



Israel at War

Thursday, January 9, 2025

Day 461

Latest Updates

Julie Platt, Jewish Federations of North America's Chair of the Board of Trustees, was awarded the Presidential Medal of Honor, Israel's highest civilian award, by President Isaac Herzog last night.

Gaza and the Hostages

- The body of hostage Youssef al-Ziyadne, 53, an Israeli Bedouin Arab and father of 19, was discovered in the Gaza Strip; it was brought back to Israel by the IDF. Ziyadne's remains were found in an underground tunnel in Rafah, where it is believed that he was alive for many months. Evidence was discovered suggesting that Youssef's son, Hamza, was also killed. Al-Ziadna was working with three of his adult children at a kibbutz near the Gaza Border on October 7; all three were kidnapped. Two of his children were released in the November 2023 hostage deal.
- There are now **99 hostages remaining** in Gaza. A significant portion of these is likely no longer alive.

- **Intense negotiations** continue to try to reach a ceasefire and hostage-release deal in Gaza. Many reports suggest that all sides are interested in reaching a new agreement before the US presidential inauguration on January 20, which is just 11 days away. Members of President-Elect Donald Trump's Middle Eastern team have now joined negotiators in Qatar.
- **Hamas may have sent a list** of potential hostages to be released in the first stage of an agreement. A copy of one unconfirmed list, containing 34 names, has been circulating following its publication by a Saudi Arabian newspaper. The list contains the names of all "humanitarian case" hostages, which includes women, children, the elderly, and the injured. However, the list does not indicate which of the 34 are alive.
- Earlier today, Hamas official Taher al-Nunu claimed the terror group has made **significant new concessions** to complete the deal. It is understood that the remaining issues to be resolved include the names and number of terrorists to be released in exchange for the hostages, along with the specific wording regarding the details of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza.

IDF Activities

- **Five IDF soldiers have fallen** in the past week, in three separate incidents in the Gaza Strip. A total of 831 soldiers have been killed since October 7, 2023, and 5,588 have been wounded. Of these, almost 200 remain hospitalized. See [here](#) for a full list of casualties.
- On Monday, **a terrorist attack** took place near Kedumim, on the road from Kfar Saba to Shchem. A terrorist opened fire on a bus, killing three Israelis and wounding eight. Yesterday, Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz warned that the West Bank may be on the brink of war.
- Earlier in the week, the IDF released data about **suicides in the military**. Since October 7 some 28 IDF soldiers and officers have taken their own lives. Of these, 16 were soldiers from the reserves. This is the highest number of soldier suicides since 2011, and reports suggest that it reflects the tremendous emotional toll that the war is taking on fighters. According to commentators, reservists are particularly prone to depression due to their lives being upturned, with lengthy

military service (sometimes in the range of 250 days per year). This in turn leads to great difficulties in relationships, domestic life, employment, and more.

- About one-third of Israeli troops have now withdrawn from southern **Lebanon** as part of the ceasefire agreement with Hezbollah. Lebanese Army troops have assumed numerous positions in the country's south, as per the agreement, to prevent Hezbollah from returning to the area. While the deployments have been slower than hoped, many are optimistic that the ceasefire will hold.
- Over the past three days, Israel has facilitated the transfer of large quantities of **humanitarian aid** to several hospitals in the Gaza Strip, including 6,750 liters of fuel, 10,000 liters of water, dozens of food crates and nearly 300 boxes of medical supplies, all in collaboration with the World Health Organization.

Rocket Fire

- While rocket fire is relatively low, **Hamas continues to fire** sporadically, sparking one or two localized sirens in the south on an almost daily basis.
- Similarly, the Iran-backed **Houthis in Yemen continue to fire ballistic missiles** at Israel. Since these are intercepted above the earth's atmosphere, shrapnel can fall over a very large area, so that each missile can trigger sirens in many cities, sending millions running to shelters. Most of the recent Houthi attacks have also occurred between 2:00 am-5:00 am.
- There have been **no significant incidents of rocket fire from Hezbollah** in Lebanon, Iran, or from Syria or Iraq since the ceasefire agreement in the north came into effect.

Diplomacy

- As a result of the increased stability in Lebanon following Hezbollah's defeat, the country **finally elected a new president today**, after more than two years of political paralysis. Army Chief of Staff Joseph Aoun will be sworn in as the country's new head of state.

- In a speech last week, Iran's top general in Syria said the **Islamic Republic was “defeated very badly”** by the fall of Syria's Bashar Assad, despite the repeated public downplaying of its significance by other Iranian leaders. Brig. Gen. Behrouz Esbati stated, “I don't consider losing Syria something to be proud of. We were defeated, and defeated very badly, we took a very big blow and it's been very difficult.”
- Defense Minister Katz and IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Herzi Halevi have been **publicly squabbling** over the handling of issues relating to the October 7 attack as well as future senior IDF appointments. Yesterday, Katz publicly sided with Israel's State Comptroller against Halevi over his probe into the IDF regarding October 7. In response, Halevi publicly slammed Katz for using the media to air “sensitive, complex national security issues” instead of discussing them privately behind closed doors.

For Further Reading

- [Hamas leader unleashed his own destruction by attacking Israel](#)
- [Picture of the Nation 2024: Israel's Society and Economy in Figures](#)
- [Critical Observations on the Amnesty International Genocide Report on Gaza](#)

Am Yisrael Chai!

Mark Segel

Executive Director of Combating Antisemitism

mark.segel@jewishtampa.com

813.769.2811