



November 16, 2023

The Latest:

- As the ground war continues, Israeli forces reportedly dropped leaflets warning Palestinians to leave parts of southern Gaza, signaling a **possible expansion of operations**.
- **51 Israeli soldiers have been killed since the ground offensive began**, and 371 soldiers since October 7. See a list of all soldiers who have fallen (with details, in Hebrew) in this war, [here](#).
- A checkpoint on the outskirts of Jerusalem was attacked by terrorists this morning. Three armed Palestinian gunmen stopped their car at the checkpoint, jumped out, and started firing at Israelis, wounding six including one who is in critical condition. The three terrorists, presumably headed into Jerusalem to carry out a major attack, were shot and killed. In their car, IDF soldiers found ammunition as well as axes.
- See details on these developments, and more, below.

Key Resources from Jewish Federations

- **Live Briefing:** Join the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) for a live emergency briefing about the situation on the ground and JDC's efforts to support vulnerable Israelis. **Today, Thursday, November 16th at noon (ET)**. Register [here](#).
- **Unity Shabbat for Israel: November 17-18.** Join Jewish Federations, ADL, AJC, and Jews around the country to come together this week for a Shabbat of Unity. We ask that all Jews light a memorial candle in honor of those who were murdered in Israel and those who have sacrificed their lives fighting for the Jewish State. We also suggest that you light an extra pair of Shabbat candles, that you recite prayers for Israel and the hostages, and that you end Shabbat by reciting Psalm 121.
- **Supporting Pastoral Guidance and Rabbinic Services.** Read [here](#) about how Federations are supporting grieving Israelis who have lost loved ones during the war through collective Israel emergency dollars.
- **Resources:** Readers can access a Jewish Federations toolkit of resources [here](#), and can refer to the Community Mobilization Center [Resource Hub](#) for the latest talking points, tools, and other resources.
- **Map:** [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.

- **Details:** 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](#).
- **Volunteering:** Read [this](#) Jewish Federation update on the latest volunteering opportunities in Israel right now.
- **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](#).
- Additional resources can be found at the end of this update.

Israel Defense Forces Operations

As the ground operation progressed, Israeli forces reportedly dropped leaflets warning Palestinians to leave parts of southern Gaza, signaling a possible expansion of operations. The leaflets were dropped near the city of Khan Yunis, and warned civilians to evacuate the area, saying anyone in the vicinity of terrorists or their positions “is putting their life in danger.” Similar leaflets were dropped over northern Gaza for weeks ahead of the ground invasion there. Watch a statement by the head of the IDF's Southern Command [here](#).

Meanwhile, Israel struck the home of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh — who lives in Qatar — in Gaza overnight. The IDF says the home was “used as terror infrastructure and, among other things, as a meeting place for the senior officials of the organization.” (See video of the [strike](#) [here](#)). Hamas has previously said the IDF hit two homes belonging to Haniyeh and his family, but this is the first strike confirmed by the military.

Watch the video of IDF battles with Hamas yesterday, [here](#), and see photos [here](#). See photos of captured weapons [here](#).

Also yesterday, Israeli forces successfully captured Gaza's port. See footage of the operation and photos [here](#).

Watch an IDF video of the MRI department at Gaza's recently captured Shifa Hospital [here](#) where large quantities of weapons were stored by Hamas, in the hospital facilities themselves. The IDF is still operating underneath the hospital and other hospitals in Gaza where terror tunnels are used to store weapons and house command and control centers and refuges for terrorists. The IDF says that some of the tunnels under the hospitals may also hold hostages. Watch a [report](#) on this by FOX News, from inside Gaza. White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby told reporters during a briefing “We have information that Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad use some hospitals in the Gaza Strip, including al-Shifa, and tunnels underneath them to conceal and to support their military operations and to hold hostages.”

The Hamas-run Gazan Health Ministry says that over 11,200 Palestinians have been killed since October 7, as a result of the war.

The Home Front

The country continues to mourn the victims of the massacre of October 7 and soldiers who have fallen in the fighting; and to demand the return of the hostages:

- Israel is said to be considering a deal that would involve the release of some 50 hostages – all women and children – in exchange for the release of imprisoned Hamas terrorists (all women and minors), and a three-day ceasefire.
- Read [here](#) about Staff Sgt. Aner Elyakim Shapiro who was killed at the Rave is being hailed as a hero for saving the lives of up to seven others. (Graphic content warning).
- In its empty kibbutz's dining hall, Nir Oz survivors set places for the 38 killed, and 75 hostages from among its members. Read [more](#).
- It is now confirmed that a pregnant Israeli woman, kidnapped by Hamas during their October 7 attack, has given birth in Gaza. See more [here](#).

