



War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

May 15, 2025 - October 7 War, Day 587, 58 hostages remain in captivity

LATEST UPDATES

IDF Activity

- Last night, a terrorist in the West Bank shot a pregnant Israeli woman and her husband who were on their way to the hospital for delivery, killing the mother. The baby was delivered, but its condition is unknown. Israeli forces are searching for the attacker. Prime Minister Netanyahu condemned the attack, and the Yesha Council expressed shock and sadness.
- On Tuesday evening, a significant Israeli strike targeted terrorist infrastructure hidden at the European Hospital in Khan Younis in southern Gaza. Senior Israeli officials and multiple sources indicated that the primary target was Mohammed Sinwar, who assumed the de facto leadership of Hamas following the killing of his brother, Yahya Sinwar, in October.
- The IDF reported that the strike targeted a Hamas command center located beneath the hospital. The outcome of the operation regarding Mohammed Sinwar remains unconfirmed, with Israeli sources suggesting a potential success, while Hamas has not issued any statements. The strike may have also killed Hamas Rafah Brigade Commander Muhammad Shabana.
- The attempted assassination of Sinwar occurred amidst ongoing deliberations within the Israeli Security Cabinet concerning the continuation and focus of military operations in the Gaza Strip. These operations have involved mainly targeted actions aimed at dismantling Hamas infrastructure, neutralizing its operatives, and exerting pressure for the release of hostages.
- Two separate security incidents occurred in the West Bank this week. Near the city of Hebron, an attempted stabbing attack targeting IDF soldiers stationed at a checkpoint was successfully thwarted by the troops onsite, resulting in the neutralization of the assailant without any injuries to Israeli personnel. In a separate incident that took place near Jenin, gunfire was directed towards an Israeli vehicle traveling in the area, resulting in minor physical damage to the vehicle but fortunately no injuries to its occupants.
- A senior Hezbollah operative was the target of an airstrike that took place in Southern Lebanon earlier this week. While the Israel Defense Forces have not formally confirmed their involvement in the strike, local Lebanese media outlets reported the death of an individual identified as a commander within the Iran-backed Shiite militant group.

- Officials announced on Sunday that the Mossad and the IDF recovered the remains of Sgt. First Class Zvi Feldman, who went missing during the battle of Sultan Yacoub in the First Lebanon War in 1982. The battle, which took place nearly 43 years ago between the IDF and the Syrian army in Lebanon's Beqaa Valley, resulted in the deaths of 21 Israeli servicemen and injuries to over 30 others. Feldman, a tank soldier, went missing during this battle along with Sgt. First Class Yehuda Katz and Sgt. First Class Zachary Baumel. The remains of Zachary Baumel were recovered and returned to Israel in 2019.
- Also, after a five-year investigation, the IDF discovered the burial site of Pvt. Arthur Gasner, a soldier who has been missing since he died in 1949. His remains were identified in a grave in Rehovot alongside two comrades.

Houthis

- In the past 24 hours, the Israel Defense Forces intercepted two out of three ballistic missiles fired by the Iran-backed Houthi group in Yemen. The IDF reported that one Houthi missile misfired on Tuesday.
- The third missile, launched toward Israel on Wednesday, was intercepted just before 8 a.m. local time, triggering air raid sirens that sounded from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and sending millions of Israelis to seek shelter.
- Following these missile attacks, IDF Spokesperson Avichay Adraee issued evacuation warnings via a post on X for those present at the Red Sea ports of Ras Isa, al-Hudaydah, and al-Salif in Houthi-controlled Yemen.
- This incident marks a continuation of the pattern of Houthi missile launches towards Israel, prompting Israeli air defense responses and, in this instance, a direct warning to individuals in Houthi-controlled port areas.
- Discussions between the US and the Houthis regarding a ceasefire reportedly continue. However, no official announcements of significant progress or alterations to the existing non-aggression agreement concerning US shipping have been made. The Houthis' rhetoric towards Israel remains hostile, with the group continuing to express its intent to carry out attacks.
- Israel reportedly expressed surprise and displeasure regarding the US-brokered truce with the Houthis, citing a lack of prior notification.
- Prime Minister Netanyahu has previously indicated Israel's readiness to "defend ourselves alone" against the Houthi threat, a stance likely reinforced by the US agreement that does not mandate a cessation of attacks on Israel.

Hostage Release

In a dramatic development, 21-year-old Israeli-American Edan Alexander was released from Hamas captivity after roughly 19 months. The release, facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross, occurred on Monday, allowing for an emotional reunion with his

family in Israel; his family recited the *Shehechianu* prayer. Click [here](#) for the video. Thousands of people [celebrated](#) the release in Edan's hometown of Tenafly, New Jersey. The former captive informed his family that he was tortured, bound, and blindfolded during his imprisonment in Gaza. He described his initial days as "hell" due to Israeli strikes. He also recounted surviving a tunnel collapse.

