



War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

March 7, 2024

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

- Jewish Federations' Israel Emergency Campaign has now surpassed \$783 million and allocated close to \$385 million. For details, [click here](#).
- For the first time since the start of the war on October 7, **Israel has completed raising a dollar bond** in international markets totaling an overall \$8 billion. In recent months, the state has focused on raising debt to finance the war through private offerings and Israel Bonds.
 - In the latest issuance, demands reached approximately \$38 billion, the highest in Israel's history, despite perceived pessimism over the economy.
 - Three new bonds were issued for terms of 5 years, 10 years, and 30 years. Approximately 400 investors from around 36 countries participated in the new issuance.
 - Israel's Minister of Finance Bezael Smotrich said, "The high demand is a sign of the strength of the Israeli economy and represents a vote of confidence from investors in the market and in our economic policy."
 - Meanwhile, Israel's largest bank, Hapoalim, announced that, despite the war, its 2023 profits were up 13%.

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Activities

- The media is reporting that the US has so far sent over [100 shipments of weapons](#) to Israel since fighting began. The deliveries have included ammunition for Israel's artillery and armored corps, "bunker busters" (earth-penetrating ordnance), and light weapons.
- However, some reports also suggest that the Biden Administration is considering a ban on any of its equipment's being used in an IDF attack on Rafah. Rafah remains the last bastion of significant Hamas power, but is also the city where hundreds of thousands of Gazans who have fled the fighting in other parts of the Gaza Strip are currently located.
- According to the IDF, 25 airdrop missions have been deployed over Gaza to parachute aid into the Strip since fighting began on October 7. Some 750 containers of relief have been dropped into the enclave by the US, UAE, Egypt, Jordan and France. Most of the drops have been made in northern Gaza, where it has been hardest to deliver aid. On Tuesday, Jordan said 43 planes had flown aid missions over the Strip.

- [The IDF](#) has destroyed and sealed the largest Hamas attack tunnel found in Gaza. The passage is located some 165 feet underground in some areas and appeared to have been wide enough for vehicles to pass through. It did not enter Israeli territory, but officials described it as designed for use in attacks, rather than as a defensive position or for use in transporting officials. The IDF said the tunnel project was led by Muhammad Sinwar, the commander of Hamas's southern brigade who is the brother of Hamas's Gaza leader, Yahya Sinwar.

Rockets

- In the **north**, Hezbollah continues to fire at Israeli targets, triggering significant Israeli retaliations. Hezbollah-backed media are reporting that Israel has set a March 15 deadline for a diplomatic deal that would see the group's forces redeploy from the border area. Without this troop withdrawal, media reports suggest, Israel would escalate the current skirmishes into a full-blown war with the terrorist group. Yesterday, Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant told US special envoy to the region Amos Hochstein that Hezbollah's continued attacks on Israel are bringing the country closer to a decision regarding military action in Lebanon.
- The number of **Hamas** rocket attacks on Israel remains very low (less than one per day on average), 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 Houthi missile attack killed three sailors on a Red Sea merchant ship, marking the first fatalities reported since the group began strikes against international shipping. The Houthis claimed responsibility for [the attack](#), which set the Greek-owned, Barbados-flagged ship True Confidence ablaze in the Red Sea.

Hostages

- Despite [hope for a temporary truce](#) to pause the fighting in Gaza alongside a hostage release before the start of Ramadan next week, no further concrete progress in negotiations has been made. Egypt, Qatar and the US have been pushing hard for an agreement before the Muslim fasting month begins on Sunday, and has called on Hamas to accept the terms of a framework worked out in Paris last month that would put in place a six-week pause in fighting and free some 40 hostages, including women, children, female soldiers and the elderly—in exchange for Palestinian security prisoners.
- Reports suggest that while Israel has accepted the proposed framework, [Hamas has delayed](#) providing information, such as a list of hostages it is holding, that would allow a deal to progress.

International Response

- Israel's Minister Benny Gantz, a member of the War Cabinet, traveled to the US and to Britain, in defiance of requests by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for him not to travel. Yesterday, Gantz met with **UK Foreign Minister David Cameron** and others. During one of the meetings, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak "dropped in" and joined the discussions. Gantz reportedly took the opportunity to ask the UK government to increase its pressure on Hamas to release all Israeli hostages.
- Despite months of evidence presented by Israel on both the direct affiliation of UNRWA staff with Hamas and systematic sexual violence committed against Israeli women, there have been widespread efforts to deny these reports. Yesterday, Israel revealed further evidence of the involvement of UNRWA workers in the October 7 massacres. Also, the UN published a 23-page [report](#) substantiating the systematic rape and sexual violence committed against Israeli women both on and after October 7. Details:
 - On Tuesday, Israel declassified an intercepted [conversation](#) between UNRWA teacher Yusef Zidan Suleiman Al-Hawajara, boasting about kidnapping an Israeli woman on October 7. Israel also [released](#) the names of additional UNRWA teachers and health workers who are Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists, all of whom had direct involvement in the October 7 massacres. The IDF has [revealed](#) that over 450 UNRWA employees are military operatives in terrorist groups in Gaza.
 - In January, the [New York Times](#) detailed the terror activities of 12 UNRWA employees, which included kidnapping a woman, handing out ammunition, and taking part in the Kibbutz Be'eri massacre where 97 people were brutally murdered. The employees included teachers and a social worker who received UNRWA salaries.
 - On Tuesday, the UN released a [report](#) detailing findings from a mission to Israel to gather, analyze and verify allegations of sexual violence committed against Israeli women. The mission team found "clear and convincing information that sexual violence, including rape, sexualized torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment has been committed against hostages and has reasonable grounds to believe that such violence may be ongoing against those still held in captivity." The mission team also found "reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred in multiple locations during the 7 October attacks, including rape and gang-rape in at least three locations: the Nova music festival site and its surroundings, Road 232, and Kibbutz Re'im."
 - According to the report, in most of these incidents, victims were first subjected to rape and then killed. At least two incidents relate to the rape of women's corpses.
 - In response to the report, President Isaac Herzog urged the international community to condemn these acts and punish Hamas. He [said](#), "Hamas and its allies are trying to discredit the report, to escape from this horrific shame. They

will not succeed as the testimonies are shocking indeed. Therefore, now the world must react strongly by condemning and punishing Hamas.”



Further Reading

[What happens when Israel runs out of ammo?](#)

Read this [analysis](#) by MIT professor of political science Barry R. Posen on why urban wars in recent history have resulted in terrible destruction, and why the IDF has faced unprecedented challenges fighting Hamas in Gaza.

David Horovitz: [We're living in the most worrying period for Jews since World War II](#)



Stories Of Heartbreak, Heroism, and Hope

[Nir Forti](#), 29: Slain just before his 30th birthday trip to Spain

See [this story](#) of 22-year-old German-Israeli Shani Louk, an art and culture lover who spent the early hours of October 7 dancing with her boyfriend at the Nova music festival before the two were brutally murdered by Hamas terrorists. Described as “a pure angel” who cared deeply for humanity, Shani was seen in a video lying lifeless in the back of a truck and being paraded around the streets of Gaza after she was kidnapped from the festival. A piece of Shani’s skull was found, indicating that terrorists beheaded her in Gaza, where her body is still being held. After her death, Shani’s family organized an art exhibition in Tel Aviv called “Forever Young Forever Art” to celebrate her creative soul.

Read about '[Fight for life,](#)' by mothers whose daughters are still hostages in Gaza