



## Israel at War

Friday, September 27, 2024

Day 356

### Latest Updates

Since October 8th, Hezbollah has bombarded Israel's north with some 9,000 rockets, missiles and drones, displacing close to 70,000 Israelis and killing innocents. Over the last week, as Hezbollah increased the intensity of its barrage against northern communities Jewish Federations have stepped up their allocations to support their growing needs. Read more about the \$43 million we allocated in the past week [here](#).

### Escalation in Northern Israel

- Fighting on the Northern front heated up rapidly over the past week bringing areas of Israel under fire for the first time since October 7th. Here is a rundown of what has happened in recent days:
  - Israel pre-emptively **struck** Hezbollah last Friday, destroying a building in a Beirut suburb under which the terrorist leaders were hiding. The attacks killed senior leaders include Ibrahim Aqil, Hezbollah's operations commander who was responsible

for [bombings in Beirut](#) that killed hundreds of Americans in the 1980s.

- The IDF followed up with a [strike](#) on Saturday night that took out 400 Hezbollah launchers, including thousands of rocket launch pads. Hezbollah retaliated by launching missiles at the Jezreel Valley in northern Israel.
- Israel and Hezbollah [traded heavy fire](#) on Sunday, with Hezbollah launching roughly 150 rockets, cruise missiles and drones at Israel. Most were intercepted by Israel's missile defense systems, but three people were wounded by shrapnel and 20 people sustained injuries while running for shelter.
- On Monday, IDF warplanes hit [1300 Hezbollah targets](#).
- On Tuesday, Ibrahim Muhammad Qabisi, the Commander of Hezbollah's Missiles and Rockets Force, was [killed](#) by an Israeli airstrike in Beirut along with other central commanders in Hezbollah's Missiles and Rockets Force.
- Yesterday, a missile fired by Hezbollah was [intercepted](#) near Tel Aviv, marking the first time that the city has been targeted. It was a Qadr 1 heavy, long-range ballistic missile that Hezbollah said was aimed at Mossad headquarters. The early morning strike saw Israelis across a large swath of central Israel into shelters and safe rooms.
- Three people were wounded when a house in the Kibbutz Saar in northern Israel was hit by a Hezbollah rocket yesterday. They were evacuated to a hospital in Nahariya, which is located near the border with Lebanon.
- Earlier today, the IDF confirmed that Mohammed Srour, commander of Hezbollah's Aerial Unit (Drone and UAVs), was killed in a targeted air strike near the Lebanese capital.
- Today, Hezbollah fired a barrage of 45 rockets at the mixed city of Acre.
- While the pace of fighting has slowed considerably in the past 24 hours, with fewer attacks by Hezbollah and fewer IAF strikes in Lebanon, rhetoric on both sides remains charged and Prime Minister

Netanyahu is reported to have instructed the IDF to continue fighting with full force.

- Nearly 70,000 Israelis remain displaced from their homes in the north. Hundreds of thousands of Israelis spent the night in bomb shelters and children sheltered in bomb shelters on Sunday rather than attending school.
- The IDF called up two reserve brigades “for operational missions in the northern sector” and is intimating that a ground invasion of Lebanon may be imminent.
- Over the past two weeks approximately 200,000 Lebanese have evacuated the southern part of the country following repeated outreach and advisories by the IDF in an effort to avoid civilian casualties.
- Defense Minister Yoav Gallant called this week’s events “the most difficult in the history of Hezbollah’s existence.” He asserted that the IDF has “crushed” Hezbollah infrastructure that had been built up over the course of decades.
- The US, France and other western countries have accelerated their diplomatic efforts towards a temporary ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah over the past twenty-four hours. Despite earlier reports indicating that an agreement had been reached, both Israel and Hezbollah have rejected the proposed diplomatic solution.
- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu landed in New York today in advance of his address on Friday to the UN General Assembly. His decision to leave the country during the current escalation drew sharp criticism from across the political spectrum.

## Gaza

- With Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar appearing to have gone silent, speculation is rising that the elusive terrorist chief may be dead. Recent messages that were purportedly signed by him appear to have been written by others.

- Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) is reportedly mulling a [plan](#) to force all Palestinian civilians out of northern Gaza, including Gaza City, to enable the IDF to lay siege on Hamas in a way that could force the group to release the 101 hostages, both alive and dead, who are still in its grip. The plan was devised by a group of former Israel generals.
- In the central part of the Gaza Strip, IDF troops [launched](#) simultaneous operations this week on the outskirts of Nuseirat and Zeitoun to eliminate Hamas infrastructure. Numerous tunnel shafts and enemy observation outposts were destroyed.
- Yesterday, Israel [returned the bodies](#) of 88 Palestinians who were killed by missile strikes in Gaza, but the Hamas run Ministry of Health refused to bury them until the bodies are identified by Israel and the locations of their deaths are released.

