



War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

June 5, 2025 - October 7 War, Day 608, 56 hostages remain in captivity

LATEST UPDATES

IDF Activity

- In a covert operation last night, the IDF and Shabak (Shin Bet) **recovered the bodies of two hostages** and returned them to Israel for burial. The two hostages, Gadi Haggi (72) and his partner Judy Weinstein (70), were both dual US-Israeli citizens (Judy also held Canadian citizenship) who were killed on October 7 at Kibbutz Nir Oz. Their bodies were abducted to Gaza.
 - The couple **left behind** four children and seven grandchildren.
 - **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** said, “I would like to thank, and express appreciation to, the fighters and commanders for this determined and successful operation. We will not rest, nor will we be silent, until we return home all of our hostages – the living and the deceased.”
 - **56 hostages are still being held in Gaza**, of whom only 20 are believed to be alive.
- IDF Reserve Master Sergeant Alon Farkas, 27, was **killed in battle yesterday** in the northern Gaza Strip. Another reserve soldier was severely injured in the same incident. Earlier in the week, three other soldiers fell in battle:
 - Lior Steinberg, 20, from Petah Tikva, Omer Van Gelder, 22, from Ma’ale Adumim, and Ofek Barhana, 20, from Yavne were all **killed in Gaza on Monday**.
 - Following his death, Lior’s sister’s partner, Or, posted on Instagram: “Just a few days ago we talked and hugged; you told me you love me. **I love you too, my dear, my hero, what a tragedy! I have no words.** It’s impossible to grasp that you’re not here with us...Watch over us from above. I love you forever, my little brother.”
 - Also, last Thursday, David Libi, 19, from Malachei Hashalom, **was killed in Gaza**. David was a Defense Ministry civilian contractor.
- **Israel's defense exports have set a new record**, one that has been broken for the **fourth consecutive year**, with over \$14.7 billion in 2024, representing a **13% increase over 2023**. More than half of the deals were valued at over \$100 million, and over 50% were signed by European countries. Total Israeli defense exports have more than doubled over the past five years. Almost half of the exports are in rocket and missile development and defense.

Hostages and Ceasefire Talks

- Earlier in the week, **Israel formally agreed to a ceasefire agreement** proposed by US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff. The hostage deal was said to include the release of 10 live hostages and the remains of 18 hostages over one week, and a 60-day ceasefire during which time a long-term ceasefire would be negotiated.
- **Hamas rejected the proposal**; it was widely criticized for turning down the deal. Following further negotiations, Hamas says that it is again reexamining the agreement and is expected to provide an answer to the US in the coming days.
- Hamas also says that they aim to bring about **a permanent ceasefire**, a complete redeployment of the IDF outside the Gaza Strip, and a free flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza. In addition, Hamas wants to prolong the release of the ten hostages, with the final group only being freed on the sixtieth day of the ceasefire, rather than at the end of the first week.
- Israel continues to refuse any arrangement, including a permanent ceasefire that **would allow Hamas to continue to rule Gaza**.
- The Witkoff Plan also calls for the **release of 125 terrorists** sentenced to life sentences in Israel, along with 1,111 other terrorists jailed in Israel and the bodies of 180 militants.

Humanitarian Aid

- In coordination with the US, Israel has **successfully established four humanitarian zones** in Gaza where large amounts of food and other supplies are being distributed. These zones are run by the **American Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF)**, with the IDF providing perimeter security.
- There have been several **incidents of rioting**; both the IDF and US contractors have had to resort to live fire on several occasions when they felt their lives were at risk. An unconfirmed number of Gazans have reportedly been killed, and despite multiple foreign media reports, it is unclear how many people have died and what caused their deaths. Investigations are ongoing.
- GHF says it distributed **nearly six million meals** in its first week of operations. As part of the effort, **21 truckloads of food aid, totaling 18,720 boxes, were delivered**.
- Numerous Israeli commentators have said that the relative success of the new distribution centers is **a significant blow to Hamas**, successfully bypassing the militants and showing the local population that food distribution can be achieved without the involvement of terror groups.

Rockets

- Missile launches by the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen **continue on an almost daily basis**. Israel has intercepted all missiles, or they have fallen short. While there have been no injuries or significant damage due to the missiles (or shrapnel left by interceptions), each launch triggers sirens across large parts of the country, sending millions running to shelters. Recent changes to the directives issued by the IDF's Home Front Command now give citizens a few minutes warning that a siren is likely to be heard shortly.
- Earlier in the week, two **rockets were launched from Syria** into Israeli territory and fell in open spaces in the Golan Heights. This was the first time there has been rocket fire from Syria since the

fall of the Assad regime and President Al Joulani's ascension to power. A short while later, another rocket was fired from Syria towards Nazareth and Afula in the center of Israel's north. The Iron Dome intercepted the missile. In response, the IDF attacked the launch site.

Political Developments

- Israel's ruling coalition has found itself in a state of **political turmoil** resulting from the government's failure to pass a bill exempting ultra-Orthodox citizens ("haredim") from IDF conscription.
- The haredi parties are part of the current ruling coalition. They had been **promised that a bill would be passed** to largely formalize the status quo, whereby most haredim can study in yeshivot instead of serving in the IDF.
- **Widespread opposition to a haredi exemption** has existed for many years. This has greatly intensified since October 7, when the need for significantly increased IDF personnel emerged. In accordance with a ruling by the Supreme Court, the IDF has begun drafting some haredim, although most have not shown up to their enlistment.
 - Yesterday, the rabbinic and spiritual leaders of the two factions making up United Torah Judaism (UTJ - the Ashkenazi haredi party) instructed their political representatives to move forward with **a bill to dissolve the government**. At the same time, Shas, the Sephardi haredi party, indicated that it will not remain alone in the government if UTJ quits. The haredi parties currently hold 18 out of the Knesset's 120. Without them, Netanyahu's government no longer has a majority.
 - The Chair of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, MK Yuli Edelstein (Likud) has **refused to pass a bill through his Committee** that does not include "serious and heavy sanctions" for draft evaders. He has come under attack from members of his party, including calls for the PM to remove him from his role as Committee Chair.
 - Israeli commentators agree that none of the parties in the coalition, including the haredi parties, **want to see the government fall**. Polls predict that the current coalition would have great difficulty forming a new government, and participating parties would likely find themselves in the opposition in the event of new elections. As a result, intense negotiations are taking place to avoid the government's collapse. Nonetheless, some Israeli media have said that a dissolution of the Knesset now seems quite possible. If that were to happen, new elections would likely occur in October 2025.
 - For now, most reports suggest that **there is not enough support, even within the coalition, for a bill** that would give widespread exemptions from conscription.
 - A vote to dissolve the government is **set for next week**, and intense efforts to resolve the crisis are expected between now and then.
- Last weekend, former Bank of Israel Governor (and American-Israeli) **Professor Stanley Fisher** passed away.

For Further Reading

- [Trump Could Put Gaza on a Better Path With One Tweet](#)
- [Analysis of IDF Strikes in Lebanon – Six Months of Ceasefire](#)
- [Gaza and the Hourglass Dilemma: The Urgent Need for a Decisive Victory](#)
- [What's missing from Trump's nuclear diplomacy](#)