



October 25, 2023

The Latest:

- On day 19 of Israel's War with Hamas, rockets continue to be fired at Israel, reaching as far south as Eilat and as far north as Haifa.
- Stories of tragedy and pain, but also of heroism continue to emerge.
- Full details on these developments, and more, below.

Key Resources from Jewish Federations

- Join the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) for their daily, balanced, in-depth and inside analysis of the war in Israel. **Today at 11am ET**. [Click here](#). A rotating team of experienced analysts of Israeli military affairs, the US-Israel relationship, Israel's political system and the country's diverse society, will guide you through the fog of war, the bombardment of news - real and fake - the barrage of tweets and posts and the confusion of chaos. Sponsored by Jewish Federations.
- Join us tomorrow, **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](#).
- Join Jewish Federations tomorrow, **Thursday, October 26, at 8pm ET**, for "Unity in Harmony: Standing in Solidarity, Song, and Prayer for Israel" featuring music and words of hope, strength, and healing from David Broza, Rabbi Josh Warshawsky, Nefesh Mountain, Rick Recht and many more. [Register here](#).
- Last week, the Biden Administration sent Congress its supplemental funding request, which contains key priorities for the Jewish community, including emergency aid for Israel, domestic security funding, and continued aid to Ukraine. [Click here](#) to urge your members of Congress to support this critical aid package.
- As Israeli Jews of Color grieve alongside their brothers and sisters following the deadly Hamas terror attacks on October 7th, American Jews of Color worry about their safety in the U.S. Jews of Color can [click here](#) to take action to urge their members of Congress to support the supplemental budget request, which provides emergency security assistance to Israel and American Jewish community institutions.

The Home Front

Funerals continue for many of the 1400 Israelis killed by Hamas, and 220 remain in

captivity:

- Watch [this](#) interview with Galit Dan, whose mother and daughter are being held hostage by Hamas.
- Read [here](#) about the Sharabi family, that has seen 3 family members murdered, one missing and one being held hostage.
- Watch [here](#) the emotional appeal at the United Nations by American-Israeli Rachel Polin, whose son Hersh was severely injured on October 7, and is now being held captive by Hamas.
- [Here](#) you can read about the emotional testimony of Sahar Ben-Sela, 30, from Herzliya, who describes how the festive Rave tragically transformed into a horrific massacre. "They mercilessly killed us from close range. They behaved like inhuman creatures, shooting and deriving pleasure from it, with smiles on their faces." And watch [this](#) video from the October 7 Rave, filmed a short time before the attack began, and see some of the many who lost their lives, in happier times.
- The IDF has released a recording of phone call made by a Hamas terrorist who took part in the October 7 attacks, bragging to his parents about slaughtering Jews. The man says he is calling from the phone of a Jewish woman he's just murdered and can be heard excitedly telling his parents that he is in Mefalsim, a kibbutz near the Gaza border, and that he alone killed 10 Jews. "Look how many I killed with my own hands! Your son killed Jews!...Mom, your son is a hero." In the call, his parents are heard praising him. Listen [here](#).
- [This](#) chilling instruction note found on the body of one of the terrorists from October 7 reads, in part, "Know that this enemy of yours is a disease that has no cure, other than beheading and extracting the hearts and livers!"
- Another inspiring story that has now been told, is of a Filipino caregiver, Camille Jesalva, who was with Nitza, the 95-year old woman she cares for, when terrorists burst into their home in Kibbutz Nirim. She was unable to barricade their safe-room window, so when they were confronted by the terrorists, she took \$350 of her own money that had been saved up for an upcoming trip and gave it to the terrorists, pleading that they leave the two of them alone. The bribe worked and the two women then remained clinging to each other in bed for two and a half hours, until the IDF rescued them. Camille subsequently cancelled the trip she had planned and saved up for, saying she now pledged to remain with Nitza.

While the level of rocket fire from Gaza remains low compared to the early days of the war, a particularly large barrage was fired at the center of the country yesterday afternoon, injuring five people in Tel Aviv. Another rocket landed on a house in Alfei Menashe. Members of the family were taking shelter in their protected room, and remained unharmed, despite extensive damage to their home. Also, two longer-range rockets were launched in the last 24 hours: one towards Eilat and one towards Haifa.

Also yesterday, numerous terrorists from Gaza attempted to enter Israel via the sea. Navy special-forces engaged the infiltrators, killing them in a gun battle.

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. There are over 200 hotels hosting evacuated communities, where the displaced people will remain until at least November 14.

While most communities have been evacuated, in some kibbutzim a small number of members have been allowed to stay behind to look after the animals. Despite the security threats, dairy farmers from across the country have been traveling south to care for cows left behind. The cows can suffer severe pain if they are not milked.

