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# Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update November 16, 2023

*JINSA's [Israel at War](#) webpage is a dedicated resource for analysis, commentary, webinars, and media coverage about the 10/7 attacks and the ensuing Israel-Hamas conflict. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below.*

## Analysis

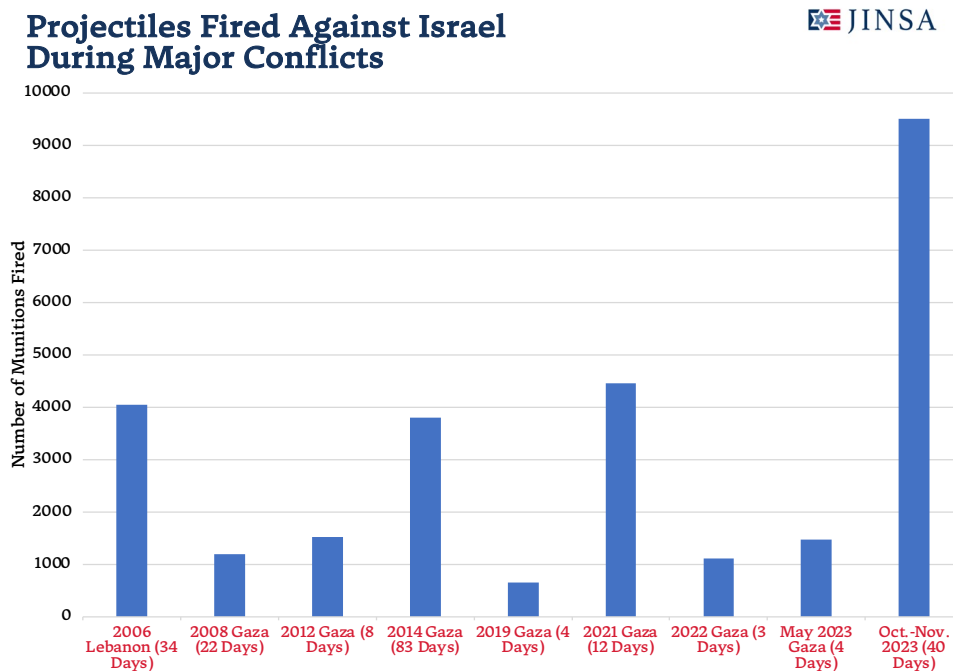
- Multiple recent polls detailed in this update show that an overwhelming majority of Americans continue to support Israel and its actions since October 7 to defeat Hamas, while there may be some indication that support for Israel's war effort is waning.
  - » A [Marist/PBS News Hour/NPR](#) poll from November 6-9 showed 55% of Americans believe Israel's response has been either appropriate (38%) or "too little" (17%), while 38% think Israel's military response has gone too far.
  - » According to a [Reuters/Ipsos poll](#) from November 13-14, 57% of Americans view Israel favorably, a 7% drop from October. When asked what role the United States should play in the war, one in three Americans say it should support Israel, which is a 9% drop from October. Meanwhile, the number who say the United States should be a neutral mediator rose 12% since October, up to 39%.
- The United States refused to vote yes on a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for [humanitarian pauses and corridors](#) over multiple days because it did not condemn Hamas, but it also did not veto the resolution, allowing it to pass.

## Last 24 Hours

### *Attacks Against Israel*

- About [9,500](#) rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Gaza during the war.
  - » Sirens [sounded](#) in Ashkelon, Kiryat Shmona, and the Gaza Envelope, as well as other locations in southern Israel.
- Terrorists in Lebanon resumed their barrages of locations in northern Israel over the last 24 hours.
  - » On November 16, terrorists in Lebanon [fired](#) three anti-tank missiles at the Israeli community of Misgav Am.

