

Ynet-News, December 06, 2024 – Friday 9th Month

12.06.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday

2 in Golan, arrested spying for Iran, providing exact locations for Hezbollah missiles

12.06.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday

IDF eliminate 2 Hamas commanders & tanks surround Hospital in north Gaza.

12.06.24 – Fr- - - News Placed in December 06 spot – Friday

Syria rebels gain ground, enabling Israel to halt Iran arms pipeline to Hezbollah

12.05.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Cyprus acquires Israeli air defense to enable a no-fly zone from Turkey occupation

12.05.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday

US reject one sided Amnesty International report accusing Israel of genocide

12.05.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday

IDF ground forces reflect on a year of combat and prepare for the next war

12.05.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Submitted Civilian report on October 7 is foundation for a Knesset committee

12.05.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Bloomberg-Sagol Center donates \$27.8 million to reconstruct north Israel damage

12.05.24 – Th- - - News Placed in December 05 spot – Thursday

Egypt Gaza proposal: IDF exit Rafah 60-days; 1st week exchange all hostage-prisoners

12.04.24 – We- - - News Placed in December 04 spot – Wednesday

Haredi MK's & Rabbis inform all yeshiva students to refuse IDF draft summons

12.04.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Hamas instructs operatives to neutralize hostages if Israel launches rescue attempt

12.04.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

MK warns Court of civil war if PM removed from office during corruption trial

12.04.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

IDF return to Jordan the bodies of terrorists after border attack on troops

12.04.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Anti- groups blacklist IDF soldiers posting self-videos in Gaza, to issue warrants

12.04.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Settlers burn Palestinian property after illegal WB structures demolished

12.04.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Israel-Philippines relations flourish with arms deals and tourism pact

12.03.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

IDF eliminates terrorists in Syria, West Bank, Gaza & Lebanon with zero tolerance

12.03.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Another week or another month, Jabaliya will fall, encircled by IDF soldiers

12.03.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

US plan for post-war Gaza, similar to Lebanon deal, with US & Abbas management

12.03.24 – Tu- - - News Placed in December 03 spot – Tuesday

IDF expanding buffer zones & corridors throughout Gaza, taking strategic areas

12.02.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

IAF launches wave of strikes on Lebanon to defend Israel

12.02.24 – Mo- - - News Placed in December 02 spot – Monday

Trump warns Hamas: Release hostages or be hit harder than anybody in US history

12.02.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

IDF prepares strikes, ready to execute at any moment in response to contract violations

12.02.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Lebanon fires mortars; IDF nighttime raid captured an Iranian spy in Syria

12.02.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Shin Bet uncovers Iran cyber phishing campaign, targeting Israeli officials

12.02.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Cautious Israeli optimism from Hamas behind the scenes negotiations

12.02.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Hundreds gathered in New York to urge Biden, Trump to bring hostages home

12.01.24 – Su- - - News – Sunday New Moon 12:22am

IDF force Iranian plane carrying weapons to return eastward

12.01.24 – Su- - - News – Sunday New Moon 12:22am

Despite cease-fire, Houthi rockets keep threatening Israel, exposes unclear strategy

12.01.24 – Su- - - News Placed in December 01 spot – Sunday New Moon 12:22am

Ben-Gvir seeks repeal 2005 transfer of Gaza to PA rule; to allow Israel settlers

12.01.24 – Su - - News – Sunday New Moon 12:22am
 Hamas seeks Egypt border for return of displaced Gazans, as part of deal
 Kislev 9th Month

11.30.24 – Sa- - - News – Saturday
 Hezbollah facility & armed operatives struck by IDF to enforce cease-fire

11.30.24 – Sa- - - News Placed in November 30 spot – Saturday
 IDF down drones from east & west & uncover Lebanon weapons cache in mosque

12.08.24 – Su
 Northern Gaza sees fewer clashes as IDF tightens grip on Jabaliya

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 Northern Gaza sees fewer clashes as IDF tightens grip on Jabaliya
 Hamas resistance in Jabaliya weakens as IDF's 162nd Division nears end of two-month operation, including raids targeting terrorists and tunnels, with 60 terrorists eliminated over weekend; fate of 70,000 displaced Gazans remains uncertain as destruction mounts
 Yoav Zitun|11:46

Resistance of Hamas terrorists against Israel's 162nd Division during its extended raid in northern Gaza is steadily crumbling. Over the past week, the number of clashes and firefights has hit its lowest point since the IDF entered Jabaliya two months ago.

This operation, spearheaded by three brigade combat teams—401st Armored Brigade, Givati Brigade and Kfir Brigade—is now closer to its conclusion than its beginning. Yet, one critical question remains: will the IDF allow tens of thousands of displaced Gaza residents, evacuated from areas like Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia, to return to their destroyed homes?

So far, even in neighborhoods where operations have concluded, the army has refrained from permitting any civilians to return. If a decision to allow them back is made, international accusations of "ethnic cleansing" could arise, though similar situations have already occurred in other areas, such as the expanded Philadelphi Corridor near Rafah and the widened Netzarim buffer zone.

These areas not only divide northern and southern Gaza but have also rendered the homes of thousands of Palestinians unrecognizable. From southern neighborhoods of Gaza City to central towns like Bureij and Nuseirat, homes haven't just been reduced to rubble—they've been completely obliterated, leaving vast expanses flattened by Israeli forces.

The next major test in Jabaliya will center around the "small buffer corridor" established by Israel specifically for this raid. This corridor, permanently manned by IDF troops, begins at a large forward logistics base near the coast, close to the village of Al-Atatra. This base was recently reestablished after being used for the same purpose during a maneuver last year.

From there, the corridor stretches east to the Israel-Gaza border, running between Kibbutz Erez and the Black Arrow Monument, cutting through the northern third of the Gaza Strip. Should the IDF maintain its presence there in the coming month, much like it did in the expanded Netzarim buffer zone earlier this year, and possibly even widen it for "operational needs and troop security," it is likely that 70,000 Gaza residents will remain displaced indefinitely.

This would mirror the situation of approximately one million residents of Gaza City and its surrounding areas, who have been unable to return to their homes since the war began, now living in southern Gaza's humanitarian zones.

On the battlefield, IDF is steadily dismantling the last pockets of Hamas resistance in Jabaliya, particularly in the city's adjacent refugee camp. Increasingly effective operations are being conducted with smaller numbers of troops. For instance, over the weekend, a joint force from the 9th Armored Battalion and the Givati Reconnaissance Unit launched a surprise raid on a terrorist hideout within the refugee camp. According to the 162nd Division, approximately 60 Hamas terrorists were eliminated in this operation through coordinated airstrikes and direct ground fire, all within a few hours.

"We're conducting surprise raids that deliver swift results, systematically dismantling the enemy while leveraging the extensive operational experience of our commanders at all levels," IDF said. Even as the Jabaliya raid nears its conclusion, operations maintain their rigorous structure: soldiers involved in the raid are rotated out regularly for rest, including time at home, with entire battalions replaced one at a time.

Meanwhile, forces from the Gaza Division's Northern Brigade (143rd), including its engineering and elite Yahalom units, have recently completed a focused operation targeting terrorist infrastructure and underground networks in Jabaliya.

"During the operation, dozens of booby-trapped shafts and a significant number of explosives were destroyed in the area. Forces uncovered and demolished an extensive underground tunnel network stretching hundreds of meters, which Hamas terrorists used to launch attacks against our troops," the IDF said in a statement.

"Inside the tunnels, we uncovered blast-resistant doors, living quarters and RPG launchers used for terror activities. During the operation, forces encountered terrorists emerging from the tunnels to fire anti-tank missiles. Using coordinated ground and air strikes, the forces successfully eliminated the attackers."

12.08.24 – Su

Israel captures Syrian peak of Mount Hermon, to bolster control of border area

12.08.24 – Su

Israel captures Syrian Hermon; Netanyahu: 'This is a historic day'

IDF forces seize control of Jabal al-Sheikh outpost on Syrian side of Mount Hermon following withdrawal of Assad army forces; PM: 'The Assad regime has fallen as a direct result of the blows we delivered to Iran and Hezbollah'

Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun|08:40

Israeli Air Force commandos captured the highest peak of Mount Hermon on the Syrian side, sources told Ynet on Sunday.

According to reports, fighters from the elite Shaldag Unit secured the strategic summit as part of an operation to bolster the Israeli military's control in the area. The peak offers a commanding view and firing range over other ridges of Mount Hermon, making it a critical asset for observation and defense.

Earlier, Saudi outlet Al Hadath reported that Israeli forces have seized control of the Jabal al-Sheikh outpost on Mount Hermon in Syria.

The report also claimed that Israeli forces have taken over sites in the demilitarized zone along the 1974 disengagement line between Israel and Syria.

For the first time since the collapse of the Assad regime, Israeli Air Force jets launched a wave of strikes across Syria, targeting military installations, according to various reports. The attacks included strikes on the Al Mazzeh military airport in Damascus, the Halhala region in southern Syria—home to a major airport—and rural areas in Daraa and Sweida provinces.

The Voice of the Capital, a Syrian opposition-affiliated outlet, reported that Israel is conducting systematic attacks on military brigades and air defense systems formerly operated by the Assad regime. The site reported that “Israel is systematically destroying all brigades, battalions, missile depots, and weapons development facilities that could threaten its security.”

Foreign reports also indicated that Israeli strikes over the weekend targeted advanced weapons stockpiles, production facilities and a chemical weapons depot near Damascus. An unnamed Syrian opposition source claimed that additional targets are expected to be destroyed imminently.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the Mount Bental area in the Golan Heights near the border on Sunday morning. Accompanied by Defense Minister Israel Katz, Netanyahu received a briefing from Northern Command chief Maj. Gen. Ori Gordin.

“This is a historic day in the annals of the Middle East,” Netanyahu declared. “The Assad regime is a central link in Iran’s axis of evil, and this regime has fallen. This is a direct result of the blows we delivered to Iran and Hezbollah, the primary supporters of Assad's

regime. This has created a chain reaction throughout the Middle East among those seeking to free themselves from this oppressive and tyrannical regime.”

Netanyahu added that while the developments present significant opportunities for Israel, they are not without risks. “We are first and foremost acting to secure our borders. This area was defined for nearly 50 years as a buffer zone under the 1974 Disengagement Agreement, which has now collapsed. Syrian forces have abandoned their posts.”

He stated: “Together with the defense minister, and with full backing from the cabinet, I instructed the IDF yesterday to take control of the buffer zone and the nearby dominant positions. We will not allow any hostile force to establish a presence on our border. At the same time, we are pursuing a policy of good neighborliness, the same approach we maintained when we set up a field hospital here that treated thousands of Syrians injured during the civil war. Hundreds of Syrian children were born here in Israel.”

In response to the escalating conflict, the IDF announced Sunday that it had reinforced its presence in the demilitarized buffer zone near the Golan Heights to prevent potential incursions into Israeli territory. “The IDF is not intervening in the events in Syria but will act as necessary to protect the State of Israel and its citizens,” the army said in a statement.

The IDF also issued warnings to rebel forces occupying parts of the Syrian Golan Heights, urging them not to cross the Alpha Line into the demilitarized zone. Concurrently, the Northern Command has elevated its alert level and activated emergency measures to bolster Golan Heights defenses against potential threats from the east.

Defense Minister Katz, speaking from the Golan Heights, said: “The prime minister and I, with Cabinet approval, directed the IDF to take control of the buffer zone and strategic positions to ensure the safety of all Israeli communities in the Golan Heights—Jewish and Druze alike—so that they are not exposed to threats from across the border.”

Hezbollah withdraws from Syria amid rebel gains

Security sources in Lebanon reported that Hezbollah, a key ally of the ousted Assad regime, has withdrawn its forces from Syria. Syrian military sources told Reuters that Hezbollah troops evacuated from al-Qusayr, a strategic city in Homs province, shortly before it fell to rebel forces.

At least 150 armored vehicles carrying hundreds of Hezbollah fighters reportedly left al-Qusayr in stages. The city, which Hezbollah had controlled since 2013, served as a key route for the movement of weapons and fighters between Syria and Lebanon.

The developments highlight growing instability in southern Syria, with Israel appearing to intensify its efforts to neutralize security threats in the region as the conflict in Syria evolves.

12.08.24 – Su

Assad family 54 year-regime of terror has just ended as rebels take Damascus

12.08.24 – Su

This is the Assad family, whose 54 year-regime has just ended

Called to succeed his father after the designated heir, brother Basel is killed, Bashar al-Assad takes the leadership bringing hope of reforms but those end quickly as the young dictator continues the hard hand of his father

Lior Ben Ari, Yaron Drukman|02:46

For 54 years Syria was under the rule of the Assads after Hafēz al-Assad took power in 1970. After his death in 2000, he was succeeded by his son, Bashar, who was toppled early on Sunday as rebel forces entered Damascus at the end of their whirlwind assault and while the Syrian military laid down its arms without a fight.

Hafēz Assad was born October 6, 1930 in a remote village to a family from the Muslim Alawite sect. He was educated in boarding school in Latakia and led a modest life far away from his family.

He joined a military academy in Hama at the age of 19 and worked himself up the ranks until he became commander of the Syrian air force in 1965. A year later he was already the minister of defense, a position he held in the 1967 Six-Day War when Syria suffered a crushing defeat. Still he managed to rise to the leadership of the Ba'ath Party and stage a coup, becoming president of Syria with the support of the military.

In 1982, Hafēz Assad massacred tens of thousands of his people in Hama to prevent an uprising of the Muslim Brotherhood against him and ordered mass executions and torture of prisoners. That same year, and after the civil war in neighboring Lebanon, the Syrian ruler moved troops across the border to assist the Palestinian's fight against Israel and forced a government that had to agree to a constitutional change that gave Lebanese Muslims a greater role in governing.

Human rights groups have for years reported on mass arrests of political prisoners in Assad's Syria, jailed without trial. He held on to his power by violent force that included purges and assassination of his opponents.

Assad entered peace negotiations with Israel for the first time in 1991, soon after the first Gulf war. The talks continued during the governments of Izhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Benjamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak and included a possible Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. They finally ended after a disagreement over a few hundred meters along the Sea of Galilee during the Barak term.

The third son of Hafaz Assad, Bashar, who was born in 1965, became Syria's leader after his brother, Basel, who was designated to succeed his father, was killed in a car crash. Bashar, who had been trained as an ophthalmologist in the UK, was called to take his brother's place.

Bashar Assad began his preparation for leadership by first joining the Syrian Medical Corps as a captain in 1994. He was quickly promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and, after a short period of combat training, was assigned to head the elite Republican Guard Battalion, a position Basel held when he was killed, while his father purged middle level military officers who would pose any possible opposition to his son's rule.

Bashar was given more senior positions between 1998 and his father's death in 2000, primarily overseeing Syria's role in Lebanon and its negotiations with Israel.

When Hafez died, Bashar took power at the young age of 34, bringing with him the hope of Syrians for a more pro-Western regime under a Western educated leader who promised reforms. But those hopes quickly ended after Bashar began his own purge of possible opponents. A few months into his rule, he married Asma, who was from a Sunni family in Homs, but was raised in the UK. They couple have three children. Bashar was implicated in the murder of Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri in 2005 by members of Hezbollah. An international investigation five years later revealed the Syrian government's involvement in the assassination. After large protests in Lebanon, Syria was forced to remove its troops from Lebanese soil dealing the regime the first in a number of blows.

The uprising that began in Syria in 2011 and was fought for over a decade ultimately led to the end of the Assad rule. By some estimations, over 600,000 Syrians died in the civil war.

During the first years, Bashar Assad lost control of most of the Syrian territory, including to the hands of ISIS, that conquered vast areas in both Syria and Iraq. In 2015, with the active military involvement of Russia, he was able to regain control of most of the land that had been lost.

Over six million Syrians were displaced from their homes. Many became refugees who sought safety in Europe, leading to a crisis that has altered the political face of many of the continent's countries. It was the largest migration of refugees since World War II. Assad and his enemies were both accused of war crimes and the Syrian dictator was said to have used chemical weapons, numerous times against the forces fighting his regime and the civilians in the areas that they controlled.

His dictatorship was said to be on the brink of collapse in 2015 after over 40,000 members of his military had been killed and many had deserted but Bashar Assad survived thanks to his Russian and Iranian allies who joined the fight.

Syria held an election in 2021, where Assad received 95.1% of the vote. His term in office however did not last and on Sunday he was reported to have left Syria by plane to an unknown destination. The plane disappeared from the radar and his fate remains unknown.

12.08.24 – Su

IDF moves tanks, troops into enforce Golan Heights border from Syrian rebels

12.08.24 – Su

IDF moves tanks, troops into demilitarized zone on Golan Heights
Military says will protect against any violation of Israel sovereignty after warning Syrian rebels taking control of the area near the border, not to advance
Yoav Zitun, Yair Kraus, Lior Ben Ari | 23:41

The IDF on Sunday moved tanks and infantry troops into the demilitarized zone along the Israel-Syria border on the Golan Heights after the fall of the Assad regime, according to foreign media reports. The move is part of the military's emergency plan to prevent any incursion of Syrian rebel forces into Israeli territory.

On Saturday the military said it had reinforced its deployment along the border, including intelligence and reconnaissance units. Ground and aerial forces have been bolstered along the border, and sector readiness has been heightened. "The IDF is determined to prevent any violation of the sovereignty of the State of Israel," the military said in a statement.

Earlier on Sunday, the Israeli Air Force conducted a series of raids around the Syrian capital Damascus, targeting advanced weapons systems and warehouses before they fall into the hands of rebels who have taken control of the city. According to the reports, the air force bombed a chemical weapons storage facility.

