



February 1, 2024

Jewish Federations And Partners

- Jewish Federations have produced [a new update](#) that provides insight into Federations' emergency allocations to Israel's **LGBTQ** community since October 7.
- The Israel Educational Travel Alliance (IETA), a collective of over 100 Israel educational travel organizations, programs, and philanthropies housed at the Jewish Federations of North America, is spearheading a vital reimagining of Israel educational travel in response to the events of October 7. Leaders, experts, practitioners, and stakeholders will convene in Washington, DC from **February 28-March 1** to reassess and revitalize the field. We welcome all professionals involved with Israel's immersive experiences to participate. Register [here](#). For more information about the Convening, take a look at the [FAQs](#) or contact ieta@jewishfederations.org.

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Activities

- Four IDF soldiers fell in battle yesterday, bringing total IDF losses since the start of the ground operation to 227; the total since the outbreak of the war is 561. For information on the four, see [here](#). See details of all the fallen soldiers [here](#).
- Heavy fighting is [continuing](#) in the largest city in the Gaza Strip's south, **Khan Younis**, with the IDF [striking at Hamas targets](#) engaging terrorists in combat and locating [weapons](#). The IDF said it eliminated several Hamas terrorists in [close-encounter combat](#) in heavily built-up areas. Other units fought in the north and center of the Strip and also conducted operations in the center of **Gaza City**. In the past 24 hours, dozens of terrorists have been eliminated, according to the IDF.
- Meanwhile, the IDF is continuing to fight close to the city of **Rafah** on the Egyptian border although, [according to many reports](#), an IDF move into the city is not on the immediate horizon, even as Israel has made some progress in negotiations with Egypt over the issue.
- The IDF continues to make headway at destroying Gaza's tunnels. Current estimates suggest that there are over 450 miles of tunnels under Gaza with at least 5,700 entrance shafts. The entire New York subway system is just 245 miles in total. While dozens of tunnels, and hundreds of shafts, have been destroyed (including some that the IDF has flooded, see details [here](#)), many remain

operational.

Hostages

- Ongoing reports suggest that **a new hostage deal may be close**. US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the UN Security Council in New York yesterday, " Hamas now has a choice to make. It can continue to dig tunnels, to plan for its next attack, to use civilians and civilian infrastructure as human shields, or Hamas can lay down its weapons and accept the proposal on the table to release every hostage."
- According to some reports, under the **first stage** of an emerging agreement, Hamas would release some 40 hostages comprised of children, women, the elderly, and those with major injuries. In return, Israel would agree to a six-week ceasefire and would release thousands of Hamas terrorists from prison, including those serving time for murdering Israelis.
- Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin **Netanyahu met with relatives of some of the hostages** on Wednesday in Jerusalem, where he said, "We are making every effort. The more public this effort is, the more distant it is. The more discreet it is, the greater are its chances for success."
- A new military order declaring a Closed Military Zone, has stopped activists and relatives of hostages who **protested** for eight straight days near the Kerem Shalom border crossing with the Gaza Strip, aiming to block trucks with humanitarian aid from entering. Instead, the protestors [moved to the Ashdod Port](#), trying to prevent ships carrying aid from entering Israel. In a statement, they said, "There is no logic in having the (aid) enter directly into the hands of Hamas terrorists... No aid should pass until the last of the hostages returns."
- It is believed that **136 hostages** remain in Gaza. The IDF has confirmed the deaths of at least 29 of them, citing intelligence and findings obtained by troops operating in Gaza and elsewhere. Hamas has also been holding the bodies of fallen IDF soldiers Oron Shaul and Hadar Goldin since 2014, as well as two Israeli civilians, Avera Mengistu and Hisham al-Sayed, who entered the Strip of their own accord in 2014 and 2015 respectively.

Rockets

- The number of **Hamas** rocket attacks on Israel remains low. In the last two weeks, it has averaged just one or two per day.
- In the **north**, Hezbollah continues to fire at Israeli targets. Israel's Defense Ministry said today that 427 houses of northern residents have sustained structural damage by Hezbollah rockets and anti-tank missiles since October. Some 80 of the houses have experienced direct hits and thus much greater damage. Around 80,000 northern residents evacuated their homes in October under fire by Hezbollah once the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza started. See [this](#) infographic.
- In the **Red Sea**, the US, the UK, and Israel continue to defend against attacks by the Iran-back Houthi rebels in Yemen.