- » Israeli media outlets [reported](#) on November 15 that a barrage of 20 rockets was launched from Lebanon towards Israel’s northern Upper Galilee region, with 15 rockets landing in open spaces near the city of Kiryat Shmona. No damage or injuries were reported.
- » On November 16, sirens [sounded](#) in Shtula and other locations in northern Israel.
- An apparent [terrorist attack](#) by three gunmen at the West Bank tunnel road checkpoint south of Jerusalem wounded at least four people. All three attackers were reportedly shot and neutralized.
  - » Israel’s internal security service, the Shin Bet, [blamed](#) Hamas for the attack and identified two of the three assailants. One of the attackers, Abed el-Khader Kawasme, 26, was the son of Abdallah Kawasma, who was the head of Hamas’s military wing in Hebron and was killed in 2003. Another assailant was Hassan Mamoun Qafisha, 28, whose uncle was a Hamas member that was expelled to Turkey in 2011.



### *IDF Operations*

- The IDF continued its ground operations in northern Gaza, including at the Shifa Hospital compound, in search of Hamas terrorists, infrastructure, and assets over the last 24 hours.
  - » The IDF announced on November 15 that their troops [located](#) various weapons belonging to Hamas hidden within the Shifa Hospital in Gaza. The weapons included guns and ammunition, as well as Hamas military uniforms.
    - According to a *Times of Israel* report, elite Israeli military units specifically [“found](#) the weapons inside Shifa’s MRI center.”
    - IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari also acknowledged that IDF personnel discovered Hamas military uniforms scattered on the hospital floor “so that the terrorists could escape in civilian guise.”

- In a gunfight outside the Shifa Hospital, the IDF shot and killed five Hamas terrorists.
- On November 16, the IDF [allowed](#) foreign reporters to accompany troops in the Shifa Hospital, including *Fox News's* Trey Yingst, who posted videos documenting where the military discovered weapons.
- » Overnight on November 16, an IDF aircraft [bombed](#) the Gaza home of exiled Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, who currently resides in Qatar. Hamas had previously claimed on two occasions that Israel struck Haniyeh's home, but this was the strike the IDF confirmed.
- » On November 16, the IDF [said](#) that the Nahal Brigade's reconnaissance unit located and eliminated weapons belonging to Hamas's naval forces in Gaza City's al-Shati camp. The IDF found diving equipment, firearms, and explosive devices, and paratroopers found additional arms in northern Gaza following a gun battle, including suicide vests, other explosive devices, RPGs, anti-tank missiles, and intelligence documents.
- » On November 16, Israel's naval commandos unit, Shayetet 13, took control of Gaza's [main dock area](#) from Hamas, where it killed ten terrorists, as well as discovered ten tunnel shafts and destroyed them.
- The IDF struck terrorist cells in Lebanon that were responsible for attacks against Israel over the last 24 hours.
  - » On November 16, the IDF [targeted](#) several weapons depots, observation posts, military infrastructure, and launch positions in Lebanon, including one site where terrorists had fired an anti-tank missile at Israel on November 15.
  - » On November 16, the IDF [fired](#) artillery toward a terror cell in Lebanon firing anti-tank missiles toward Israel.
  - » On November 16, Israeli aircraft targeted Hezbollah cells in Lebanon and published [videos](#) of the strikes.

### *Casualties and Hostages*

- Over 1,200 people in Israel have been [killed](#), and another 6,900 have been injured in the war.
  - » [371](#) Israeli soldiers have been killed.
    - 48 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
    - Two IDF soldiers were [killed](#), and four were seriously wounded during combat operations in Gaza on November 14.
  - » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 32 [American](#) nationals, 34 [Thai](#) nationals, 39 [French](#) nationals, 17 [British](#) nationals, 10 [Nepalese](#) nationals, 7 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 16 [Russian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, 4 [Chinese](#) nationals, 3 [Brazilian](#) nationals, 3 [Belarusian](#) nationals, 3 [Philippines](#) nationals, 2 [Ukrainian](#) nationals, 2 [Peruvian](#) nationals, 5 [Canadian](#) nationals, a [Cambodian](#) national, a [Colombian](#) national, an [Irish](#) national, an [Italian](#) national, a [Spanish](#) national, a [Swiss](#) national, a [Turkish](#) national, and an [Austrian](#) national.
- According to unverified figures from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry, more than 11,500 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 29,800 have been injured during the war.

