

War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

June 18, 2025 - October 7 War, Day 621, 53 hostages remain in captivity

Iran continues to fire missiles at Israel's major population centers, albeit at a reduced rate, as the IDF strikes strategic sites around Iran.

As a result of the improving security situation, Israel's Home Front Command announced that **some restrictions will be lifted** at 6 p.m (Israel Time) tonight. Workplaces will be allowed to reopen, and up to 30 people will be permitted to gather. Schools will remain closed.

Jewish Federations of North America's Israel office has activated its emergency protocols and is in close contact with the government, the military, missions and partners on the ground to assess the situation.

Iranian Attacks on Israel

- In the last twenty-four hours, a significant **number of barrages of ballistic missiles** were yet again fired by Iran at Israel, triggering sirens across the major population centers. No major injuries or damage have been reported, partly due to far smaller numbers of missiles being fired each time. While barrages of 150-200 missiles were common during the first few days of the war, recent firings have been only about ten missiles each, making interceptions far easier.
- Smaller barrages significantly increase the chances of successful interceptions, but each firing still requires millions of citizens to dash to shelters. The very loud "booms" resulting from interceptions are also potentially **traumatic**.
- Overnight, **fires and minimal damage** resulted from falling debris following successful interceptions.
- Today, for **the first time in this war**, an American Aegis-Class naval destroyer stationed off the Israeli coast participated in the interceptions as part of the IDF's defense efforts. The US THAAD anti-missile defense system has also been deployed alongside Israeli defenses in the current war.
- While it is understood that **Israel has succeeded in destroying large numbers of missiles** and missile launchers, it is believed that Iran still maintains a large stockpile of these weapons. See [this footage](#) of an Israeli attack on a launcher, moments before it fired.
- Iran also continues to deploy UAVs (**Unmanned Aerial Vehicles** - drones) against Israel. The drones activate sirens in limited geographical locations, and their

potential to harm is much smaller than that of a ballistic missile. Nonetheless, the IDF is often challenged in being able to shoot down the drones, resulting in "chases" that sometimes continue over wide areas of the country, triggering additional sirens. Nevertheless, all drones have eventually been shot down.

- Watch [this interview](#) on Fox News with Israel's Foreign Minister Gidon Sa'ar where he says that **Iran is targeting civilians, which is a war crime**

Operation Rising Lion: Israel's Attacks on Iran Continue

- Israel is claiming major successes as it continues to carry out **around-the-clock attacks** on a [wide range of military](#), nuclear and other strategic sites inside Iran. The IDF says it has inflicted a severe blow on Iran's military capabilities.
- Overnight, at least fifty fighter planes bombed [twenty targets](#) in the capital Tehran, alongside numerous other missions across Iran. Among the targets in Tehran was a **centrifuge production facility** which supplied Iran's uranium enrichment sites. See [this 3D illustration](#) of that attack.
- See [this footage](#) of a **strike on Iranian attack helicopters** in Kermanshah.
- Alongside IDF fighter jets, **large numbers of Israeli drones** have been successfully operating in the skies of Iran, [shooting at launchers](#) as well as at missile stockpiles and other storage facilities.
- Despite the many successes, an Israeli Air Force UAV ("Hermes" class drone) flying over Iran was **shot down by a surface-to-air missile**. The unmanned vehicle fell in Iranian territory. The IDF says there is no risk of a security breach because the UAV did not carry any classified equipment or information. This is the first time that an Israeli asset has been shot down in Iran.
- According to **IDF Spokesperson, BG Effie Defrin**, "We have delivered significant blows to the Iranian regime, and, as such, they have been pushed back into central Iran. They are now focusing their efforts on conducting missile fire from the area of Isfahan. We are aiming at military targets; they are attacking civilian homes." See his full remarks [here](#), and read [more](#) about Israel's successes in eliminating Iran's military leaders.
- In [this article](#) from yesterday, **Time Magazine outlines the unprecedented successes** of Israel's air campaign against Iran.
- Watch [this short IDF video](#) about **Iran's Revolutionary Guards** and the pivotal role they play.

The United States

- Despite initially telling Israel not to assassinate Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei, US President Donald Trump **has now issued a call for Iran's "unconditional surrender."** Earlier, he indicated that Khamenei will not be killed "for now."
- Numerous Israeli media outlets have been reporting that the **US is considering joining in the military attacks** on Iran. For Israel, the most significant contribution that the US military could make would be to provide B2 bombers.
 - One of Iran's key nuclear sites, **Fordow, is built deep within a mountain**, protected against airstrikes.
 - The U.S. possesses one of the only weapons capable of reliably destroying the facility, **the GBU-57 — a 30,000-pound, bunker-busting bomb**, which is explicitly designed to destroy deep, fortified facilities.
 - Due to their weight and size, only the US military's **B-2 Spirit stealth bombers are capable** of carrying and delivering the large bombs. Israeli F-15s, F-16s and F-35s cannot carry the GBU-57s.
 - Israeli jets can only deliver **smaller bunker-busters** like the GBU-28, which cannot penetrate to the same depth.
 - The B-2's **stealth allows it to penetrate Iranian air defenses** with little risk, and can launch from the U.S. or other forward bases.

