



February 26, 2024

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Activities

- During an evacuation of civilians from Khan Yunis in Gaza, the IDF [found terrorists](#) who were concealed along with civilians and attempting to escape with them. The terrorists were apprehended by the Seventh Armored Brigade, which also killed several other militants and discovered a cache of weapons, including rifles, machine guns, and grenades.
- The IDF found a terrorist cell that had been using drones to attack Israelis; the Israeli Air Force (IAF) neutralized the cell. The IAF attacked Hamas's aerial unit, including striking rocket launch posts that were pointed toward Israel.
- Meanwhile, the IDF announced that it has [concluded](#) a weeklong raid on Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, where both militants and weapons had been found; about 200 terror suspects, including some who allegedly participated in the October 7 massacre, have been arrested there. There is also evidence that Israeli hostages were held captive for a period at the same hospital, including boxes of sealed medicine labeled with the names of hostages.
- Two IDF soldiers, Staff Sgt. Ido Eli Zrihen, 20, and Staff Sgt. Nerya Belete, 21, [died](#) while fighting with the Givati Reconnaissance Unit in southern Gaza. An officer and two soldiers in the Givati Brigade were also seriously wounded. Click [here](#) for the latest information, in Hebrew, on fallen soldiers.
- Violence has erupted once again in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City, where IDF soldiers have now been redeployed. Major Eyal Shuminov, 24, of the Givati Brigade was killed by an anti-tank missile on Saturday in the neighborhood. The district is being eyed as a [potential site](#) for a "humanitarian pocket," where some semblance of ordinary Gazan life would be able to resume once Hamas is defeated; under the plan, local merchants and civic leaders would be empowered to distribute humanitarian aid.

Rockets

- Multiple Hezbollah rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome on Saturday over Kiryat Shmona. Watch the interceptions [here](#). Also, Israel's long-range Arrow air

defense system shot down a missile over the Red Sea that was headed for Israel. Watch the video [here](#).

- The number of Hamas rocket attacks on Israel remains very low, due to Hamas's capabilities being significantly degraded by the IDF.
- In joint airstrikes, the US and UK [struck](#) at least 18 Houthi rebel targets in Yemen; they included an underground storage facility, weapons, and a helicopter. Iran-backed Houthi rebels in the country are attempting to [ban ships](#) owned by Israeli, American, or British companies—or sailing under their flags—from the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Arabian Sea. After the ban was announced, a Houthi missile struck a British-owned cargo ship in the Gulf of Aden, setting it on fire.

Hostages

- The IDF confirmed that Sgt. Oz Daniel, 19, an Israeli soldier who was kidnapped along with the rest of his tank crew, on October 7, has [died](#) in captivity.
- Last week's talks in Paris on a [new hostage deal](#) appear to have made progress; the Israeli, American, Egyptian, and Qatari negotiators developed what an Israeli official called "a solid basis for discussions." Another Israeli official reported that Hamas has "dropped some of its demands." Channel 12 in Israel carried the statement that if Hamas goes along with the agreement, then there is "a high chance that, before March 11 [when Ramadan begins], we will see hostages freed for the first time since [the first truce collapsed at the end of] November." There are an estimated 134 hostages still imprisoned by Hamas, but only about 100 thought to still be alive.
- Israel's War Cabinet has [approved](#) a new round of talks this week, to be coordinated by Qatar. They will take place in Egypt.
- Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu told CBS's "Face the Nation" on Sunday morning that an [invasion of Rafah](#), the southernmost city (on the border with Egypt) where more than a million Palestinians are now sheltering, would mark the last phase of the war. He said that a hostage deal could delay this offensive, but the invasion will take place no matter what.
- The prime minister released his [plan for postwar Gaza](#), which includes continuing control of not only Gaza by the IDF, but also the borders between both Gaza and Israel and Gaza and Egypt. The plan has been rejected by Palestinian leadership; it also does not follow American prescriptions for the future of the enclave.
- The prime minister said that 99 Members of Knesset are [opposed](#) to the creation of a Palestinian state, despite the insistence of the US and other countries that the war must give way to plans for such an entity. A majority of Israelis, recent surveys have shown, also [disagree](#) with the idea.

International

- An officer in the US Air Force died today after [setting himself on fire](#) outside the Israeli Embassy in Washington. The self-immolation was a protest against what he called, before lighting the match, Israeli "genocide" in Gaza.
- Secretary of State Tony Blinken is expressing [disappointment](#) with the prime

minister's plan to build 3,000 new homes in the West Bank. He said that "new settlements are counterproductive to reaching an enduring peace." In a [reversal](#) of the Trump Administration's view of the West Bank settlements, Blinken called them "inconsistent with international law."

- Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu, from the far-right Otzma Yehudit Party, [claimed](#) that US President Joe Biden "is leading us to a disaster" in that a Palestinian state adjacent to Israel would "lead to a Holocaust."

Stories of Heartbreak, Heroism and Hope

- Arbel Yehud, 28, a third-generation resident of Kibbutz Nir Oz, was [taken captive](#) along with her brother, Dolev, and her boyfriend, Ariel Cunio. Although many women have been released by Hamas, Arbel has not.
- Keith Siegel, 64, and his wife Aviva, 62, who made aliyah from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, were [taken hostage](#) from their home on Kibbutz Kfar Aza. Along with a neighbor and her two children, they were driven into Gaza in their own car. Aviva was released on November 26, but Keith is still in Gaza.
- Watch this heartwarming [video](#) of Kibbutz Be'eri children singing. Their kibbutz, which is located just three miles from the border with Gaza, was one of the [worst sites](#) of the massacre by Hamas
- Watch [12 Hours](#), a six-and-a-half minute English-language mini-documentary by Eli Katzoff about Einav Zangauker, who, along with her family, is protesting to secure the release of her son, Matan. In the film, the family pitches a tent on the highway and blocks traffic to make their demands.

Further Reading

- With criminal gangs [seizing much of the humanitarian aid](#), US officials see Gaza "turning into Mogadishu."
- US military experts are [pessimistic](#) that Hamas can be dismantled by Israel in the foreseeable future.
- Ksenia Svetlova on [the danger of failed states surrounding Israel](#).

Jewish Federations

- Jewish Federations' Israel Emergency Campaign has now raised a total of more than \$780 million and allocated close to \$350 million. For details, [click here](#).
- **See these resources** by Jewish Federations that give insight into some areas of Federations' emergency allocations:
 - [LGBTQ+ Community](#)
 - [Young Children](#)
 - [Volunteers](#)
 - [Women](#)
 - [Pastoral Guidance](#)
 - [Bedouin Communities](#)
 - [Food Security](#)
 - [People with Disabilities](#)

- 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.
- Registration for Birthright Israel's summer round is now open. See this [link](#) for important [FAQs](#) to help potential participants and their parents navigate any concerns over the security situation. Interested parties can [reserve their spot here](#). [Registration is also open](#) for Onward's summer internships and fellowship programs – an opportunity for Birthright Israel alumni and those looking for a longer experience in Israel.
- As part of the [Second Line](#) initiative, Jewish Federations is 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 both 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 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:** 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 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 right now.
- **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](#).

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: Jewish Federations of North America's Dani Wassner dani.wassner@jewishfederations.org

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