



Israel at War

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Day 538, 59 Hostages Remain in Captivity

Latest Updates

Gaza Protests

- For the third day in a row, several hundred Gazans demonstrated against Hamas in the northern part of the Strip, calling on the terror organization to release the hostages in order to bring an end to the war.
- Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) said that Hamas should “heed the voice of the people.”
- Protesters could be seen carrying signs reading, “Hamas does not represent us,” “The people want the fall of Hamas” and “Out, out, out! Hamas get out!”
- While commentators say it is too early to see this as a pattern of increased opposition to Hamas by the people of Gaza, the length and scope of the protests is unusual and could become increasingly significant.

IDF Activities

- On Monday, a terrorist rammed his car into a bus shelter and then started stabbing commuters on a highway near Yokneam, in the Haifa area.
 - The attacker critically wounded a 20-year-old soldier, who is now fighting for his life in the hospital, and took his gun.
 - The terrorist then started shooting at passing cars, killing an 85-year-old Israeli man.
 - A group of Police Border Guards happened to be driving past the scene, on their way to training. They engaged the terrorist and shot him dead.
- Also Monday, a number of armed men in Syria fired at IDF soldiers near the border. The troops returned fire, killing seven of the Syrians. In response, the IDF also bombed two military air bases in Syria, destroying several fighter jets.
- While Israel hasn't launched a large-scale ground offensive in Gaza since fighting resumed, it has conducted multiple airstrikes against important Hamas targets, resulting in the elimination of several top terrorist figures. In addition, ground troops have conducted numerous maneuvers and taken up strategic positions in the Strip.

Rockets

- Sirens sounded across central Israel earlier today (including in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem), as the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen launched two missiles against the Jewish state. Millions ran for shelter in the eighth such attack since fighting resumed in Gaza. Israel's Arrow Anti-Missile System intercepted the incoming missiles, with explosions heard and seen by people across the country. Numerous incidents of falling debris have been reported.
- Several rockets were fired from Gaza in recent days, mainly at areas in the Gaza border region.

- Last weekend, six rockets were fired at the Israel's northernmost town, Metulla, which is on the Lebanese border. Only 8% of residents have returned to the town since the ceasefire began. Israel hit numerous Hezbollah targets in retaliation, even though Hezbollah claimed that it had not fired at Israel. The IDF is keen to send a strong message to the Lebanese government that it won't tolerate any further attacks.

Political Developments

- On Monday, the Knesset passed Israel's 2025 national budget, which was a particularly noteworthy achievement for the governing coalition.
 - Had the budget failed to pass by the end of this month, new elections would have automatically been triggered.
 - The new budget includes significant payments to projects supported by coalition members, as well as large cuts to health, welfare, and education budgets, as well as substantial tax increases.
 - The current coalition is now in a strong position to remain in power for at least another year.
- Yesterday, the Knesset passed a new law as part of a watered-down version of some of the judicial reforms that have been debated in recent years.
 - The new reforms are the result of a compromise reached between Justice Minister Yariv Levin (the main proponent of the reforms), and Foreign Minister Gidon Sa'ar, who was opposed to the reform package.
 - The new law deals with how judges are selected and is designed to diminish both the power of the Israeli bar and judges who are currently serving. Under the new law, the Bar Association will no longer have a seat on the selection panel and the ruling government coalition will have a majority within the committee.
 - The new system creates additional politicization of the system, with judges potentially being selected based more on their political affiliation or ideology than on judicial expertise or abilities.

- While many are bewailing the harm done to Israeli democracy by the new law, others see the reform as a reasonable compromise.
- Some of the opposition leaders have vowed to overturn the new law when they form a new government.
- The Supreme Court issued a temporary injunction freezing the dismissal of Ronen Bar, the head of the Shin Bet, until a final ruling on the matter on April 10. The Court accepted the Government's request to allow the Prime Minister to interview potential candidates to replace Bar once the Court agrees to his dismissal.
- On Sunday, the government commenced the procedure to dismiss Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara, voting unanimously to move ahead.
 - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not take part in the meeting, as he is prohibited from dealing with the matter due to his current corruption trial, which poses a conflict of interest.
 - Justice Minister Yariv Levin presided over the discussion in the prime minister's place.
 - The long process to fire the attorney general includes the requirement to convene a special panel that includes a former justice minister who is not from one of the coalition parties. Commentators believe it will be difficult for the government to fill this position with someone who supports the move.

Hostages

- On Monday, Hamas released another “sign of life” video depicting two hostages, Elkana Bohbut and Yosef Haim Ohana. In the footage, the two men look thinner and in poor health. Reading a seemingly dictated text, they call on the Israeli government to make a deal to release them as soon as possible. While their families welcomed the chance to see their loved ones and receive proof that the two are alive, Israeli authorities criticized Hamas once again for the “psychological warfare” and mental anguish such videos cause.

- While negotiations for a new ceasefire and hostage-release deal continue, there are no signs of an imminent breakthrough.

Other News

- Close to 200,000 tourists, including both Israelis and those from overseas, are [visiting the site](#) of the Nova Music Festival massacre every month. Visitors pay tribute to the more than 350 people who were murdered there on October 7.

For Further Reading

- [Israel Applying Lessons Learned from October 7](#)
- [Israel's Second War of Independence](#)
- [Netanyahu's Shin Bet shakeup moves Israel closer to chaos](#)
- [Israel's New Chief of Staff Faces First Test](#)

Am Yisrael Chai!

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