



War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

April 18, 2024

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

(Please note that publication of this update will be paused over Passover).

Following last weekend's unprecedented attack on Israel by Iran, we are calling on the House to advance a supplemental aid package to provide \$26.4 billion in vital support, including funds for essential defense systems. This package will also allocate additional resources to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) to safeguard communities from antisemitic violence. Contact your representatives to stress the significance of this funding.

Take Action

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Activities

- Following **Iran's attack** on Israel on Saturday night, Israeli officials have reassured allies across the globe that Israel intends to retaliate in only a limited manner that avoids escalation into a wider war.
 - On Sunday, **Iran shut down its nuclear installations** and evacuated international observers from those sites; it did reopen them on Tuesday. Iran's President Ibrahim Raisi threatened that if Israel attacks, Iran will respond "in a wide-

ranging and painful manner to any small act that would harm Iran's interests."

- Watch this CNN [interview](#) with Senior Fellow at JPPI Yaakov Katz who describes **Israel's dilemma** in either containing the Iranian threat or retaliating based on lessons it learned from Hamas on October 7.
- According to various news reports, the **US has now approved a potential Israeli Rafah operation** in exchange for the Jewish state not directly conducting counterstrikes on Iran at present.
- See [here](#) for additional information, background, and resources on the Iran attack.
- Yesterday, Hezbollah attacked the Bedouin village of Arab el-Aramshe in the north. Some **18 people were wounded** including one who is in critical condition and one who is in serious condition. As is the case with all towns in the area, the village was largely evacuated due to its proximity to the Lebanese border.
- IDF reserve soldiers and the local emergency response squad were using a local community center as a makeshift residence, and Hezbollah launched a precise rocket attack at the building and a car parked on the street, causing a large number of casualties. When soldiers started tending to the wounded, Hezbollah launched a follow-up drone that was carrying explosives and crashed it at the site to disrupt evacuation efforts.
- Meanwhile, the IDF conducted a **large-scale exercise in the northern sector**, where forces trained for possible offensive operations as well as defensive measures.
- In [recent evacuations of wounded soldiers](#) from the Gaza Strip, it has taken an average of 27 minutes from the moment a soldier is wounded until they are in a helicopter on the way to the hospital "If you live in Tel Aviv, it takes longer to order a pizza than for a wounded person to get a helicopter in Gaza."

Hostages

- Israel is **still waiting for a positive Hamas response** to a proposal for a hostage deal and truce put forward by the US, together with Egyptian and Qatari mediators. Israel had previously accepted the

agreement. US President Joe Biden [said](#) "It's now up to Hamas. They need to move on the proposal that has been made so we get these hostages home where they belong."

- Meanwhile, Rachel Goldberg, mother of American-Israeli hostage 23-year-old Hersh Goldberg-Polin, [was named to Time Magazine's](#) 2024 annual TIME100 **list of the most influential people in the world.** "Rachel's inclusion on the TIME100 list is in recognition of the impact she and her husband Jon Polin, along with hundreds of other families of hostages taken by Hamas, and millions of people around the world, have had in raising global awareness of the hostage crisis and their unwavering efforts to continue to fight for the release of Hersh and every hostage," a group representing hostages' families said on Wednesday.

Humanitarian Aid

- According to the IDF, Israel has **opened a new northern crossing to Gaza**, more trucks are crossing into the Hamas-run enclave, and the humanitarian situation on the ground has improved.
- **US naval ships, headed for the Gaza Strip** to build a temporary pier or floating dock have now arrived in Crete. The ships left Fort Eustis on the James River on March 12 to make their way across the Atlantic Ocean to Gaza. See more on these efforts [here](#).
- Israel continues to do everything in its power to bring **massive quantities of aid** into the Gaza Strip. Almost every day, the number of aid trucks entering Gaza breaks a new record. See more on humanitarian aid [here](#).

Rockets

- In the **north**, Hezbollah continues to fire at Israeli targets, triggering significant Israeli retaliations.
- 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-backed Houthi

rebels in Yemen. Similarly, the US military continues to strike at pro-Iranian targets in Syria and Iraq.

International Response

- **British Foreign Secretary David Cameron and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock** are visiting Israel. They met yesterday with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who reiterated that Israel would maintain its right to self-defense. Netanyahu thanked foreign ministers for their countries' "unequivocal support" and for their "unprecedented standing up in defense of the State of Israel against Iran's attack."
- Yesterday, the Israeli Cabinet approved a five-year, \$5 billion plan to rebuild and to strengthen communities near the Gaza border after the October 7 attack. The funds are slated to go toward housing, infrastructure, education, employment, health, and other areas.

Stories of Heartbreak, Heroism, and Hope

- **See this [story](#)** of 85-year-old Arye Zalmanovich, a father of two, grandfather of five, and farmer who had deep historical knowledge and was profoundly committed to his country. A revered founder of Kibbutz Nahal Oz, Aryeh was in his home the morning of October 7 when terrorists infiltrated. Released hostages shared stories of his bravery in captivity, and how he managed to maintain his dignity despite the harrowing conditions and to show great compassion for his fellow captives. On December 1, the IDF announced that Arye was murdered by terrorists in captivity. Loved ones shared that before he was taken captive, Arye continued to wear his work clothes every morning and drink coffee with the young generation of farmers on the Kibbutz.
- **Read this [CNN article](#)** on the plight of families of dead American hostages who are doing everything they can to retrieve their bodies.
- A message from the Jewish Agency for Israel project: "Each of us has a story. Our heritage is transmitted through stories that our people have been telling for generations. Next week, we will gather around the seder table and recount our oldest story - the story of the Exodus, the moment when our people became a nation. Each of our Shlichim (Israeli emissaries) has a

story too. They connect with many other stories as they meet so many diverse people along the way, and then share those with the Jewish people wherever they go. We created the Sipurim project to enable these stories to be shared worldwide. Our Shlichim are creating content that truly resonates on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, connecting our people and their personal stories into one: the virtual story of our global Jewish family." See [more](#).

- **Read this [story](#)** about 70-year-old Carol Siman Tov, a native of Pennsylvania who made aliyah at the age of 21. Carol worked as a nurse at Kibbutz Nir Oz where she lived. She was an avid traveler and had a bucket list of many places around the world she wanted to visit. Carol was murdered by terrorists in her home on October 7. That same day, Hamas murdered her son Johnny and his wife and three grandchildren and also shot Carol's puppy. Carol was eulogized as a "symbol of resilience and unconditional love which illuminated generations of children and grandchildren. She didn't keep the good for herself, she always shared everything generously."