The reports also claimed that the IDF relayed a message to the rebel forces who have taken control of the Syrian Golan, not to cross into the Alfa Line – the demilitarized zone between the two countries.

Foreign media reports overnight described an IDF strike on a convoy of Hezbollah fighters leaving the city of Al-Qusayr, in the governance of Homs, shortly before the area fell into rebel hands. At least 150 armored vehicles with hundreds of Hezbollah fighters were said to have left the city which served as a central hub for the transfer of weapons and operatives from Syria to Lebanon since 2013, when pro-Assad forces took control of the area.

Meanwhile the Golan regional council said that schools in the four Druze towns on the Golan Heights will only conduct distance learning on Sunday while in other communities, schools will be open.

12.08.24 – Su

Pentagon October leak, delayed Israeli strike on Iran, court documents confirm

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Pentagon leak delayed Israeli strike on Iran, court documents confirm

Prosecutors reveal leaked classified documents forced Israel to delay planned strike on Iran; despite evidence, suspect placed under house arrest; his motives remain unclear
Daniel Edelson, New York|Yesterday | 18:28

U.S. prosecutors argued in court that the leak of classified documents delayed a planned Israeli military operation against Iran. Troy Edwards, the lead prosecutor, said the disclosure prompted Israel to postpone a "kinetic action" out of concern that its plans had been compromised.

Despite presenting incriminating evidence against the alleged leaker, Asif William Rahman, 34, a federal judge ordered his release to home detention under electronic monitoring.

The Justice Department announced plans to appeal the decision, arguing that although Rahman no longer has access to classified materials, his memory of sensitive information could still pose a national security threat. Prosecutors stressed that "memory and perception" alone are sufficient for the unauthorized sharing of classified data, even through simple means like verbal communication.

Rahman, an Ohio native and Yale graduate, was arrested in Cambodia while allegedly attempting to delete classified files and enhance the security of his digital devices. He is accused of leaking two classified documents from secure systems. Officials have not disclosed his motives, which remain unclear.

The two classified documents were leaked in October during Israel's preparations for a strike on Iran, following a barrage of ballistic missiles launched by the Islamic Republic on October 1.

According to at least one foreign media report, denied at the time by Israel, the leak delayed Israel's response, which ultimately came three weeks later in an operation dubbed "Days of Atonement."

The documents, dated October 15 and 16, were classified as "Top Secret" and first surfaced on a pro-Iranian Telegram channel before spreading to X (formerly Twitter). They were produced by the U.S. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), which analyzes data and imagery collected by American spy satellites. Their security classification restricts sharing to the Five Eyes alliance, an intelligence-sharing partnership between the U.S., Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The documents, which do not include the satellite images referenced, detail Israeli preparations for an attack on Iran. They reportedly describe the Israeli Air Force conducting "a large-scale deployment drill" and an aerial refueling exercise. One document mentions the Air Force "engaging" with air-launched ballistic missiles, noting activity involving at least 16 missiles of a type referred to as "Golden Horizon" and at least 40 identified as either "ISO2" or "Rocks" since October 8.

In the wake of criticism in local media of Turkey's 'secret financial ties', Turkish president – who has spoken out harshly against Netanyahu since the beginning of the war – tells reporters that his country has severed relations with Israel; Turkish embassy in Tel Aviv is still operating and Jerusalem says not informed about cut in ties

12.07.24 – Sa

Israel assists UN repelling rebels from borders, as they topple the Syrian Assad regime

12.07.24 – Sa

Israel assists UN forces in repelling rebel attack in southern Syria

Armed assailants attack UN outpost near village of Hader in Quneitra province, close to Israel's Golan Heights; rebels reportedly enter Homs and approach gates of Damascus
Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun | 10:25

The IDF said Saturday it aided UN forces in repelling a rebel attack on a United Nations outpost near the Druze village of Hader in southern Syria's Quneitra province, close to the Golan Heights.

"A short while ago, an attack was carried out by armed individuals at a UN post in the Hader area in Syria," the military said in a statement. "The IDF is currently assisting the UN forces in repelling the attack.

"The IDF is deployed with reinforced forces in the Golan Heights area and will continue to operate in order to protect the State of Israel and its citizens."

The attacked UNDOF outpost, tasked with monitoring the 1974 Israel-Syria disengagement agreement, sits on a hill opposite Majdal Shams, just feet from the Israeli border. Israel's intervention was partly motivated by the proximity of the Druze community in Hader, closely tied to residents of Majdal Shams across the border.

Israel has a history of intervening in the area. Nearly a decade ago, the IDF acted to protect Hader against rebel advances, preventing Israeli Druze from taking independent action. Israel had previously assured Majdal Shams' leaders it would step in to safeguard their Syrian relatives if necessary.

The Golan Regional Council assured residents following gunfire heard in the area that "IDF forces stationed in the Golan are responsible for the activity," and emphasized that while there is "no immediate threat," the military has increased its presence. Meanwhile, the jihadist rebel group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), not currently operating near Israel's border, declared its responsibility to defend international institutions, including UN facilities, in Syria.

The IDF announced further troop reinforcements along the Golan Heights, involving infantry, armored and engineering battalions, to bolster defenses and prepare for possible escalation. Recent military exercises in northern Jordan Valley and southern Golan tested rapid response capabilities. Forces deployed during the drills have remained in the Golan to strengthen defenses.

"The IDF is closely monitoring developments, ready to respond to any scenario," a military spokesperson said on Friday, vowing to prevent threats near Israel's border and act against any danger to its citizens.

The development comes as rebel factions in Syria make rapid territorial gains in the south. Rebels announced the capture of Quneitra province near the Israeli border, as well as the southern provinces of Sweida and Daraa.

Earlier Saturday, opposition groups reported taking control of Sanamayn, a city 20 kilometers (12 miles) from Damascus, after entering the birthplace of the 2011 uprising, Daraa, last weekend.

The offensive, spearheaded by HTS and joined by other factions, began with surprise attacks on Assad regime forces in northern provinces, including Aleppo and Idlib. HTS leader Abu Mohammed al-Golani told CNN, "Our goal is to topple the regime by any means necessary."

Rebel forces have since seized key cities in central Syria. After capturing Aleppo, the country's second-largest city, they advanced southward, taking Hama and pushing into Homs, Syria's third-largest city and a crucial crossroads connecting many provinces. Pro-Assad forces have launched airstrikes and dispatched reinforcements to Homs, but analysts suggest the fall of the city could be a turning point threatening the regime's survival.

Meanwhile, opposition reports indicate that rebels are within a few miles of Damascus, with some claiming they are "at the gates of the capital." Pro-regime sources denied rebel forces were near the capital but confirmed withdrawals from surrounding towns. In the east, Kurdish rebels reportedly captured Deir ez-Zor and the Iraqi border crossing at Al-Bukamal. Local officials in Iraq said approximately 2,000 Syrian soldiers fled to Iraq seeking asylum, with some requiring medical attention.

In Damascus, rumors circulated about President Bashar al-Assad's departure amid rebel advances. His office dismissed such claims, stating he remains in the capital performing his duties. Nonetheless, reports suggest Egyptian and Jordanian officials have urged Assad to leave Syria and establish a government-in-exile. A Wall Street Journal report claims Assad's wife, Asma, and their children left for Russia last week.

In southern Syria, footage emerged of protesters in Jaramana, a predominantly Druze city 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Damascus, toppling a statue of Hafez al-Assad, Bashar's father. Demonstrators called for the regime's downfall, and security forces were deployed to protect government buildings.

The foreign ministers of Russia, Iran and Turkey met on Saturday to reaffirm the importance of Syria's territorial integrity and agreed to renew efforts toward a political resolution to the ongoing crisis. The meeting highlighted the complex alliances in the Syrian conflict: Turkey supports certain rebel factions, while Russia and Iran back the Assad regime.

Russian aircraft continue to conduct airstrikes against rebels across Syria, and pro-Iranian militias have entered the country following the recent surprise offensive.

A source close to Hezbollah revealed that the group, recovering from a year of fighting with Israel, has deployed 2,000 fighters to Syria to support Assad's forces in battles against the rebels.

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Saturday ruled out intervention in the Syrian conflict. "Syria is a mess, but is not our friend, & THE UNITED STATES SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. THIS IS NOT OUR FIGHT. LET IT PLAY OUT. DO NOT GET INVOLVED!" he wrote on his social media platform Truth Social, ahead of his January 20 inauguration. Currently, approximately 900 U.S. troops remain stationed in Syria.

12.07.24 – Sa

Hamas publishes propaganda video of Israeli hostage Matan Zangauker

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Hamas publishes propaganda video of Israeli hostage Matan Zangauker

Zangauker, held in Gaza for over 420 days, appears in a video—likely scripted by his captors—criticizing Netanyahu and voicing fears for his life

Einav Halabi, Yael Ciechanover, Dan Raban | 09:39

Hamas on Saturday released a video showing Israeli hostage Matan Zangauker, held captive in Gaza for over 420 days since being abducted during the terrorist group's October 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel.

In the footage, Zangauker, whose words may have been dictated by his captors, criticizes Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying, "I am very disappointed. I am now sure you don't understand your enemies or their intentions. This is your failure and that of your government since October 7."

He adds that he and fellow hostages fear for their lives following new directives reportedly conveyed by their captors. Expressing despair, he urged Israelis to protest outside Netanyahu's residence, saying, "We suffer every day. It's time you felt our suffering too."

Zangauker spoke directly to his mother, Einav, a prominent advocate for the hostages, saying, "I watch you, I hear about your actions, and I hope to sit with you again at the table, to eat, talk and drink together."

He described dire conditions in captivity, including lack of food, water and hygiene, living among rats and other animals. "The isolation is killing us, and the darkness is terrifying. It's not fair we pay for the government's mistakes."

Zangauker's partner, Ilana Gritzewsky, was also abducted but released in a hostage deal in November last year. His family authorized the release of the video but noted that statements made were likely dictated by Hamas.

A week earlier, Hamas released another video featuring Edan Alexander, an American-Israeli hostage, who appealed to U.S. President-elect Donald Trump to secure his release. Alexander criticized U.S. military aid to Israel, claiming, "The weapons Biden sends are killing us," and added, "I don't want to die like Hersh, another American friend," referring to former hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin, who was abducted during the October 7 massacre and later executed by his captors along with five other hostages.

Addressing his family, Alexander said, "Every day feels like eternity. Please stay strong; it's only a matter of time before this nightmare ends."

12.06.24 – Fr

2 in Golan, arrested spying for Iran, providing exact locations for Hezbollah missiles

12.06.24 – Fr

Father & Son from Golan, arrested for spying for Iran, Shin Bet says

The residents of the Druze village of Mas'ade operating under direction of an Iranian journalist in Damascus who is an operative of the IRGC Quds force Palestinian unit; 21 year old son provided photographs of military movements; Father under administrative detention

Israel Moskovitz|02:40

The Shin Bet said on Friday that it had arrested a father and son from the north last month, on suspicion of spying for Iran in the course of the war. According to the security service 21 Tahrir Safadi from the Druze village of Mas'ade on the Golan Heights on instructions from his father Bassem, gathered information for the Shiite axis in recent years.

The son was arrested and his father, who was arrested once in 2016 for supporting terrorism and inciting violence on social media, was being held under administrative detention on orders of Defense Minister Israel Katz.

He collected intelligence on military deployment and activity in the area that was given to Husam a-Salam Tawfik Zidan, a journalist in the Iranian Alalm network, who resides in Damascus and has been working for the Palestinian branch in the Quds force tasked with assisting Palestinian groups in instigating terror attacks against Israelis.

Father and son were directed by the journalist and carried out missions including photographic military movements, soldiers and equipment.

According to the security forces, Tahrir continued to work for his Iranian handler during the war and provided information about exact locations that Hezbollah launched missiles had landed. He was indicted on charges of espionage.

The investigation revealed once again how the Shiite axis led by Iran, has been working to advance terror attacks in Israel, enlisting Israeli citizens to spy on their behalf," the Shin Bet and Israel Police said in a joint statement.

"The security services and the police view any contact with the Iranian axis operatives with the utmost severity and consider their espionage as a danger to the state of Israel and its people. We will continue to act under our authority and the law and use any measures at our disposal to thwart these threats and bring those involved to justice."

12.06.24 – Fr

IDF eliminate 2 Hamas commanders & tanks surround Hospital in north Gaza.

12.06.24 – Fr

IDF eliminates Hamas commander behind October 7 massacre in Kibbutz Nahal Oz
Israeli fighter jets eliminate senior Hamas operatives, including Majdi Aqilan, deputy commander of the Shati Battalion, who led deadly raid on border community, resulting in killing and abduction of residents
Yoav Zitun|01:48

Israeli fighter jets eliminated key Hamas operatives this week, IDF military said Friday. Among those killed were Majdi Aqilan, deputy commander of the Hamas Shati Battalion, who was implicated in the Oct. 7 massacre at Kibbutz Nahal Oz, and Mamdouh Mehna, a senior figure in Hamas' tunneling operations, also involved in the kibbutz attack.

Additionally, Ahmad Suwaidan, a Hamas company commander linked to the kidnapping of Israeli civilians on Oct. 7, was killed in the strikes.

Kibbutz Nahal Oz was among the hardest-hit Gaza border communities during the Hamas-led assault on southern Israel.

The raid on the sleepy farming community and the adjacent military base resulted in the deaths of over 60 Israeli soldiers and 15 civilians. Additionally, several soldiers and eight civilians were abducted and taken into Gaza.

Meanwhile, Palestinian reports on Friday claimed that Israeli tanks surrounded Kamal Adwan Hospital in Jabaliya, northern Gaza. Witnesses allege that Israeli forces entered the hospital, evacuated patients and staff and detained several individuals. The IDF has not commented on the reports.

12.06.24 – Fr

Syria rebels gain ground, enabling Israel to halt Iran arms pipeline to Hezbollah

12.06.24 – Fr

As Syria rebels gain ground, Israel vows halt Iran's arms pipeline to Hezbollah
Defense officials pledge to prevent Tehran from arming regime, reinforcing troops or rebuilding Hezbollah's military capabilities; Israel reportedly strikes arms depots near Damascus amid fears of unconventional weapons falling into insurgent hands
Lior Ben Ari, Moran Azulay, Reuters, Yoav Zitun|14:41

Israeli defense officials vowed Thursday that Iran would not be allowed to arm the Syrian military or reinforce it with troops as Islamist rebels continue to make rapid gains throughout the country.

After launching a surprise offensive last week in Idlib province, the rebels have captured Aleppo and breached defenses in Hama, raising fears that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad may increasingly rely on Iran and its proxies for survival.

Officials warned that Israel would act to prevent Iran from reestablishing a foothold in Syria, which could offer Hezbollah a vital military lifeline after suffering heavy losses in its war against Israel. They also noted that they have observed a surge in Iranian efforts to rearm Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Concerns are growing globally over the potential for rebel forces to seize Syria's unconventional weapons stockpiles. According to Saudi outlet Al Hadath, Israel bombed weapons storage facilities north of Damascus overnight, reportedly targeting chemical weapons to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently cautioned Assad against collaborating with Iran and Hezbollah, warning he was "playing with fire." Following the rebel offensive, Netanyahu reiterated that Israel is closely monitoring developments and would act to protect its interests.

The Security Cabinet is meeting on Thursday to discuss the situation in Syria, among other matters, following an early morning security assessment by Defense Minister Israel Katz and IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi.

HTS forces enter Hama

Israeli officials noted Russia's reduced military presence in Syria due to its war in Ukraine, leaving Assad without the same level of support as during the Syrian civil war. Previously, Russia, alongside Iranian fighters and militias, played a pivotal role in stabilizing Assad's regime, enabling him to regain most of the country and confine insurgents to the northwestern Idlib province. In recent years, the fighting had slowed considerably.

The rebel offensive coincided with last week's Israel-Hezbollah cease-fire, exploiting the weakened Lebanese-based Iranian proxy and pro-Iran militias to advance. Assad's forces retreated, allowing Sunni jihadist fighters led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a former al-Qaeda affiliate, to seize Aleppo, Syria's second-largest city.

Despite Russian airstrikes, the rebels continued their advances. Damascus has not confirmed the fall of Hama, though Assad's troops have withdrawn, claiming to "redeploy on the outskirts to avoid urban warfare and protect civilians."

The loss of Hama would be a significant blow, potentially isolating the regime's coastal strongholds in Tartus and Latakia. Latakia, home to Assad's Alawite sect and a Russian naval base, is strategically and symbolically critical to the regime's survival.

Hama's location on the route between Aleppo and Damascus also opens the way for rebel forces to advance on Homs. The rebels announced their intent to move on the city, urging its population to rise against the government. "Your time has come," they declared on social media.

The Al Arabiya network reported airstrikes, likely by the Syrian air force, targeting a strategic bridge near Homs to slow the rebels' advance.

Meanwhile, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein will meet his Syrian and Iranian counterparts Friday to discuss the escalating situation in Syria, according to the Iraqi state news agency.

12.05.24 – Th

Cyprus acquires Israeli air defense to enable a no-fly zone from Turkey occupation

12.05.24 – Th

Cyprus acquires advanced Israeli air defense system in shift away from Russian tech
Island nation replaces outdated Russian air defenses with Israel's Barak MX system,
capable of intercepting drones and cruise missiles up to 150 km; local media calls
acquisition 'game-changer' amid threats from Turkey; Ankara yet to respond
Yoav Zitun, news agencies|13:34

Cyprus has purchased Israel's Barak MX air defense system, capable of intercepting threats up to 150 kilometers (95 miles) away, Cypriot media reported on Thursday. Initial deliveries of the system have reportedly arrived in recent days, with at least one battery deployed and operational.

