



October 31, 2023

THE LATEST:

- More than three weeks into Israel's War with Hamas, the IDF has successfully rescued one of the hostages, leaving 240 still in captivity.
- Israel's ground campaign continues, with reports suggesting that Gaza City is now surrounded by Israeli forces.
- Full details on these developments, and more, below.

KEY RESOURCES FROM JEWISH FEDERATIONS

- Refer to the Community Mobilization Center [Resource Hub](#) for the latest talking points, tools and resources to help you speak up for Israel.
- JDC will hold an Israel Emergency Briefing tomorrow, **Wednesday November 1 at noon ET**, with Col. (Ret.) Miri Eisin, media commentator and director of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at Reichman University in Herzliya. Hear an overview of the situation on the ground and the issues facing Israel's society. The call will also feature speakers from the JDC team in Israel about their efforts to support those affected by the war. Register [here](#).
- Member of the Security Cabinet, Minister Benny Gantz, has sent [this](#) special video message to our Jewish communities.
- This site shows a [map](#) of the October 7 massacre with a red dot for every person killed and a black dot for every person abducted by Hamas. Clicking on any dot will show the name and picture (if available) of the victim with age and last known location.
- For full details about the home front and military operations, see this [update](#). And for information on the latest overall numbers from the conflict, see [here](#).
- Birthright Israel has opened a [volunteering program](#) for people from outside of Israel to come to Tel Aviv and assist in food rescue operations to prevent shortages in the Israeli market; this includes sorting, packing, and distributing goods for both civil and military personnel.
- [Click here](#) for the Jewish Federations toolkit of resources.
- Additional resources can be found at the end of this update.

THE HOME FRONT

In a rare piece of good news, the IDF has successfully rescued one of the hostages. A

19-year old woman soldier, Pvt. Ori Megidish, was reunited with her family and is reportedly in good condition (see photo [here](#)). Megidish was an observation soldier, taken hostage by Hamas when terrorists stormed the Nahal Oz base over three weeks ago. See more [here](#), and watch [here](#) as Ori embraces her grandmother for the first time. And see the IDF announcement [here](#).

Meanwhile, Hamas released a propaganda video Monday showing three Israeli women held hostage by the terror group. In what appears to be a scripted statement, the women accuse Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of failing to prevent the October 7 attacks and called on him to secure their release. Also yesterday, Israeli media reported that Mossad head David Barnea, made a secret trip to Qatar in an effort to secure the release of the hostages held by Hamas.

Also yesterday, German-Israeli Shani Louk, who was seen paraded by terrorists in Gaza, has been confirmed dead. The Israeli ZAKA rescue organization identified pieces of skull belonging to the young woman, and informed her family that she cannot be alive without it. Louk's parents expressed some relief that she's not suffering, but understand that a funeral is not possible right now.

- Natalie Raanan has arrived back in Chicago, ten days after being released from Hamas captivity along with her mother Judith. Raanan was visiting family in Israel and was taken hostage into Gaza by Hamas terrorists during the October 7 attacks.
- Read [this](#) story of how a Harry Potter fan's murder on October 7 reverberates from Israel to Boston.
- See [this](#) story about a 75-year-old Holocaust educator being held hostage in Gaza.
- And read [this](#) account by Robert Tiviyaev who lost 17 friends and neighbors on October 7.

The level of rocket fire from Gaza remains low compared to the early days of the war, but there has been a barrage against Tel Aviv and the center every day. Yesterday rockets were fired at Jerusalem for the first time in over a week.

Following a drone infiltration alert in Eilat, reports suggest that a projectile, possibly launched from Yemen, was intercepted over the Red Sea before it reached the resort city. Residents of Eilat, which has doubled in size over the last three weeks (with Israelis displaced from both the south and the north moving in), reported hearing explosions. The unidentified projectile was shot down near the Saudi-Jordanian border; it had likely been fired by Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen.

In a second incident, a surface-to-surface missile was fired toward Israeli territory from the area of the Red Sea and was successfully intercepted by the "Arrow" Aerial Defense System. IDF systems tracked the trajectory of the missile, and the IDF added that "Air Force jets were scrambled at the time, and intercepted aerial threats identified in the area of the Red Sea. All aerial threats were intercepted outside of Israeli territory."

