



February 8, 2024

Jewish Federations and Partners

- Join Jewish Federations **tomorrow, Friday, February 9 at noon ET** for a **special briefing for advocacy leaders** with exclusive updates on aid to Israel, the significant congressional developments of the past week, and the adoption of the IHRA definition to protect communities and colleges. Register [here](#).
- Join the **Jewish Agency for Israel's webinar** - Navigating Crisis: Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on the War with Hamas & the Road to a Brighter Future; Introduction by Jewish Agency Chairman of the Executive Major General (Res.) Doron Almog. **Monday, February 12, 2024 at 12:30 pm ET**. Register [here](#).
- Registration for Birthright Israel's summer round is now open. See this [link](#) for important [FAQ's](#) 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.

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Activities

- **Staff Sgt. (res.) Hanan Drori, 26**, died from a fungal infection after being seriously injured in Gaza, bringing the total of troops killed in the ground offensive against Hamas to 227 (and to 563 since the outbreak of war). See Drori's story [here](#) and details of all the fallen soldiers [here](#).
- Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin **Netanyahu addressed the country** last night. In his comments he said, "Peace and security require total victory over Hamas. We cannot accept anything else.... Without total victory Iran and its terror proxies —Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and others—will be emboldened to subvert moderate states in the Middle East; they'll threaten the entire free world.... Only total victory will prevent that.... Total victory over Hamas will not take years. It will take months. Victory is within reach." Watch his full remarks [here](#).
- The IDF uncovered a **strategic tunnel** under the city of Khan Younis that was used to hide high-ranking members of the organization and to hold hostages. The tunnel is believed to have held twelve hostages at various times, three of whom were released two months ago. During searches, several rooms were discovered inside the underground complex, including a barred cell where hostages were

held, a bathroom, and a rest area used by terrorists holding the hostages. Additionally, intelligence materials and weapons belonging to Hamas were found. IDF Intelligence estimates suggest millions of dollars were invested in the construction of the facility, which is part of an intricate and interconnected underground network. It was linked to another tunnel where additional hostages were held. See [video footage](#) as well as [photos](#) of the findings.

- Israel's Government and the IDF are working on a plan that will see a **lengthening of compulsory military service** as well as reserve duty days, as a result of the war. Military service for males (and some females) will be extended from 32 to 36 months, and the age when males will no longer have to perform reserve duty will be changed from 40 to 45 for enlisted soldiers, (and up to the age of 50 for officers).
- **Khan Younis** in southern Gaza has been the site of the war's heaviest fighting in recent weeks. Dozens of terrorists, including [high-ranking](#) commanders, have been killed in targeted airstrikes and close-quarters combat. The IDF continues to uncover tunnels, weapons stores and other munitions aimed at killing Israelis. Military analysts have [said](#) that defeating Hamas in southern Gaza is key to defeating the terrorist organization and to removing its threat to Israel and the greater region. Some background:
 - The IDF has [dismantled](#) hundreds of Hamas posts in Khan Younis including a military intelligence building, tunnel shafts, launch pads for firing rockets, a rocket manufacturing facility, communications posts and offices of many senior officials.
 - Over the weekend, IDF troops [raided the main headquarters](#) of Hamas's Khan Younis Brigade. The complex, known as the Al-Qadsia Outpost, also housed the office of Muhammad Sinwar, a senior Hamas military commander and the brother of the terror group's leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar. The outpost included a training ground of model targets (including mock entrances to Israeli communities), IDF bases, and military vehicles, all of which were used by Hamas to do simulations and to prepare for the October 7 massacres.
 - IDF discoveries in Khan Younis continue to reveal Hamas's [strategy](#) of hiding behind human shields. The IDF uncovered an extensive [tunnel system](#) where Israeli hostages were held that was built under civilian infrastructure. Hamas terrorists continue to operate from and around Nasser and Al-Amal hospitals and [launched](#) a rocket from within Nasser Hospital. Terrorist infrastructure and weapons have been uncovered in the vicinity of [schools](#) and [mosques](#), and Hamas terrorists have been found hiding within [civilian shelters](#).
 - The IDF established a [humanitarian corridor](#) from the city that was used by 120,000 Palestinians to evacuate to safer areas. The IDF identified 500 terror suspects hiding within the civilian population who were handed over for questioning. [Field hospitals](#) donated by Jordan and the UAE are operating in Khan Younis.