## Hostages

- Former American hostage [Aviva Siegel](#), who was released by Hamas last November, told the media this week that she “wanted to die so many times” during her weeks-long ordeal. “I’m still in Gaza; I haven’t left yet,” she said. Her husband, Keith, 65, remains in captivity and she averred that she remains “with him in spirit at all times.” The other living American hostages are Sagui Dekel-Chen, 36; Edan Alexander, 20; and Omer Neutra, 22. Hostages who have reportedly died are Itay Chen, 19, and married couple Judith Weinstein, 70 and Gadi Haggai, 73. Watch this [moving video](#) of the hostage families’ appearance on NBC Nightly News this week.
- Relatives of the six hostages who were recently murdered by their captors published a scathing [letter](#) in Time Magazine on Wednesday in which they accused global leaders and celebrities of failing them and their loved ones. They also disclosed fresh details of what the slain hostages had suffered during their captivity.
- UK Prime Minister [Keir Starmer](#) stumbled and called the hostages “sausages” when calling for their return during a Labour Party conference on Tuesday.

## International

- In his [opening speech](#) at the UN General Assembly this week, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres took the powerful nations of the Security Council to task for failing to end devastating wars in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, and other parts of the world. “Peace demands action. And peace demands leadership,” he said.
- Israeli officials were [angered](#) by some aspects of the speech. Guterres conceded that “nothing can justify the abhorrent acts of terror committed by Hamas on October 7 or the taking of hostages, both of which I have repeatedly condemned.” But he went on to say that “nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people” by the Israelis.
- Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the United Nations envoy for Lebanon, [warned](#) that the “region on the brink of an imminent catastrophe” and called for diplomatic solutions to the crisis. Urgent discussions on the situation are continuing at the UN.
- In his farewell address on Tuesday to the General Assembly, President Joe Biden [inveighed](#) against the dangers of American isolationism, urging the US to continue to play a major role in fostering peace in Gaza, Ukraine, and the Sudan.
- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken [stated](#) on Wednesday on NBC’s Today Show that while Israel has the right to defend itself, the issue needs to be solved through diplomacy rather than war.
- The US military is not providing intelligence support to Israel for its operations in Lebanon, the Pentagon said, even though it said that it is [engaged](#) in a “full-court press,” along with France for a diplomatic resolution of the crisis, with an eye to a ceasefire in both Lebanon and Gaza.
- Engage Action, which is one of the largest Muslim political groups in the US, [endorsed](#) Vice President Kamala Harris on Wednesday despite its opposition to her Middle East policy. The group said that preventing former President Donald Trump from regaining the White House motivated its decision.

## Stories of Heartbreak, Heroism, and Hope

- Sgt. First Class [Ohad Cohen](#), 20, a soldier in the Israeli Air Force's elite Shaldag unit, was killed in action while fighting Hamas terrorists on October 7 in Kibbutz Be'eri. Ohad loved to read, write, run, and hike. A [eulogy](#) on the Central Arava Regional Council website described him as “a smart boy, highly moral, social and smiley. Almost all of his friends remember first and foremost his kind smile that best characterized him, his sensitivity and the light he spread around him.” His mother, Michal, wrote in her eulogy that Ohad was “a child full of love, full of goodness. Wherever you went, you made everyone fall in love with you.”
- [Hanan Yablonka](#), 41, from Tel Aviv, was murdered by Hamas terrorists on October 7 after fleeing the Supernova music festival. Hanan was a loving father and friend. He was a sports fan and followed Hapoel Tel Aviv. Hanan was taken hostage while doing what he loved most — enjoying music, dancing, and celebrating life,” the Hostage Families Forum said. Hanan's 11-year-old nephew, Amor, eulogized him, saying that “for eight months, I have been fighting for you, for eight months the longing hasn't stopped, for eight months I haven't stopped mentioning the name Hanan Yablonka.”
- [Naomi Dgani](#), 80, was slain by Hamas terrorists in her home in Kibbutz Kfar Aza on October 7. That morning, she spoke for the last time on the phone with some of her children and grandchildren. In Naomi's memory, her family wrote a new set of eerie [lyrics](#) for Leonard Cohen's classic song, “Who By Fire.” Her nephew, Or Alterman, recalled that “on one of my last visits to Kfar Aza, Naomi took me for a ride on her scooter along the trails of the kibbutz. We went through all the places ingrained in my childhood memories.”

## Further Reading

- [What is Hezbollah?](#)
- [Sorry, AOC: Israel's Precision Attack Against Hezbollah Was Humane—and Legal Opinion](#)

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- [Israel and the Middle East at a Crossroads: How Tehran's Terror Campaign Threatens the US and Our Allies](#)

## Jewish Federations Resources

- Jewish Federations have collectively raised over \$854 million and allocated more than \$597 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' Backgrounders:  
[At-Risk Youth](#) | [LGBTQ Community](#)  
[Young Children](#) | [Volunteers](#)  
[Women](#) | [Pastoral Guidance](#)  
[Bedouin Communities](#) | [Food Security](#) | [People with Disabilities](#)
- 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](#).
- Read the latest communication from the Community Mobilization Center [here](#).

Am Yisrael Chai!

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