Other News

- While Israel's airspace remains officially closed to non-military aircraft, the

country's Transportation Ministry has launched **Operation "Safe Return"** to bring close to **150,000 Israelis stuck abroad back home.**

- Private Israeli airlines such as El Al, Israir, Arkia and Haifa Air, as well as the Israeli Mano Cruise Ship Company, have been **mobilized for the effort.**
- Flights will depart **primarily from Cyprus and Greece**, with others departing Paris, Milan, Rome, and Montenegro.
- The operation is being conducted in complete coordination with the military **under strict guidelines.**
- This morning, El Al pilot Nechama Spiegel, the first Haredi woman to lead an aircrew, captained the first rescue flight.
- See [this moving post](#) by the Jerusalem Post's former editor-in-chief Yaakov Katz on his journey.
- One of Israel's largest banks, Bank Leumi, announced today that they have organized **a large ship that will sail from Cyprusto Israel**, and can carry hundreds of Israelis looking to get back.
- At the G7 summit in Canada, **German Chancellor Friedrich Merz** expressed strong support for Israel. "This is the dirty work Israel is doing for all of us. We are also victims of this regime. This mullah regime has brought death and destruction to the world."
- The **Iranian reformist newspaper**, Shargh, published an editorial yesterday saying that Iran's national security interests dictate that the government should strive for an end to the war. The newspaper said that Israel's capacity to wage a prolonged fight outlasts that of Iran's thanks to Israel's "ties to superpowers" and its superior technology. In contrast, Iran's military resources are limited, and it needs to conserve them to protect itself against the neighbors who are "striving to weaken her." The newspaper calls for Iran to end the war and save its resources for domestic economic development.
- A **cyber-attack, which was attributed to Israel**, was launched yesterday on Iran's largest bank, disabling systems and making cash withdrawals impossible.

Numbers

As of today, since the beginning of Operation Rising Lion:

- Over 400 **Iranian rockets shot** at Israel.
- Hundreds of attack **UAVs launched** by the Islamic Republic
- Around 40 **impact sites.**
- 24 **Israelis killed** by missiles.
- 804 **people injured**: 8 in serious condition, 41 in moderate condition, 755 with light injuries
- 18,766 **damage claims** have been received by the Israel Tax Authority, including:
 - 15,861 related to buildings.
 - 1,272 related to vehicles.
 - 1,633 related to other property.
- More than 3,800 people have been **evacuated from their homes.**

On the Ground: Jewish Federations and Partners

- Israel's Tourism Ministry estimates that about **40,000 tourists are stranded in Israel** after the country's airspace was closed until further notice. The Ministry says it has launched a 24/7 virtual office offering information services to tourists in Israel via digital channels, available in both Hebrew and English. "We are also trying to help tourists, presenting them with currently available options for foreign passport holders to leave Israel via land border crossings via Jordan and Egypt, which have remained open," a Tourism Ministry spokesperson says.
- **For tourists trying to leave Israel** The Ministry of Tourism is gathering contact information for tourists wishing to leave the country by air and coordinating their departure from Israel as quickly as possible with the responsible authorities.
 - To this end, [an online form](#) was produced for tourists to fill out. The information provided will be transferred to the official authorities

- responsible for coordinating the rescue flights.
- The Ministry of Tourism does not have information regarding the dates and destinations of the flights at this stage.
- The Ministry of Tourism has opened a virtual office that provides information services in Hebrew and English through digital channels to tourists in Israel.
- The service is available 24/7 through the following digital channels:
 - Email: virtual@goisrael.gov.il
 - WhatsApp (messaging app via phone number: +972-53-583-5808)
 - Facebook page: Israel Virtual Tourist Office
- The **Israel Trauma Coalition (ITC)**, a Federation partner, continues to respond to the widening emotional toll of the war. ITC has fully activated its emergency response system, deploying trauma professionals to provide immediate psychosocial care and emotional first aid, particularly to those evacuated from homes that were deemed uninhabitable following direct missile strikes. See a full report on ITC activities [here](#).
- Join the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) for an **emergency briefing** to hear how the organization is reaching those in greatest danger. Join today, **Wednesday, June 18, at noon ET**. Register [here](#).
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As Reported Earlier:

- Jewish Federations are also working closely with the **National Emergency Management Authority** (known by the Hebrew acronym RAHEL) to assess needs on the ground.
- **Dozens of Federation-supported organizations** are already providing extensive support to the population, including significant mental health help.
- **Israel's National Security Council** has alerted overseas Jewish communities and embassy staff to elevated risk levels, citing the potential for Iranian-sponsored terror.
- **All missions and Federation personnel** currently in Israel are safe.

For more information, please contact: Jewish Federations of North America's Dani Wassner dani.wassner@jewishfederations.org. Subscribe to this weekly update [here](#).

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