



War in Israel's South

Update from Jewish Federations of North America

October 24, 2023

THE LATEST:

- On day 17 of Israel's War with Hamas, two more hostages have been released, leaving 220 more in Hamas captivity.
- French President Emmanuel Macron is in Israel in an additional show of the solidarity of western nations.
- Israeli media is reporting that behind closed doors, the U.S. is suggesting that Israel should not launch a ground invasion of Gaza now.
- Full details on these developments, and more, below.

KEY RESOURCES FROM JEWISH FEDERATIONS

- Jewish Federations have produced a document answering questions about funding impacted localities and municipalities in Israel. See [here](#).
- For those in Israel 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. For full details about the home front and military operations, see [this update](#).
- Read the latest communication from the Community Mobilization Center [here](#).
- As many funders struggle to distinguish between the multitudes of organizations looking for important resources, the Jewish Funders Network has produced this [thorough page of guidance](#).
- Over 120 communities have held solidarity gatherings. Watch a video about this [here](#). For a guidebook on hosting a gathering in your community, click [here](#).
- Jewish Federations have launched [The Blue Ribbon Campaign](#), which symbolizes support and solidarity for the safe return of the hostages taken by Hamas. Wearing a ribbon publicly unites people of all religions, races, nationalities, ethnicities, ages, and generations and demonstrates for the people of Israel that they are not alone and that good people across the globe are with them and their families during this dark time.

THE HOME FRONT

Two more Israeli hostages, both elderly women, were released by Hamas yesterday, although the women's family members remain under captivity in Gaza. According to authorities, the two, Nurit Cooper and Yocheved Lifshitz, are in good health. Lifshitz' husband Oded (83) and Cooper's husband Amiram are still in captivity. Oded is a retired journalist and human rights activist involved in bringing Gazans to health facilities in Israel. Israel thanked Egypt and others for facilitating the release. (See more on the hostage release [here](#)).

The Israeli Ministry of Health says that 278 people injured in the October 7 attacks and ensuing war remain in hospitals across the country. Of these, 40 are in serious condition, 164 are in moderate condition, and 74 are in good condition.

Funerals continue for many of the 1400 Israelis killed by Hamas:

- Watch this video account of the security officer from Kibbutz Nirim who repelled dozens of terrorists on October 7.
- Read [this story](#) of the wheelchair bound young woman Ruth Peretz who was killed by Hamas, along with her father.
- Israeli media is reporting that it is emerging from interviews with terrorists captured on October 7, that Hamas operatives were offered \$10,000 for every hostage they captured. See more [here](#)
- During the fighting on Friday, IDF soldier Omer Balva was killed by a rocket fired by Hezbollah. Omer, an American-Israeli, was born in Maryland where he lived until he began his military service in Israel after graduating high school. Omer was in Maryland on October 7, but returned to Israel when his reserve unit was called up a few days later. See more [here](#).

Yet again, there was no rocket fire from Gaza overnight, and overall sirens have remained low. However this afternoon, a very large barrage was fired at Tel Aviv and other towns in Israel's center. Despite the overall slow-down, the IDF Spokesperson warned the Israeli public that "Complacency must not be shown in the home front. This is an attempt by the enemy to put us to sleep," as he warned that Hamas still has significant rocket-launching capabilities.

For information on the latest overall numbers from the conflict, see [here](#).

Areas around the Gaza Strip and also near the Lebanese border remain closed military zones, to which entry by civilians is prohibited.

In the North, Hezbollah continues to hit Israel, in ongoing attacks. Anti-tank missiles, mortars and rockets are frequently launched from Lebanon towards communities in Israel's north. In response, the IDF strikes Hezbollah targets using aircraft, tank fire and artillery.

ISRAELI RESPONSE

The IDF carried out strikes against more than 400 Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip in the past 24 hours, killing several field commanders and other terror operatives. The strikes focused on Hamas staging grounds across the Gaza Strip — including several in mosques — and against terror operatives preparing rocket fire on Israel. The IDF also struck the entrance of a Hamas tunnel on the Gaza coast, and command centers, overnight. Recent strikes have left several more Hamas terrorists leaders dead,

including the deputy commanders of the Nuseirat, Shati, and Furqan battalions.

[Read here](#) about a squad of female IDF combat troops who eliminated nearly 100 Hamas terrorists.