In the North, rocket and other attacks continue to take place from both Lebanon and Syria, as do retaliatory Israeli strikes.

ISRAELI RESPONSE

As the ground operation continues, Israeli troops clashed with terror cells inside Gaza

who launched missiles and directed heavy machine gunfire at the forces. The IDF says its soldiers killed members of the terror cells, and directed the Air Force to carry out strikes during the fighting. The IDF is said to have surrounded Gaza City from both the north and the south. Watch video [here](#) of IDF troops fighting on the ground, and view photos [here](#).

Overnight, the military carried out attacks against some 300 Hamas targets in Gaza, from the ground, and through air and navy forces. Sites destroyed included anti-tank guided missile and rocket launch positions, tunnel entrances and Hamas military compounds.

IDF fighter jets killed the Commander of the Beit Lahia Battalion of Hamas' Northern Brigade, Nasim Abu Ajina, who directed the massacres on October 7 in Kibbutz Erez and Moshav Netiv HaAsara. Abu Ajina had commanded Hamas' Aerial Array; he took part in the development of the UAVs and paragliders of the terrorist organization. According to the IDF, his elimination significantly decreases the ability of Hamas to disrupt the IDF's ground activities.

An additional 39 trucks of **humanitarian aid** entered Gaza yesterday, bringing to 171 the total number of trucks that have provided hundreds of tons of aid. The day before, 45 trucks had entered the Strip. U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said that "Even as we work to provide fuel for essential humanitarian services, Hamas continues to maintain extensive fuel reserves. Rather than provide that fuel to hospitals or aid workers or for other civilian needs, however, it continues to hoard it for the benefit of its fighters and to carry out its terrorist attacks against Israel."

Meanwhile, Israel has reopened the second of three water pipelines that provide water to the Gaza Strip, allowing for a total of 7.5 million gallons a day to flow from Israel. Israel says there is now enough water being supplied to Gaza for basic humanitarian needs and that there is no shortage of either food or water for the territory's residents. Read more on humanitarian supplies and needs [here](#).

In a message to foreign journalists, Prime Minister Netanyahu said, "I want to make clear Israel's position regarding a ceasefire. Just as the United States would not agree to a ceasefire after the bombing of Pearl Harbor or after the terrorist attack of 9/11, Israel will not agree to a cessation of hostilities with Hamas after the horrific attacks of October 7th." See his full remarks [here](#).

Also, watch [this clip](#) in which the interviewer asks senior Hamas official Musa Abu Marzouk, "When you built 500 km of tunnels in Gaza, why didn't you build shelters for civilians from the attacks?" Abu Marzouk answers: "The tunnels are for us (Hamas). The citizens in the Gaza Strip are under the responsibility of the United Nations."

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Israel's UN Ambassador Gilad Erdan wore a yellow Star of David that read "Never Again," as he addressed members of the UN Security Council at United Nations headquarters yesterday. Erdan told the Security Council he and his staff would wear the stars until members of the body condemned Hamas's "atrocities."

In response, Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum director Dani Dayan said the move "dishonors both the victims of the Holocaust and the State of Israel." He added that "The yellow patch symbolizes the helplessness of the Jewish people and being at the mercy

of others. Today we have an independent country and a strong army. We are masters of our destiny. Today we place a blue-white flag on the lapel, not a yellow patch."

Tom Nides, who joined Wells Fargo Bank just over one month ago as vice chairman following the 20 months he served as the US ambassador to Israel, has resigned "to return his attention to events in the Middle East." Nides said, "Watching the horrific events unfold in Israel and Gaza these past few weeks have had a profound effect on me, in ways that I could not have imagined. While my tenure as ambassador ended a few short months ago, I now feel an obligation to turn my attention back to the region, and continue to provide whatever assistance I can, outside of an official government role, to help find solutions for the people living there." The former ambassador said he will work with UJA Federation New York and others "to bring whatever expertise I can, immediately."

Meanwhile, in a sign of his strong backing of Israel, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak fired his fellow Conservative MP Paul Bristow, the parliamentary private secretary to Technology Secretary Michelle Donelan, for calling for a "permanent" cease-fire in the war between Israel and Hamas.

Six out of the seven living Australian former prime ministers signed a joint letter in support of Israel. The letter described October 7 as "the single largest massacre of Jewish people since the Holocaust," and likened the act's cruelty and violence to that of ISIS. Read more [here](#).