- » On October 25, President Biden [cautioned](#) against trusting Gaza Health Ministry casualty figures, stating: “I have no notion that the Palestinians are telling the truth about how many people are killed ... I have no confidence in the number that the Palestinians are using.”
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, [at least 190](#) people have been killed, and [at least 2,700](#) have been wounded in the West Bank.
- The IDF [claims](#) that it has killed at least 1,500 infiltrators from Gaza since the start of the war.
- According to the IDF, terrorists in Gaza currently hold [238](#) individuals as hostages.
- Foreign nationals also remain missing, including at least 11 [American](#) nationals, 9 [French](#) nationals, 15 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 9 [Ukrainian](#) nationals, 8 [Russian](#) nationals, 3 [Canadian](#) nationals, 3 [Philippines](#) nationals, 2 [Austrian](#) nationals, 3 [Italian](#) nationals, 2 [Paraguayan](#) nationals, 5 [Peruvian](#) nationals, 2 [Sri Lankan](#) nationals, 2 [Tanzanian](#) nationals, a [Chilean](#) national, an [Azeri](#) national, and a [Nepalese](#) national.
  - » At least 8 [German](#) nationals, 23 [Thai](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 3 [British](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, 3 [Romanian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals have been taken hostage.

#### *Humanitarian Efforts*

- Turkey’s health minister, Fahrettin Koca, [said](#) on November 15 that 26 Gazan patients and 13 friends or family of the patients have entered Egypt and will be taken to Turkey for medical treatment.
  - » Koca added that Turkey is planning to set up a field hospital near the Rafah crossing, though it was not specified whether this would be on the Egyptian or Gazan side of the border.
- On November 15, Hamas spokesperson for the Rafah border crossing, Wael Abou Omar, [said](#) that 644 people, including 587 dual nationals, 37 injured or sick people, and 20 others accompanying them, entered Egypt through the Rafah crossing that day.
- The United Arab Emirates will [construct](#) three desalination plants in southern Gaza, and according to WAM news, “[t]he production capacity of each plant is 200,000 gallons per day with a total of 600,000 gallons, benefiting 300,000 people per day.”

#### *Iranian Involvement and Response*

- On November 15, the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen were likely responsible for launching a [drone](#) into airspace above the Red Sea.
- On November 15, *Reuters* [reported](#), citing anonymous officials familiar with the discussions, that Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in early November that because Hamas did not provide Iran with advance warning of the 10/7 attack, Iran will not enter the war.
  - » Khamenei also reportedly urged Haniyeh to silence members of Hamas asking Iran and Hezbollah to enter the fighting against Israel in full force.
  - » Insinuating Hezbollah’s surprise at the 10/7 attack, a Hezbollah commander reportedly said that “we woke up to a war.”

- An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report that *The Associated Press* [obtained](#) indicates that Iran has increased its stockpile of almost weapons-grade uranium.
  - » According to the report, Iran has approximately 128.3 kilograms, or 282.9 pounds, of uranium enriched up to 60 percent purity. The IAEA's September report indicated that Iran's stockpile was 6.7 kilograms lower at the time.

