



# ISRAEL UPDATE



## Israel at War Thursday, May 23 Day 230

Debate on proposals to conscript Israel's ultra-Orthodox population into the IDF, often referred to as "sharing the burden," has raged for many years. Following October 7th and the military's need for additional manpower, these debates have intensified. Join Jewish Federations and the Israel Democracy Institute for an in-depth webinar on the future of IDF conscription for ultra-Orthodox Israelis, to be held on Tuesday, May 28 at noon ET.

### Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Activities

- [Three soldiers](#) fell in battle in Gaza yesterday as fighting remains intense at numerous points across the Strip. In battles in Nuseirat in central Gaza, IDF forces encountered terrorists who were operating out of an UNRWA school. The compound was being used as a storage facility for guns, explosive devices, and mortar launchers, and was subsequently destroyed in an IDF air strike.
- Yesterday, acting on intelligence regarding the location of a high-ranking Hamas terrorist who had led strikes on October 7, the IDF prepared an attack on the house in question. As seen in [this video](#), just before deploying a



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strike, an IDF drone identified a young child approaching the location on a bicycle. The operation was immediately halted as the boy stopped in front of the target's house and the terrorist came out to talk to him. When the boy then rode away from the house, the terrorist walked back inside. At this point, a green light for the attack was reissued, the terrorist was killed, and the child was saved.

## Humanitarian Aid

- Despite the completion and operation of the new floating pier by the US military, the [Pentagon said](#) that it has so far been unsuccessful in delivering aid to the Gazan population.
- See more figures on humanitarian aid [here](#).

## Hostages

- Last night, following four hours of debate, Israel's [war cabinet instructed](#) the country's negotiating team to continue efforts to reach a hostage release deal, despite Hamas's reported intransigence.
- [CNN has reported](#) new details about the failed hostage deal from three weeks ago. According to the broadcaster, Egypt had unilaterally amended the terms of the proposal transmitted to Hamas which was different from the draft proposal that Israel had given to the Egyptians. Hamas then "agreed" to the terms, but Israel denied that those



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terms had been approved. The primary point of contention concerned the stage of the agreement at which the war would end, as well as the future existence of Hamas as a governing entity in Gaza.

- In a dramatic move, a video taken on October 7 from body cameras of Hamas terrorists was released yesterday. The video was filmed during the attack and infiltration of the Nahal Oz IDF base.
- The footage depicts the two hours in which hundreds of terrorists were inside the base, during which they killed many soldiers and abducted others.
- The families of five female soldiers abducted on that day (who remain in captivity) asked that the video be shared with the public. A censored, heavily redacted version, totaling three minutes and ten seconds was released. The clip is so disturbing that Jewish Federations have chosen not to share a link, even though the video is widely available.
- In the uncensored portion of the footage, which was not made public, Hamas terrorists are seen executing many soldiers.
- The edited version shows five female soldiers, Liri Albag, Carina Arayev, Adam Berger, Danielle Gilboa and Naama Levy (all under 19 years old), badly bruised and bleeding, being handcuffed with their hands behind their backs and made to sit on the floor.



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- The young girls are surrounded by dozens of armed Hamas men wearing military vests and green Hamas bandanas on their heads.
- The terrorists scream at the women, calling them dogs and saying they will “crush them.” One of the terrorists threatens, “These can be impregnated.” Another terrorist looks at one of the women and comments, “You are very pretty”.
- One of the girls, 19-year-old Naama Levy, has dedicated her life to promoting peace and understanding between Israelis and Palestinians. She became deeply involved with Hands of Peace, an organization committed to organizing meet-ups, fostering dialogue and mutual understanding among young people from both sides of the conflict. In the video, she tells the terrorists that, “I have friends in Palestine,” and asks them to call her Palestinian friends. They tell her to “Shut up.” (Read more [here](#)).
- The prisoners are then seen being carried out to the jeeps that would take them to captivity in Gaza, where they have been held for the past 230 days.
- Read more on the video [here](#).