Meanwhile, Google is temporarily disabling live traffic conditions on its mapping service apps, Google Maps and Waze, in Israel. "As we have done previously in conflict situations and in response to the evolving situation in the region, we have temporarily disabled the ability to see live traffic conditions and busyness information out of consideration for the safety of local communities," a Google Maps spokesperson said.

Due to the war, and the fact that one-third of university students have been called to military reserve duty, Israeli universities announced that they will not be commencing the new academic year this week, but will delay opening until at least early December.

In the North, Hezbollah continues to hit Israel, in ongoing attacks. In addition, yesterday rockets were fired from inside Syria, presumably from pro-Iranian sources. Israel directed air strikes and artillery fire at the source of the attacks, and Syria said that eight Syrian soldiers were killed as a result.

Israeli Response

The IDF carried out hundreds of strikes against Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip overnight. One attack killed the commander of the North Khan Yunis Battalion, Taysir Mubasher. In the past, Mubasher served as the Commander of Hamas' naval forces and held several positions in weapons manufacturing. See video of overnight strikes [here](#).

Hamas says that some 80 people were killed in those overnight Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip.

Speculation continues as to when a ground offensive may begin. One of the challenges is the vast network of tunnels that Hamas has created, reportedly second in length only to those that have been built in North Korea. Read more [here](#) about the challenges that the tunnel network poses to Israel.

According to the Jerusalem Press Club, there are currently 1500 foreign correspondents based in Israel, covering the war. The Israeli government, and many organizations are working hard to ensure accuracy in the stories being portrayed. Today, despite reports of acute fuel shortages in Gaza, the IDF distributed photos of massive fuel supplies being held in storage by Hamas for its own uses, while hospitals, civilians and others go without. See more [here](#).

International Response

Israeli leaders and others expressed outrage over remarks made by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who said that Hamas' October 7 attacks "did not occur in a vacuum," seemingly justifying the massacres. Israel's ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan called for Guterres to resign and announced the country will deny visas to UN officials. Israel's Foreign Minister Eli Cohen cancelled a meeting scheduled for today with the UN chief.

Guterres tried to walk back his comments, tweeting "The grievances of the Palestinian

people cannot justify the horrific attacks by Hamas. Those horrendous attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.”

In response to reports that the U.S. has asked Israel to delay a ground invasion of Gaza, reporters asked President Joe Biden whether he is pressuring Israel to delay the incursion. In answer, the President said, “The Israelis can make their own decisions.”

Delta Airlines said yesterday that it will cancel all flights to Israel through November 15 because of the ongoing conflict in the region. Since earlier this month, United Airlines, American Airlines, and Delta have all temporarily halted flights to Israel. Delta had said it planned to resume some flights on November 1. American has canceled flights through December 4. See details [here](#) of which airlines are still flying to Israel.

Meanwhile, S&P Global Ratings announced that it was lowering Israel's credit outlook from stable to negative, citing risks that the Israel-Hamas conflict could broaden, with a more pronounced impact on the economy.

Efforts On The Ground

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

Stories continue to emerge suggesting the mainstreaming of Israeli haredi society in this conflict. See [this](#) story about thousands of ultra-Orthodox volunteers helping out.

Read [this](#) uplifting story about the 400 guests who joined a couple they didn't know for a last-minute wedding.

Listen [here](#) as the Israel Opera sings a beautiful rendition of 'Bring Him Home' from Les Misérables as a tribute to the 220 innocent hostages being held by Hamas.

Also see [this](#) Muslim store owner in Lod who asked the local rabbi to put up a mezuzah for him as “I want every Jew that walks in to my store to feel protected”.

Israel's top entertainers are all lending a hand by travelling the country and giving free performances to soldiers, evacuees, survivors, mourners, the injured and more. See [here](#) for details.

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (Jdc)

Recent JDC activity includes:

- 500 child survivors of October 7 have received JDC's "*Hibuki*" therapeutic dolls. This unique trauma intervention, which will ultimately reach 7,000 young evacuees over the coming months, is designed to help children cope with traumas they experienced and relive daily.
- Hassidim from the Karlin Hassidic community volunteered to distribute hot meals to soldiers on Israel's northern front. JDC has recruited more than 1,000 volunteers to support emergency needs and national efforts.
- 160 professionals who manage homecare services and day-centers for the elderly, welfare departments, and nursing institutions, participated in a webinar at JDC's National School for Optimal Aging. The session aimed to empower participants with strategies for trauma intervention, management skills in times of

emergency, and tools for supporting nursing caregivers living with their own traumas.

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.

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](#).

Additional Federation Resources

- 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.
- 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 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.

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.

To subscribe to these updates, [click here](#).