



ISRAEL UPDATE



War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

May 8, 2025 - October 7 War, Day 580, 59 hostages remain in captivity

LATEST UPDATES

Gaza

- On Monday, Israel's Security Cabinet voted to launch **Operation Gideon's Chariots**: A new stage in the war in Gaza. US President Donald Trump is scheduled to visit Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates next week; most analysts predict that Israel will not engage in major fighting before the visit concludes.
- The IDF has also **called up tens of thousands of reservists** to bolster forces.
- As part of the new decision, the government voted to **"conquer Gaza and hold the territories,"** according to an Israeli official.
 - The language of the decision was **deliberately vague**, but has, nonetheless, been interpreted in various ways.
 - Some global headlines asserted that the decision was made to **"occupy"** Gaza, and even to rebuild Jewish settlements there. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich (the leader of the Religious Zionism Party) suggested as much, going as far as to say that Israel "should not be afraid to use the word 'occupation.'"
 - Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the decision will involve **"military rule"** of Gaza, but did not specify for how long that would be necessary.
- While the government's aims are to **destroy Hamas and release the hostages**, the IDF says that **releasing the hostages is the paramount goal.**
- Most commentators agree that the government's main intention is to **put pressure on Hamas** to be more flexible in negotiations and to release hostages.
- Hostage families and other groups have **criticized the decision**, saying that renewed fighting will endanger the hostages' lives, and that a deal should be reached with Hamas. Other Israelis argue that the terror group will never voluntarily release all of the hostages - their "most valuable card;" and that the only way to free the captives is by forcing Hamas's hand. New Hope MK Ze'ev Elkin said, "Defeating Hamas does not contradict the release of the hostages—on the contrary, only when Hamas is under pressure does it agree to deals."
- While many international groups have claimed that Gaza is on "the brink of starvation," the IDF and others on the ground insist that the Strip still has numerous weeks of food and other supplies. Israel has said that it will **allow humanitarian aid to enter** but will not let Hamas distribute supplies. Israel is working on a plan to deliver food and supplies directly to families, potentially via private US contractors.

IDF Activity

- **IDF Captain Noam Ravid, 23, and Staff Sergeant Yaly Seror, 20, both from the Army Corps of Engineers, were killed in Gaza this week.** Their unit was clearing a building when explosive devices hidden in a tunnel shaft under the house were detonated - killing them and wounding two others.

- For a full list of those who have fallen in the current war, see [here](#). The Institute for National Security Studies think-tank has launched [this moving memorial project](#), “In their death, they commanded us to live.”
- Three soldiers were wounded in **two separate terror attacks** yesterday. At the Reihan Junction in Samaria, a terrorist opened fire at IDF troops, severely wounding at least two. A suspect has been arrested. In Har Hevron, a terrorist attempted to carry out a car-ramming attack against IDF forces. The terrorist then exited his car with a knife and was shot by soldiers on site before he managed to stab passersby.
 - A Hamas commander was killed in an **Israeli airstrike in southern Lebanon** yesterday. The target, Khaled Ahmad al-Ahmad, served as chief of operations in the terror group’s western sector in Lebanon. According to the IDF, he had perpetrated numerous attacks on Israeli civilians and troops during the war.
 - **The IDF continues to take actions in Syria to protect the Druze community there, amid increased sectarian fighting in the country.** With nearly 150,000 Druze in Israel, thousands of whom serve in the military, the Israeli government is committed to protecting the ethnic minority. Today, Israeli troops began operating a forward mobile medical triage facility in southern Syria, as part of several efforts undertaken to support the Syrian-Druze population and ensure their safety. See footage of the facility [here](#).

Houthis

- Almost all **rocket sirens** in Israel in the last few months (typically a few each week), have been triggered by missiles fired by the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen, who control a large part of the divided country.
- Typically, these missiles are **intercepted by Israel’s defense systems**, but due to the long range and unpredictability, sirens are heard in large areas of Israel, often causing millions to run to shelters.
- **On Sunday, for the first time, defense systems failed to intercept an incoming Houthi missile, which struck the grounds of Ben Gurion Airport** outside of Tel Aviv. The missile hit an open area not far from the terminal buildings. **Since no structures were hit, damage was minor, and only four people suffered injuries.** Nonetheless, the psychological damage was considerable as thousands of people at the airport saw the strike occur, and dozens captured it on video that was later shared widely. **More significantly, most foreign airlines immediately suspended flights to and from Israel, stranding thousands of citizens outside the country.** Limited flights on Israeli carriers led to prolonged waits in the airport. [Some airlines](#) have begun to resume flights, but others may wait weeks, or even more.
- **In response, on Tuesday, Israeli fighter jets launched a large attack on Yemen’s Sana’a International Airport,** the main international gateway of the Houthi-controlled part of the country. Following IDF warnings to vacate the terminals, most of the airport was destroyed by Israeli strikes, including the control tower, terminal buildings and numerous aircraft on the ground. The entire airport is inoperable for the foreseeable future.
- **Yesterday, US President Donald Trump announced that a ceasefire had been reached between the US and the Houthis** in which the terror group agreed to end attacks on US and other international shipping in exchange for a halt of US attacks on Yemen. **The Houthis explicitly stated that the deal does not include Israel, and the terror group has already attempted to fire additional missiles at Israel since the agreement was announced.** Israeli commentators have bemoaned the fact that the US agreed to a deal that did not require a cessation of Houthi attacks on Israel.

Hostages

- **US President Donald Trump surprised many on Tuesday, especially in Israel, by stating that there are 21 hostages who are still alive.** Until then, the commonly accepted number was 24. Hostage families suggested that there may be information about some of the hostages that Israel shared with the US government, but not with the families.

- Israel's Prime Minister's Office later clarified that there is **confirmed intelligence about 21 hostages being alive**, and incomplete information about three others; this is why President Trump stated that only 21 are alive.
 - Today, the Israeli government said that there is **significant concern for the lives of three of the hostages**: one Israeli and two foreigners, whom Hamas is holding.

Diplomacy

- According to numerous media reports, **secret talks have been taking place** between Syria's new leaders and the Israeli government, with the United Arab Emirates acting as mediators. The talks are reportedly focused on security coordination, to ensure that there is no further escalation of tensions between Israel and Syria. While most agree that it is too early to refer to the talks as a breakthrough, or to say that they could result in a normalization agreement in the longer term, observers have noted the additional blow to Iran's seemingly losing its major ally, Syria, in its multi-pronged attacks on Israel.
- Last week, Prime Minister Netanyahu, met with a **bipartisan US Congressional delegation** led by House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) that included US Representatives Ann Wagner (R-MO), Gregory Meeks (D-NY), Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-American Samoa), Madeleine Dean (D-PA), Marilyn Strickland (D-WA), Greg Landsman (D-OH), and Laura Friedman (D-CA).

For Further Reading

- [Israelis Are United – It's Time for Our Leadership to Follow Suit](#)
- [Trump Seeks a Deal, but Iran May Be Pushing Too Far](#)
- [The Route to the Day After in Gaza](#)
- [Watch Heroes Among Us: "I just remember falling on the floor and not wanting to believe them"- Senai Guedalia](#)
- [Iran's Nuclear Program Was Built for War, Not Energy](#)
- [Hamas Is Not Just a Terrorist Organization](#)

Three new reports highlighting various aspects of Federations Israel Emergency work have been released:

- [Support for IDF reservists](#)
- [Support for local communities](#)
- [Support for Arabic speakers](#)

Am Yisrael Chai!

Pamela Garron
Director, Jewish Life & Learning
813.739.1688