## **International Response**



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- Spain, Norway, and Ireland announced yesterday that they will recognize a Palestinian state. Israel has [recalled its ambassadors](#) from those countries, arguing that the recognition is “rewarding terrorism.”
- The judge in the International Court of Justice case brought by South Africa against Israel has [clarified the Court’s decision](#), explaining that, contrary to media reports, the judges did not decide that there was a plausible case of genocide to answer. The Court also said that it will rule Friday afternoon on South Africa’s request to order a halt to Israel’s Rafah offensive in Gaza.
- Following last week’s decision by the ICC Prosecutor to [recommend indictments](#) for both Israeli and Hamas leaders, many have voiced their opposition and even outrage.
- You can view Jewish Federations’ statement on the issue [here](#), and see this [editorial](#) in The Wall Street Journal on the decision to “lump together” Israel’s democratic leaders who are fighting a just war with Hamas’s leaders who are determined to murder as many Israelis as possible.
- US President Joe Biden [said](#), “The ICC prosecutor’s application for arrest warrants against Israeli leaders is outrageous. And let me be clear: whatever this prosecutor might imply, there is no equivalence - none - between Israel and Hamas. We will always stand with Israel against threats to its security.”



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- Israel's President Isaac Herzog called on leaders of the free world to condemn the ICC's announcement. He also said, "Any attempt to draw parallels between these atrocious terrorists and a democratically elected government of Israel - working to fulfill its duty to defend and protect its citizens entirely in adherence to the principles of international law – is outrageous and cannot be accepted by anyone."

## **Rockets**

- Rocket fire from Hamas in Gaza has been on the rise in the last few weeks. Recent days have seen almost daily fire at Sderot and other locations near the Strip. Regular attacks against Ashkelon have also been launched. However, there have been no attempted firings at the center of Israel for many months.
- In the north, Hezbollah continues to fire at Israeli targets, triggering significant retaliations. In recent weeks, there has been a marked increase in rocket fire in the area.
- In the Red Sea, the US, the UK, and Israel continue to defend against attacks by the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. Similarly, the US military continues to strike at pro-Iranian targets in both Syria and Iraq.

## **Stories of Heartbreak, Heroism, and Hope**



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- Toldot Yisrael produces video testimonies of women and men who fought in 1948 and before. The organization's founder speaks here about what has been learned from interviewing soldiers who are serving now. [October 7th was "the first time that a Jewish army has stopped a pogrom."](#)
- Watch the [story](#) of 27-year-old Inbar Haiman, a graffiti artist described by loved ones as a "free spirit" and "light" in the world. Inbar was a student of visual communications in Haifa. Before her army service, she spent a year teaching Arab and Jewish children in the south of Israel. Inbar attended the Nova festival as a volunteer and fled the site when terrorists infiltrated on the morning of October 7. She escaped to a nearby field where she was murdered by gunmen. Her bloody body was taken into Gaza, where it is still being held by Hamas. Her boyfriend Alon called her "the most amazing girl that I've ever met."

## Further Reading

Israel and the World After October 7- [An Interview with Bernard-Henri Lévy](#)

*Washington Post*: [The ICC has united Israel in opposition](#)

Ksenia Svetlova: [The Empathy Gap](#)

[Why Some Iranians Refuse to Mourn President Ebrahim Raisi](#)



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[From Oct. 7 to today: How Hamas Criticism Vanished in \*The New York Times\*](#)

## **Jewish Federations Resources**

Jewish Federations have collectively raised over \$800 million and allocated more than \$400 million for humanitarian needs and economic support in Israel since October 7. For an updated list of allocations, click [here](#). Read this [JTA](#) story about our work: “The man allocating \$800M in post-Oct. 7 donations to Israel on where the money goes.”

- Jewish Federations' Backrounders:

[At-Risk Youth](#)

[LGBTQ Community](#)

[Young Children](#)

[Volunteers](#)

[Women](#)

[Pastoral Guidance](#)

[Bedouin Communities](#)

[Food Security](#)

[People with Disabilities](#)

As part of the [Second Line](#) initiative, Jewish Federations are partnering with the Israel Ministry of Health, the Israel Trauma Coalition, and Birthright Israel to recruit qualified volunteers to provide both in-person and remote support to



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both affected populations and local mental health professionals in Israel. To apply, click [here](#). For more information, contact [Hannah Miller](#).

Resources: Readers can see links to resources, background, research and other information on the current war [here](#); can access a Jewish Federations toolkit [here](#), and can refer to the Community Mobilization Center [Resource Hub](#) for the latest talking points and tools.

Details: For information on the latest overall numbers from the conflict, see [here](#).

Volunteering: Read [this](#) updated Jewish Federations' overview on the latest volunteering opportunities in Israel right now.

Read the latest communication from the Community Mobilization Center [here](#).

Am Yisrael Chai!

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