The Barak MX, produced by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), is designed for land and sea use. It includes various interceptors capable of targeting aircraft, helicopters, drones, anti-ship missiles, cruise missiles and certain ballistic missiles within ranges of 2 to 150 kilometers. The Israeli Navy also uses the system under the name "Barak Magen."

Cypriot media described the system as one of the most advanced in the region, drawing comparisons to Israel's renowned Iron Dome. The Kathimerini newspaper called the system a "game-changer," stating it significantly enhances Cyprus' defensive capabilities and could enable the enforcement of a no-fly zone over its airspace if necessary. Discussions for the purchase reportedly began in 2021, reflecting growing defense cooperation between Israel and Cyprus. This cooperation includes joint air force drills, often held in Cypriot and Greek airspace due to their Russian-made air defense systems. The obsolescence of these Russian systems, including the Tor M1 currently in use by Cyprus, prompted the island nation to upgrade its air defense infrastructure.

A senior Cypriot official told Reuters that EU sanctions on Russia following the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 have caused a shortage of spare parts for Cyprus' Russian systems. "That is why Cyprus is turning to other countries of the European Union, as well as Israel. As part of that, efforts are underway to upgrade our anti-aircraft umbrella," the official said.

Initially, the Barak MX system will complement existing Russian systems but is expected to replace them in the long term. Greece, too, is reportedly in talks with Israel to acquire air defense systems, including David's Sling and SPYDER.

The acquisition comes against the backdrop of the island nation's decades-long tensions with Turkey. The island has been divided since 1974 when Turkey invaded the north following a Greece-backed coup. The northern part operates as the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognized only by Turkey, while the southern part is an EU member state and the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus.

Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides hinted at the Turkish threat when asked about the purchase. While not confirming the deal outright, he said, "What I can say is that we are doing everything necessary to strengthen Cyprus' deterrence capabilities—not only because we are a nation under occupation, but as an EU member state in a region of unique geopolitical importance."

The president's cautious remarks likely reflect sensitivity over relations with Turkey. In 1998, Greece-backed Cyprus faced sharp Turkish opposition after acquiring Russian S-300 missiles, forcing their relocation to Crete to avoid military escalation. For now, Cypriot media reports that Turkey has remained silent regarding the Israeli system's acquisition.

12.05.24 – Th

US reject one sided Amnesty International report accusing Israel of genocide

12.05.24 – Th

US rejects Amnesty International report accusing Israel of genocide

State Department dismisses genocide allegations as 'unfounded,' emphasizing that the best path to improving humanitarian conditions in Gaza is 'for the parties to work toward an agreement to stop the war'

Daniel Edelson, New York|13:09

U.S. State Department on Thursday dismissed claims raised in an Amnesty International report alleging that Israel is committing genocide in the Gaza Strip.

"We disagree with the conclusions of such a report," State Department spokesperson Vedant Patel told a press briefing. "We have said previously and continue to find the allegations of genocide are unfounded."

Patel acknowledged the importance of international organizations in monitoring the situation in Gaza but emphasized that the U.S. does not share Amnesty's interpretation. "That does not change the continued concern we have as it relates to the humanitarian situation in Gaza," he added. "The best thing that can happen, if we want to see improvement in the humanitarian conditions in Gaza... is for the parties to work toward an agreement to stop the war."

In its report, entitled "You Feel Like You Are Subhuman," the human rights group alleges that Israel's actions constitute a violation of the Genocide Convention, claiming intentional destruction of Gaza's Palestinian population.

The report accuses Israel of systematically treating Palestinians as subhuman, with deliberate acts of killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm and deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction in whole or in part. It highlights allegations of starvation, forced displacement, relentless bombings and prevention of humanitarian aid.

Amnesty's investigation claims Israel displaced 1.9 million people in Gaza over the past year, with some individuals uprooted up to 10 times. The report further alleges that 42,000 Gazans, including 13,300 children, have been killed, with 97,000 injured, in what it describes as an unprecedented scale of destruction in the 21st century.

The report claims Israeli bombardments "often wiped out entire multigenerational families" and made large swaths of Gaza "uninhabitable."

Amnesty accuses Israel of using "intentional starvation" to expose Gazans to "slow and calculated death," rejecting Israel's claims that Hamas uses civilians as human shields. The organization also contends that the destruction of Gaza's population, even under the guise of targeting Hamas, demonstrates genocidal intent.

The IDF rejected the findings of the report, which includes interviews with 212 witnesses and victims' families, alongside data from Palestinian authorities.

"The allegations presented in the report are entirely baseless and disregard the operational realities the IDF faces. Since Hamas's unprecedented attack on October 7, 2023, the IDF has been working to dismantle Hamas's terror infrastructure while adhering to its obligations under international law. The IDF takes every possible measure to minimize harm to civilians during its operations. These steps include evacuation warnings for civilians in combat zones and ensuring safe passage to designated areas," the military said in a statement.

"The IDF's efforts, led by the Civilian Harm Mitigation Unit, involve issuing early warnings, assisting civilians who heed these warnings in relocating, and ensuring their welfare after reaching safe areas. These efforts are substantial. Additionally, the IDF has been implementing lessons learned during the war to continuously improve existing processes. The accusations in the report of genocide and intentional harm are unfounded and ignore Hamas's violations of international law, including its use of civilians as human shields and deliberate targeting of Israeli civilians. The IDF remains committed to conducting its operations in accordance with international law."

The Israeli chapter of Amnesty has also expressed sharp disagreement with the international organization's conclusions, highlighting internal tensions.

In a separate note, Amnesty International called for the unconditional release of hostages held by Hamas and accountability for those responsible for the October 7 attacks. The organization said those events would be the focus of a forthcoming report.

12.05.24 – Th

IDF ground forces reflect on a year of combat and prepare for the next war

12.05.24 – Th

IDF ground forces reflect on a year of combat and prepare for the next war
Senior IDF officials plan for a multi-front war, focusing on more combat engineering battalions, stronger border defenses and drones to reduce Air Force reliance; tunnel threats, both new and re-excavated, remain key challenge

Yoav Zitun|11:23

The IDF Ground Forces Command on Thursday reviewed its operations in Gaza and northern Israel, preparing for continued combat against Hamas in the coming years, regardless of potential hostage deals.

The briefing highlighted challenges and lessons learned from the fighting in Gaza, which marked the military's first large-scale maneuver in 17 years.

Military officials acknowledged that in the two weeks following Hamas' October 7 attacks, there was significant internal opposition to the idea of a ground invasion. "For every supporter of the maneuver, there was an opponent," said an IDF source. "But those familiar with the ground forces were not surprised by the success of the soldiers and their capabilities."

The officials noted that initial operations were slower as forces adapted to the terrain and tactics. "We had to learn the area, the enemy and the pathways to what is now a defeated terrorist organization, stripped of its primary capabilities, including launching rockets," they said. The IDF emphasized that units, such as the 252nd Division, had not conducted maneuvers of this scale since the First Lebanon War.

The early stages of the Gaza campaign were marked by difficulties in locating and neutralizing terrorists hiding in buildings. "At first, we thought we'd simply seal tunnel shafts and move forward. Today, our forces are maneuvering within the tunnels," an official said.

However, the IDF and the Israeli government have yet to achieve the war's declared objectives: returning hostages held by Hamas and dismantling the terrorist group's military and governing capabilities. "The IDF is capable of dismantling Hamas militarily, but the army cannot establish an alternative government," a military official said.

The Ground Forces Command identified combat engineering battalions as a critical need after more than a year of prolonged warfare. A new regular battalion is already being established, and the elite Yahalom engineering unit, which has tripled in size since Operation Protective Edge in 2014, is set to expand further.

The military also awaits the arrival of 132 D9 bulldozers purchased from the United States. Their delivery has been delayed due to an informal arms embargo imposed by the

Throughout the months of fighting, the Ground Forces Command managed to add no fewer than 100 new engineering vehicles to its arsenal, sourced primarily from civilian companies and local purchases.

The command also plans to bolster its forces by establishing new territorial defense battalions as part of the military's lessons learned from the October 7 attacks, aimed at strengthening border security.

Additionally, the IDF intends to form a tactical air defense battalion to protect maneuvering forces from threats like drones and UAVs, operating within brigade-level frameworks without reliance on the Air Force.

“The Ground Forces must reduce dependence on the Air Force, allowing it to focus its resources on strikes and operations in third-ring countries like Iran and Yemen. This means bringing more firepower and equipment to soldiers on the ground,” IDF officials said.

The military also plans to upgrade two brigades, likely from the reserves, into armored brigades equipped with Namer APCs. “Some armored brigades were not prepared for war because that’s how we trained them,” officials admitted. “We’ve closed gaps, but there’s still a lot of work ahead.”

Despite challenges, the Ground Forces Command expressed satisfaction with the fighting spirit of the troops, particularly among reservists who continue to rise to the mission under significant strain.

“At the start of the war, we studied foreign armies where morale dropped after 33 days of fighting, requiring troops to be rotated out. That hasn’t happened here—in fact, the opposite is true,” officials noted.

The command also acknowledged gaps and weaknesses yet to be resolved: Partial network communication between command centers and field HQs; operational continuity failures on October 7, when Gaza Division command centers were disabled for hours; insufficient firepower for ground troops, forcing them to rely on aerial support; outdated operational mobility, relying on aging Hummers, converted trucks and a limited number of APCs deemed inadequate for the mission.

Officials admitted the pace of acquiring new equipment remains slow. However, there was a significant personnel development: the upcoming recruitment of the first female soldiers to the paratrooper mobility unit, part of the military’s effort to integrate more women into combat roles.

As part of their analysis of the war, senior IDF officials are already outlining the anticipated patterns of the next war. They foresee a multi-front “strategic spread” against Israel, featuring enhanced coordination between Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran. This would include increased use of ground-launched missiles that do not require direct line of sight, such as Hezbollah’s Iranian-manufactured Almas anti-tank missiles, as well as continued reliance on tunnels, which have proven highly effective, particularly in Gaza. New tunnels or re-excavated ones are expected to play a significant role.

“The IDF’s upcoming rearmament must focus on capabilities that allow for rapid victories in short wars on enemy territory, filling gaps currently evident in the Ground Forces,” officials said.

Since the war began, the Ground Forces have procured approximately 15,000 new drones for combat intelligence, 23,000 new M4 rifles, 10,000 night-vision devices for troops, 22,000 advanced sights for soldiers’ weapons, 30,000 tactical helmets, 150,000 ceramic armor plates, 4,000 new vests for armored corps troops and more—all without relying on donations.

The IDF on Thursday presented data highlighting the scale of its Ground Forces, the largest and most central branch of the military: 19,000 career soldiers, 4,500 civilian

employees, 230,000 reservists, 133,000 spare parts, over 10,000 armored vehicles (which covered over a million kilometers or 620,000 miles in the past year), 27 prepositioned equipment bases and 571 types of munitions.

During the months of fighting, the Ground Forces deployed 17 Eitan APCs, 27 new tanks, 500 perimeter cameras for armored vehicles, 28 Namer APCs, 2,000 precision mortar shells of the Iron Sting type, 15,000 shoulder launchers and more to combat units.

Additionally, the IDF announced a decision to relocate observation personnel to rear command centers rather than frontline outposts in both the Gaza Division and the Galilee Division. These command centers will be situated in the sector but at a safer distance, a change implemented as part of the lessons learned from October 7.

The Ground Forces have also developed a comprehensive plan to strengthen the role of observation personnel. Soon, they will be permanently equipped with weapons, such as the micro-Tavor rifles previously used by Golani and Nahal infantry troops, who have since transitioned to M4 rifles.

The shift to rear command centers will be implemented gradually over the coming years as part of a new multi-year plan set to launch in January.

Regarding ultra-Orthodox recruitment, the IDF expressed hope that its efforts—including ongoing dialogue with senior rabbis, draft orders sent to young ultra-Orthodox men and tailored outreach and adjustments—will yield results. The aim is to recruit members into the newly established ultra-Orthodox brigade.

“We are currently facing a manpower gap of 12,000 combat soldiers and a shortfall of 1,200 combat support troops,” officials noted. They stressed the importance of reinstating the three-year mandatory service term. Despite these challenges, they reported high motivation levels for combat service, with rates nearing 100% in various units during the last August recruitment cycle.

12.05.24 – Th

Submitted Civilian report on October 7 is foundation for a Knesset committee

12.05.24 – Th

What went wrong on October 7?

After the Civilian Commission's report, the state comptroller takes the lead—but will it bring answers?

Maayan Hoffman/The Media Line|08:43

For 14 months, Israel has grappled with the agonizing question: How did the events of October 7 unfold, and who is responsible for the failures that allowed the tragedy to occur?

These questions haunt victims, their families, and a nation desperate for answers—not just to assign blame but to heal, grow, and ensure that such a disaster never happens again.

As countless victims and their loved ones have voiced, understanding what went wrong is essential for closure and for strengthening the country's ability to prevent and respond to future threats.

"We have to conduct a proper investigation so that we know what to fix," said Eyal Eshel, father of Sgt. Roni Eshel, an observer soldier who was killed at the Nahal Oz base on October 7.

However, the government and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have been reluctant to launch a formal investigation. Such an inquiry would likely be led by a team established by the Knesset's State Control Committee. Instead, over the past several months, a civilian committee has carried out its own investigation and presented limited recommendations. The IDF has conducted isolated reviews of specific incidents in a few affected communities, but little progress has been made toward a comprehensive inquiry.

At the end of November, an agreement between the state comptroller and the IDF finally paved the way for a formal review to begin. This framework allows the investigation to proceed while enabling the IDF and its commanders to maintain focus on the ongoing war and internal learning processes. According to the Supreme Court's recent decision, core reviews of the events of October 7 are set to begin in the first quarter of 2025, taking into account the wartime circumstances.

Once completed, the reports from these investigations will be submitted to the State Control Committee, alongside findings from the Civilian Commission of Inquiry, which presented its report earlier this week. Together, these documents could provide the foundation for a broader trial led by an investigative committee appointed by the Knesset. Advocates hope this process will lead to meaningful reforms and accountability. Eshel, who was deeply involved in the work of the Civilian Commission, acknowledged the challenges ahead.

"It will be hard for the state comptroller to move forward, but [Israel's state comptroller and ombudsman] Matanyahu Englman and his team will break the glass ceiling. There is no other choice," he said.

While critics argue that the effort comes too late and may prove insufficient, insiders close to the process assured The Media Line that the results will likely shake the country and bring long-awaited answers to light.

"In any responsible, well-ordered organization, a complex activity will be followed by an in-depth investigation so that lessons can be learned from experience and conclusions can be drawn for professional, organizational conduct should the need for further activity arise in the future," stressed Prof. Asa Kasher, a professor emeritus of professional ethics and philosophy and a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University.

"The investigation should focus on the activity's most important aspects... However, to improve the organization and the outcome of its future activities, other aspects will have to come into play," he added.

Inside the state comptroller's investigation: A comprehensive approach

The Media Line received an exclusive briefing on how the state comptroller's investigation will be conducted. The process will involve approximately 200 people

working across various aspects of the audit, focusing on two primary areas: the events of October 7 and the government's management of the aftermath.

The first area of investigation centers on the day of the attack. The comptroller's office will scrutinize the roles of the country's politicians, the army, intelligence agencies, and others. Critical questions will be asked: What happened along Israel's southern border? Why was the IDF unprepared? Were there warning signs that such an attack could occur, and, if so, why were they ignored? Did security officials know about the Nova Festival, and why wasn't it better protected?

The investigation's second focus will be on Israel's management of the homefront after the attack. This includes how the government handled support for civilians—such as grants, economic assistance for small businesses forced to close, and the allocation of the war budget. It will also examine the evacuation and identification of the injured and deceased and the evacuation of residents from vulnerable areas in Israel's North and South. Additionally, the audit will delve into the mental health support provided to citizens, identifying gaps and areas for improvement.

Around 60 areas will be investigated, with half to two-thirds focusing on how the government has managed the civilian population in the 14 months since the attack. "No one will be spared," The Media Line was told, indicating that even top ministers and senior army officials will be held accountable. The comptroller's findings are expected to include the names of those deemed responsible and recommendations for action, ranging from resignations to potential criminal trials.

Although a few high-ranking military personnel have already stepped down, citing their failure to act effectively on October 7, some argue that such resignations lack substance. As Kasher told The Media Line, "Immediate resignation has only symbolic value and not even that when the commander admits his failure and overall responsibility for a failure he did not prevent. His resignation has value only if it comes after an investigation and a process leading to an improvement in the unit's activities. Merely replacing one commander with another does not guarantee improvement. There has to be a solid foundation for every step in the process, which also includes resignation and replacement."

The Office of the State Comptroller's authority is comparable to that of a parliamentary investigative committee, but the process differs slightly. A parliamentary committee would conduct public hearings, whereas the comptroller's work is carried out behind closed doors, ensuring confidentiality during the investigation. However, the final reports will be presented publicly.

The comptroller also holds unique legal powers, including the ability to subpoena individuals for interviews and access all necessary documents, even classified ones. This ensures a level of accuracy and thoroughness that surpasses the work of the Civilian Commission.

Civilian report highlights failures leading to October 7

The Civilian Commission's report was delivered this week to MK Mickey Levy, chairman of the State Control Committee. However, Eshel explained to The Media Line that the full report has not yet been shared with the public due to its sensitive information.

Portions that could be disclosed were presented during a public briefing in Tel Aviv last month.

The report, compiled over more than four months, is based on testimony from approximately 120 witnesses. According to a spokesperson interviewed by The Times of Israel, it aims to help victims' families understand what happened to their loved ones while pressuring the government to launch its own formal investigation.

"Imagine if after 9/11 there wasn't an investigation," the spokesperson told The Times of Israel. "I don't think anyone can even imagine this."