International Response

- **US President Joe Biden** signed an executive order Thursday that could pave the way for sanctions on Israeli vigilante violence against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank. The State Department was expected to announce the first four targets

of the order Thursday. U.S. officials said they were not targeting members of the Israeli government accused of inciting violence, and the government has in the past distanced itself from the small minority of settlers who took part in what it called vigilantism, hooliganism, or people's attempts to take the law into their own hands. The move follows a round of visa bans the U.S. began imposing in December on people involved in such acts. For more, [see here](#).

- **President Biden** also said today that he is working “day and night” to free hostages held in Gaza and bring peace to the region. “Not only do we pray for peace, but we are actively working for peace, security, dignity for the Israeli people, and the Palestinian people.”
- Yesterday, Prime Minister Netanyahu met with a **delegation of ambassadors to the UN**, from Malta, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, Slovenia, and Sierra Leone. “I think it's time that the international community and the UN itself understand that **UNRWA's** mission has to end,” he said. “UNRWA is ...self-perpetuating also in its desire to keep alive the Palestinian refugee issue. And we need to get other UN agencies and other aid agencies replacing UNRWA if we're going to solve the problem of Gaza as we intend to do... UNRWA is infiltrated with Hamas.” Watch the footage [here](#).
- US Secretary of State **Antony Blinken** met with the UN Security Council's recently appointed Gaza coordinator, Sigrid Kaag, on Wednesday to discuss ongoing humanitarian efforts and post-conflict reconstruction strategies in the Gaza Strip. Kaag was appointed to head the Security Council's mission to Gaza after a resolution was passed in late December mandating that more aid enter the enclave.
- **Iran's Revolutionary Guards** have [removed many of their senior officers](#) from Syria due to a spate of Israeli strikes in the country and will rely more on allied Shi'ite militia to preserve their influence there.
- A group of **67 plaintiffs** [filed a lawsuit](#) in US federal court on Wednesday to hold the Islamic Republic of Iran responsible for the October 7 Massacre.

STORIES OF HEARTBREAK, HEROISM AND HOPE

- Watch [this story](#) of a Beduin family from Israel's south who are among the hostages held by Hamas.
- [Rivka Ben Horin, 74, and Yossi Gross, 75](#): A couple who found love again and were murdered in their homes in Kibbutz Nir Oz on October 7.
- See [this](#) video of Elad, a manager at the Keter Plastics Factory returning to his job, and watch [this](#) moving video about soldiers returning home from Gaza.

Further Reading

- After October 7: [Offensive cyber operations as a tool of war](#)
- JDC Brookdale: [Older adults of Ethiopian origin: Recommendations for action during the Israel-Hamas War](#)
- IDF soldiers ask the nation: ['How much of our unity is dependent on our beliefs?'](#)

Jewish Federations Resources

- See these **resources** by Jewish Federations that give insight into some areas of Federations' emergency allocations:
 - [Young Children](#)
 - [Volunteers](#)

- [Women](#)
 - [Pastoral Guidance](#)
 - [Bedouin Communities](#)
 - [Food Security](#)
 - [People with Disabilities](#)
- Jewish Federations' **Israel Emergency Campaign** has now surpassed \$775 million system-wide; and has allocated more than \$300 million to a wide range of humanitarian organizations in Israel. See a detailed update on allocations [here](#).
 - Jewish Federations recently released the [Israel Emergency Impact Report & resource package](#) to articulate the system-wide impact in Israel since 10/7. Watch a recent webinar ([recording here](#)) to learn more about this data, and the allocations processes.
 - **Last week, Jewish Federations also held** a webinar on the unprecedented legal, ethical, and humanitarian challenges faced by Israel in conducting an urban war. For a recording, [click here](#). Also, to watch the inspiring four-minute 2018 video by Koolulalm that was shared after the program, [click here](#).
 - As part of the [Second Line](#) initiative, Jewish Federations are partnering with the Israel Ministry of Health, the Israel Trauma Coalition, and Birthright Israel to recruit qualified volunteers to provide both in-person and remote support to affected populations and local mental health professionals in Israel. Native Hebrew speakers are particularly in demand, although speakers of French, Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic, Amharic, and Spanish will also be considered. Volunteers must be able to travel to Israel for six weeks. This is a golden opportunity for engagement, particularly for communities that can recruit a small group as a cohort. To apply, click [here](#). For more information, contact [Hannah Miller](#).
 - Jewish Federations', 10/7 Project is a collaboration with 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 here](#) for more information about the 10/7 project, as well as [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: See here for information on the latest overall numbers from the conflict.**
 - **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 **Monday and 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.
 - **Local Authorities:** Jewish Federations have produced a document answering 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](#).

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.

For more information, please contact: Jewish Federations of North America's Dani Wassner at dani.wassner@jewishfederations.org