Reports continue to suggest that a deal between Israel and Hamas that would see the release of 50 - 100 women and children being held in Gaza could be announced within days. Under the emerging outline, the hostages would be released in groups, in exchange for Palestinian women and young people being held by Israel. According to the reports, Israel would also agree to a temporary ceasefire of three days, to allow safe passage for the hostages and an influx of aid for Gazan civilians.

The level of rocket fire from Gaza remains low, presumably due to Hamas' diminished capabilities.

In the north, rocket and other fire by Hezbollah continues at a slow, but steady pace.

International Response

U.S. President Joe Biden said that Israel's operation in Gaza, "will end when Hamas no longer maintains the capacity to murder, abuse, and do horrific things to the Israelis." Biden said that Israel's military has "an obligation to use as much caution as they can in going after their targets. Hamas said they plan to attack Israelis again and this is a terrible dilemma."

Germany's interior minister announced raids in seven of the country's regions on an Islamist association suspected of links to Hezbollah. She stated, "At a time when numerous Jews feel particularly threatened," Germany will "tolerate neither Islamist propaganda nor antisemitic incitement hostile to Israel." The police raids targeted the Hamburg Islamic Center and five affiliated groups.

French President Emmanuel Macron says his country is making real efforts to help secure the release of the hostages. In separate tweets in French, English, and Hebrew, Macron says France is "putting all our efforts, all our strength, into freeing the hostages held by Hamas and allowing their families to be reunited with their loved ones."

Yesterday, the UN Security Council approved a resolution calling for "urgent and extended humanitarian pauses and corridors throughout the Gaza Strip" after four failed attempts to respond to the war. The vote was 12-0 with the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia abstaining. The final draft watered down language from a "demand" to a "call" for humanitarian pauses. It also called for "the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups."

Inspiration

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

- "Hamas' evil unleashed a fierce love in Israel." Read [more](#).
- 130 Gaza border area kids traveled to Hungary to watch the Israeli soccer team

compete. See [here](#).

- Read [here](#) about one branch of Israel's famous Aroma Coffee chain that has closed its cash registers and turned the entire successful café into a hub for volunteers to make thousands of sandwiches a day, to feed IDF troops.

Additional Background Reading

- [Biden's Decision and the American Military Deployment](#)
- [Weeks after the onslaught, a quietly inspiring visit to a bloodied Gaza-border kibbutz](#)
- [Initial lessons from the war](#)

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)

- 20 Bedouins with disabilities are benefitting from an online support group opened by JDC and partners. Through weekly meetings, participants gather in a safe space for socialization and support, where they can share their unique challenges and receive professional guidance. Also, 500 kits with toys and craft materials are being distributed to Bedouin families with small children and toddlers. These families live in unrecognized villages with no sheltered spaces, face the ongoing threat of rocket fire, and need help keeping their young children who are still not in school engaged.
- The Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute is developing a comprehensive dashboard to monitor the status of Arab society in Israel during the war. The dashboard was commissioned by the Israeli Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry for Social Equality and will measure progress in key areas including employment, education, welfare, and social resilience. Dashboard indications will help decision-makers address the needs of Arab Society and mitigate disparities during this time of crisis.
- JDC procured first aid supplies including 6,288 burn treatment kits, 3,000 IV kits, 300 first aid kits, and 200 basic life support kits for Jewish and Israeli-Arab local municipalities in areas under threat, and which lack basic medical equipment. JDC continues to source critically needed supplies for local emergency response units in towns close to Israel's borders.
- 400 youth counselors doing National Service are receiving JDC training to provide educational activities for evacuated children residing in hotels. Some 20 training courses are currently taking place across Israel, empowering the trainees with tools for informed trauma intervention and to help build resilience.
- JDC released 7 informational videos and leaflets containing guidelines and tips for effective communication with people with disabilities during emergencies. These resources are being circulated by government ministries and are available to all volunteers and professionals who work with people with disabilities. Watch a sample video (in Hebrew) [here](#).

Other Resources

- **Local Authorities:** Jewish Federations have produced a document answering questions about funding-impacted localities and municipalities in Israel. See [here](#).
- **Volunteering:** Birthright Israel has opened [a volunteering program](#), where people from outside of Israel can come to Tel Aviv and take part in food rescue operations to prevent shortages in the Israeli market, including work to sort, pack, and distribute goods for civil and military personnel.

- **Critical Information:** 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.
- **Supplying Protective Equipment:** 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](#).
- **Funders:** 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.
- **Hostages:** 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 to 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.

Jewish Federations

Jewish Federations of North America's Israel Emergency Fund has surpassed \$635 million. We have allocated a total of more than \$175 million to date from the Emergency Fund; for our blog post on the subject, [click here](#) and for the updated list of recipients and amounts, [click here](#).

The Community Mobilization Center is monitoring major developments in Israel and North America related to Israel's war to defend itself 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.



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