- Hamas described the release as a "goodwill gesture" towards the Trump Administration, potentially aimed at encouraging a new ceasefire and increased humanitarian aid to Gaza. This marked the first hostage release since Israel's renewed major offensive in Gaza in March.
- Following Edan's release, Israeli authorities report that 58 hostages remain in captivity in Gaza, with at least 20 and up to 23 believed to be still alive.
- Negotiations for Edan's release reportedly involved direct communication between the Trump Administration and Hamas, with Palestinian-American activist Bishara Bahbah acting as a key mediator, seemingly bypassing direct Israeli involvement in these talks.
- Edan Alexander's parents thanked President Trump, Middle East Envoy Steve Witkoff, and Hostage Envoy Adam Bohler for securing his release from Hamas after 584 days. Speaking from the hospital, they did not thank the Israeli government, instead urging Prime Minister Netanyahu to prioritize the remaining hostages' return.
- While Hamas had previously linked Edan's release to a recommitment to a stalled ceasefire, the current release is viewed by some as a move to encourage renewed truce negotiations and greater humanitarian access to Gaza. Qatar and Egypt welcomed the release as a positive step for further talks.
- Israel acknowledged being informed by the US of the intended release once it was finalized. Prime Minister Netanyahu's office emphasized that Israel made no concessions for this release. It reiterated that military pressure on Hamas would continue in parallel with efforts to secure the return of all remaining hostages.
- A group of over 65 former hostages held in Gaza then signed a letter addressed to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Trump, and other officials, urging Israel to seize the "historic momentum" created by Edan Alexander's release and resume negotiations for a deal to free all remaining captives.
- The letter stated, "We believe the Israeli government now faces a genuine opportunity to return to the negotiating table. We urge all those involved in this process: Please do not walk away until a comprehensive deal is signed." They also wrote that "the majority of Israeli society wants the hostages home – even at the cost of halting military operations," emphasizing the "sanctity of human life and the paramount importance of bringing the fallen back for proper burial in Israel."
- Despite Netanyahu's reluctance to agree to a permanent end to the Gaza war, US envoy Witkoff is pressing Israel and Hamas to compromise in the hostage negotiations that are taking place in Doha, which might extend beyond Trump's Mideast trip. Israel is threatening a large-scale operation if the "Witkoff" proposal—a partial release for a temporary truce and war-end talks—is rejected by Hamas.

Trump's Middle East Visit

- US President Donald Trump launched a four-day diplomatic visit to the Middle East this week, undertaking scheduled stops in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Today, he is visiting Doha and Abu Dhabi.
- In a surprise move, President Trump said Tuesday he will move to normalize relations and lift sanctions on Syria's new government to give the country "a chance at peace." While this is a significant gain for Damascus, it is likely to be considered a setback by Israel, which intensified its military and territorial expansion within Syria following the downfall of the Assad regime in December.
- During his visit to Saudi Arabia, President Trump secured a \$600 billion investment deal with the kingdom, including a \$142 billion defense agreement. ¹ He praised Saudi leadership and outlined plans for significant U.S.-Saudi economic and military cooperation.
- Upon his arrival in Qatar, President Trump held a series of meetings with the country's leaders to bolster the defense and trade ties between the two nations. Controversy is swirling about a Boeing 747-8 jumbo jet that Qatar has offered to give Trump for use as a temporary replacement for Air Force One that he could keep after his presidency.
- Also, while in Qatar, President Trump indicated today that a deal with Iran was close, expressing confidence that it could prevent a military attack on their nuclear sites.
- The Trump Administration is reportedly weighing an agreement to supply G42, an Emirati AI company previously under US scrutiny for Chinese connections, with hundreds of thousands of American-designed AI chips. The idea of selling the chips to a foreign country raises concerns because analysts predict that AI will be increasingly used in planning military strategy, supplying troops, and waging war.
- President Trump's itinerary for this Middle East trip did not include a stop in Israel. Media reports indicate growing tensions between Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Disagreements include Trump's approach to Iran, particularly his willingness to engage in nuclear talks, and his handling of the Houthi situation in Yemen; the agreements reached have reportedly not included any guarantees regarding the Houthis ceasing their attacks on Israel.
- Yesterday, President Trump stated that appointing a new president and prime minister in Lebanon earlier this year presents a "new chance" for the country, "free of Hezbollah's grip." He noted that the new Lebanese government, led by President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, has been taking steps to wrest control from Hezbollah.

For Further Reading

- [How the Houthis Outlasted America](#)
- [Why Netanyahu Might Be on a Collision Course with Trump](#)
- [The US-Israel Alliance: A Critical Moment for Reflection and Renewal](#)

Am Yisrael Chai!
Pamela Garron