



January 2, 2023

The Latest

- As fighting continues, more **IDF soldiers have been killed**, bringing the total number of IDF casualties since the ground offensive began to 173, (and to 505 since October 7). Yesterday, American-Israeli Sgt.- Maj (Res) Amichai Oster was slain in battle. He was the son of Dr. Howard Oster, deputy director of the Internal Medicine Division at Sourasky Medical Center, and Marcy Oster, a well-known journalist. The family had made Aliyah from Cleveland, Ohio. See details of all the fallen soldiers [here](#).
- As fighting in Gaza continues, an Israeli delegation is currently in Egypt, discussing a potential **new hostage deal**.

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Operations

- Yesterday, the IDF captured a [Hamas stronghold](#) using special forces who battled terrorists inside tunnel networks beneath the site. Hamas's "Eastern Outpost" is made up of 37 buildings in the middle of a civilian population, surrounded by residential buildings, a school, and a hospital; there is also a mosque in the complex which is used as a meeting point for Hamas operatives. The stronghold (see infographic [here](#)), including a 65-foot deep command bunker (see [video](#)), was used by Hamas's intelligence division and other units to manage the fighting in the entire Gaza Strip.
- Two terrorists - one Hamas and one Islamic Jihad - **revealed how Hamas exploits civilians** and civilian areas in Gaza. Zohadi Ali Zahadi Shahin - a Hamas operative in its Shati Battalion admitted that Hamas stopped Gazans who tried to move southwards to escape the fighting and transferred them to the Shifa Hospital to be used as human shields (see [footage](#)). Muhammad Darwish Amara, an Islamic Jihad operative from the group's Gaza Brigade, admitted that - despite his objections - a Hamas operative planted a bomb in his apartment where his children were staying (see [footage](#)).
- Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said today that while fighting remains intense in the southern Gaza Strip, "only a few thousand" terrorists are left in the north.
- Nonetheless, it is being widely reported that within two or three weeks, Israel will move into Stage 3 of the war, which will entail lower-intensity fighting. The IDF

says it has already begun releasing some five brigades from reserve duty. With more and more soldiers being sent home, Israeli universities resumed studies, belatedly beginning the new academic year.

- Similarly, residents of several towns near the Gaza border have been told they can return to their homes. See more [here](#).
- The Hamas-run health ministry in the Gaza Strip says that more than 22,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed since the start of Israel's war with Hamas.
- Israel continues to allow humanitarian aid for the Gazan population:
 - In late December, Israel [opened](#) a second border crossing, Kerem Shalom, to allow for more aid to be transferred. Until then, all aid had arrived through the Rafah crossing via Egypt.
 - According to the latest data released by Israel's [COGAT Authority](#), (Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories) over 104,000 tons of aid and more than 5,800 trucks have now been transferred into Gaza. On December 25th, over 200 trucks carrying aid were inspected and crossed into Gaza. Every day, containers of diesel fuel and cooking gas are delivered to UN agencies from Egypt.
 - Earlier this week, COGAT [facilitated](#) the delivery of 80,000 vaccines that were donated by UNICEF.
 - These efforts are ongoing with trucks accessing the Gaza Strip every day under IDF supervision, despite documented efforts by Hamas to sabotage those efforts, [steal](#) supplies before they can reach their intended targets, and [hide](#) in ambulances and humanitarian convoys.
 - In public comments made on Sunday, President Isaac Herzog [alleged](#) that the United Nations has been a major obstacle to the delivery of humanitarian aid.
 - Only 10% of drinking water typically used within Gaza is provided by Israel whereas the rest is locally sourced. Yet throughout the war, COGAT [opened](#) two water lines from Israel into Gaza providing water to hundreds of thousands of Palestinian residents in the southern part of the strip, with 28.5m liters being delivered each day. These pipes have been destroyed by Hamas on several occasions and Israel has overseen their repair.
 - On Friday, the United Nations Security Council [passed a resolution](#) that called for increased aid to Gaza. US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield praised the resolution but abstained from voting in favor of it. She asked, "Why is it so hard to condemn Hamas for slaughtering young people at a concert, for butchering families alive, for the reports of widespread sexual violence? I will never understand why some council members have remained silent in the face of such evil."
 - The Lieber Institute of Law & Land Warfare at West Point published a [review](#) of Israel's commitment to protecting civilians and providing humanitarian aid. They argued that Israel's actions are legitimate given the nature of combat and the obstacles that Hamas puts forth that endanger civilians.

