



December 8, 2023

Jewish Federations' **10/7 Project** is a new collaboration with AJC, AIPAC, ADL, and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The [10/7 Project](#) is an organized effort to promote bipartisan support for Israel and counter disinformation about the attacks of October 7th and Israel's response. [See here](#) for more information about the 10/7 project, as well as [this news bulletin](#) that was just published.

The Latest

- The IDF reported today that it hit 450 sites in Gaza over the past day.
- As fighting continues, five more **IDF soldiers have been killed**, bringing the total number of IDF casualties since the ground offensive began to 91. See details of all the fallen soldiers [here](#).
- An anti-tank missile fired from Lebanon struck and **killed an Israeli civilian** in the northern border town of Mattat yesterday. The man in his 60s was treated by Magen David Adom medics near the scene who were forced to declare his death.
- By Thursday, the IDF said that its **troops had surrounded** Khan Younis, the largest city in southern Gaza, (and a center of Hamas' power) and had also advanced inside the city.
- All restrictions have been lifted regarding the **resumption of schools** in the center of Israel. Until now, schools could only open if students could reach shelters within the allotted time when sirens rang.
- Israeli authorities have now identified a total of **274 soldiers and 859 civilians killed** during the brutal October 7 assaults. The latter figure includes 57 Israel Police officers and 38 local security officers. It is unclear which of these individuals were on duty when killed. Removing those victims leaves a figure of 764 civilians. Read [additional details](#) about the demographics and nature of those murdered.

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Operations

- Some of the most intensive fighting in the ground war so far has been taking place in recent days.
 - The IDF has [surrounded the city of Khan Younis](#) in southern Gaza and is operating in the city's center.
 - Yesterday, [troops broke through](#) the defenses of Hamas's Khan Younis Brigade, and [captured terror strongholds](#), locating weapons and intelligence materials.

- Soldiers killed numerous Hamas operatives in ground combat and airstrikes and located around 30 tunnel shafts that were then destroyed during the ongoing battles, as well as a [weapons depot](#) inside a mosque.
 - The IDF said, “The entire leadership of the Hamas terror organization — political and military — grew up in the area of the city of Khan Younis, including Yahya Sinwar, Muhammad Sinwar, and Mohammed Deif. Now the city is surrounded.”
- The military is also [making advances](#) in the northern Gaza Strip, where they have been operating for more than a month. The IDF stated “In the last 48 hours, in Jabaliya, Shejaiya, and Khan Younis, we breached the defense lines. The terrorists are coming out from the underground and fighting our forces. And our forces are winning in close-quarters combat. They have the upper hand.”
- Yesterday also saw additional signs that general order – as well as Hamas control – **is breaking down** inside Gaza. Thousands of Gazans ransacked a UN facility (long accused of corruption), finding tons of food, clothing, and other supplies, currently in desperate need in Gaza. And in an unprecedented development, one Gazan phoning into a local TV station openly accused Hamas and its leadership of bringing the entire catastrophe on them, and urged Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar to “release the hostages.”
- The Israeli government has approved a “minimal” **increase in fuel supplies** to the Gaza Strip to prevent a humanitarian crisis. Israel has restricted fuel shipments into Gaza since the outbreak of the war over concerns that they will fall into the hands of Hamas and be used for military purposes. Humanitarian officials say the fuel shortages have crippled the health care system and hindered deliveries of basic humanitarian supplies.
- The IDF and Israel’s Defense Ministry launched a program yesterday to **better equip civilian community defense teams**. The local units are made up of residents of communities and are often the first to respond to infiltrations and attacks. On October 7, several of the teams in communities near the Gaza border were overwhelmed as they took on dozens of Hamas terrorists, sometimes without adequate arms and equipment.
- The Israel Defense Forces said Wednesday it has seen a [massive spike in female conscripts](#) seeking to join combat units during the war in the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, the **age of retirement** for Israelis serving in reserves and active duty will be temporarily raised by one year to maintain the IDF’s operational preparedness during the war. Defense and Justice ministries officials are drawing up a temporary bill that will raise the age of retirement for reservists from 40 to 41. In addition, IDF officers’ retirement age will be raised from 45 to 46, or from 49 to 50, subject to their specific role’s requirements.

