



War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

March 28, 2024

Past updates can be found [here](#).

Join Jewish Federations and the Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) on **Tuesday, April 2 at 1:30 pm ET** to explore the impact of the ongoing war in Israel on the country's economy. Delve into the dramatic shifts in economic priorities prompted by the October 7 terrorist attack and subsequent conflict, as securing resources for the war effort and civilians' immediate needs, supporting essential industries, and maintaining basic infrastructure have become paramount. Gain valuable insights into Israel's recently proposed wartime budget and its implications for national security and post-conflict stability. **Speakers include:** Prof. Karnit Flug, former Governor of the Bank of Israel and IDI's Vice President of Research.

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Latest Numbers

- 1,533 **Israelis have been killed** since October 7.
 - **258 soldiers** were killed since the ground operation began
 - **597 soldiers** killed since October 7
 - 14,889 Israeli **injured**

- 127,000 Israelis remain displaced (around half are from the south).
 - 30,000 of these people remain in evacuee hotels .While residents are allowed to return to most southern communities, many have chosen - with the government's approval – to keep their children in school until the end of the academic year in June. Some are simply too traumatized to return.
 - In addition to the severe emotional and psychological cost, and in addition to the financial cost of housing these residents elsewhere, many are unable to reach their places of work.

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Activities

- Three Israelis, including a 13-year-old boy, were wounded when terrorists shot at a bus in the Jordan Valley earlier today. A manhunt is underway for the terrorist.
- At the beginning of the war, the Israel Air Force (IAF) froze its annual training program and all resources and attention were directed to the war effort. In the past few weeks, the IAF has gradually [returned to training](#). The new program will focus on increasing the IAF's readiness for war in the northern arena and other arenas during prolonged combat. The training will include long-range strikes, flying deep into enemy territory, and surprise exercises will be held for various units. The program will not impede operational activity in the war in Gaza.
- Listen to the [interrogation](#) of a terrorist whose job is to produce missiles, as he admits to hiding in Shifa hospital for three months.
- The government continues to [debate](#) possible new legislation regarding the ultra-Orthodox draft exemption. War minister and National Unity party leader Benny Gantz has said that he would [quit the government](#) if the bill passes in the Knesset. See the latest [here](#).

Humanitarian Aid

- Spanish military planes [airdropped 26 tons of humanitarian aid](#) to Palestinians in Gaza yesterday despite a call to halt the airdrops due to several [deadly incidents](#).

- Latest on aid to Gaza:
 - More than 250 **humanitarian aid trucks** are inspected before proceeding to Gaza daily, via the Kerem Shalom and Nitzana crossings. In addition, some 25 daily food aid trucks from the private sector enter northern Gaza.
 - 125 packages (1 ton each) of humanitarian aid were airdropped over northern Gaza on March 26, while 4 tankers of cooking gas and 4 tankers of fuel designated for the operation of essential infrastructure in Gaza, entered the Strip.
 - 4 **mobile water desalination units** were also transferred to Gaza on March 26. These units are expected to supply 2-3 liters of water per day to tens of thousands of people in the Rafah area. This is in addition to the Emirati water line from Egypt.
 - 21 **bakeries** are operational in Gaza, providing over 2 million loaves of bread, bread rolls, and pitas a day for the local population.
 - Yesterday, the **IDF paused operations** in the western neighborhoods in Rafah between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, to enable the movement of humanitarian aid.
- See the latest facts and figures on Israel's humanitarian aid to Gaza [here](#).

Rockets

- In the **north**, Hezbollah continues to fire at Israeli targets, triggering significant Israeli retaliations. Yesterday a direct hit from a Hezbollah rocket killed a young Druze Israeli factory worker in the mostly-evacuated city of Kiryat Shmona. In response, Israel attacked terrorist cells in southern Lebanon killing at least nine Hezbollah members. In the north, since October 7:
 - 18 Israelis have been killed
 - At least 247 Hezbollah fighters have been killed
 - More than 2,800 projectiles have been fired at Israel from Lebanon and Syria
 - The IDF has hit 4,500 Hezbollah sites
- 61,800 Israelis have been evacuated from along the Lebanese border, from 42 communities. None have yet been allowed to return, Although at least 3,000 remained from the outset, either because they refused to leave their homes, or as they were

exempted from evacuation as critical workers. [Read this story.](#)

- The number of **Hamas** rocket attacks on Israel remains negligible on most days, due to Hamas' significantly diminished capabilities.
- 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

- Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met in Jerusalem yesterday with a **bipartisan US Congressional delegation**, including former board chair of Jewish Federations, Representative Kathy Manning (D-NC). During their meeting, Netanyahu said, "Our goal is to destroy the military and governing capabilities of Hamas in Gaza. Hamas has to be eliminated. Not as an idea. Nazism wasn't destroyed as an idea in World War Two, but Nazis do not govern Germany."
- A **French court** has handed out a four-month suspended sentence to a former city council member from the Lyon area for calling Hamas's October 7 onslaught an "act of resistance."
- Earlier this week, the **UN Security Council** adopted a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza during the month of Ramadan and the unconditional and immediate release of all hostages. The United States abstained from using its veto, allowing passage of the first resolution since the start of the war that called for an immediate ceasefire. In response to the U.S. abstention, Prime Minister Netanyahu said he would no longer send a delegation to Washington DC to discuss a potential ground invasion in Rafah, although the delegation may travel next week instead.
 - UN [Resolution 2728](#) was [adopted](#) by a vote of 14 in favor to none, with the U.S. abstaining. The resolution included an immediate ceasefire during Ramadan, a call for the release of the hostages, and the expansion of humanitarian assistance into Gaza.
 - While not exercising its veto right, **US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-**

Greenfield [placed blame on Hamas](#) for the ongoing conflict and for standing in the way of peace; she explained that the absence of condemnation of Hamas is the reason the US did not vote in favor of the resolution. She also referred to the resolution as non-binding, although under international law, UN Security Council resolutions do obligate adherence by all parties.

- **Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant** responded to the UN's ceasefire call, [saying](#), Israel "has no moral right to stop the war in Gaza until we return all the hostages to their homes. If we don't reach a clear and absolute victory in Gaza, it could bring a war in the north closer."
- **War Cabinet Minister Benny Gantz** [said](#), "The Security Council's decision has no operational significance for us." He added, "The special relationship between Israel and the United States is an anchor in Israel's security and foreign relations, and the direct dialogue with the American administration is an essential asset that must not be given up even when there are challenges and disputes."
- **UN Secretary-General António Guterres** [warned](#) that failure to implement the resolution would be "unforgivable."
- In an official press briefing, **US National Security Council Spokesman John Kirby** [said](#) that the cancellation of the visit of Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer and Israeli National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi to Washington is "disappointing," but he emphasized that the United States non-vote at the Security Council "does not represent a shift in [US] policy" in supporting Israel's war against Hamas.
- [Just a few hours after the UN vote, Hamas rejected](#) the most recent hostage deal that would have seen 40 hostages released in return for some 700-800 Palestinian prisoners. Hamas claimed that it will not waver from its original demands for a full ceasefire and complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip, conditions that, according to Israel, are "delusional."

- According to **Israeli Foreign Minister Katz**, the UN resolution emboldened Hamas to reject the deal on the table, [claiming](#) that Hamas will not need to make any concessions due to the amount of international pressure on Israel to halt its military campaign. The U.S. administration countered Israel's position [stating](#) that Hamas' rejection of the deal came before the UN vote.

Stories of Heartbreak, Heroism, and Hope

- Amit Soussana is the **first former hostage to publicly say she was sexually abused** in captivity. A UN report has said it found "clear and convincing information" that some hostages suffered "conflict-related sexual violence." Read Amit's exclusive [story](#) from the New York Times.
- Read the [story](#) of 30-year-old **Russian-Israeli Sasha Trufanov**, an engineer who works for a microelectronics company that was purchased by Amazon. Described by his girlfriend Sapir as a person with "a heart of gold," the two of them recently moved into an apartment together in Ramat Gan. On October 7, they were visiting Sasha's parents on Kibbutz Nahal Oz when Hamas terrorists infiltrated his family's home, murdered his father, and abducted Sasha, his girlfriend, and two other members of his family. The three were released in a hostage deal, while Sasha remains in captivity. "I can't wait for him to come home already," Sapir said.
- Watch [this Jewish Federations' video](#) about Alice Vaknin from Kiryat Shmona, who was shaken by the October 7th attacks, especially since she had recently fallen and was in a vulnerable state. Fearing she wouldn't find proper care, she found comfort at Yad Sarah's Wellness and Rehabilitation Hotel, where services for her were funded by Jewish Federations.
- [Rescued Gaza hostage says Hamas 'treated him like a dog'](#)