Rockets

- **Hamas rocket attacks** on Israel have been further reduced, although one large barrage was fired at exactly midnight on New Year's Eve. As the IDF has made significant gains in Gaza, the level of rocket fire has been steadily dropping.

Thousands of rockets were fired on October 7, and hundreds of rockets per day in the weeks that followed. By the week of December 1-7, Hamas still managed to fire 75 rockets per day, but by December 8-14, the number had dropped to 23. From December 15-27, the average number of rockets dropped to 16 and is now under 10.

- **In the north**, the opposite phenomenon is taking place; Hezbollah seems to be slowly increasing its level of rocket and other fire against Israeli targets. Earlier today, two anti-tank missiles fell in the town of Shlomi. One missile exploded near a high-rise building and caused minor property damage.
- In the **Red Sea**, Israel and the United States military continue to shoot down missiles and UAVs fired at Israel and commercial shipping vessels, by Iran-back Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Hostages

- It is believed that **129 hostages remain in Gaza** — not all of them alive — after 105 civilians were released from Hamas captivity during the weeklong truce in late November. Four hostages were released before that, and one was rescued by troops. The bodies of eight hostages have also been recovered and three hostages were mistakenly killed by the military. The IDF has confirmed the deaths of 23 of those still held by Hamas, citing new intelligence and findings obtained by troops operating in Gaza.

International Response

- The **US aircraft carrier** USS Gerald R. Ford, which was deployed to the eastern Mediterranean after October 7th, will return to the United States “in the coming days,” the US Navy announced. Sent to “contribute to our regional deterrence and defense posture,” the carrier will “redeploy to its home port as scheduled to prepare for future deployments.”
- Foreign Affairs Magazine: [How Israel could lose America](#).

Stories Of Heartbreak, Heroism And Hope

- [Adi Margalit](#), 24: Architecture student who ‘danced until her final day’
- The full extent of [Hamas's sex crimes](#) on October 7 may never be known
- Sgt. [Ido Binenstock](#), 19: Died on the battlefield trying to save friends

Further Reading

- As a result of the war, [Egypt faces growing crises](#)
- [What will happen to Gaza](#) once the war is over?

Jewish Federations' Resources

- **Jewish Federations have now raised** a total of more than \$762 million system-wide and allocated over \$265 million to a wide range of humanitarian organizations in Israel. [Click here](#) for our latest allocations update.
- Jewish Federations', 10/7 Project is a collaboration with AJC, AIPAC, ADL, and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The [10/7 Project](#) seeks to **counter the disinformation** about the attacks of October 7th and Israel's response, especially aimed at the key media and government influencers. [See here](#) for more information about the 10/7 project, as well as [this news bulletin](#).

- **Resources:** Readers can see links to resources, background, research, and other information on the current war [here](#); can access a Jewish Federations toolkit [here](#), and can refer to the Community Mobilization Center [Resource Hub](#) for the latest talking points and tools.
- See these **resources** by Jewish Federations that give insight into some areas of Federations' emergency allocations:
 - [Women](#)
 - [Pastoral Guidance](#)
 - [Bedouin Communities](#)
 - [Food Security](#)
 - [People with Disabilities](#)
- **Details:** For information on the latest overall numbers from the conflict, see [here](#).
- **Webinar:** The Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI): Daily webinars sponsored by Jewish Federations and the Jewish Agency are offered. A rotating team of 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 11-11:30 am ET**. No registration is required. Join [here](#).
- **Volunteering:** Read [this](#) updated Jewish Federations update on the latest volunteering opportunities in Israel right now.
- **Local Authorities:** Jewish Federations have produced a document answering questions about funding-impacted localities and municipalities in Israel. See [here](#).
- Read the latest communication from the **Community Mobilization Center** [here](#).
- **Previous updates** can be found [here](#).

Jewish Federations

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 you as the situation develops.