The commission placed significant blame for October 7 on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, accusing him of fostering a disconnect between Israel's political and military leadership. This division, the report asserts, left the country unprepared for the unprecedented attack. The commission also criticized the IDF and the Israel Security Agency, stating they had "completely failed to fulfill their sole objective — protecting the citizens of Israel."

The report revealed that Israeli leadership had been warned that relying on Qatari cash transfers to pacify Hamas could be a flawed strategy, yet the warnings went unheeded.

Alarming, the IDF had obtained what appeared to be Hamas's plans for the October 7 assault a year earlier but failed to prepare for the possibility of a large-scale invasion adequately, the report said. The commission also criticized the defense establishment for shifting its focus to a "small and smart army," overly reliant on technology to secure borders, at the expense of training soldiers and maintaining sufficient ground forces.

The report concluded by calling for sweeping reforms to decision-making processes at all levels of government. It recommended implementing more vigorous checks and balances and establishing a cohesive national security strategy. A bill requiring the government to develop such a strategy is progressing through the Knesset.

While the Civilian Commission's report represents an important first step, Kasher noted its limitations. The volunteers who compiled it—himself included, though he stepped down from the role some time ago—did not have the authority to compel testimony from individuals. Kasher emphasized that the state comptroller's investigation will likely prove more effective due to its broader powers. Ultimately, however, he believes a comprehensive and official state inquiry will still be necessary to fully address the failures and ensure accountability.

None of these reports will address the actions being scrutinized by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is investigating whether Israel harmed the Palestinian people during the past 14 months of war. To respond effectively to the ICC, Israel would need to confront similar questions.

However, the Office of the State Comptroller or any other body conducting these inquiries is not currently focused on addressing international allegations.

Israel has previously undertaken such investigations. In 2010, the government appointed an independent public commission of inquiry, led by former Supreme Court Justice Jacob Turkel, to examine whether Israel's naval blockade of Gaza and its actions during the

takeover of the Mavi Marmara—part of a Turkish flotilla bound for Gaza—complied with international law.

“A responsible investigation of war will, of necessity, shed light on many aspects of the overall picture,” Kasher observed.

The pressing question remains: Will the comptroller’s findings pave the way for a government-mandated investigation under a comprehensive state committee?

“In the end, it will happen,” Eshel said. “It is just a matter of time. If not, the country will be lost.”

The story is written by Maayan Hoffman and reprinted with permission from The Media Line.

12.05.24 – Th

Bloomberg-Sagol Center donates \$27.8 million to reconstruct north Israel damage

12.05.24 – Th

Michael Bloomberg donates \$27.8 million to reconstruction in northern Israel

The richest Jew in the world, through the Bloomberg Sagol Center, will oversee the program; Moshe Davidovich, head of the Meta Asher Regional Council: "Thanks to Bloomberg and other amazing donors who have opened their hearts and pockets, I am convinced that we will not only rehabilitate the North, but lead it to a prosperity that it has never seen"

Iris Lifshitz-Klieger|07:03

Billionaire Michael Bloomberg, whose fortune is estimated at \$102 billion dollars, according to Forbes, announced that he will donate 100 million shekels, about \$27.8 million, to the reconstruction of the areas in the north that were damaged by the war. Senior officials in local governments estimate that this is only an initial investment.

James Anderson, a senior official at the Bloomberg Foundation, wrote in a letter to the heads of the northern municipal authorities: "We ask to stand by you, the heads of the authorities in the north and the south, and help with the challenges of reconstruction and growth. It is clear to us that the challenges you are facing will require an overall strategic vision, with critical local needs, to bring a comprehensive regional development boom," he wrote. "In order to succeed in creating a common story together with the residents, a shared destiny is needed, not only in disaster, but also in growth and redevelopment."

Bloomberg will not give the money and forget about it, but plans to track what is being done with it. To this end, the philanthropy fund of the richest Jew in the world chose to lead the program the Bloomberg Sagol Center for City Leadership at Tel Aviv University, which Bloomberg established in 2022 with his Israeli partner Yossi Sagol, whose family's fortune was accumulated thanks to their activities in the business sector, including the Keter Plastik' company.

"The real war of the residents of the entire country and the residents of the north in particular, is the fight for its resurrection and not as a slogan of politicians. This war proved the strength of the citizens and Diaspora Jewry, in places where institutions have failed. Thanks to Michael Bloomberg and other amazing donors who have opened their hearts and pockets, I am convinced that we will not only rehabilitate the North, but lead it to a prosperity that it has never seen," said the head of the Meta Asher Regional Council regional council Moshe Davidovich on Thursday morning.

The plan for the restoration of the areas in the municipalities has already been put into action: the Bloomberg Sagol Center has recruited over 60 professionals who are experts in the fields of project management, some of whom will be physically placed among the 40 municipalities selected to participate in the program, and some of whom will be accompanied and trained by the professionals who work in the municipalities themselves.

In addition to the financial contribution, Bloomberg is centering the international knowledge and experience gained through the leadership program that they lead in the US by their international foundation, which three years ago opened its first branch outside the US, at Tel Aviv University. The branch operates in partnership with Harvard University.

The Bloomberg-Sagol Center annually trains 40 senior municipal officials from the 20 municipalities selected to participate in the program. Half of them are heads of municipalities and half are senior professionals in those municipalities. The program was established based on Bloomberg's worldview that through local government, the most significant impact can be made on the quality of life of residents, because this is the environment in which, in the end, each person consumes most of their services from state institutions on a daily basis.

12.05.24 – Th

Egypt Gaza proposal: IDF exit Rafah 60-days; 1st week exchange all hostage-prisoners

12.05.24 – Th

Egypt reveals new Gaza cease-fire proposal: Withdrawal from Rafah and 60-day trial period

Cairo proposes that IDF forces remain in Gaza during the first 60 days, while hostages are exchanged for terrorists; Rafah Crossing into Egypt will be under the control of the Palestinian Authority

Smadar Peri|01:32

Egypt proposes a new arrangement in Gaza following talks that were held at the Egyptian intelligence headquarters between Hamas and Palestinian Authority representatives. An Egyptian senior official has told Ynet and Yedioth Ahronoth that the new plan includes a gradual cessation of fighting in Gaza with the Israeli side withdrawing from the Rafah crossing, resulting in a preliminary 60-day cease-fire.

About a week after the temporary cease-fire comes into effect, according to the Egyptian senior official, living Israeli hostages will be returned in exchange for hundreds of terrorists from Israeli prisons. During the 60-day cease-fire, Israel will maintain a military presence in Gaza. The proposal also deals with the possibility of Palestinian refugees returning to the northern Strip, as Hamas demands.

The Rafah crossing is expected to be managed and supervised by the Palestinian Authority. In previous proposals, Israel demanded to supervise the crossing via cameras. In addition, according to the senior Egyptian source, Hamas and the PA will establish a management committee, which will include about 10-15 "independent Palestinian political technocrats." The committee will be supervised by U.S. representatives.

The Egyptian source emphasized that the first 60 days will be designated as a pilot for both sides and that, if the plan holds, it will be "the end of the conflict between the parties." As for practical feasibility, he claimed that "Hamas is demonstrating a positive attitude" and emphasized that the organization will agree to the establishment of a committee that will reactivate the crossings.

The goal is to reach an agreement before President-elect Donald Trump returns to the White House. However, Hamas has yet to respond to the proposal and has not declared a change in its stance. As far as is known, the terrorist organization is still insisting on an end to the war and a complete withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza Strip.

Trump wants a deal before the inauguration on January 20

Qatar is also returning to center stage while Egypt is mediating a deal. Trump's new envoy, Steve Witkoff, met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed al-Thani in an attempt to reach a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip and a hostage deal before the inauguration. Currently, there are still 100 hostages in Gaza, and many of them are considered to be alive.

A source involved in the talks told Reuters on Wednesday that Witkoff met Netanyahu and the Qatari prime minister at the end of November. The same source said that this shows that Qatar has in fact renewed its involvement as a key mediator, after announcing that it was ending its role last month. He said that the Hamas representatives are expected to return to Doha soon and organize another round of talks.

Witkoff met the Qatari prime minister on November 22 in Doha. "Both agreed that a cease-fire is needed before the inauguration and then we can move on to other issues, such as stabilizing Gaza and the region," the source said. A day later, Witkoff met with Netanyahu in Jerusalem. Trump's envoy also met with the hostages' family members. "He spoke with them about the efforts of Trump's team to reach a deal before the inauguration," the source said.

According to the report, on November 24, two days later, Prime Minister al-Thani flew to Vienna and secretly met with Mossad chief David Barnea, who has been leading the negotiating efforts with Qatar for the past 14 months. "There are plans for another round, but no dates have been set yet," he said. In an interview with the British network Sky News, the Qatari prime minister said that Trump wants to reach a deal before he takes office, expressing cautious optimism.

A senior Israeli official said earlier this week that if the terror organization agrees to a symbolic expulsion of Hamas leaders from Gaza, it might be possible to reach a deal that includes ending the war. The problem here is looks due to Netanyahu's inability to allow the image of Hamas returning to power.

But despite the cautious optimism in Israel, senior Hamas officials said that they are "waiting for a change in the Israeli position." Hamas is still standing by its demands: a cessation of fighting, the full withdrawal of the IDF from Gaza, a promise to rebuild the Strip and the introduction of intensive aid. On the other hand, Fatah officials who are discussing the "day after" with Hamas and Islamic Jihad said that there has been progress regarding Hamas's consent to the joint committee to manage the Gaza Strip.

12.04.24 – We

Haredi MK's & Rabbis inform all yeshiva students to refuse IDF draft summons

12.04.24 – We

Haredi lawmakers attend emergency meeting on avoiding IDF draft

Meeting held in Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox community spiritual leader Rabbi Dov Landau's home, where United Torah Judaism Knesset members sit in after decree calls on all yeshiva students to stay away from recruiting offices

Shilo Freid|Updated:10:07

Members of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party, part of the ruling government coalition, attended an emergency meeting on Tuesday at the home of Dov Landau, a prominent rabbi in Bnei Brak and spiritual leader of the Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox community, who directed all heads of religious schools and seminaries to ensure that their students do not respond to any IDF summons or draft order, and to avoid any contact with the IDF, except through yeshiva administrators.

A news publication affiliated with Landau published the announcement on Wednesday, accompanied by an image of Moshe Gafni, the chair of the Knesset Finance Committee, addressing the participants. "It's clear to all of us that yeshiva students will not enlist in any form," according to the article.

"The uncertain situation is causing concern and tension among yeshiva heads, their students and families whose sons have received draft orders. Unfortunately, the number of those receiving summonses is increasing," the article added.

"We all understand the severe state we're in," it also reported, "following the judicial authorities' removal of the yeshiva students' exemption status. For years, yeshiva students and kollel scholars were exempt from military service, but recently there have been attempts to change the long-standing arrangement."

The publication reported that there must be coordination and unity in the Haredi community and "under no circumstances should individuals take matters into their own hands."

The lawmakers are currently negotiating with other members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition on a new conscription law exempting from service as many yeshiva students as possible, and have generally refrained from addressing the matter publicly.

12.04.24 – We

Hamas instructs operatives to neutralize hostages if Israel launches rescue attempt

12.04.24 – We

Hamas threatens to 'neutralize' hostages if Israel launches rescue attempt

Internal Hamas document obtained by Reuters warns of planned Israeli hostage rescue operation in Gaza and instructs its operatives to kill hostages if such an attempt takes place without regard for repercussions

Reuters|08:52

Hamas said it had information that Israel intended to carry out a hostage rescue operation similar to one conducted in Gaza's Nuseirat camp in June and threatened to "neutralize", or kill, the captives if such an operation took place, according to an internal statement seen by Reuters on Wednesday.

In the internal document dated November 22, Hamas told its operatives not to consider any repercussions of following the instructions and said Israel was responsible for the fate of the hostages. It did not say when any Israeli operation was expected to take place.

Hostages Noa Argamani, Almog Meir Jan, Andrey Kozlov and Shlomi Ziv were rescued in a special operation by the security forces in early June. The four had been abducted from the Nova music festival on October 7, where they were working or spending time with their friends. They were rescued in a complex operation by the IDF, the Shin Bet and the Israel Police, which operated in the heart of Nuseirat in the center of the Gaza Strip. In the heroic operation Commander Arnon Zamora was killed; the operation was later renamed Operation Arnon.

About three months after the successful rescue operation, a serious incident occurred in the Gaza Strip, in which six hostages were murdered in a tunnel in Rafah by Hamas terrorists, who feared an IDF combat rescue operation. Hersh Goldberg-Polin, Ori Danino, Eden Yerushalmi, Alex Lobanov, Almog Sarusi and Carmel Gat were murdered in Gaza days after the IDF and Shin Bet successfully recovered the body of an Israeli soldier who was killed and kidnapped to Gaza during the October 7 attacks. The hostages were murdered a day before the IDF forces arrived at the tunnel, and were found with gunshot wounds and with severe conditions of neglect evident on their bodies.

12.04.24 – We

MK warns Court of civil war if PM removed from office during corruption trial

12.04.24 – We

Minister warns of armed civil war if Netanyahu removed from office during corruption trial

David Amsalem, Likud, tells Netanyahu friendly outlet people will take up arms; says 'we won't let it happen' we can do things so the public will act spontaneously, judges would be prevented from entering their chambers
ynet|05:49

Minister of Regional Cooperation David Amsalem of the ruling Likud Party and a close ally of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said violent civil war would break out if any steps were taken to remove Netanyahu from power for being unable to fulfil his duties, while on criminal trial for corruption. People will take up arms, he said in an interview to a Netanyahu friendly outlet.

"This won't happen. We won't let it happen," he said. I suppose we can make the judges stay clear of such a place and we can do other things so that the public will act spontaneously," Amsalem said.

"If the prime minister is removed because they decided to remove him, and by that, destroy democracy, they will not be able to enter their chambers. People will come and prevent them from entering. No problem. We can do this step by step."

Netanyahu had been cleared to fill the role of prime minister despite been criminally indicted after he assured the court that he would be able to fulfil his role and defend himself during his trial.

Attorney General Gali Baharv-Miara told the Supreme Court earlier that there was no reason to remove the prime minister at this time. The AG had been under attack by members of Netanyahu's government and his coalition in the Knesset who have been attempting to fire her and replace her with a more supportive AG after she blocked legislation efforts including during the attempts to change the judicial system and the balance of power between the executive branch and the courts.

Netanyahu also rejected the requests to the Supreme Court for his removal and claimed the judges would be dragged into a political matter and would be subverting the democratic will of the people.

The prime minister had made repeated attempts to postpone testifying before the Jerusalem District Court in his defense during his corruption trial and after he was granted a two-month delay, his final request for further postponement was rejected.

On Wednesday, Netanyahu's defense council again appealed to the court requesting that the prime minister only testify two days a week and for no longer than five hours, and not the three days ordered by the judges. Defense council also asked that the testimony not be schedule on consecutive days and said that Netanyahu was busy with running the country and would be unable to make himself available.

12.04.24 – We

IDF return to Jordan the bodies of terrorists after border attack on troops

12.04.24 – We

IDF hands Jordan the bodies of terrorists after attack on troops

Bodies of two terrorists who infiltrated from Jordan opening fire on forces were delivered to Jordanian authorities under orders of the government

Yoav Zitun, Lior Ben Ari | 03:31

Israel on Wednesday handed over to Jordan the bodies of two terrorists who infiltrated across the border earlier this year and launched an attack on IDF forces. The IDF confirmed the overnight return of the bodies of Amer Qawas and Hassam Abu Ghazala to Amman.

Jordan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs also confirmed receiving the bodies, and said they were handed over to their families for burial. The military spokesperson said the return of the dead terrorists was upon instructions from the government.

The attack left an IDF soldier and a reservist with light to moderate injuries. The terrorists, dressed in military uniforms, infiltrated the area in the Arava Desert. They were shot dead by a reservist soldier and a female reservist who were dispatched to the scene.

IDF soldiers observed the terrorists crossing the border from Jordan. According to the military, the two terrorists were stopped "just yards from the border fence."

The force engaged the suspects along the "smuggling route" near the border, about three yards into Israeli territory, after the terrorists opened fire with Glock pistols. One of the attackers ran out of ammunition during the exchange.

The terrorists were equipped with a wire cutter, which they used to breach the single barbed-wire fence at the border. They also carried binoculars, a map, and an Arabic-Hebrew phrasebook. After they were killed, the IDF coordinated with their Jordanian counterparts. An investigation carried out soon after the incident, revealed that they were not members of the Jordanian military, despite wearing military uniforms.

The attack came after a deadly shooting attack at the King Hussein border crossing where a Jordanian citizen drove a truck across the border and opened fire on staff, killing three men.

Israeli security officials have warned that the long border with Jordan has been neglected for years and was now the source of arms smuggled by Iranian operatives for use by terrorists on the West Bank.

12.04.24 – We

Anti- groups blacklist IDF soldiers posting self-videos in Gaza, to issue warrants

12.04.24 – We

The Hague effect: IDF combat soldiers at risk of arrests abroad
Israel prepares legal response to footage posted online by officers, soldiers operating in Gaza, exposing them to danger when overseas; at least 8 had to leave countries immediately after Pro-Palestinian organizations draw black lists
Yoav Zitun|02:23

The IDF estimates that the decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague to issue arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defense minister Yoav Gallant could add to arrests and other legal actions worldwide against senior military officers, as well as mandatory service and reserve soldiers who fought in the Gaza Strip. Some soldiers have already been required to leave countries they visited due to concerns about legal proceedings.

The IDF has identified about 30 cases of criminal proceedings initiated against its members. At least eight soldiers, including some who had traveled to Cyprus, Slovenia and the Netherlands, were forced to leave immediately.

