



January 30, 2024

The Israel Educational Travel Alliance (IETA), a collective of over 100 Israel educational travel organizations, programs, and philanthropies housed at the Jewish Federations of North America, is spearheading a vital reimagining of Israel educational travel in response to the events of October 7. Leaders, experts, practitioners, and stakeholders will convene in Washington, DC (**Feb. 28-March 1**) to reassess and revitalize the field. We welcome all professionals involved with Israel's immersive experiences to participate. Register [here](#). For more information about the Convening, take a look at the [FAQs](#) or contact ieta@jewishfederations.org.

Jewish Federations and Partners

- Join Jewish Federations partner, JDC, tomorrow, to hear firsthand updates on their recent work in Israel and other regions in need. JDC Global Briefing - **January 31 at 12 pm ET**. [Register here](#).
- **Last Friday**, the International Court of Justice in the Hague [declined](#) to call on Israel to end its military operations against Hamas and called for the immediate, unconditional release of all hostages, but also said that Israel must “take steps to prevent genocide” in Gaza. To read Jewish Federations’ response to the ruling, [click here](#), and see additional talking points [here](#). [Click here](#) for additional information Jewish Federations has prepared on the ruling.
- **Read [this CNN story](#)** about Ukrainian teenagers who sought refuge from war in Israel at Jewish Federations’ partner World ORT’s youth village. The young people have now been caught up in the “horrors of Hamas’ attack.”
- Jewish Federations recently released the [Israel Emergency Impact Report & resource package](#) to articulate the system-wide impact in Israel since 10/7. Watch a recent webinar ([recording here](#)) to learn more both about this data and about the details of the allocations processes.
- **Last week, Jewish Federations also held** a webinar on the unprecedented legal, ethical, and humanitarian challenges faced by Israel in conducting an urban war. For a recording, [click here](#). Also, to watch the inspiring four-minute 2018 video by Koolulalm that was shared after the program, [click here](#).

The Latest Numbers: Israel At War

- 779 civilians were killed (five on the northern border, the rest in the Gaza region)
- 557 Israeli soldiers killed (220 since ground operations began) – thirteen were

killed in the north and the rest in and around Gaza.

- 132 Israelis still in captivity
- 15,500 Israelis wounded
- 218,000 Israelis are internally displaced (138,000 of these are from the south, the rest from the north).
- 11,000 rockets were fired at Israel (9,000 from Gaza, 2,000 from Lebanon, and around 30 from Syria. The Houthis in Yemen have launched 37 attacks, not all of them against Israel).
- The IDF has killed around 10,000 Hamas terrorists and some 175 Hezbollah terrorists.

Hostages

- Ongoing reports suggest that **a new hostage deal may be close**. Under the first stage of an agreement, Hamas would release some 40 hostages comprised of children, women, the elderly, and those with major injuries. In return, Israel would agree to a six-week ceasefire and would release thousands of Hamas terrorists from prison, including those serving time for murdering Israelis. For more information, [click here](#).
- Over the weekend, **Hamas released a video** showing three of the women they have kidnapped. As always, Israeli media did not broadcast the footage, to avoid playing a role in what is seen as Hamas' psychological warfare.
- Activists and relatives of hostages have **protested** for eight straight days near the Kerem Shalom border crossing with the Gaza Strip, aiming to block trucks with humanitarian aid from entering. In a statement, they said, "There is no logic in having the trucks enter directly into the hands of Hamas terrorists... No aid should pass until the last of the hostages returns."
- It is believed that **132 hostages** remain in Gaza. The IDF has confirmed the deaths of at least 28 of them, citing intelligence and findings obtained by troops operating in Gaza and elsewhere. Hamas has also been holding the bodies of fallen IDF soldiers Oron Shaul and Hadar Goldin since 2014. Two Israeli civilians, Avera Mengistu and Hisham al-Sayed are both thought to be alive after entering the Strip of their own accord in 2014 and 2015 respectively.

Rockets

- The number of **Hamas** rocket attacks on Israel remains low. Despite this a barrage of eleven rockets was fired yesterday at cities in Israel's center, including Tel Aviv, causing millions of Israelis to flee to shelters, but no serious damage or injuries.
- In the **north**, Hezbollah continues to fire at Israeli targets.
- In the **Red Sea**, the US, the UK, and Israel continue to defend against attacks by the Iran-back Houthi rebels in Yemen.

UNRWA

- **The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)** is a UN body that was created in 1950 to provide services to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. According to the UN, due to the "absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem," the **General Assembly has repeatedly renewed the Agency's mandate, most recently in June of 2023**. Throughout much of its existence, and particularly in recent

years, UNRWA has faced serious allegations of working with terrorist groups and of falling under the influence of Hamas. In the past few days, startling and damning discoveries have been made of participation by UNRWA employees to the October 7 massacres.

