



March 4, 2024

ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES (IDF) ACTIVITIES

- The IDF has concluded its [two-week operation](#) in Gaza City, during which it reports that more than 100 Hamas militants have been eliminated.
- In a surprise attack, [fifty terrorist targets](#) were struck Saturday night in Gaza's Khan Younis is just six minutes, according to the IDF.
- This morning, the IDF killed Palestinian Islamic Jihad militants suspected of a [rocket attack](#) on Hatzerim, a kibbutz in Southern Israel.
- Earlier today, one person was killed and seven others wounded in Israel by an anti-tank missile attack from Lebanon that struck an orchard near the border community of Margaliot. The victims are all foreign laborers, apparently from Thailand.
- The IDF attacked a vehicle in southern Lebanon via drone strike, killing three Hezbollah operatives. Among them was Abbas Ahmed Halil, [grandson](#) of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.
- Another wave of [airstrikes](#) took place in the Rafah area, including near the Philadelphi Corridor (along the border between Gaza and Egypt). The IDF had discovered a network of Hamas tunnels in the area.
- Three IDF soldiers died on Friday in an explosion in Khan Younis; their names are Sgt. Dolev Malka, Sgt. Afik Tery, and Sgt. Inon Yitzhak. Fourteen others were wounded, five of them severely. In addition, the IDF confirmed the death of Warrant Officer Dennis Yekimov, 33, of Beer Sheva who was killed on Saturday.
- A grim total of 586 Israeli soldiers have died since October 7, with 246 perishing since the beginning of the ground war on October 27. Click [here](#) for the latest update, in English, on wounded and fallen soldiers.
- The IDF has announced a full investigation of the situation last week in which Hamas accused Israel of shooting at thousands of Gazans who were desperately trying to get aid from a convoy of trucks. Israel will attempt new methods of [delivering aid](#) to northern Gaza in the wake of the incident.
- The US and Jordanian air forces jointly [airdropped](#) 38,000 meals into Gaza over the weekend. The IDF and local Gazans have teamed up to [protect humanitarian aid](#). The arrangement is a marker of hope for future cooperation between the two groups after the horrific stampede last Friday.

ROCKETS

- Hezbollah claims to have [shelled](#) areas near the Israeli border town of Zarit, but Israel has not confirmed this.
- In the Red Sea, an Italian naval ship [shot down a drone](#) in self-defense—the drone is the same type as those used by the Houthis. Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetti said, “The Houthi terrorist attacks are a serious violation of international law and an attack on the security of the maritime traffic on which our economy depends,” he says.
- A UK-owned ship, the Rubymar, [sank](#) over the weekend after being damaged by a Houthi missile on February 18. The ship’s cargo included more than 20,000 tons of ammonium phosphate sulfate fertilizer, the loss of which poses a significant environmental threat. The Houthis have now perpetrated five dozen attacks in the Red Sea region, which is one of the busiest commercial waterways in the world.

CEASEFIRE NEGOTIATIONS

- Officials say Israel has [agreed in principle](#) to a six-week ceasefire with Hamas in exchange for the return of hostages. But as a precondition for negotiations, Israel had reportedly demanded a list of the hostages who are still alive.
- Because Hamas refused to provide such a list, Israel declined to send its negotiators to Cairo, where talks were set to resume yesterday.
- Earlier today, Israeli sources said that negotiators were asking for information on the number of hostages still alive, rather than the names of all individuals still in captivity, as a prerequisite to continuing talks. Hamas is demanding a [permanent end](#) to Israel’s ground invasion first.
- President Biden is urging that a [ceasefire](#) take effect by this Sunday, which marks the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.
- According to Egyptian and Qatari officials, Yahya Sinwar, the Gazan leader of Hamas, has been [out of contact](#) for more than a week. Unnamed Israeli officials have been quoted claiming that Sinwar is not interested in reaching a ceasefire.