While the IDF has not imposed a blanket travel ban for personnel, even during the ongoing war, it is implementing a “risk assessment” process for soldiers seeking to travel abroad. The assessment focuses particularly on combat soldiers and commanders who operated in Gaza.

This policy follows the issuance of unprecedented arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant, placing them alongside figures like Russian President Vladimir Putin and former Serbian president Slobodan Milošević, who have been accused of war crimes.

Despite strict prohibitions against posting footage of operations in Gaza, many combat soldiers—both active and in reserves—have shared such content online. This has provided anti-Israel organizations with material to compile "black lists" of IDF soldiers. Dozens of pro-Palestinian groups, primarily operating out of Europe but with a global network of representatives, collect this information to target IDF personnel.

These organizations publish the names and photos of IDF combat soldiers online and monitor their social media posts, hoping to identify future travel plans. When they do, they file complaints with local prosecutors or submit personal petitions to courts in those countries to initiate investigations or delay the soldiers' departures.

As a result, soldiers planning vacations abroad are advised to avoid posting their locations publicly, minimizing the risk of becoming targets for anti-Israel activists and potential legal or security complications.

The Military Prosecutor's Office believes that prosecutors in The Hague are unlikely to pursue cases against soldiers or junior commanders, as they were acting on battlefield orders. Israel retains the right to investigate and prosecute its military personnel if necessary.

However, concerns remain that the ICC may target senior officers who commanded operations, such as division commanders, the Air Force commander or the chief of staff. While no arrest warrants have been issued against these figures so far, the potential for such actions is considered a significant threat.

"Individual proceedings against soldiers and junior officers traveling abroad could be based on ICC rulings," the IDF said. "To any soldier or officer, if they are arrested, summoned for questioning or feel they are being followed or photographed while abroad, Israel will provide immediate legal assistance through its local embassy or the Foreign Ministry's situation room."

Israel has hired local legal experts in dozens of countries to monitor changes in legislation and case law related to Israeli officials and military personnel. These lawyers track legal activity against Israelis and, if needed, represent soldiers and officers in those countries.

Representatives from Mossad and Shin Bet also participate in an inter-ministerial team that issues periodic assessments on the risk of arrest or interrogation for IDF service members who operated in Gaza. For instance, in South Africa, an IDF soldier holding South African citizenship would likely be detained for questioning.

"In non-ICC member countries such as the U.S., China or India, there is local legislation governing the law of war," the IDF noted. "These nations are not obligated to act on ICC arrest warrants, but local laws could still pose risks."

A report published in The Washington Post on Tuesday included at least 11 pieces of video evidence filmed by IDF soldiers during operations in Gaza over the past year. The footage shows explosions, building demolitions, mass evacuations, fires across the enclave and the detention of partially clothed Gazan residents. It also includes soldiers' statements describing their missions as "occupy, expel and settle" in Gaza.

The soldiers who appear in the footage were not anonymized, as the videos were posted online by the soldiers themselves. This not only damages Israel's international image but also places the soldiers at personal risk worldwide.

"Legal experts who reviewed the footage noted that many serious cases involve soldiers effectively admitting to and documenting potential violations of international humanitarian law," the IDF said.

12.04.24 – We

Settlers burn Palestinian property after illegal WB structures demolished

12.04.24 – We

Settlers burn Palestinian property after illegal structures demolished

Fires set to homes, cars and shop in Huwara and Beit Furik after Civil Administration tears down buildings illegally constructed on private Palestinian land; clashes erupt

during demolitions, leaving several security forces injured; Katz scraps administrative detention of settler convicted of violent crimes

Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi | 00:51

Settlers set fire to property in the West Bank towns of Huwara and Beit Furik early Wednesday after Israeli authorities demolished illegal structures built on private Palestinian land near Nablus, according to Palestinian reports.

A store, several cars, a partially constructed home in Beit Furik and multiple buildings and vehicles in Huwara were burned, causing extensive damage but no reported injuries.

The Israeli Civil Administration said the demolitions followed repeated criminal acts originating from the illegal outpost and were carried out in accordance with a decision by defense forces to prevent further violence.

A statement from the administration cited concerns that such activities could escalate tensions in the area. Officials noted settlers were notified in advance of the demolition, which included a religious seminary, as a gesture of respect for their religious practices.

Analysis indicates that the events highlight ongoing challenges faced by Israeli security forces in enforcing the law against nationalist crimes by settlers. Observers report that even when suspects are apprehended, 90% are not prosecuted. Violent settlers reportedly use various tactics to evade detection, including destroying surveillance equipment, masking their identities and refusing to cooperate with investigations.

Settlers set fire to Palestinian property in Beit Furik

The failure to address such crimes has drawn criticism domestically and internationally, with nations like the U.S. and Britain imposing sanctions on settlers and related organizations for involvement in attacks against Palestinians. Experts warn that settler violence destabilizes the West Bank, exacerbates tensions, and burdens security forces already stretched thin.

Meanwhile, Defense Minister Israel Katz revealed Wednesday that he had reduced the administrative detention of a settler convicted of violent crimes, releasing him from custody early.

12.04.24 – We

Israel-Philippines relations flourish with arms deals and tourism pact

12.04.24 – We

Israel-Philippines relations flourish with arms deals and tourism pact
Israel Shipyards delivers Shaldag-class patrol boat to Philippine Navy, marking significant step in growing ties between the two nations

Itamar Eichner | Yesterday | 23:30

The relationship between Israel and the Philippines has been warming across various fronts, and on Tuesday, a Shaldag 5-class patrol boat was delivered from Israel Shipyards to the Philippine Navy.

This is a further step in an agreement signed between the shipyard and the Philippine government in 2020.

The Shaldag, considered one of the fastest and most advanced patrol boats of its kind in the world, was delivered to the Philippine fleet fully equipped with all operational systems.

Capable of speeds exceeding 40 knots (approximately 75 km/h), the boat has a range of up to 1,000 nautical miles. Its design allows it to navigate both deep and shallow waters, enabling it to approach almost any shoreline. The boat is powered by two powerful engines and a waterjet propulsion system that provides exceptional maneuverability.

Alongside the agreement between Israel Shipyards and the Philippine government, Israeli defense firm Rafael signed a deal to supply weapons, control and communication systems that will be installed on the boat. These include a 30mm Typhoon gun, a 0.5mm gun and short-range missile systems.

The boat can remain at sea for up to six days and accommodate a crew of up to 14 soldiers and commanders, offering improved living conditions with a fully equipped kitchen, comfortable crew rooms, personal rooms for the commander and his deputy and a briefing and rest area.

As part of the deal, Israel Shipyards is also refurbishing and upgrading the Philippine Navy's shipyard. Additionally, a large group of Philippine Navy technicians has been trained at the company's Haifa shipyard, enabling them to maintain the Shaldag boats delivered to the customer. This knowledge transfer process has been highly valued by the Philippine Navy's leadership.

The project is expected to be completed by June 2025 with the delivery of the last boat to the Philippine Navy.

Meanwhile, Tourism Minister Haim Katz, currently visiting Manila, signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen cooperation between the two countries in international organizations, with a focus on marketing, aviation, innovation and digitalization.

During his visit, Katz is expected to address the annual conference of the Philippine Association of Travel Agents and meet with journalists, opinion leaders, church leaders and the president of Philippine Airlines. He will also participate in an Israeli wine-tasting event in collaboration with Israeli wineries.

"Upon taking office, I noticed an increased flow from the Philippines, which has remained stable even during the war," Katz noted. "The Philippines is a key country in Asia, and its people see Israel as a must-visit destination. We intend to make special efforts to further develop and strengthen tourism ties between our countries."

Philippine Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco added, “The Philippines and Israel share a tradition of warm relations, common heritage and faith, highlighted through cultural and tourism exchanges. We will focus on knowledge exchange in sustainable tourism and accessible tourism.”

The Philippines ranks fifth for tourist arrivals in 2024 to Israel, with around 40,000 citizens visiting Israel, primarily for religious reasons. The Israeli Tourism Ministry, through its local office in Manila, has conducted diverse marketing activities, including roadshows, seminars for agents and collaborations with influencers and media outlets. The Christian Jubilee Year in 2025 is seen as a unique opportunity to attract Christian tourists to Israel. This event will be central to tourism activities in the Philippines next year.

Israel and the Philippines have had a tourism agreement since 1987. The memorandum of understanding forms the basis for a new pact that will soon be signed, expanding the areas of cooperation.

Warming relations post-October 7

After October 7, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos expressed support for Israel, calling for the release of hostages, condemning terrorism and reaffirming the deep friendship between the two nations.

Although the Philippines is part of the Non-Aligned group of nations and usually votes against Israel at the UN, after October 7, it voted at least once in favor of Israel, which drew criticism from other member states of the bloc.

In Israel, there are 28,000 Filipino workers, most of whom work in healthcare, with some in the hospitality sector. Despite the war, most have remained in Israel. “They are loyal, feel safe and are treated well by their employers. They feel at home and part of a family here. We hear this all the time,” said Israeli Ambassador to the Philippines Ilan Plots. “The Philippine government greatly appreciates the treatment and conditions of Filipino workers in Israel.”

In the past year, Israel has sent four economic and business delegations to the Philippines in areas such as agriculture, water, cybersecurity and emergency preparedness. Last week, the Israeli Embassy in Manila held a week-long event to promote Israeli innovation and technology, encouraging investments in Israeli startups.

“There are many opportunities here. The Philippine economy is experiencing significant growth, and the middle and upper classes are expanding. The whole world is increasing its marketing efforts, and Israel is also doing the same,” added Ambassador Plots.

And if that’s not enough: The embassy in the Philippines inaugurated an interactive learning center named after Kibbutz Be’eri at a public school in San Juan. The opening ceremony, attended by San Juan Mayor Francis Zamora in Metro Manila, included songs and dances prepared by the children for the ambassador, as well as a reading of the story of “David and Goliath” in English and Filipino by the ambassador and the mayor. The children actively participated, asking the ambassador questions and learning about Israel. Mayor Zamora emphasized the strong connection between the two countries and expressed hope to visit Israel. Ambassador Plots highlighted the deep historical ties

between the two nations, dating back to 1938 when President Manuel Quezon saved 1,300 Jews from the Nazis by granting them work visas to the Philippines.

The name "Be'eri" reflects both the focus on the well ("Be'er" in Hebrew) of knowledge that the children will gain from the center and remembrance of one of the kibbutzim severely impacted by the October 7 massacre. This is the second of three projects where the embassy is contributing learning centers named after various towns and communities in Israel.

Last year, the Jerusalem Learning Center was inaugurated, and next week another center named after the southern Israeli town of Ofakim will be opened. Additionally, Israel has helped Philippine schools open informal English learning centers and provided aid to areas affected by natural disasters.

Currently, the embassy is working to convince Philippine Airlines to launch direct flights to Israel after the war, which could increase tourist exchanges between the two countries. In the past, the airline conditioned this on flying over Saudi Arabia, and it had received approval from the Saudis. However, the war has complicated those plans.

On average, 14,000 Israelis visit the Philippines annually, with that number on the rise. Despite the war, Filipino tourists rank fifth in arrivals to Israel. Last year, before the war, it was expected to be a record year for Filipino tourists visiting Israel.

12.03.24 – Tu

IDF eliminates terrorists in Syria, West Bank, Gaza & Lebanon with zero tolerance

12.03.24 – Tu

IDF operates, eliminates terrorists on four fronts

Israel's military targets Hezbollah operative in Syria, terror cell in the West Bank, continues operation in Gaza and enforces cease-fire with Lebanon 'with maximum force and zero tolerance'

Yoav Zitun, Einav Halabi, Lior Ben Ari, Elisha Ben Kimon|08:19

Amid American and French claims of Israeli violations of the cease-fire agreement in Lebanon, Defense Minister Israel Katz visited the northern border on Tuesday and warned that Israel stands ready to continue to operate there. "If the cease-fire collapses, Lebanon will no longer enjoy immunity," he said.

"We'll enforce the cease-fire agreement with maximum force and zero tolerance. We've separated Lebanon from Hezbollah until now but that will no longer be the case," Katz stressed.

Meanwhile, the IDF continued its multi-front operations, carrying out strikes in Syria, southern Lebanon, the Beqaa Valley and the Gaza Strip on Tuesday.

During his visit to the northern border, Katz received an operational overview of the area. "Our policy, alongside the IDF, is clear and unequivocal – we will act with full force to enforce every understanding of the cease-fire agreement," the defense minister said.

Addressing Monday's incident of Hezbollah firing on Mount Dov, Katz added: "That was the first test. We responded forcefully and we will continue to do so, not allowing Hezbollah to revert to its old methods."

The U.S. has exerted heavy pressure on Israel to moderate its response to the mortar fire, which followed Israeli strikes, urging restraint and avoiding disproportionate actions or attacks in Beirut. The White House has also called on Lebanon to refrain from retaliating against Israeli responses.

Katz sent a clear message to the Lebanese government. "They need to authorize the Lebanese Army to enforce their side of the agreement, push Hezbollah north of the Litani River and dismantle all terror infrastructure," he said.

"Every piece of infrastructure – terror-related, weapons and others – must be dismantled and must be done under U.S. supervision," Katz asserted.

"If they fail to act and the agreement collapses, the scenario is very clear," he warned.

"Should war resume, we'll act with greater force and penetrate deeper."

The IDF continued its warning strikes in Lebanon, described as an "enforcement of the cease-fire" by Israel but referred to as "violations" by France and the U.S. on Tuesday, Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese channel Al-Manar reported that an Israeli drone attacked a site in southern Lebanon's Beit Lif, with additional strikes in Deir Siryan later in the day. Since the cease-fire took effect, the IDF has mainly fired for the sake of deterring, frequently targeting residents and activists attempting to return to southern Lebanese villages. The military has also been active in Syria, Gaza and the Beqaa Valley.

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati said on Tuesday that "talks are ongoing and intensified on Monday, to halt Israeli violations. We stressed the need to stabilize conditions to enable the return of displaced residents and to expand the Lebanese Army's deployment in the south."

In Syria, opposition-affiliated news site Voice of the Capital reported that an Israeli drone struck a vehicle on the road leading to Damascus Airport. Syrian radio station Sham FM later confirmed one fatality in the strike and reported damages.

According to Arab media, the Israeli Air Force carried out a targeted killing of a Hezbollah commander on Syrian soil. While the figure wasn't a senior official, the strike is considered unusual since the cease-fire began. The full results of the attack remain unclear.

In the West Bank, an Israeli Air Force drone twice struck a terrorist cell at the entrance to Al'Aqaba, near Tubas in the West Bank, which was planning to execute an attack. The Palestinian Health Ministry reported two fatalities, with a third terrorist moderately injured before being evacuated to a local hospital.

Later, Palestinian reports and footage showed a significant number of IDF forces entering the hospital complex and arresting several individuals. Palestinians also reported gunfire clashes at the site.

The West Bank hospital director-general alleged that Israeli forces detained five medical staff members during the raid and attempted to "seize" the bodies of those killed in the strikes.

Israeli forces carried out operations in the southern and northern Gaza Strip. Palestinian media reported on Tuesday that eight people were killed and over 20 injured in several strikes in Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza. The reports claimed the strikes targeted "areas near school shelters" in the region.

IDF forces entering the hospital in the West Bank

Meanwhile, the IDF Spokesperson's Unit announced that forces operating in the Netzarim Corridor have eliminated seven terrorists involved in the October 7 massacre and destroyed numerous terror infrastructures over the past two weeks.

12.03.24 – Tu

Another week or another month, Jabaliya will fall, encircled by IDF soldiers

12.03.24 – Tu

'It may take another week or another month, but Jabaliya will fall'

Led by Col. Liron Batito, the Givati Brigade focuses on eliminating Hamas terrorists in northern Gaza with a strategy of rapid raids combined with cautious, deliberate advances; despite killing and capturing over 2,000 terrorists, he says 'there's still plenty to do'
Ron Ben-Yishai|04:41

As we talk, the operations officer hands the radio earpiece to Col. Liron Batito, commander of the Givati Brigade. We're seated in the brigade's command center, housed in an abandoned building deep in the heart of Jabaliya. On the walls, screens display real-time updates of troop positions, enemy movements and live feeds from surveillance systems.

"A Tzabar detachment identified two terrorists approaching, likely with an anti-tank weapon," Batito says calmly. "The battalion commander is already handling it," he adds.

Now in Jabaliya, their mission is to dismantle a massive Hamas network that reemerged after IDF forces cleared the area early in the war. "Now the terrorists are waging urban guerrilla warfare against us, mostly in small groups of two or three," explains Batito.

"But when we entered here, there were thousands. We've eliminated 1,000 and captured another 1,000, but a few hundred remain. Most are fanatics, Islamist jihadists. Some actively participated in the October 7 massacre and atrocities. They won't surrender because they fear what we'll do to them if they're captured."

Each Hamas cell operates within its own geographic area of responsibility, equipped with dozens of explosive devices and RPG launchers, according to Givati fighters. While they have inflicted casualties on IDF forces, Givati commanders have recently observed that Hamas operatives are facing a growing shortage of ammunition.

Preventing Hamas from rebuilding

The IDF is conducting a series of raids targeting enemy sites identified through intelligence provided by Shin Bet and Military Intelligence (Aman). These targets often include schools where women, children and the elderly have taken shelter, with terrorists attempting to hide among them.

Givati Brigade troops, typically transported in armored personnel carriers and supported by tanks, swiftly encircle such locations in under an hour. Once surrounded, the terrorists, realizing their situation, try to flee.

The soldiers make extensive use of various drones, including loudspeaker drones used to direct non-combatant civilians on how to evacuate safely. The drones also track fleeing terrorists, dropping explosives on them or guiding troops through the alleys in pursuit.

