



Israel at War

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Day 482

Latest Updates

Ceasefire and Hostages

- The ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that went into effect on Sunday, January 19 **seems to be holding**, as is the deal in Israel's north. Since January 19, there has been no rocket fire directed at Israel, nor any significant fighting on the two fronts. The Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen have also not fired at Israel during this time. Nonetheless, fighting continues with Hamas and other terror groups in the West Bank.
- Following the release of two groups of hostages last week, earlier today **three Israeli hostages and five Thai nationals** who had been taken on October 7 were released and are now safely in Israel.
- Last Shabbat, under the ceasefire agreement, Hamas released **four captured female Israeli soldiers**: Karina Ariev, Daniella Gilboa, Naama Levy – all 20 years old – and Liri Albag, 19 have all been reunited with their families amid highly emotional scenes (watch footage [here](#)).
 - While Hamas had adhered to the number of hostages scheduled to be released that day, the terror group **did not adhere to the terms** of the

deal which called for all Israeli female civilians to be released before soldiers. One young civilian woman, Arbel Yehoud, was still being held.

- As a result of the breach of the deal, **Israel temporarily delayed** the scheduled withdrawal of its forces from the Netzarim Corridor, which would have allowed thousands of displaced Gazans to return to their homes in the north that same day. Israeli media commentators suggested that the government was not prepared to allow even a minor deviation from the terms of the agreement, out of concern that it could lead to more significant breaches in the future. Blocking the civilians from venturing north was a major problem for Hamas, which had made this issue a key demand in negotiations.
- Under US mediation, the sides reached a new agreement that called for an extra hostage release today, in addition to that scheduled for this coming Saturday.
- **The first hostage released today was Agam Berger**, the last of the female soldiers who was being held. See Agam being transferred from the Red Cross to Israeli forces [here](#), and watch her emotional reunion with her parents [here](#).
- A short while later, **80-year-old Gadi Mozes and 29-year old Arbel Yehud**, both from Nir Oz, were released by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad forces who had been holding them.
 - The staged hand-over to the Red Cross took place at the ruins of **Hamas leader Yahia Sinwar's family home**.
 - In what many described as “[horrifying scenes](#),” the two, **looking confused and terrified**, were accompanied by gunmen and led over a long walk through a crowd of hundreds – possibly thousands - of screaming Gazan men, large numbers of whom appeared to be armed.
 - These [traumatic scenes](#) were carried live on Israeli television. Israel has said that it will **delay releasing Palestinian prisoners today** until a way can be found to guarantee that future hostage releases will take place in a calm and safe setting and atmosphere.
- It has now been revealed that **Arbel spent her entire captivity alone**, and that when she met Mozes shortly before being handed over to the Red Cross today, he was the first Israeli she had spoken to in almost 16 months.

- Following the release of the three Israelis, Hamas **set five Thai nationals free**. The five had been working in Israel and were also kidnapped on October 7. Dozens of Thai restaurants in Israel have been sending Thai food to Shamir Hospital where the five released men are being evaluated and treated. One more Thai national remains in captivity. The five are: Thenna Pongsak, Sathian Suwannakham, Sriaoun Watchara, Seathao Bannawat, and Rumnao Surasak.
- Also today, ex-hostage Amit Soussana, released in the first exchange in November 2023, said that recently returned hostage Liri Albag **saved her life** when her Hamas captors tortured and threatened her.
- **Some 110 terrorists are scheduled to be released from Israeli jails today as part of the agreement, many of whom are serving multiple life sentences for murdering Israeli civilians. Some of these prisoners were already on a bus when Israel called a halt to the exchange due to the scenes at the hostage release in Gaza.**
- According to the terms of the agreement, **three more hostages will be released** this coming Saturday, with additional small groups coming out every seven days. In the sixth week (which will be the last week in this first stage of the deal), 14 hostages will be released.
- Hamas has confirmed that 8 out of the 33 hostages scheduled to be released in the first stage of the ceasefire are **no longer alive**.

In the North

- Over the past weekend, the **60-day implementation period** of the ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah expired.
- Under the deal, the **Lebanese Army was supposed to have assumed control** of all southern Lebanon, keeping Hezbollah north of the Litani River. In parallel, the IDF was to have withdrawn from the area.
- However, the Lebanese Army's **deployment has been slower** than expected and it did not manage to take control of all designated areas. As a result, Israel announced that it would not fully withdraw its forces by the deadline.

- On Monday, thousands of Lebanese citizens tried to return to homes they had evacuated in the south during the war, even though the IDF was still in position and had not yet opened the routes. Significant rioting ensued, during which **24 Lebanese were killed**.
- On Tuesday, **the sides agreed** to extend the implementation period by three weeks, to February 18, during which time, all redeployments should take place.

Diplomacy

- Israel's **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is scheduled** to travel to Washington next week. He will be the first foreign leader to meet with US President Donald Trump since the inauguration.
- President Trump's Special Envoy **Steve Witkoff** was present at Hostage Square in Tel Aviv where he joined hostage families and a large crowd of people who were watching today's hostage releases on large screens.
- Witkoff is believed to be **pushing forward negotiations** on the second stage of the ceasefire, which is set to see the remaining hostages freed and put a more permanent ceasefire in place. Israeli media has also reported that there are major efforts to finalize a "large deal" that will include normalization agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia, among other issues.

For Further Reading

- [The IDF's High-Tech Investments Paid Off, but They Came at a High Cost](#)
- [Hezbollah Returns to Southern Lebanon – What Can Be Done?](#)
- [After the Gaza Ceasefire, Watch the West Bank](#)
- [Hamas buckled under the IDF's campaign—and declared victory](#)

Am Yisrael Chai!

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