



War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

April 1, 2024

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

Join Jewish Federations and the Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) tomorrow, **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 passed 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. Register [here](#). Readers can also see the Bank of Israel's new [annual report](#), issued yesterday.

[Register Now](#)

Jewish Federations are [working with ReGrow](#), a project of Volcani International Partnerships and Mishkei Hanegev, to **support the farming communities of the Western Negev**. Federations are offering grants of up to \$12.5 million to replace tractors and other equipment that Hamas terrorists [destroyed and looted](#).

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Activities

- Over the weekend, **terrorists shot an RPG** (rocket-propelled grenade) at a top-story apartment in a building in Khan Yuneis in the southern Gaza Strip where IDF soldiers were stationed. As a result of the explosion and ensuing collapse of some of the walls, a soldier was killed and sixteen were injured including six who are in serious condition.
- The IDF has now concluded its operations in and around the **Shifa Hospital** in Gaza; and is withdrawing forces from the hospital complex. After [two weeks of fighting](#), dozens of terrorists have been killed and hundreds detained, including high-ranking members of both Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In addition, large quantities of [weapons were discovered](#) and confiscated in the hospital complex including pistols, rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, thousands of rounds of ammunition, and explosives. Weapons were even found hidden in beds and pillows in the [maternity ward](#). Remarkably,
 - 6,000 civilians were evacuated by the IDF to keep them safe.
 - 200 Hamas terrorists were killed.
 - 500 Hamas terrorists have been captured.
 - And, incredibly, zero civilians were killed.
- Over the weekend, a **terrorist stabbed and lightly wounded an IDF officer** at the Beer Sheva Central Bus Station. The terrorist, who came from the nearby Bedouin city of Rahat, was shot and killed by another soldier who was on the scene. And yesterday, in a separate attack in a shopping mall in near Ashdod, three people were stabbed; they are all now in serious condition. The terrorist, a Palestinian who was working at one of the stores at the mall, was killed by a passing policeman.
- Earlier today, IDF forces **arrested the sister of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh** in Tel Sheva [on suspicion](#) of having ties to Hamas and engaging in incitement and support for terror.
- A new survey conducted by the Israel Democracy Institute polled the public's assessment of the **performance of Israel's political and military leadership** since October 7. IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi topped the rankings of positive performance (48%), followed by Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant

(40%) and Minister Benny Gantz (34%). Only 28% ranked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's performance as positive, while 57% of respondents ranked it as "poor" or "very poor." With tensions rising between the US administration and the Israeli government about the necessary next steps in the war, the survey also asked whether Israel should act on its own or in coordination with the US. Most Israelis think Israeli leaders should act on the basis of their own judgment, though there has been a slight increase among Jewish Israelis who favor coordination with the US, from 38% in January 2024 to 43% in the present survey. See the full results [here](#).

- Every year before the spring holidays, Israel's National Security Council publishes an assessment of the **threat of terrorism for Israelis traveling abroad**. See this year's [advisory](#).
- As the debate in Israel continues on the question of ultra-Orthodox conscription, a Real-Time Data Institute survey was published by Haredi news site Kikar HaShabbat, with surprising results. Among **Ultra-Orthodox responders**:
 - 89% said it was essential for their children to live in Israel;
 - 69% were proud to be Israeli;
 - 63% were proud of the IDF;
 - 63% said that haredim who are not involved in full-time Torah study should serve in the IDF;
 - 55% said that secular Israelis feel animosity towards Haredim
 - 15% said they felt animosity towards the secular public.
- Last night, **hernia surgery was performed on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu**. While Netanyahu was under general anesthesia, Deputy Prime Minister Yariv Levin served as Acting Prime Minister.

Humanitarian Aid

- Ships carrying **332 tons of food left Cyprus** over the weekend, in a convoy that will reach Gaza in the coming days. The aid will be taken to the Strip on a cargo ship and a barge towed by a salvage vessel, along with a tugboat carrying a support team.
- This is the second shipment from Cyprus this month after Israel announced that it would allow all food aid into Gaza after screening for weapons. Cypriot and

Israeli authorities have established a **maritime corridor** to facilitate pre-screened cargoes arriving directly in Gaza, which does not have any port facilities. The aid in the first mission (which included almost 200 tons of food) was unloaded at a makeshift jetty, that been constructed from rubble. The new convoy includes two forklifts and a crane to assist with future marine deliveries, as well as a team to operate the crane.