Hostages

- According to a report in the New York Times, Israel believes that **32 out of the 136 hostages are dead**. In Israel, a careful process exists for declaring the death of a soldier where there is no body. The decision is assigned to a special committee made up of representatives of the IDF, the Ministry of Health, the Chief

Rabbinate, medical personnel and others. According to the media, there are a further twenty hostages where insufficient evidence is available to make a clear determination. In the event that these people have also perished, then only 84 of the hostages remain alive.

- Meanwhile, it is understood that Hamas has issued a counter-proposal to a possible hostage deal being suggested by Qatar, Egypt and the US (to which Israel responded positively). According to many reports, Hamas has now proposed:
 - In Phase One, all women, children, elderly, the injured, and female soldiers (35 in total) would be released in exchange for one day of ceasefire per hostage plus ten days of ceasefire for negotiations. In addition, Israel would release 1,500 prisoners, 500 of whom would be chosen by Hamas (and would include some terror “heavyweights” such as those serving time for murdering Israelis, as well as those who participated in the October 7 massacres). Hamas is also demanding that the IDF withdraws its forces from the centers of cities in Gaza and that humanitarian aid to the Strip is doubled.
 - In Phase Two, all remaining hostages would be released in exchange for a further 45 days of ceasefire, a large number of Hamas prisoners freed, and the IDF would redeploy all forces outside the Gaza Strip.
 - In Phase Three, all bodies of Israelis would be returned in exchange for the bodies of Hamas terrorists; there would also be a third period of 45 days of ceasefire. A permanent arrangement for Gaza would also be negotiated. Israel is reportedly willing to consider allowing Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar to leave Gaza alive and go into exile as part of a deal.
 - It is clear that Israel will not accept all of these conditions; however, negotiations continue.

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. Today, three soldiers were injured (one seriously) when terrorists fired an anti-tank missile at the city of Kiryat Shmone.
- In the **Red Sea**, the US, the UK and Israel continue to defend against attacks by the Iran-back Houthi rebels in Yemen. Similarly, the US military continues to strike at pro-Iranian targets in Syria and Iraq.

International Response

- **US Secretary of State Antony Blinken** began the second day of his seventh wartime visit to Israel. He met with war cabinet ministers Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot today and then with Opposition Leader Yair Lapid.
- Yesterday, Blinken met with Prime Minister Netanyahu and other leaders. Read the full text of his remarks in Jerusalem yesterday, [here](#).

Stories Of Heartbreak, Heroism and Hope

- Watch this [video clip](#) of Hamas officials vowing to “destroy Israel” and “murder Jews around the globe.”
- Liora Argamani, the [mother of Israeli hostage](#) Noa Argamani, “just wants a chance

to hug her daughter one last time and bid her farewell.” Liora is suffering from terminal brain cancer and time is running out.

- [Sheryl Sandberg unveils Oct. 7 film about Hamas's sexual atrocities](#)

Further Reading

- [Blinken should know PA just as bad as Hamas rule in Gaza](#)
- David Horovitz: [With IDF hamstrung and Hamas scenting a way out, Netanyahu dodges strategic decisions](#)
- [Hamas stronghold in Gaza's Rafah is key to its survival](#)

Jewish Federations

- 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' **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](#).
- The Biden Administration has issued a new executive order to impose sanctions against four Israelis it said had committed violence in the West Bank. See this Jewish Federations' backgrounder for more information.
- Convening on the **Future of Israel Educational Travel**: The Israel Educational Travel Alliance (IETA), the consortium of over 100 Israel educational travel organizations housed at Jewish Federations of North America, will hold a convening in Washington, DC from **Wednesday, February 28 to Friday, March 1** to assess the future of the field of Israel educational immersive travel in the wake of 10/7. We welcome all Federation professionals who are involved with Israel-immersive experiences to participate. Register here. For more information, take a look at the FAQs or contact Melody.Desanto@jfna.org for more information.
- 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.
- 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 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 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:** 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](#).

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Subscribe to this twice-weekly update [here](#).*