Overnight, the IDF used multiple channels to distribute the following message to citizens of Gaza: "If your will is to live in peace and to have a better future for your children, do the humanitarian deed immediately and share verified and valuable information about hostages being held in your area. The Israeli military assures you that it will invest maximum effort in providing security for you and your home, and you will receive a financial reward. We guarantee you complete confidentiality. The Israel Defense Forces. The contact details are: Secure phone call: *8619. Whatsapp, Telegram, Signal: +972503957992." See the original notice in Arabic [here](#).

[Watch here](#), video of an address the IDF Chief of the General Staff, LTG Herzi Halevi to the media.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

French President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Israel on a solidarity visit today, following numerous other western leaders. Macron met with Israel's President Isaac Herzog, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others. In his comments, Macron said, "The first objective should be the release of all hostages without any distinction." He later added a message for Israel saying, "I want to make sure you are not left alone in this war on terrorism, because I speak on behalf of a country which experienced terrorist attacks, and you were there. And I think this is our duty to fight against this terrorism, without any confusion, without enlarging the conflict.... What happened will never be forgotten -- and we will be here today, tomorrow and the day after for peace and stability. Because these people were killed just because they were Jewish and they wanted to live in peace."

Meanwhile the Biden administration is reportedly concerned that Israel lacks achievable military goals for its operations in Gaza, leading US officials to believe that the IDF is not yet ready for a ground incursion. [See more here](#). US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said a ground invasion could be costly and take considerable time saying, "Urban combat is extremely difficult. It goes at a slow pace. This may be a bit more difficult because of the underground network of tunnels that Hamas has constructed over time and the fact that they have had a long time to prepare for a fight."

According to US media, the US sent Lt. Gen. James Glynn, a three-star Marine, and other officers to Israel to help build the battle plans for the expected ground offensive. Glynn, who has helped lead special operations forces against ISIS and served in Fallujah, Iraq currently serves as the deputy commandant for manpower and reserve affairs of the Marine Corps. Earlier in the day, President Biden hinted that he could support a Gaza ceasefire if Hamas released all the hostages it is currently holding.

EFFORTS ON THE GROUND

Israelis of all stripes have come together to support soldiers and bolster morale in the country, many sharing inspiring tales.

[Read this story](#) about Israelis trying to reunite pets caught up in the attacks of October 7, with their families, or to find adopters.

Two sisters have transformed their Tel Aviv cooking studio into a supportive volunteer

community for olim in response to the ongoing crisis. See more here.

[Watch this video](#) some Israeli troops made for their worried mothers back home. Meanwhile, Omer Meidan, a soldier from Modiin was wounded in the fighting. [See these photos and video](#) of his community in Modiin welcoming him as her returned home.

AMERICAN JEWISH JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE (JDC)

JDC will host an Israel Emergency Briefing, featuring updates from the ground in Israel and JDC's efforts to support those affected by the crisis on Wednesday October 25, at 12:00 NOON (ET). [Register here](#).

JEWISH FEDERATIONS

Jewish Federations of North America have raised an astonishing \$388 million to support Israel in her hour of need, surpassing two thirds of the \$500 million campaign announced just last week. Already, Jewish Federations have allocated more than \$70 million to organizations providing emergency relief and support in Israel, including the Jewish Agency for Israel, JDC, World ORT, Israel Trauma Coalition, United Hatzalah, Magen David Adom, ZAKA, Barzilai Medical Center, and the Soroka Medical Center. These funds are being put to a slew of immediate and urgent needs, such as medical care, emergency services, evacuation, transport, housing, supporting victims of terror, trauma relief and psychological support, as well as preparing for medium- and long-term needs.

Our Jewish Federations have responded to the horrific attacks against Israel with an unbelievable outpouring of support. Join us this **Thursday, October 26, at 1pm ET** as we highlight the impact of our Federation advocacy and allocations. Hear personal stories from our leaders on the ground, and a briefing on community advocacy and the impact of our collective allocations. To register for the webinar, please [click here](#).

The Community Mobilization Center is monitoring major developments in Israel and North America related to Israel's war to defend herself against Hamas, and will rapidly disseminate resources to help mobilize and support our local communities as they work to build and sustain civic and political support for Israel in this conflict. Read the latest communication from the Community Mobilization Center [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.

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