- The United States is currently working to construct a **floating pier** off Gaza to receive aid. The target for completion of the facility is May.
- See the latest facts and figures on Israel's humanitarian aid to Gaza [here](#).

Hostages

- **Tens of thousands of Israelis protested** on the streets of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and other locations yesterday, pressing the government to do more, and to act with greater flexibility, in order to reach a deal that would see the release of the hostages. Many protestors also called on the Prime Minister and the government to accept responsibility for the war and to resign.
- A high level delegation from **Hamas met with leaders of Palestinian Islamic Jihad** in Iran on Friday. In a joint statement they said that they have agreed on four firm demands that must form the basis of any future hostage deal: A full withdrawal of IDF forces from Gaza; a complete halt to fighting; the return of Palestinian evacuees to their homes; and humanitarian aid.
- Despite this apparent intransigent position expressed by the terror organizations, the Heads of Shin Bet and Mossad are traveling separately to Cairo and Doha this week to **continue talks on a possible deal**.

Rockets

- In the **north**, Hezbollah continues to fire at Israeli targets, triggering significant Israeli retaliations. Over the weekend, in a targeted attack in Tyre, Lebanon, Israel killed Ali Abd El-Hassan Na'im, Hezbollah's deputy commander of its Missiles and Rockets Unit.
- 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. Yesterday, a drone successfully struck a naval base in the southern Israeli city of Eilat, causing minor damage, but no injuries. It had been launched by pro-Iranian militia forces in Iraq. See analysis [here](#).

International Response

- On Friday, the Washington Post reported that despite apparent disagreements between the White House and Prime Minister Netanyahu, the United States recently agreed to quietly send **a large shipment of weapons** to Israel, worth billions of dollars, including 25 F-35 stealth fighter jets.
- Last week, Israel's **Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant** visited Washington, DC to coordinate the next steps in the Hamas-Israel war. The trip was aimed at discussing Israel's military position and security needs:
 - Minister Gallant met with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, and CIA chief William Burns.
 - Gallant [arrived in Washington](#) with a list of U.S. weapons and weapons systems Israel is asking to be expedited, along with the ability to purchase warplanes for a potential full-scale war with Hezbollah.
 - Secretary Austin [emphasized](#) the importance of improving the humanitarian situation and prioritizing civilian protection in Gaza even as he maintained the US position of ensuring that "Israel has what it needs to defend itself."
 - After Prime Minister Netanyahu cancelled Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer and National Security Council chairman Tzachi Hanegbi's trip to Washington, Rafah became a focal point of Gallant's meetings.
 - According to reports, [discussions](#) did not focus on stopping the operation, but rather on protecting civilians who are sheltering in Rafah, while still ensuring that Israel can dismantle the

four remaining Hamas battalions in the enclave. Both sides agreed that Hamas cannot be allowed to rearm, and that defeating Hamas in Rafah is critical to ending the war.

- National Security Council Communications Adviser John Kirby [said](#) the White House “just can’t support a major ground offensive in Rafah that doesn’t include an achievable, verifiable plan to look after the safety and security of the 1.5 million Gazans who have sought refuge there.”
- Following the meetings, Gallant [reported](#), “I think there is an understanding we have to dismantle Hamas.”
- During the multi-day trip, U.S. and Israeli officials both reaffirmed the importance of the [relationship](#) between the two countries and the [shared goals](#) of Israel’s war against Hamas.
- Also over the weekend, Prime Minister Netanyahu reached out to the White House to [reschedule](#) the meeting to discuss Israel’s Rafah operation.

Stories of Heartbreak, Heroism, and Hope

- Remembering [Noya Dan on Autism Awareness Day](#)- “It would have taken just a little humanity for Hamas to leave this girl and her grandmother alive, but the terrorists possessed no such humanity.”
- **Read** the [story](#) of 19-year-old Karina Arieiev, a resident of Pisgat Ze’ev and the sister of Sasha and daughter of Albert and Ira. Described by her sister as “the sweetest person,” Karina has dreams to study either psychology or sociology so that she can help others. Karina was taken captive from Kibbutz Nahal Oz by Hamas terrorists on the morning of October 7. Three months later, Hamas published a propaganda video showing her bloodied and bruised face, with a look of horror in her eyes. “Ask people to pray for Karina bat Ira,” her sister pleaded. “Ask them to do whatever they can to help bring her home.”