



November 22, 2023

A note on these updates: Due to Thanksgiving, there will be no update tomorrow or the next day. As of next week, we will move to a three-times-per-week format, with updates typically to be sent out on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings.

Wishing everyone an enjoyable Thanksgiving, and praying for the release of the hostages, the safety of the soldiers, and peaceful times for all.

The Latest:

Overnight, the Israeli government voted to approve a **limited hostage deal** with Hamas, brokered by Qatar, with assistance from the US, Egypt, and others:

- Following a marathon eight-hour meeting, Israel's government voted late last night to approve a deal that would enable a **limited hostage exchange**. See details below.
- From recent polling research by Jewish Federations: 72% of public supports humanitarian pause for hostage release; only 20% want unconditional ceasefire. [Read more.](#)
- Hamas will release at least 50 women and children, and will not release children without their mothers. A full list of those being released will be provided by Hamas tonight (Wednesday evening, Israel Time). The hostages will be released at a rate of 12-15 each day for four days, with the first set likely to come out on Thursday.
- The 50 slated for release include 30 children, eight mothers, and twelve elderly women whose lives are considered to be at risk. Read more [here](#) about the children.
- All 50 hold Israeli citizenship. Nonetheless, there are reports that, separately from this deal, Hamas will also release some Thai captives,
- In exchange, Israel will release 150 terrorists from a list of 300. None will have been convicted of murder. The vast majority, 287 of the 300, are males aged 18 and under; most of them are being held for rioting and rock-throwing in the West Bank or East Jerusalem. The other thirteen prisoners are adult women, most of them convicted of attempted terror stabbings.
- Israel will also agree to a four-day ceasefire.
- During the cease-fire, Hamas will also try to locate some 30 other hostages (children and their mothers) being held by other groups. For each of these hostages who is let go, Israel will release three additional terrorists. For every ten

- additional hostages released, Israel will grant an additional day of the ceasefire.
- The ratio of one Israeli to three Palestinian terrorists is meager. Gilad Shalit, the captured Israeli soldier, was exchanged for more than 1000 Hamas prisoners (many of whom had been convicted of multiple murders). See a table of previous deals [here](#).
 - Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu described the deal as "difficult, but correct." The IDF, the Mossad, and the GSS (Shin Bet), all approved of the deal.
 - Also in the agreement, Hamas will allow representatives from the Red Cross to visit the hostages who will remain in captivity and supply them with medicine. In addition, fuel can enter Gaza during the pause in the fighting.
 - The deal was first approved by the Inner Security Cabinet (comprising Prime Minister Netanyahu, Defense Minister Galant, and Minister Gantz, with Ministers Dermer and Eizenkot observing), then by the full security cabinet, and then, finally, by a meeting of the entire government. In the last meeting, discussions and heated debates over the deal continued for more than eight hours. Ultimately, Itamar Ben Gvir's Otzma Yehudit party voted against the deal, while Bezalel Smotrich's Religious Zionism and all other coalition party members voted in favor.
 - Israel's President Isaac Herzog stated, "The reservations are understandable, painful, and difficult, but given the circumstances I back and support the decision of the Prime Minister and the Government to move forward with the deal to release hostages. This is a moral and ethical duty that correctly expresses the Jewish and Israeli value of securing the freedom of those held captive, with the hope that it will be the first step in returning all the hostages home. The State of Israel, the IDF, and all the security forces will continue to act in every way possible to achieve this goal, alongside the restoration of the absolute security of the citizens of Israel."
 - The Almagor Terror Victims Association says that it will now file a petition to Israel's High Court of Justice against the deal.
 - "I am extraordinarily gratified that some of these brave souls who have endured weeks of captivity and an unspeakable ordeal will be reunited with their families once this deal is fully implemented," US President Joe Biden said after the vote.
 - Read [here](#) the behind-the-scenes story of the negotiations that led to the deal.
 - For 46 days, a refugee Kfar Aza family 'sits shiva' for their dead and awaits their hostages. Read more [here](#).
 - Read more about the Nova Music Festival rave, and the massacre that took place on October 7, [here](#).
 - Carolin Bohl, 22 was a German student who wanted to make the world better through art. She was killed by Hamas on October 7 at Kibbutz Nir Oz while on holiday with her boyfriend. Read more [here](#).
 - **69 Israeli soldiers have been killed** since the ground offensive began, and 389 soldiers since October 7. See a list of all soldiers that have fallen (with details, in Hebrew) in this war, [here](#).

The level of **rocket fire** from Gaza remains low, despite almost daily barrages.