- In 2015, a [report](#) by UN Watch detailed 12 separate Facebook accounts operated by UN officials openly inciting antisemitism and terrorism. Teachers in UNRWA schools have repeatedly [issued](#) terror-supporting statements against Israel and Jews, and the curriculum taught in UNRWA schools has been [exposed](#) for glorifying terrorists and inciting murder and violence.
- UNRWA facilities located within the Gaza Strip have [often been used by Hamas](#) for military purposes. While the Agency has openly [condemned these actions](#), evidence has been uncovered showing that [UNRWA buildings](#) continue to be used to hide Hamas equipment.
- In the wake of October 7, Israeli intelligence uncovered evidence of UNRWA workers who were directly involved in the attacks. The [New York Times](#) detailed the involvement of 12 employees, which included kidnapping a woman, handing out ammunition, and taking part in the Kibbutz Be'eri massacre where 97 people were brutally murdered. The employees received UNRWA salaries for their work as teachers and in social work and logistics.
- Today the [Wall Street Journal reported](#) that that some 1,200 UNRWA employees based in Gaza have ties to Islamic terror groups.
- In the wake of the revelations, as of writing, 17 bodies that fund the Agency's operations have announced that they will [freeze their](#) financing, amounting to 73% of UNRWA's total [2022 budget](#) of \$1.6 billion. These bodies include the United States, Canada, Germany, and the European Commission.
- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres [said](#) he was "horrified by the accusations."
- The US State Department also [responded](#) to the allegations, saying that the United States is "extremely troubled." They called for accountability for anyone who was involved in the massacres by Hamas.
- Foreign Policy Advisor to the Israeli Prime Minister Ophir Falk [spoke with](#) CNN about the abundance of evidence that UNRWA staffers were involved with the attacks; he called for "an in-depth investigation."

International Response

- US Secretary of State **Antony Blinken** is set to arrive in Israel tomorrow, for his seventh visit since October 7.
- Pramila Patten, the **UN envoy for sexual violence in conflict**, arrived in Israel to investigate a wave of allegations of Hamas sexual violence on October 7, and "identify avenues for support." In a message to victims, Patten said: "Please come forward, please break your silence, because your silence will be the license of those perpetrators. My team and I, are here to listen to you in all safety and confidentiality. I'm here for a week, I'm prepared to meet you in a safe and enabling environment and to listen to your stories. The world needs to know what happened on October 7."
- Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations Gilad Erdan is bringing **a delegation of nine ambassadors to the UN** on a trip to Israel this week. The delegation will

arrive later today for a tour, hosted by Erdan, of areas in southern Israel, which were attacked by Hamas on October 7. The group will also meet with released hostages, as well as with the families of those still held captive in Gaza and survivors of massacres. During their trip, the ambassadors — who are from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Malta, and Slovenia, and other nations — will also be briefed on the latest Israeli findings regarding the allegations against UNRWA.

Stories Of Heartbreak, Heroism, and Hope

- Watch CNN's story of 46-year-old Omri Miran, shiatsu healer, husband to Lishay, and father to two-year-old Roni and nine-month-old Alma. He has so far spent 116 days in Hamas captivity. During this time, he has missed his wife's birthday, Alma's first time standing up, and Roni's first day of school. Every night Roni asks where her father is and why he has not yet been found.
- Kfar Aza's first two returnees [hope to forge a path of renewal](#).
- [Read](#) about Sg. Maj. (res.) Reouven Chicheportiche, 38, was killed in battle against Hamas terrorists in Moshav Pri Gan on October 7, 2023. He is survived by his wife Sofia, their children, Be'er, Shaked, Eitan Chaim, and Sinai, as well as his parents and five siblings. He was born in France and in 1992 made aliya as a child with his family.

Further Reading

- [Self-deterrence will not stop the Houthis](#)
- Former MK: [Middle Eastern diplomatic ties under strain](#) amid war in Gaza
- [Are Palestinians holding anti-Hamas protests across the Gaza Strip?](#)

Jewish Federations

- See these **resources** by Jewish Federations that give insight into some areas of Federations' emergency allocations:
 - [Young Children](#)
 - [Volunteers](#)
 - [Women](#)
 - [Pastoral Guidance](#)
 - [Bedouin Communities](#)
 - [Food Security](#)
 - [People with Disabilities](#)
- Jewish Federations' **Israel Emergency Campaign** has now surpassed \$775 million system-wide; and has allocated more than \$300 million to a wide range of humanitarian organizations in Israel. See a detailed update on allocations [here](#).
- As part of the [Second Line](#) initiative, Jewish Federations are partnering with the Israel Ministry of Health, the Israel Trauma Coalition, and Birthright Israel to recruit qualified volunteers to provide both in-person and remote support to affected populations and local mental health professionals in Israel. Native Hebrew speakers are particularly in demand, although speakers of French, Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic, Amharic, and Spanish will also be considered. Volunteers must be able to travel to Israel for six weeks. This is a golden opportunity for engagement, particularly for communities that can recruit a small group as a cohort. To apply, click [here](#). For more information, contact [Hannah Miller](#).

- 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](#) is an organized effort 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.
- **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 of the country's diverse society will speak every Monday and 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 as the situation develops.

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