Analysis:

- What Russia hopes to get out of the Israel-Hamas war ([Time Magazine](#))
- Post-war Gaza planning ([Jerusalem Strategic Tribune](#))
- Despite the war, Israelis remain optimistic ([Israel Democracy Institute](#))

EFFORTS ON THE GROUND

Israelis of all stripes have come together to support soldiers and bolster morale in the country, many sharing inspiring tales. See what [these](#) volunteers have accomplished.

Read [this](#) story about how thousands of Israeli ultra-Orthodox Jews are volunteering for efforts.

Israel Channel 12 Television published a survey of the attitude of haredi Israelis towards the IDF. The survey was conducted by Dr. Nahumi Yaffe of Tel Aviv University comparing Haredi attitudes between March 2022 and October 2023. Results included:

- "I should contribute to Israel's military effort": 35% in March 2022, 52% in October 2023.
- "The Haredi public should find a way to contribute to Israel's war effort": 30% in March 2022, 60% in October 2023.
- "Haredi men need to have basic military training for a time of need": 59% in March 2022, 76% in October 2023.
- "Israel needs a strong army": 80% in March 2022, 85% in October 2023.

Watch [these](#) children in a school in Ra'anana welcoming evacuees from Netivot in the south. The school's principal was given permission to leave his reserve unit for a few hours to be there, and lead the kids in.

Buildings in Israel constructed before the early 1990s do not have designated shelters, and, upon hearing a siren, residents are instructed to run to the internal communal stairwell. Inevitably, some people are caught in the shower or other difficult situations when a siren sounds, often leading to uncomfortable scenes, which many are humorously documenting. See [here](#).

Watch [this](#) clip of a passenger's musical tribute to Israel on board at Southwest Airlines flight.

OTHER RESOURCES

- Jewish Federations have produced a document answering questions about funding impacted localities and municipalities in Israel. See [here](#).
- Read [this](#) Jerusalem Post piece on efforts by Jewish Federations of North America, who have announced that we have collectively raised \$554 million for the Israel Emergency Campaign. The campaign was launched on October 12th with an initial goal of [\\$500 million](#). To date, [\\$111 million](#) has been allocated to over 60 organizations in Israel to support frontline communities, the Fund for Victims of Terror, trauma relief, medical equipment, support for first responders and volunteer efforts. One hundred percent of all funds raised are making it into the hands of the organizations that do the most good on the ground.
- Read [this](#) joint message from Jewish Federations' Chair Julie Platt and President & CEO Eric Fingerhut.
- Julie Platt appeared on Jewish Rock Radio's "Unity in Harmony" virtual solidarity concert for Israel, sponsored by Jewish Federations, which featured David Broza, Rick Recht, Rabbi Josh Warshawsky, and many other artists. To watch the concert, click [here](#).
- Watch [this](#) special video by the Maccabeats and other groups, singing a tribute with the prayer for Israel's armed forces. The video includes a call to donate to Jewish Federations' Israel Emergency Fund.
- 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.
- 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](#) page of guidance.
- Over 120 communities have held solidarity gatherings. Watch a compilation [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 JEWISH AGENCY FOR ISRAEL

The Jewish Agency continues to be active on the ground. At present:

- 3,946 grants have been transferred through the Fund for Victims of Terror and an additional 800 are in process (for a total of more than 4,800 cases to date). The Fund is also providing financial support for families of civilians taken hostage, and its Hotline has received 3,643 calls.
- As of today, 1,250 olim from the south and 523 olim from the north have been evacuated to safer locations elsewhere in the country.
- In buildings belonging to the Agency's elderly care facilities, Amigour, workers have been stocking communal bomb shelters with food and supplies in case there is a need for long-term use.
- Small businesses in the south can now apply to receive emergency grants of up to \$5,000. Small businesses in the south can also apply for interest-free loans up to \$25,000. The Agency already has some 1,500 initial enquiries, with 58 applications already in process.
- More than 1,400 volunteers have been recruited for Jewish Agency efforts.

JEWISH FEDERATIONS

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 in close contact with the Government of Israel and the IDF. We will continue to update as the situation develops.

For more information, please contact: JFNA's Dani Wassner
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