In the **north**, rocket and other fire by Hezbollah continues at a steady pace, as do Israel's retaliations against Hezbollah. Hezbollah has fired more than 1,000 rockets and other projectiles at Israel since fighting began on October 7.

Israel Defense Forces Operations

Despite the upcoming cease-fire (see below), the IDF is continuing to operate in Gaza,

with ground forces clashing with Hamas terrorists, and strikes being carried out against the group's infrastructure. The truce has not yet gone into effect. Overnight, troops raided Sheikh Za'id, near Jabaliya. They destroyed several Hamas observation posts and also attacked in the Beit Hanoun area, where they found a weapons cache inside a home. The Navy also carried out strikes against Hamas sites along the coast, including against a residential building from where Hamas snipers had opened fire at ground forces. See the video [here](#), and photos [here](#), as well as video footage of the IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi addressing troops [here](#).

The IDF announced that in fighting since the ground war began, it has exposed and destroyed approximately 400 terror tunnel shafts. See video footage of the destruction of tunnel shafts [here](#).

See [here](#) for new details, provided by the IDF, about how Hamas operates inside hospitals.

The Hamas-run Gazan Health Ministry says that over 13,000 Palestinians have been killed since October 7.

International Response

In another sign of deep, ongoing **US involvement** in the region, Secretary of State Antony Blinken is set to travel to Israel again early next week, making his latest of multiple visits since October 7.

Newly appointed **British** Foreign Minister (and former Prime Minister) David Cameron welcomed the hostage deal between Israel and Hamas, saying, "This agreement is a crucial step towards providing relief to the families of the hostages and addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. I urge all parties to ensure the agreement is delivered in full."

France's Foreign Affairs Minister Catherine Colonna said, "We hope that there will be French people among the first batch of hostages to be released."

In **Russia**, the Kremlin praised the ceasefire agreement as the "first good news for a long time," and said that humanitarian pauses were the only way to build efforts for a sustainable settlement.

Inspiration

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

- In [this](#) heartbreaking photo, see the mother of Yonatan Samo, a soldier who fell in battle last week, listen to her son's heart beating after it was transplanted, following his death, into the body of Yaakov Malka, a father of four.
- The first wave out of 7,000 foreign doctors wanting to help amid the war has arrived in Israel. See more [here](#). Federations are helping support this effort through the collective emergency campaign.
- Yisrael Atlow, who is currently serving as a reservist, thought he was heading for a 24-hour break from the army. To his surprise, when he arrived, he was met with a surprise wedding planned by his fiancé. His entire unit attended the wedding, where Atlow wore his uniform instead of the suit he had planned. In an interview with Channel 13, his now-wife, Anna, was asked how she managed to keep the wedding a secret, to which she responded, "He wasn't reachable. He didn't have a

phone. It was easy.” Atlow reflected on the celebration, saying, “We have a lot of pain in our nation right now, but we need joy. And that is what we are doing here.” See [here](#).

- One reserve soldier tweeted in Hebrew that, “The sweetest hour on Reserve Duty is between 7:00 and 8:00pm when all the reserve soldiers are on the phone, putting their kids to bed.”
- An Israeli Orthodox mother of 10 worked for 12 hours to rescue young people from the rave on October 7. See [here](#).

Additional Background Reading

- [The Ceasefire Imposture](#): Bret Stephens, The New York Times
- Sheryl Sandberg: [Rape is never ok](#).
- [Israeli hostage deal: What makes Israel special and vulnerable](#)

Additional Resources

- **Volunteering:** Read [this](#) updated Jewish Federation update on the latest volunteering opportunities in Israel right now.
- **Supporting Pastoral Guidance and Rabbinic Services.** Read [here](#) about the work to date that Federations are supporting in this field through collective Israel emergency dollars.
- **Local Authorities:** Jewish Federations have produced a document answering questions about funding-impacted localities and municipalities in Israel. See [here](#).
- **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.
- 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.

Key Resources from Jewish Federations

- **Jewish Federations** have now raised a total of more than \$659 million system-wide and allocated close to \$200 million to a wide range of humanitarian organizations in Israel. See our impact stats [here](#).
- **Arab and Jewish Israelis joint responses:** Join this webinar on **Tuesday, November 28 at noon ET** to hear from Shira Ohana and Hanan Alsanah about inspiring joint emergency responses from the earliest days of the war. They will report on what they are doing to preserve a shared future for all residents of the Negev. Register [here](#).
- **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.
- **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](#).
- **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](#).

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 you as the situation develops.