabilities, including access to a hotline with social workers and psychologists
- Strengthening the capacity of nursing institutions for elderly Israelis who have fled from the current conflict zone
- Expanding mental health interventions for children and youth at risk
- Training front-line professionals to meet the unprecedented needs among the most vulnerable children and families, the elderly, and people with disabilities

The Jewish Agency for Israel:

The Jewish Agency is focusing on the following areas:

- Operating the Fund for the Terror Victims.
- Caring for the safety and resilience of employees and staff in the field, especially in areas affected by the fighting. Working with emissaries to provide psychological assistance where needed.
- Care of program participants in various programs, including sensitive personal situations resulting from the current situation.
- Taking 2000 Olim from absorption centers in the South for a five day respite period. Providing respite activities for children and teenagers in families who prefer to stay.

- Supporting 2700 residents of Amigour elderly care facilities in the South.

The Israel Trauma Coalition (ITC):

Working in coordination with the Home Front Command, ITC's Southern Resilience Centers remain on high alert. With staff and residents confined to their homes, services are being provided via telephone and zoom.

The Director of ITC's Sdot Negev Center experienced shooting in her community with two residents killed and two missing. She was also the person who had to deliver the tragic news to relatives who identified the body of their daughter Saturday night.

The southern Bedouin communities have also been affected with two families losing six children ranging in age from 5-15 and an elderly grandmother.

Jewish Federations issued a [statement](#) on the current fighting and yesterday held a webinar with reports from the IDF Spokesperson, Jewish Federations' partners in Israel and others. View a recording [here](#).

UJA-Federation of New York is inviting all to a virtual briefing, **tomorrow at 12pm ET**, as they welcome Naftali Bennett, former prime minister of Israel for a special virtual briefing from Israel. He will provide the latest information, insight, and analysis in real time as events unfold. [Register here](#).

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.