On the ground, speaking with commanders and soldiers, it becomes evident that claims of "ethnic cleansing" in northern Gaza, such as those made by former defense minister and IDF chief of staff Moshe Ya'alon, hold no merit.

The operations are strictly tactical, serving a dual purpose: applying pressure on Hamas, particularly regarding hostages, and preventing further regrouping or rebuilding efforts by Hamas in northern Gaza, roughly four kilometers from Kibbutz Netiv HaAsara and the city of Sderot.

Most of the roads currently being built by the IDF in Gaza are designed to facilitate rapid logistical and operational movement deep into the territory. Quick mobility makes it harder for terrorists to target Israeli forces.

While corridors like Netzarim and Philadelphi may carry strategic—and potentially political—significance, the majority of new roads are purely functional, ensuring secure movement through Gaza's terrain, including its muddy winter conditions and for potential post-war operations.

As of now, there are no visible signs in Gaza of plans to implement calls from some coalition members to reestablish Israeli settlements in the territory. While some in the field believe the IDF should remain in Gaza to prevent Hamas from rebuilding, there is little enthusiasm for resettlement.

Meanwhile, the IDF is already operating in what commanders describe as the "third phase" of combat: swift raids by small detachments targeting terrorists identified through intelligence and eliminating those attempting to approach Israeli forces.

I joined Lt. Col. Matan Elgraby, commander of the Tzabar Battalion, in a Namer armored personnel carrier. On October 7, Elgraby was shot in the stomach while fighting terrorists in Kibbutz Kfar Aza but returned to his unit and has been continuously engaged in combat since summer.

As we travel down a narrow alley, every pile of rubble evokes memories. "Here, just last week, I lost a dear soldier, Ron Epshtein from Nesher, and here one of my company commanders was wounded," he says.

The Givati Brigade has lost 71 soldiers in this war, with the Tzabar Battalion alone mourning 17 fallen fighters and many others wounded.

Soldiers first

We stop about 100 meters behind the battalion's forward unit, which had encountered militants while I was speaking with the brigade commander. Battalion commander Lt.

Col. Matan Elgrabi fires a burst from a machine gun mounted on the Namer at suspicious movement. "We'll eliminate them shortly with an airstrike," he says.

A "combat strike" means that an Air Force fighter jet would deliver precision munitions to destroy the building housing the terrorists. "Why risk soldiers when one bomb can achieve the goal?" Elgraby remarks. This tight coordination between branches and units is one of the most effective and innovative aspects of this war, significantly enhancing the safety of Israeli forces.

Not far behind us is the evacuation Namer. Paramedic Yariv, from Tel Aviv, shares how his team's experience during the war has led to rapid medical evacuations, now bringing wounded soldiers to the border or airlifting them within 30 minutes, and to hospitals within an hour. Speed is crucial to saving lives, but equally vital are the fresh blood transfusions Yariv administers to critically wounded soldiers within minutes of their injury.

Sitting with Yariv, a young man in his 20s, it's hard not to admire his composure and confidence despite dealing with severe injuries. When I ask him, "Do you feel mental exhaustion?" he replies, "Of course, but we push through. We're sensitive to it and intervene when we see signs in others. It happens often."

Elgraby explains that initial care for soldiers showing signs of mental fatigue is handled by their commanders. Many troops draw strength from the horrors they witnessed on October 7. "Anyone who saw what we did that day won't forget and will fight to the end to ensure it never happens again," Elgarby says.

Another key source of resilience is the emotional support soldiers provide one another through camaraderie, commitment and deep bonds with their comrades in the company, battalion and brigade.

When asked what he prioritizes most besides completing the mission, Brigade commander Batito responds without hesitation: "The safety of my forces. I move slowly and act cautiously to minimize casualties among my men. The public should understand the fighting is slow because we are uprooting terrorist cells in an urban area, much of which had been leveled, where terrorists move stealthily from house to house. It may take another week or another month, but Jabaliya will fall."

"And what comes next?" I ask. "Gaza City?"

Batito pauses for a second. "There are many terrorists in Gaza City," he replies carefully. "And a brigade commander, Saad Haddad, who is organizing them. There's plenty to do there."

12.03.24 – Tu

US plan for post-war Gaza, similar to Lebanon deal, with US & Abbas management

12.03.24 – Tu

Hamas agrees to US-supervised plan for post-war Gaza management, report says

Report outlines proposed administration plan establishing committee that would oversee enclave under US supervision; Palestinian Authority conditions agreement in Hamas recognizing its exclusive rule

Einav Halabi | 01:47

Qatari newspaper The New Arab published on Tuesday a draft of the document establishing the "Community Support Committee for the Management of the Gaza Strip" following discussions between Hamas and Fatah delegations in Cairo held last Saturday.

According to the drafted document, which still requires approval from Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, the committee will include experts from various fields who will manage the coastal enclave from both within Gaza and Palestinian Authority territories. The committee will also operate under U.S. supervision.

The two-page document outlines the committee's role as the governing authority responsible for all sectors, including health, economy, education, agriculture, essential services and reconstruction efforts. It stresses the committee's formation as a national consensus body functioning under Palestinian state laws and regulations. The committee will comprise 10–15 members recognized for their integrity, experience and transparency. Its organizational structure includes a president, a vice president, officials for aid, education, health and economy, a local governance coordinator, a reconstruction director and a liaison for communication with local and international bodies.

Additionally, a border crossing representative will oversee the critical operation of the Rafah border crossing, a vital economic artery for Hamas before the war. The document specifies six foundational principles for the committee's establishment. The first stresses maintaining the territorial integrity of the "occupied Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, including the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza." The second principle highlights coordination between the West Bank-based Palestinian government and the Gaza committee.

The third affirms the committee's alignment with the broader Palestinian political framework, rejecting any separation of Gaza from other Palestinian territories. The fourth calls for the selection of independent, qualified national figures to carry out the committee's tasks.

The fifth aims to manage all local authorities in Gaza in a way that benefits the Palestinian public. The sixth principle reads that the committee will operate in Gaza until the "reasons for its establishment are resolved, general elections are held or another agreed-upon solution is adopted."

Despite the emerging agreement, the committee's formation depends on Abbas's approval, which he currently conditions on Hamas recognizing the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole national representative of the Palestinian people. Should Abbas endorse the principles, a presidential decree would formalize them.

If established, the committee marks a significant shift in Hamas's stance, as the terror group has so far resisted international involvement that would effectively strip it of control over Gaza. The move aligns with a Lebanese-style governance framework and includes external oversight of Gaza. This shift is part of Egypt's broader initiative to advance negotiations on a hostage deal and a cease-fire to end the war, meeting Israel's demand that Hamas no longer govern Gaza.

However, despite this potential change, Hamas — currently operating in Gaza as a guerrilla organization and still inflicting losses on Israeli forces — is unlikely to disappear. Consequently, Israel is expected to continue insisting on complete freedom of action in Gaza.

12.03.24 – Tu

IDF expanding buffer zones & corridors throughout Gaza, taking strategic areas

12.03.24 – Tu

Facing teen terrorists and hidden tunnels: The IDF's long fight ahead in Gaza
Hamas reportedly rebuilding its Gaza City brigade, including recruiting teenagers, as IDF nears completion of buffer zone in enclave's center; Nahal Brigade targets Rafah resistance pockets, while 162nd Division wraps up major Jabaliya raid
Yoav Zitun, Rafah|00:57

As the IDF enters the second year of combat in Gaza, military planning anticipates continued ground operations against Hamas for years to come, with or without a hostage deal.

Despite the cease-fire in the north bringing quiet along the Lebanon border, Gaza remains a consistent focus of military activity, involving three divisions. The Gaza Division, the largest, concentrates on defending Israeli border communities, while the others work to secure operational gains by steadily advancing and taking control of strategic areas within Gaza.

The nature of the fighting has evolved significantly since the conclusion of the Rafah ground offensive in August. IDF soldiers now patrol newly secured zones with fewer protective measures, conducting targeted operations only as needed against remaining Hamas resistance.

Near Rafah, troops occupy fortified positions along a widened Philadelphi Corridor that now extends two to three kilometers into Gaza. This expansion involved flattening hundreds of Palestinian buildings, pushing the threat of sniper, anti-tank, or small-arms fire beyond effective range.

In the Netzarim Corridor, which has grown bigger in size than Tel Aviv and where IDF reserve forces have been stationed for months, progress on establishing a buffer zone inside Gaza is nearing completion. Approximately 95% of the planned area—a strip

averaging one to two kilometers wide—is secured, with ongoing tunnel detection and demolition operations targeting Hamas’ underground infrastructure.

Elsewhere, the 162nd Division has made significant gains in Jabaliya, now requiring only one or two battalions to dismantle large Hamas strongholds in one night—operations that previously required two to three brigades. Supporting the divisions is an artillery battalion providing firepower across Gaza, from Rafah in the south, through Netzarim in the center and to Jabaliya in the north.

Gaza Division: Defending from enemy territory

The U.S. objections from last year to the demolition of thousands of buildings in favor of the construction of a buffer zone, the Gaza Division’s flagship project since being captured by terrorists during the October 7 Hamas attack, now seem like a distant memory.

Once a densely built area, neighborhoods such as Beit Hanoun’s Officer Towers, once visible from Sderot, have been leveled, along with thousands of buildings in areas like Shijaiyah and Khirbet Khizeh, which directly threatened Israeli communities.

According to military sources, the buffer zone now extends an average of one to two kilometers into Gaza, with nearly 95% of the project completed. The zone, cleared of orchards, fields and greenhouses, is tightly monitored, with strict rules of engagement. Soldiers are warned to exercise caution, as civilians—including children—have entered the zone in desperation, and there is concern that hostages escaping Hamas captivity—like Yotam Haim, Samar Talalka and Alon Shamriz, who were shot and killed by Israeli forces after a misidentification—might use the same route.

The division has intensified efforts to locate and destroy Hamas’ cross-border tunnels, some of which remain undiscovered due to the extensive underground network near the border. IDF units are simultaneously targeting up to four tunnel routes, supported by advanced monitoring and detection systems that have significantly improved operational efficiency.

The Gaza Division also oversees the logistical and operational support for two other divisions operating inside Gaza, bolstered by fortified forward bases established on the Israeli side of the border. What began as four battalion-level task forces responsible for border security on October 7 has grown to include armored, infantry and engineering units, as well as “community battalions” specifically tasked with protecting kibbutzim and moshavim.

The Gaza Division has intensified operations in areas that have seen little military activity in recent months, such as Khan Younis, opposite Kibbutz Kissufim. Additionally, the division has taken on exclusive responsibility for the Philadelphi Corridor along Gaza’s southern border, a shift from the 162nd Division prompted by manpower constraints. The task, handed over in August, is being carried out by the Nahal Brigade with three to four battalions rotating on a staggered schedule to allow regular leave.

"Initially, we were concerned about whether a defensive division could also manage a brigade inside Gaza, but it’s working because Nahal is experienced and effective there," IDF officials said.

They noted the corridor's buffer zone has been expanded to 2–3 kilometers, pushing Hamas forces back and reducing threats. Soldiers stationed along Philadelphi now operate from secure outposts where they can move freely without helmets or vests, heightening their alertness for actual combat situations.

Troops also benefit from improved conditions, including better living quarters and cellular coverage, though limited to the Israeli provider Cellcom.

In Rafah, the IDF estimates that 1,000–2,000 Gazan civilians remain. The division's goal is to push them northward toward Khan Younis and Al Mawasi. "The border communities are coming back to life," said an IDF source, estimating that 75% of residents have returned to their homes, though recovery has been slower in areas hardest hit, like Nir Oz and Be'eri.

The Philadelphi Corridor, recently paved by the IDF into a 14-kilometer (9-mile) military highway stretching from Kerem Shalom to a coastal outpost, has undergone a dramatic transformation.

The primary engineering focus in the area has been the systematic demolition of homes, which the IDF says were mostly used by Hamas or posed a threat to soldiers. This clearing has exposed a wide strip of land between the Sinai border and the vanishing line of houses south of Rafah. In the Al-Shaboura refugee camp alone, 300 buildings have been leveled.

Only some soldiers stationed along the corridor benefit from the improved living conditions provided by the IDF, which include new housing facilities and a cell tower, similar to one recently installed in the Netzarim Corridor.

The Nahal Brigade, whose soldiers have sustained the longest continuous deployment in Gaza since the ground offensive began in late October of last year, is nearing a historic moment. They are expected to withdraw from Gaza and return to routine security assignments in the West Bank under the Judea and Samaria Division, from which they were redeployed on the morning of October 7. This transition marks the IDF's effort to restore its pre-war battalion structure, easing some of the burden on reservists.

The 99th Division, the youngest of the IDF's divisions under Central Command, was responsible for the Netzarim Corridor at the start of the year when it averaged two kilometers in width. Today, the corridor has expanded to approximately six kilometers, now equipped with cellular infrastructure, a new water line, comfortable outposts for soldiers and two brigades—northern and southern—tasked with widening the area further, extending from Gaza City neighborhoods in the north to central towns like Bureij and Nuseirat in the south.

The soldiers' primary role in the corridor mirrors that of the Philadelphi Corridor: securing and "maintaining the achievement," according to the IDF. The strategic gain in Netzarim is blocking the movement of Gazans from the southern to northern parts of the coastal enclave while encouraging the relocation of 300,000 people—out of the roughly one million who lived in northern Gaza before the war—southward.

"Today, there are almost no crossings in Netzarim, not even humanitarian or medical ones as before," IDF officials said. "We are establishing additional forward bases, increasing pressure on Hamas, which is effectively encircled on all sides by three IDF divisions."

The most recent significant operational event in the Netzarim sector occurred last week. A force from the northern brigade conducted a nighttime search raid between the Zeitoun and Sheikh Ajlin neighborhoods of Gaza City. During the operation, a Hamas fighter emerged from a combat tunnel and fired an RPG at an IDF bulldozer operator, severely injuring him.

"These searches continue to uncover large quantities of ammunition, Hamas equipment and weapons," the military noted. "In almost every operation, Hamas attempts counterattacks with sniper fire or other remote strikes."

The IDF assesses that Hamas is refraining from launching major attacks on static Israeli forces in the Netzarim Corridor, conserving its resources for a potential post-withdrawal phase, if and when it occurs. "That's why we are advancing more slowly and thoroughly from the corridor," an IDF source explained.

Hamas is reportedly focusing on rebuilding its Gaza City brigade, which has not been targeted by IDF operations for months, using terror to control the local population and prevent their relocation southward.

The group has also been recruiting new fighters, some as young as 14, and attempting to develop weapons such as drones capable of carrying grenades. Gaza City forces still have commanders in place, including a brigade commander who has avoided elimination by keeping a low profile.

Further south, in areas like Nuseirat, the situation differs. There, Hamas forces remain largely intact as the IDF has not conducted ground operations there, concerned about the potential presence of hostages. As southern Gaza is pushed northward from Rafah and the eastern border, Nuseirat is becoming increasingly crowded, merging with Deir al-Balah and Al Mawasi into a densely packed metropolitan area of displaced people along the coast.

The IDF is also considering the possibility of a sea-based attack targeting forces stationed in the western part of the Netzarim Corridor.

Military officials emphasized that operations in the Netzarim Corridor remain primarily operational, but as the timeline progresses and the likelihood of the remaining Israeli hostages perishing in Hamas tunnels increases, public legitimacy could grow for the establishment of Israeli settlements in the cleared area, along with repealing the Disengagement Law, which led to Israel's complete withdrawal from Gaza in 2005.

"We are keeping the enemy occupied from the Netzarim Corridor, preventing them from launching major attacks involving 50–60 fighters," IDF officials said. They added that soldiers' rotations are stable, with regular leave schedules allowing some forces to return home while others remain at outposts. "Although we don't officially classify this as routine security operations, there are clear patterns of repetition in the soldiers' activities," they noted.

The corridor is currently held by two reserve brigades, the 551st and the 179th, whose soldiers have spent more time on duty than at home over the past 14 months. The 99th

Division has described the reserve call-up orders for its forces as “relaxed emergency orders,” allowing certain units, such as staff personnel, to return home between shifts, spending two to three days per week with their families.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi recently announced that the 162nd Division, the Southern Command’s regular spearhead division, will remain in Gaza through at least next year. Its brigades will not be redeployed to the northern front.

Beyond the structural cohesion of the division, the decision is attributed to the experience and expertise its units have gained in over a year of combat against Hamas. These include the Givati and Nahal Brigades, the 401st Armored Brigade and the Multidimensional Unit, which has been integrated into the division.

Currently, the 162nd Division is the only unit conducting a full-scale offensive within Gaza. Since late September, it has been leading a campaign in Jabaliya aimed at bisecting the northern third of the territory, separating Gaza City from the towns of Jabaliya, Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia.

The operation employs tactics reminiscent of the so-called “Generals’ Plan,” involving the displacement of tens of thousands of Gazans southward through checkpoints where they are thoroughly screened. To date, over 1,000 individuals suspected of being Hamas operatives have been detained.

An investigation by Ynet and Yedioth Ahronoth reveals that, unlike in previous operations, Gazan civilians have not been allowed to return to neighborhoods cleared by the IDF in the ongoing offensive in Jabaliya, now entering its third month. The 162nd Division estimates the operation could conclude within weeks, as an estimated 100 to 200 Hamas terrorists remain entrenched in the Jabaliya refugee camp, a key stronghold.

As part of the operation, the Kfir Brigade is conducting “mop-up operations” on the northern and eastern edges of Jabaliya, as well as in Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun, aiming to secure a safer environment for the return of Israeli residents in northern Gaza-border communities.