Rockets

- **Hamas rocket attacks** on Israel remain far lower than earlier in the war but continue to strike Israeli cities daily. [Watch](#) as an intercepted rocket crashes into a street in Tel Aviv, narrowly missing two pedestrians.
- Tragically, many of the rockets were fired by Hamas [from inside the humanitarian zones](#) set up by Israel for those civilians escaping the fighting.
- **In the north**, Hezbollah also continues its medium-level rocket and other fire against Israeli targets.
- On Wednesday, Israel’s long-range Arrow air defense system shot down a ballistic missile, fired by the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen, over the Red Sea. The

incident set off sirens in the **city of Eilat**, though the surface-to-surface missile was destroyed before entering Israeli airspace.

Hostages

- At least [10 of the Israeli civilians released](#) by Hamas, both men and women, were **sexually assaulted or abused** while in captivity, the Associated Press reported Wednesday. In a report detailing allegations of severe and widespread sexual abuse by Hamas terrorists during their October 7 onslaught and later against hostages, a doctor who treated some of the 110 hostages released from captivity told the AP that at least 10 men and women among those freed were sexually assaulted or abused.
- Read about how [released hostages](#) had been starved and tortured.
- See [this account](#) of his time as a Hamas hostage by one of the Thai foreign workers who was released.

International Response

- **US Energy Envoy** Amos Hochstein said yesterday that the Biden Administration has not lost hope that normalization can be achieved between Israel and Saudi Arabia, even though US-mediated talks between the two countries were frozen when war broke out following October 7.
- **UK Defense Secretary Grant Shapps** will visit Israel this week. Shapps stated, “My visit this week is an important opportunity to discuss efforts to accelerate the delivery of lifesaving humanitarian assistance into Gaza and efforts to secure the release of all remaining hostages.” The UK has recently deployed an additional 1,000 military personnel in the Middle East and Shapps said that “our forces are there to support the humanitarian aid effort and help in stabilizing the area.”

Stories Of Heartbreak, Heroism And Hope

- Watch these inspiring videos from Jewish Federations:
 - [Yael](#) - Magen David Adom Call Center Dispatcher
 - [Gilad](#) – Elderly man receiving basic needs support
- Watch [this video](#) about JDC’s agricultural volunteers during the war.
- Read about [Sgt. Binyamin Yehoshua “Benji” Needham](#), 19, a British-Israeli dual citizen and a soldier in the Combat Engineering Corps’ 601st Battalion, was killed fighting in Gaza earlier this week.
- Read about the Jewish Agency’s [Amigour volunteers](#).
- A yeshiva in Yerucham pays a [heavy price](#) as multiple students have fallen in battle.
- Many [Arab-Israeli leaders](#) expressed shock and sympathy with the victims of October 7, when the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit held a screening on Tuesday night for leaders of the sector, showing them video testimony of the horrific events. In attendance were heads of local municipal authorities, community leaders, media personalities, journalists, and thought leaders from the Arab community in Israel.
- Watch JDC’s [emergency educational initiatives](#) for evacuees.

Further Reading

- [Why Israel, which wanted to think it was done with Gaza, sees this as a war of no choice](#)
- The Hostages Held in Gaza – [And Israel’s Contradictory Impulses](#)

- [Ivory tower disgrace](#)

Additional Resources

- **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.
- See these newly produced resources by Jewish Federations that give insight into some areas of Federations' emergency allocations:
 - [Pastoral Guidance](#)
 - [Bedouin Communities](#)
 - [Food Security](#)
 - [People with Disabilities](#)
- **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](#).
- **Jewish Federations** have now raised a total of more than \$711 million system-wide and allocated over \$242 million to a wide range of humanitarian organizations in Israel. Click [here](#) for our latest allocations update.
- **Volunteering:** Read [this](#) updated Jewish Federation update on the latest volunteering opportunities in Israel right now.
- **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.
- **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 you as the situation develops.