MORE ON THE HOSTAGES

- Close to 20,000 marchers [arrived](#) in Jerusalem on Saturday to call for the release of the hostages after walking for four days from Kibbutz Reim. The protesters held a rally in Paris Square.
- With his own wife and daughter freed from captivity in November, Israeli TV writer Hen Avigdori continues to [advocate](#) for the release of the rest of the hostages.
- The Kan public broadcaster on Sunday leaked a recording of the three hostages who, as they emerged from hiding, were mistakenly killed by the IDF last December. Hear the audio of the pleas of Alon Shamriz, Yotam Haim, and Samer Talaka [here](#). The recording was captured by a GoPro camera attached to a canine unit dog from the IDF’s Oketz unit. Despite hearing cries for help, IDF soldiers believed that these sounds were a ruse by the enemy, intended to draw them into an ambush.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

- In a speech in Selma, Alabama, Vice President Kamala Harris [made headlines](#) by calling for an “immediate ceasefire” to ameliorate the dire situation in Gaza. In the same speech, however, she made clear that the onus was on Hamas to accept a six-week ceasefire and to return the hostages. “Hamas claims it wants a ceasefire. Well,

there is a deal on the table, and, as we have said, Hamas needs to agree to that deal. Let's get a ceasefire, let's reunite the hostages with their families, and let's provide immediate relief to the people of Gaza." Nevertheless, her remarks are being characterized as the most explicit condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza to date.

- Prime Minister Netanyahu is said to be [furious](#) that War Cabinet Minister Benny Gantz is visiting Washington without his approval. Gantz is set to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, and Members of Congress from both parties.
- US Envoy Amos Hochstein is visiting Beirut today to attempt, through diplomatic channels, to [stave off war](#) between Israel and Hezbollah.
- Rishi Sunak, the UK Prime Minister, [called out](#) the country's anti-Israel protests on Friday, noting a "shocking increase in extremist disruption and criminality." He implored British citizens to "stand together to combat the forces of division."
- At the recommendation of President Herzog, public broadcaster Kan has agreed to [revise](#) the song lyrics for Israel's Eurovision entry. Kan reached out to the writers and asked them to change the words. The president said that the Israelis need to be "smart and not just right" in this situation because of the importance of being represented at the contest.

STORIES OF HEARTBREAK, HEROISM AND HOPE

- In Sderot, schools [reopened](#) for the first time since October 7. Roughly 55-60% of students in the border community's district were in attendance.
- Thai field hand Sriyaoun Watchara, 32, was [taken hostage](#) on October 7 along with five other field hands (two of whom have returned safely to Thailand); 11 other Thais were murdered.
- A 96-year-old woman, Aviva Sela, [escaped](#) the massacre at Be'eri on October 7 even after her Filipina caregiver was murdered and her grandson, who was visiting her at the time, was taken captive. Her daughter and former son-in-law were both slain.
- Thousands of ordinary Israelis have become [heroes](#) at this time of travail and tragedy.

FURTHER READING

- [Hope for New Gaza Ceasefire Deal Hangs in the Balance as Israel Boycotting Talks](#)
- [Israel's Newest, British-Born International Spokesperson is Raising Some Eyebrows](#)
- [Meet Beatie Deutsch, a Religious Mom and Fastest Woman in Israel](#)

JEWISH FEDERATIONS

- Jewish Federations' Israel Emergency Campaign has now raised a total of more than \$780 million and allocated close to \$375 million. For details, click [here](#).

See these resources by Jewish Federations that give insight into some areas of Federations' emergency allocations:

- [At-Risk Youth](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Community](#)
- [Young Children](#)

- [Volunteers](#)
- [Women](#)
- [Pastoral Guidance](#)
- [Bedouin Communities](#)
- [Food Security](#)
- [People with Disabilities](#)

Jewish Federations released the [Israel Emergency Impact Report](#) and [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. Click on 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 for all those looking for a longer experience in Israel.

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.

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