



Israel at War

Update from Jewish Federations of North America
December 27, 2023

THE LATEST

- As fighting continues, more IDF soldiers have been killed, bringing the total number of IDF casualties since the ground offensive began to 164, (and to 496 since October 7). See details of all the fallen soldiers [here](#). One of those killed yesterday was Cpt. (Res.) Shaul Greenglick, 26, of Ra'anana. When Greenglick was home on a break from reserve duty three weeks ago, he [appeared](#) in uniform on an episode of the reality TV singing competition "The Next Star." The judges praised him as having "a natural talent with an amazing voice."
- Reports continue that talks are taking place over a possible deal for the **release of hostages** in exchange for Palestinian prisoners and a two to three-week ceasefire. According to some news outlets, Hamas would return 40 hostages it is holding.
- Israelis are beginning to discuss the **failures that led to October 7**. State Comptroller Matanyahu Englman announced that in the coming months his office will examine the "multi-system failures" that occurred. He promised that "no stone will be left unturned" in examining "personal responsibility" for the "failures on all levels – policy, military and civilian."

ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES (IDF) OPERATIONS

- After more than 75 days of [fighting](#), Israel continues to [make progress](#) in its war with Hamas, having [hit](#) over 22,000 targets, killing 5,000 terrorists (including over 70 top commanders), and arresting 500 more. See photos [here](#).
- Through ongoing [operations](#) across Gaza, the IDF continues to uncover large amounts of Hamas [weapons, facilities, tunnels](#), and materials for attacking Israel. Many of these discoveries have been made inside [homes](#), schools and mosques.
- Around 220,000 Israelis remained displaced from their homes near Gaza, as well as from the area near the country's northern borders with Lebanon and Syria.
- "Not your fault": The mother of one of the hostages killed in error by IDF troops, has sent a [message](#) of love and support to the soldiers who killed him.

ROCKETS

- Hamas rocket attacks on Israel have been reduced to a sporadic level. Nonetheless, occasional barrages are still fired, some reaching Israel's center.

- In the north, Hezbollah seems to have slowly increased its level of rocket and other fire against Israeli targets. Earlier today, a barrage of 18 rockets was fired at Kibbutz Rosh Hanikra on the Lebanese border. The kibbutz, like most towns in the north, has been largely evacuated of citizens. In a separate attack yesterday, a Hezbollah rocket struck a church in Israel's north, severely wounding one Christian man. When Israeli rescue workers arrived at the scene, a second rocket was fired at the emergency personnel, wounding nine people.
- In the Red Sea, Israel and the United States military continue to shoot down missiles and UAVs fired by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen at Israel and at commercial shipping vessels. Earlier in the week, the US shot down 12 Houthi attack drones and five missiles. Watch this [video](#) of the Israel Air Force shooting down a Houthi-launched UAV.

HOSTAGES

- A 12-year-old boy who was [held hostage](#) by terrorists in the Gaza Strip has described some of his experiences in captivity; they include being beaten by Palestinian civilians and being told by his captors that Israel had been destroyed.
- The IDF announced on Monday that its troops found a [car](#) belonging to an Israeli hostage as well as a Hamas [pickup truck](#) at northern Gaza's [Indonesian Hospital](#). The IDF said that these discoveries demonstrate the terror group's use of medical centers in the Strip.
- It is believed that 128 hostages remain in Gaza, following the earlier truce deal that freed 105. Four hostages were released prior to that, and one was rescued by troops. The bodies of 8 hostages have also been recovered and 3 hostages were mistakenly killed by the IDF. Citing new intelligence and findings obtained by troops operating in Gaza, the IDF has also confirmed the deaths of 22 of those still held by Hamas,. This likely leaves around 100 living hostages, including seven American citizens.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

- US President Joe Biden spoke yesterday with Qatar's ruling emir, Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, to discuss the efforts to [secure the release](#) of the remaining hostages held by Hamas.
- Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said that the PA will [return to rule](#) over Gaza despite Israeli opposition, and said that the period following the war will be a "test" for the US to prove that it can keep its word in backing a "revitalized" form of PA rule over the Strip.

STORIES OF HEARTBREAK, HEROISM AND HOPE

- Lt. Adar Ben Simon, 20: Commander "[sacrificed her life](#) like a hero."
- A new-immigrant soldier who [raced home](#) from the front to be at the birth of his first child.
- Edan, Sahar & Geula: A woman and her two grandsons all [captured and killed](#).
- An Israeli bus driver [drove by a bus stop](#) late at night and saw 20 soldiers who had missed the last bus. The driver called his office and received permission to drive each of the soldiers home.
- "It could have been us." Watch the moving [video](#).

FURTHER READING

- The world's foremost rabbinic authority on declaring death [grapples with Oct. 7 horrors](#)
- Foreign Affairs: [Israel – The day after](#)
- Biden: [Israel's best friend, ever?](#)
- Newsweek: I saw the [children Hamas beheaded](#) with my own eyes. Shame on Queen Rania
- Next Steps in the Red Sea: [Offense, Not Just Defense](#)

JEWISH FEDERATIONS' RESOURCES

Jewish Federations have now raised a total of more than \$762 million system-wide and allocated over \$265 million to a wide range of humanitarian organizations in Israel. Click [here](#) for our latest allocations update and see these resources by Jewish Federations that give insight into specific areas of our allocations: [Women](#), [Pastoral Guidance](#), [Bedouin Communities](#), [Food Security](#), and [People with Disabilities](#).

- [The 10/7 Project](#) is a new collaboration among Jewish Federations, AJC, AIPAC, ADL, and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The 10/7 Project is an organized effort to counter the disinformation about the attacks of October 7th and Israel's response, especially aimed at the key media and government influencers. See this [news bulletin](#).
- Resources: Readers can see links to resources, background, research and other information on the current war [here](#); can access a Jewish Federations toolkit [here](#), and can refer to the Community Mobilization Center [Resource Hub](#) for the latest talking points and tools.
- Details: 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 of the country's diverse society will speak **every Sunday to Thursday from 11-11:30 am ET**. No registration is required. Join [here](#).
- Volunteering: Read this updated Jewish Federations [update](#) on the latest volunteering opportunities in Israel right now.
- Local Authorities: Have questions about funding impacted localities and municipalities in Israel? See [here](#).
- Read the latest communication from the Community Mobilization Center [here](#).
- Previous updates can be found [here](#).

JEWISH FEDERATIONS

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
dani.wassner@jewishfederations.org