A key characteristic of the fighting in Jabaliya is the efficiency of the experienced IDF forces, who are achieving more with fewer troops. Last week, Givati reconnaissance units, supported by aerial assistance, used just two-and-a-half companies to eliminate 40 terrorists and capture 100 others in a large Jabaliya complex, completing the mission in just three hours.

Despite the progress, Hamas continues to mount resistance, occasionally targeting IDF forces. The operation has resulted in the deaths of approximately 30 soldiers so far, an average of one every two days. Among the fallen is Col. Ehsan Daxa, commander of the 401st Armored Brigade.

12.02.24 – Mo

IAF launches wave of strikes on Lebanon to defend Israel

12.02.24 – Mo

IDF launches wave of strikes on Lebanon following Hezbollah attack

Military says conducted widespread strikes on Hezbollah terrorists, dozens of rocket launchers and other terrorist infrastructure across Lebanon, reiterates commitment to cease-fire

Yoav Zitun|14:21

The IDF announced that the Israeli Air Force (IAF) conducted widespread strikes on Hezbollah terrorists, dozens of rocket launchers and other terrorist infrastructure across Lebanon on Monday night.

Among the targets was a launcher in the Berghoz area of southern Lebanon, struck shortly after Hezbollah fired two projectiles toward Mount Dov.

The IDF said that Hezbollah's actions constitute a clear violation of the cease-fire agreement between Israel and Lebanon and called on Lebanese authorities to take responsibility and prevent Hezbollah from operating within its territory.

"The State of Israel remains obligated to the fulfillment of the conditions of the cease fire agreement in Lebanon," the military said in a statement, adding that "is prepared to continue operating wherever necessary and will continue to operate to defend Israeli civilians."

Qatar-based newspaper The New Arab reported that the strikes targeted crossings along the Lebanon-Syria border, while Lebanese sources indicated additional IDF strikes in southern Lebanon.

The Lebanese National News Agency reported Israeli drones flying over Beirut, particularly the Hezbollah-dominated Dahieh district.

The strikes came hours after Hezbollah fired two mortar shells into Israeli territory earlier in the day, marking the first such incident since a cease-fire in Lebanon took effect last week. The mortars landed in open areas on Mount Dov, causing no casualties or damage.

Hezbollah claimed responsibility, describing the attack as a "defensive response and a warning," claiming they targeted an Israeli outpost near the village of Shebaa.

Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz, have pledged a forceful response to the cease-fire violation.

Earlier, sirens sounded in the northern Israeli community of Lehavot HaBashan, though the IDF later confirmed it was a false alarm.

Separately, the IDF announced that a naval missile ship intercepted a drone over the Red Sea on Monday. The drone, launched from the east, was destroyed before it could enter Israeli airspace, according to the military.

12.02.24 – Mo

Trump warns Hamas: Release hostages or be hit harder than anybody in US history

12.02.24 – Mo

Trump warns Hamas: Release hostages or 'there will be ALL HELL TO PAY'
US president-elect vows severe consequences if hostages not released before his inauguration; 'Those responsible will be hit harder than anybody has been hit in the long and storied History of the United States of America,' he writes on Truth Social
Itamar Eichner, Raanan Ben-Zur|13:51

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Monday issued a stark warning, pledging severe consequences if Hamas does not release the hostages it holds in Gaza before he takes office in January.

"Everybody is talking about the hostages who are being held so violently, inhumanely, and against the will of the entire World, in the Middle East - But it's all talk, and no action!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

"Please let this TRUTH serve to represent that if the hostages are not released prior to January 20, 2025, the date that I proudly assume Office as President of the United States, there will be ALL HELL TO PAY in the Middle East, and for those in charge who perpetrated these atrocities against Humanity. Those responsible will be hit harder than anybody has been hit in the long and storied History of the United States of America. RELEASE THE HOSTAGES NOW!"

Trump's statement followed the IDF's confirmation that Captain Omer Neutra, an Israeli American soldier believed to have been held hostage since the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack, was killed, with his body still held by Hamas.

Neutra, a Long Island native, was a tank commander in the 7th Armored Brigade's 77th Battalion. He was killed during Hamas' infiltration of Israeli communities near the Gaza border. Neutra's death was confirmed by the IDF chief rabbi after a thorough review of evidence and reliable information collected by the military.

His family released their first statement following confirmation of his death. "For 14 months, 423 days, we worked tirelessly to bring Omer home, holding onto hope that he was alive, despite the lack of any sign of life. This is an unimaginable nightmare," said his parents, Orna and Ronen, and his brother, Daniel.

"Our beloved Omer made Aliyah out of pure love for the land and a deep commitment to the people of Israel," they wrote. "On the morning of Simchat Torah, he and his team were the first on the front lines, alone in a disabled tank, as they used their bodies to protect Israel's borders. They fought to the very end. For 423 days, we have waited for our leaders to rise to the occasion for the sake of Israel and the hostages, just as our beloved Omer did through his actions."

The family added, "We never imagined, even in our worst nightmares, that we would find ourselves fighting for the values we instilled in Omer and for which he chose to make Aliyah and enlist—sanctity of life and mutual responsibility. Today, the sense of loss is overwhelming. The grief is immense. Words are exhausted, time has run out, and words alone cannot bring comfort. Leadership will be shown only through actions and results—by bringing the 101 hostages home."

12.02.24 – Mo

IDF prepares strikes, ready to execute at any moment in response to contract violations

12.02.24 – Mo

IDF prepares strikes in response to cease-fire violations following Hezbollah fire

Officials say decision to act now rests with Netanyahu and Katz; 'Failing to respond forcefully to the first violation will drag us into a war of attrition,' warns senior IDF official

Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun, Yossi Yehoshua|10:50

The IDF Operations and Intelligence Directorates have developed a contingency plan for a decisive response to cease-fire violations by Hezbollah, security officials said after the terrorist group fired two mortar rounds at Mount Dov on Monday evening, its first such attack since the cease-fire took effect last week.

The officials said the decision to act now rests with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz. "Failing to respond forcefully to the first violation will drag us into a war of attrition," warned a senior IDF official involved in the planning.

Hezbollah claimed responsibility for the attack, describing it as a "defensive warning." In a statement, the group accused Israel of multiple cease-fire breaches, including airstrikes, attacks on civilians and violations of Lebanese airspace.

Hezbollah said it fired at an IDF outpost on Mount Dov after failing to halt Israeli actions through other means. The attack, described as "symbolic," is seen as an attempt to signal readiness to retaliate for Israeli enforcement operations in southern Lebanon.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the attack a "serious violation of the cease-fire" and vowed a strong response. "We are determined to continue enforcing the cease-fire and to respond to every Hezbollah violation, no matter how minor or severe," Netanyahu said in a statement.

Defense Minister Katz voiced a similar threat. "We promised to act against any Hezbollah violations of the cease-fire, and that is exactly what we will do. What was will no longer be," he said.

Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich echoed the call for a strong retaliation, urging a strike that would "make Hezbollah understand that the equation has changed." IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi warned that the military would "respond forcefully" to the attack. "We have plans and objectives ready to execute at any moment," he said during a visit to the Lebanon border with Northern Command officers and division commanders.

Opposition leaders criticized the fragile cease-fire, with Yisrael Beitenu Chairman Avigdor Liberman calling it a "conceptual failure."

“Enough with the illusion. When the Israeli government realized that no agreements can be made with terrorists, only then will the State of Israel restore deterrence and security for its citizens,” he wrote on X. “We must not wait until this costs us in blood.”

Meanwhile, a parliamentary source in Hezbollah told the Qatari newspaper The New Arab that the attack was “initial” and aimed to address Israel’s alleged violations. “Hezbollah does not intend to return to the pre-cease-fire situation but will not stand idle while Israel breaches the agreement,” the source said. He added that Hezbollah had documented over 54 violations since the cease-fire began and criticized Israel’s claims as “false.”

The attacks came amid accusations from France and the United States that Israel has violated the cease-fire. Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar dismissed these claims, saying, “Israel enforces the agreement in response to Hezbollah violations, which require immediate action.”

Sa’ar cited incidents such as armed Hezbollah operatives being spotted in southern Lebanon and attempts to transfer weapons as examples of violations demanding swift Israeli responses.

Mount Dov, historically a flashpoint due to its lack of a defined border fence and civilian presence, remains a focal point for tensions between Hezbollah and the IDF.

12.02.24 – Mo

Lebanon fires mortars; IDF nighttime raid captured an Iranian spy in Syria

12.02.24 – Mo

Hezbollah fires mortars into Israel for first time since cease-fire

Two projectiles fired from Lebanon land in an unpopulated area in the Mount Dov sector
Itamar Eichner|09:14

For the first time since the implementation of the cease-fire last week, Hezbollah launched on Monday two mortar shells into Israeli territory, with both landing in an unpopulated area in the Mount Dov sector.

Night-time operation under Hezbollah's nose: How Israel captured an Iranian spy in Syria
A meticulously planned IDF operation led to the capture of Iranian operative Ali Soleiman al-Assi near Quneitra; Soldiers executed a covert nighttime raid, employing diversion tactics and aerial support, effectively dismantling espionage efforts and preventing future attacks on Israeli targets

12.02.24 – Mo

Shin Bet uncovers Iran cyber phishing campaign, targeting Israeli officials

12.02.24 – Mo

Shin Bet uncovers widespread Iran campaign targeting Israeli officials

Security agency says uncovered 200 attempts to target Israelis including security officials, politicians, journalists and others in effort to obtain access to their devices for the purpose of launching attacks

Yoav Zitun|06:55

The Shin Bet on Monday said it exposed 200 attempts of cyber attacks by Iranian operatives, targeting Israelis including public figures.

"The Shin Bet uncovered an Iranian phishing campaign aimed at Israeli citizens, some senior members of the security echelons, politicians, members of academia, journalists and others," the Shin Bet said in a statement.

"The aim of the Iranian campaign was to get access to computerized media systems: e-mail, computers, smartphones) of Israelis the Iranians planned to attack, in order to access personal information such as home addresses, contacts and places where they regularly stay. This information is then to be used by the Iranians to attack Israeli officials using enlisted operatives. Nine such local cells enlisted by Iran to carry out missions on its behalf, were discovered in recent months."

The security agency said most Israelis targeted in the campaign are approached over WhatsApp, Telegram or email with an appropriate cover story prepared for each target, to avoid suspicion.

The method is to cause the target to download an app containing malware on to his computer or phone, or to refer the targets to an internet site that poses as a legitimate service, but requires personal information to be given, such as a private or professional email address.

After the target reveals the address and a password, the Iranian operatives then take that information and through it accesses the target's devices.

After the Shin Bet identified the malicious campaign, an investigation was launched which revealed the extent of the attacks and identified its targets. They were informed and were advised what steps must be taken to avert danger and bolster their online security systems.

"This is an additional significant threat from Iran aimed at carrying out attacks and assassinations," a Shin Bet official said. "We ask for increased alert because such cyber strikes can be avoided by proper awareness, and cautious behavior online."

12.02.24 – Mo

Cautious Israeli optimism from Hamas behind the scenes negotiations

12.02.24 – Mo

Behind the scenes of hostage negotiations: Cautious Israeli optimism, firm stance from Hamas

A proposed 60-day cease-fire is at the center of hostage negotiations, and while there is cautious optimism in Israel – bolstered by the Lebanon agreement and the upcoming U.S. leadership transition – Hamas remains resolute; 'If Hamas consents to symbolic exile, a deal could move forward. A diplomatic narrative will likely be crafted to justify ending the conflict' Israeli official says

Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi, Daniel Edelson in New York|17:17

As reports surface of efforts to restart negotiations under U.S. pressure, cautious optimism is growing in Israel about a potential hostage deal. Four main factors are fueling this sentiment: The cease-fire model in Lebanon, which could influence Gaza; Hamas' isolation and fears that the IDF will bolster its forces in Gaza after completing operations in Lebanon; Support from U.S. President-elect Donald Trump for outgoing President Joe Biden's initiative; and General war fatigue on all sides.

In a shift from his previous statements, Trump has expressed a desire to see a hostage deal finalized before he returns to the White House on January 20. He has reportedly conveyed a message to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, urging Israel to end the conflict before the U.S. administration transitions. The negotiations are being spearheaded by the United States, with mediation from Qatar and Egypt. Despite Qatar's earlier announcement of suspending its involvement, it remains a key player.

The current proposal includes a 60-day cease-fire, with a limited Israeli presence in the Philadelphi Corridor. A source familiar with the negotiations noted that the challenge lies more with Israel than Hamas. A senior Israeli official suggested that a symbolic exile of some Hamas leaders from Gaza could enable progress. However, the official warned that Netanyahu would not allow a scenario that visually portrays Hamas regaining control of Gaza.

Another Israeli official, privy to the discussions, said the deal would likely involve a "diplomatic spin" to justify halting the war. The source added that Hamas is unlikely to compromise unless it secures guarantees for post-war reconstruction.

"This is a dynamic time. There's potential for expanded possibilities, and we are evaluating the situation and acting accordingly," the official said.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu convened a meeting of senior ministers and negotiation team leaders to assess progress, raising speculation about developments behind the scenes. However, it is still too early to determine whether these efforts will culminate in a deal. Hamas and Israeli leaders weigh in

Despite Israel's cautious optimism, Hamas leaders remain firm in their demands: A cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of IDF forces from Gaza, guarantees for reconstruction, and an influx of humanitarian aid. Meanwhile, Fatah officials involved in

talks with Hamas and Islamic Jihad about a post-conflict governance framework reported “tentative progress” in **Hamas’ willingness to establish** a joint administration for **Gaza**.

Israeli President Isaac **Herzog** expressed **hope for an agreement**. “There are **negotiations** taking place **behind the scenes**, and it can be done. Now is the opportunity to bring about a meaningful change that will **lead to a deal to free the hostages**,” Herzog said during a meeting with the family of Edan Alexander, an American Israeli hostage whose spoke in a video released by Hamas on Saturday. “**Now is the time to** bring meaningful change and **achieve a hostage deal**,” he said. “We are **negotiating with a bitter and cruel enemy** whose sole purpose in releasing this video was to try to break our spirit. On the contrary – I believe this video has strengthened us.”

Herzog reiterated his appeal to the international community: “My call to the entire world, to Israel’s leadership, and to all mediators is this: the time is now. We want Edan home. **We want everyone home urgently**. We cry out for this every single day – **now is the time** to act.”

Edan’s mother, Yael Alexander, shared her anguish and determination. “This has been a sleepless night. Edan – his voice and the video replaying endlessly. You can see in the video that **Edan is going through hell**. His **eyes are crying out, full of sorrow**, but it gave me so much strength – Edan strengthened us with his call to us.

“We released this video so that everyone can see – Edan is alive, and many other hostages are alive. **It’s time to act and free them**,” she said.

In **New York**, Edan’s father, Adi Alexander, **gathered with hundreds of activists** in New York’s **Central Park to call on** current U.S. President Joe **Biden** and President-elect Donald **Trump to act and** bring about a deal for the release of all 101 hostages still held in Gaza.

“Edan’s words in the video haunt me: **‘Every day here feels like eternity.’** No father should hear their child plead for their life like that,” Adi Alexander told the crowd. “Edan believes in the strength of the U.S., and so do I, but strength means nothing if it is not combined with action.”

“I stand here after **seeing my son alive for the first time in over a year**. It did give us a **glimmer of hope**, but it also reignited the **urgency of our plea**: Time is running out. President Biden, President-elect Trump, Prime Minister Netanyahu - I call on you all to act. This is not a moment for politics or hesitation. This is a **moment for courage, collaboration, and decisive action**,” he said.

Ronen and Orna Neutra, the **parents of American Israeli hostage** Omer Neutra, also spoke at the rally and **called on Biden and Trump** to **“seize the moment, work together**, before January. It can be a moment that unites us all.”

Manhattan Borough President **Mark Levine** said at the rally that it is **“important that the world knows that we will not stop fighting**. We demand that the international community make the **issue a priority. Bring** Edan, Omar and **everyone home**. Now.”

Hundreds gathered in New York to urge Biden, Trump to bring hostages home

12.02.24 – Mo

Hundreds in New York call on Biden, Trump to bring hostages home

Demonstrators gather a day after Hamas releases video of American Israeli hostage Edan Alexander; His father, Adi Alexander, asks leaders to 'not let politics or bureaucracy stand in the way of humanity'

Daniel Edelson, New York|16:56

A day after Hamas released a psychological terror video of American Israeli hostage Edan Alexander, his father, Adi, and hundreds of activists gathered in New York's Central Park to call on current U.S. President Joe Biden and President-elect Donald Trump to act and bring about a deal for the release of all 101 hostages still held in Gaza.

"Edan's words in the video haunt me: 'Every day here feels like eternity.' No father should hear their child plead for their life like that," Adi Alexander told the crowd. "Edan believes in the strength of the U.S., and so do I, but strength means nothing if it is not combined with action."

"I stand here after seeing my son alive for the first time in over a year. It did give us a glimmer of hope, but it also reignited the urgency of our plea: Time is running out. President Biden, President-elect Trump, Prime Minister Netanyahu - I call on you all to act. This is not a moment for politics or hesitation. This is a moment for courage, collaboration, and decisive action," he said.

Ronen and Orna Neutra, the parents of American Israeli hostage Omer Neutra, also spoke at the rally and called on Biden and Trump to "seize the moment, work together, before January. It can be a moment that unites us all."

"Conditions in Lebanon have changed, all eyes are now on Gaza. The people of Israel are waiting. It's time to bring them back. Omar and Idan grew up here, did the Zionist act, left everything behind and gave everything to the country they love. They deserve to go home," they said.

Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine said at the rally that it is "important that the world knows that we will not stop fighting. We demand that the international community make the issue a priority. Bring Edan, Omar and everyone home. Now."

Similar rallies are held weekly in New York, but Sunday's drew several hundred more people due to the release of the video of Edan Alexander. Hamas still holds seven hostages with American citizenship.

12.01.24 – Su

IDF force Iranian plane carrying weapons to return eastward

12.01.24 – Su

IDF forces Iranian plane suspected of carrying Hezbollah weapons to turn around
As part of enforcing the cease-fire agreement, the Israeli Air Force ordered an Iranian Mahan Air plane - suspected of carrying weapons for Hezbollah and destined for Syria - to turn around as fighter jets circled nearby, and the plane complied, returning east
Yoav Zitun, Itamar Eichner|14:11

The IDF ordered an Iranian plane suspected of carrying weapons for Hezbollah and scheduled to land in Syria, to turn around and head eastward, according to a report on Sunday.

The Israeli Air Force led the operation against the Iranian plane, with the key difference being the location – Syria, not Lebanon. Israeli fighter jets circled near the Iranian aircraft, in a threatening posture indicating they would shoot it down.
Top Videos

A "letter of assurances," part of the cease-fire agreement with Lebanon, stated that "the U.S. is committed to working with Israel to counter Iran's destabilizing activities in Lebanon, including preventing the transfer of weapons, proxies and other materials from Iranian territory."

Meanwhile, the IDF continued operating in Lebanon, citing "actions that threatened Israel and violated the cease-fire agreement." According to the IDF, paratroopers from the 98th Brigade identified armed terrorists near a church in southern Lebanon, which Hezbollah had used as a terrorist infrastructure. The soldiers fired and eliminated them.

The slain terrorists were involved in ground defense, anti-tank and artillery operations in the region and had participated in fighting while using the church. After eliminating the terrorists, the IDF searched the area around the church and found a weapons cache in a pit.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz who met on Sunday at the induction center with new recruits in the Armored Corps, addressed the recent developments in Syria and the northern cease-fire agreement.

"We are constantly monitoring developments in Syria," Netanyahu said. "We are determined to protect Israel's vital interests and preserve the achievements of the war. In this regard, we are strictly enforcing the ceasefire agreement, and any violation will be met with a decisive response from the IDF. That's how it's been, and that's how it will continue. We will maintain Israel's security."

12.01.24 – Su

Despite cease-fire, Houthi rockets keep threatening Israel, exposes unclear strategy

12.01.24 – Su

Despite cease-fire, Houthi rockets keep threatening Israel, exposing lack of clear strategy

While north remains quiet, alarms in central Israel warning of missile launch from Yemen are a reminder that other fronts remain active, and Israel lacks an exit strategy; Iran's proxies in Yemen and Iraq may be keeping a lower profile, but their threats persist, while in Israel disappointment grows over international coalition's reluctance to adopt tougher stance

Itamar Eichner, Lior Ben Ari | 12:28

The alarms that blared Sunday morning across central Israel served as a stark reminder that, despite the cease-fire in Lebanon and a significant drop in rocket alerts, the war is far from over. Multiple fronts remain active, each presenting its own challenges.

A ballistic missile launched from Yemen on Sunday during what had been a rare quiet day underscored a troubling reality – Israel lacks a comprehensive strategy to address these ongoing threats. For nearly 14 months, attempts to create such a strategy have stalled. Hopes now rest on the end of the Gaza war to bring stability to other fronts, though this remains uncertain.

Criticism within Israel has also grown regarding the perceived inaction of the U.S. and the international coalition. Despite severe disruptions to shipping routes and Egypt's economy, American efforts have been limited to intercepting drones and targeting weapons depots, leaving many questioning the West's ability to confront these escalating threats.

The missile attack from Yemen was a clear message from Iran's regional proxies: As long as the fighting in Gaza continues, so will their attacks on Israel. Iran appears to have no interest in fully de-escalating, and the ongoing strikes from Yemen and Iraq may compel Israel to take more decisive action. This could include pressuring the U.S., where an administration change looms next month, to intensify its military efforts in the region.

In a recorded statement last week before the Israeli Cabinet approved the Lebanon cease-fire, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the broader regional challenges. "In Yemen, we struck the Houthis' Hodeidah port with force – something the international coalition had not done before. In Iraq, we have successfully thwarted numerous drone attacks, but challenges remain," he said.

Netanyahu also targeted the "head of the octopus" – Iran. "We've destroyed significant parts of their air defense systems, missile production capabilities, and elements of their nuclear program. Preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons is my top priority. It's crucial for Israel's security and future," he declared.

Over the weekend, the IDF reported intercepting two drones approaching from the east before they entered Israeli airspace. However, the origins of the launches remain unconfirmed.

Despite the cease-fire in Lebanon, the region is far from calm. Syrian rebels launched a surprise attack against the Assad regime, and Iranian-backed militias continue to insist their operations will persist. These groups, initially aligning their actions as "support for Gaza," have made it clear they do not plan to cease fire soon.

Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, leader of Yemen's Houthis, gave his first speech since the cease-fire last Thursday. Calling Lebanon's "victory" over Israeli aggression a historic triumph, he emphasized: "We will not abandon Gaza. We will continue our operations on all fronts." His comments were followed by nationwide protests organized by Houthi supporters.

Pro-Iran militias in Iraq also distanced themselves from the Lebanon cease-fire, with groups like Kata'ib Hezbollah declaring that the cessation of fighting by Hezbollah would not impact their commitment to the Palestinian cause. They even vowed to escalate their attacks if Israel does not halt its actions in Gaza. Reports from Iraqi and international media suggest tensions between Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani and the militias are growing, partly due to the risk of Israeli retaliation.

Notably, while attacks from Yemen and intercepted drones persist, claims of responsibility from the Houthis and other militias have been less frequent, a marked shift from the daily announcements seen earlier in the conflict. Analysts suggest this is a strategic move to avoid provoking a larger Israeli response now that the Lebanese front has quieted.

According to Danny Citrinowicz, a senior researcher at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies and a former head of the Iran branch in military intelligence, several factors are driving the militias' reduced visibility. These include fears of an Israeli focus on their activities post-Lebanon, escalating internal conflicts in Iraq, and U.S. pressure on Baghdad. However, Citrinowicz warns this does not mean the militias will stop. "They aim to maintain a low profile, enough to show loyalty to the Palestinian cause without risking large-scale Israeli retaliation," he explained.

The Houthis officially claimed responsibility for Sunday's missile attack, boasting that they had targeted a "vital site near Jaffa" with their hypersonic Palestine-2 ballistic missile. For Israel, the growing threats from these fronts underscore the urgent need for a unified strategy before the situation spirals further out of control.

12.01.24 – Su

Ben-Gvir seeks repeal 2005 transfer of Gaza to PA rule; to allow Israel settlers

12.01.24 – Su

Netanyahu open to encouraging Palestinian migration from Gaza, Ben-Gvir says
Hardline national security minister says working to persuade PM to back his plan, adding that reestablishing Jewish settlements in Gaza insufficient on its own

Moran Azulay|04:35

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said Sunday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was showing some openness to the idea of encouraging Palestinian migration from Gaza.

In an interview with **Army Radio**, the hardline lawmaker also expressed support for **reestablishing Jewish settlements in Gaza**, calling it a **fitting response to the October 7 Hamas-led massacre**.

"After all, we must remember that **this could be the greatest punishment** for what was done to us on Oct. 7," he said. "The **only times we have won over our enemies** was when we took territory from them.

"Conquering Gaza is definitely an idea, but I must admit it would not be enough for me. We should encourage migration and I think **Palestinians should be able to leave** willingly to their countries."

He said he saw a **man in Gaza begging** on television **to be allowed to leave**. "I think there are **many like him**. I am working hard to convince the prime minister that this should happen and am **beginning to see some openness**. I hope he will eventually understand that **this is the only way**," Ben-Gvir said.

However, a **senior official dismissed the notion of Jewish settlement in Gaza**, despite calls from Housing Minister Yitzhak Goldknopf of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party **during a visit to the Gaza border** last week. Goldknopf had **advocated for rebuilding settlements** in the coastal enclave, an idea also championed by settlers and their allies within the government.

Settlers push into Gaza in an **attempt to establish new settlements**

Right-wing lawmakers and ministers are working on **legislation to repeal the 2005 disengagement law**, which led to the **evacuation of all settlements** and Israeli troops from Gaza. The **law's reversal**, proponents argue, **would pave the way for the establishment of new Jewish communities** in the territory.

The **2005 withdrawal transferred Gaza to Palestinian Authority control**, but **Hamas** forcibly ousted the PA in 2007 and has ruled the region since. Critics of the settlement push warn that **such moves could escalate tensions** and **complicate** the already fraught **security** situation.

12.01.24 – Su

Hamas seeks Egypt border for return of displaced Gazans, as part of deal

12.01.24 – Su

Hamas signals flexibility on gradual IDF withdrawal from Gaza, report says

Palestinian sources tell Asharq al-Awsat terror group also willing to allow PA to control Rafah border crossing in exchange for return of displaced Gazans to enclave's north; Saar says more flexibility on both sides to reach deal

Einav Halabi, Itamar Eichner|02:33

Hamas has shown increased **willingness to agree to a cease-fire** deal that includes a **phased withdrawal of IDF troops from the Gaza Strip**, pan-Arab newspaper Asharq al-Awsat reported on Sunday, citing Palestinian sources.

Hamas had previously demanded a complete withdrawal and an end to the war before releasing hostages held since the October 7 massacre.

The terrorist group is reportedly prepared to allow the Palestinian Authority (PA) to manage the Rafah border crossing with Egypt in exchange for the return of displaced Gazans to northern areas of the coastal enclave.

Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said there may be more flexibility on both sides to reach a deal in Gaza. Saar spoke at a conference held by the Israel Hayom news paper and said there are indications that a cease-fire could be reached. "I think we will know in the coming days," he said. "The basic principle is that Hamas cannot rule over Gaza but we are committed to advancing the release of hostages."

Meanwhile, the Biden administration is pushing for an agreement before President-elect Donald Trump takes office in January 2025. Trump, after receiving Israeli assessments indicating that half of the 101 hostages are believed to be alive, has expressed interest in advancing a deal.

Hamas escalated its psychological warfare on Saturday by releasing a video of captive American-Israeli soldier Edan Alexander, pleading with Trump to work for his release along with other hostages.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has reiterated that Israel will not agree to a cessation of the war until Hamas' military and governance capabilities are dismantled but is committed to securing the release of hostages. After the video surfaced, Netanyahu emphasized that efforts to bring all hostages home are ongoing.

A Hamas delegation arrived in Cairo on Saturday for talks with Egypt's intelligence chief Major General Hassan Rashad. Egypt is working to mediate a hostage deal and promote internal Palestinian reconciliation.

Meanwhile, Israel has resumed negotiations with Qatar and the United States, despite the former's earlier announcement that it would reduce its mediating role.

The families of hostages have intensified pressure on the Israeli government, criticizing its willingness to agree to a cease-fire with Hezbollah in Lebanon while resisting a similar arrangement in Gaza.

11.30.24 – Sa

Hezbollah facility & armed operatives struck by IDF to enforce cease-fire

11.30.24 – Sa

Hezbollah arms, operatives struck by IDF after cease-fire violations

Military reports airstrike targeted Hezbollah vehicle loaded with missiles, and armed operatives also struck as cease-fire breached; southern Lebanon residents warned to stay north of Litani River, as security measures remain in effect

Yoav Zitun|Yesterday | 08:06

The IDF reported Saturday that it had struck multiple Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, citing threats to Israel and violations of the cease-fire agreement.

In one instance, the IDF said armed operatives were observed loading a vehicle with RPGs, ammunition and other military equipment, which was subsequently hit in an airstrike.

Additional strikes were carried out against Hezbollah operatives suspiciously approaching buildings in southern Lebanon. Weapons, including grenades and firearms, were found on the operatives, the IDF said.

In a separate strike near Sidon, Israeli aircraft targeted rocket launchers at a Hezbollah facility. "These actions were taken to address immediate threats and to enforce the cease-fire," the IDF reported.

The military reiterated warnings to southern Lebanon residents to avoid areas south of the Litani River, as curfews from 5 p.m. to 7 a.m. remain in effect.

Earlier in the day, IDF troops in southern Lebanon discovered Hezbollah arms and munitions hidden inside a mosque. The military also confirmed airstrikes along the Syria-Lebanon border to disrupt the transfer of weapons intended for Hezbollah.

11.30.24 – Sa

IDF down drones from east & west & uncover Lebanon weapons cache in mosque

11.30.24 – Sa

IDF downs hostile drone from east, uncovers Hezbollah weapons cache in mosque
Military says drone shot down by air defenses while second intercepted by Navy missile boat over Mediterranean

Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun|Yesterday | 02:47

An Israeli Navy missile boat intercepted a hostile drone over the Mediterranean Sea on Saturday as it approached from the east, the IDF said. No sirens were activated. Earlier, another drone was shot down by air defenses.

The military also confirmed launching strikes on the Syrian side of the Lebanon-Syria border, described as part of ongoing efforts to disrupt arms transfers to Hezbollah.

Meanwhile, in Syria, Islamist opposition forces continued their offensive on the city of Aleppo, with reports from the Hezbollah-affiliated Al Mayadeen network claiming the rebels had taken control of 60% of the key city. The rebels reportedly enforced a curfew, removed Syrian, Hezbollah and Iranian flags, and raised their own banners.

Amid the fighting, Russian and Syrian air forces launched counterstrikes, while the Syrian regime shut down roads leading to Aleppo's airport in an effort to counter the rebel advance.

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Ynet-News, November 29, 2024 – Friday 8th Month

11.29.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Israel warrant appeal does not meet ICC criteria for direct appeal under the Rome Statute

11.29.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Evacuated residents return north February 1, with grants & assist to rebuild & revitalize

11.29.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday

PM & top security observing battles between rebel forces of Aleppo & Syria army

11.29.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Hezbollah chief says group scored 'divine victory' in war against Israel

11.29.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Saudi Arabia abandons pursuit of US defense treaty over Israel stalemate on Gaza

11.29.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday

9 injured, 3 serious in West Bank bus stop shooting; terrorist killed by 6 IDF soldiers

11.29.24 – Fr- - - News Placed in November 29 spot – Friday

IDF eliminate 40 terrorists, arrests 100 in Jabaliya Gaza raid; using efficient tactics

11.29.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday

IDF tallies Hezbollah conflict; 12,500 targets, 100 special operations, 1,500 terror sites

11.28.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Housing settlements in Gaza & WB are the answer to October 7 & ICC warrants

11.28.24 – Th- - - News Placed in November 28 spot – Thursday

IDF to launch Hashmonaim Brigade; wearing Shabbat suits and hats on Hanukkah

11.28.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday

IDF strike rocket threat in S-Lebanon & warn residents of curfew 5 pm to 7 am

11.28.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Biden pushes Gaza hostage deal while Trump prepares to lay out Mideast agenda

11.27.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

PA leader Abbas names successor Rawhi Fattouh on his departure

11.27.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

IDF destroyed largest strategic Hezbollah missile production site before cease-fire

11.27.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

IDF urges Lebanese to stay north of the Litani at night & avoid Israeli forces

11.27.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Hezbollah claims victory over Israel, chanting for Shiites who ran Israelis from Galilee

11.27.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Forces nab Iran buried cache of arms smuggled for West Bank terror in Jenin

11.27.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Lebanon cease-fire, push Hamas to ready a deal through Egypt, Qatar & Turkey

11.27.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

North residents fear return despite cease-fire; harder moving in mid-school exams

11.27.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Appeals for Erdogan to mediate Hamas hostage deal, as Turkey chants Death to Israel

11.27.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

ICC decision, equating Israel to Hamas, breaches its own principles of justice

11.27.24 – We- - - News Placed in November 27 spot – Wednesday

IDF withdraw from Lebanon within 60 days, UNIFIL replaces by January 27

11.27.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Cease-fire in Lebanon began 4 am: 3 provisions of agreement, and US guarantees

11.26.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Netanyahu on Lebanon only cease-fire: 'I promised victory and we will achieve victory'

11.26.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Police arrested woman smuggling 6,000 M-16 bullets from north to West Bank

11.26.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Northern Israel not ready for political game or defeatist agreement full of concessions

11.26.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Israel & US team Dershowitz, Cuomo, Cotler, Freeh & Levin challenge ICC morality

11.26.24 – Tu- - - News Placed in November 26 spot – Tuesday

Lebanon media announced cease-fire to be after 10 pm, as IDF reached Litani River

11.26.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Netanyahu may not appeal ICC warrants, but wait for Trump to pressure court

11.25.24 – Mo- - - News Placed in November 25 spot – Monday

US agreement surrenders Israel & allows Hezbollah to prepare for next war

11.25.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Disaster in Red Sea: Tourist ship sinks off Egyptian coast; 17 travelers missing

11.25.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Rabbi murdered in the UAE similar to Rabbi killed in Mumbai 16 years ago

11.24.24 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Cease-fire subject to approval by Cabinet, some issues possible within the week

11.24.24 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Amid war, these Israeli universities shine in global rankings

11.24.24 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Hezbollah targets Galilee & Haifa areas, 2nd time Sunday, over 150 rockets

11.24.24 – Su- - - News Placed in November 24 spot – Sunday

Iran reverse-engineered US & Israeli missiles, provide proxies with modern technology

11.24.24 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Court remands settler after attack on IDF & Police in Hebron, three others released

11.23.24 – Sa- - - News – Saturday

UAE Chabad emissary's car abandoned; suspected killed by Iran-linked cell

11.23.24 – Sa- - - News Placed in November 23 spot – Saturday

Israel strike on Beirut apartment fails to kill Hezbollah operations chief

11.23.24 – Sa- - - News – Saturday

IDF strikes Beirut, 8-story building brought down, teaming with people