### *U.S. and International Response*

- On November 15, *CBS News* [reported](#) that the U.S. naval guided missile destroyer the *USS Thomas Hudner* had shot down the drone fired from Yemen—almost certainly by Iran-backed Houthis—over the Red Sea earlier that day.
  - » The U.S. Department of Defense [said](#) in a statement that “on November 15th and while transiting the international waters of the Red Sea, the crew of the *USS Thomas Hudner* (DDG 116) engaged a drone that originated from Yemen and was heading in the direction of the ship. The *Hudner's* crew engaged and shot down the drone to ensure the safety of U.S. personnel. There were no U.S. casualties or any damage to the ship.”
- After meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, U.S. President Joe Biden [said](#) on November 16 that Israel's military operations in Gaza “will end when Hamas no longer maintains the capacity to murder, abuse, and do horrific things to the Israelis.”
  - » Biden added that Israel has “an obligation to use as much caution as they can in going after their targets. Hamas said they plan to attack Israelis again and this is [a] terrible dilemma.”
  - » He reiterated that “one thing has been established: [Hamas] does have headquarters, weapons, materiel, below this hospital, and — I suspect — others,” but Israel must be “incredibly careful” while operating around hospitals.
  - » The president said that he is “mildly hopeful” that negotiators will reach a deal to secure the release of the hostages that Hamas kidnapped on October 7.
    - He elaborated, “I don't want to get ahead of myself here because I don't know what's happened in the last four hours, but we have gotten great cooperation from the Qataris.”
- U.S. National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby [told](#) reporters on November 15 that Hamas is violating international law by operating from Gaza's Shifa Hospital.
  - » Kirby said that “it is a violation of the law of war to headquarter yourself in a hospital.”
  - » Kirby added that Shifa hospital is an “active legitimate hospital ... we want patients to be as protected as possible.”
- During their November 15 meeting, President Biden [urged](#) President Xi to take advantage of China's significant influence to calm international tensions and to pressure Iran to eschew expanding the Israel-Hamas war.
  - » An unnamed U.S. official said that it was too soon to tell what China is saying to Iran regarding the matter.
  - » Biden also urged Xi to continue abstaining from providing Russia with military aid for use in Ukraine.
- On November 15, the United Nations Security Council [passed](#) a resolution drafted by Malta calling for extended humanitarian pauses and corridors in Gaza.

- » The resolution calls for “urgent and extended humanitarian pauses throughout the Gaza Strip for a sufficient number of days to enable, consistent with international humanitarian law, the full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access for United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners.”
- » The resolution also calls for the release of “all hostages held by Hamas and other groups, especially children” and calls on all parties to “refrain from depriving the civilian population in the Gaza strip [sic] of basic services and humanitarian assistance.”
- » The United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia abstained from the measure.
- » U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield [explained](#) on November 16 that the United States could not vote yes because the resolution “did not condemn Hamas or reaffirm the right of all Member States to protect their citizens from terrorist attacks.”
  - She acknowledged further that the resolution will not affect the situation on the ground, and the administration is working with international actors to secure the release of hostages held by Hamas and contain the war.
  - The ambassador also endorsed a post-war arrangement in which the Palestinian Authority governs both a unified West Bank and Gaza Strip, working toward an eventual two-state solution.
- Following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s insistence that “this killing of women, of children, of babies” in Gaza must cease, Israeli war cabinet minister Benny Gantz [spoke](#) with him on November 15 and argued that Hamas continues to exploit Palestinians as human shields.
  - » Gantz insisted that the war is integral to Israel’s security and that Israel must “change the reality in the region,” and Israel is fighting “against an enemy that cruelly massacred women, the elderly, and children, and who holds babies hostage while preventing Gazan residents from evacuating to safe areas where humanitarian supplies and medical care is available.”
  - » Trudeau emphasized his “years of support for Israel and its right to defend itself,” the need to secure the release of the hostages, and the importance of humanitarian aid deliveries to the Gaza Strip.
  - » Both leaders affirmed that it is their “joint obligation” to combat antisemitism.
- On November 16, Germany [conducted](#) raids in seven regions in the country, targeting the Hamburg Islamic Center and five affiliates, which have suspected ties with Hezbollah.
  - » Federal Minister of the Interior and Community of Germany Nancy Faeser said, “at a time when numerous Jews feel particularly threatened,” Germany will not tolerate “Islamist propaganda nor antisemitic incitement hostile to Israel.”
- French President Emmanuel Macron [condemned](#) the “bombardment of civilians ... and civilian infrastructure” on November 15, without specifying whether he was criticizing Israeli or Hamas actions in the war.
  - » Macron said at a press conference that “we condemn in the strongest terms all bombardment of civilians and in particular civilian infrastructure, which must be protected.”
  - » Macron stated that “we completely recognize Israel’s right to defend itself and to fight against terrorism. But because Israel is a democracy ... this right to self defense must be

exercised within the framework of international humanitarian law, and while respecting the rules of war.”

- Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin [spoke](#) by phone on November 15 to discuss the war.
  - » According to a U.S. readout, the two discussed “Israel’s operations against Hamas. The Secretary reiterated his steadfast support for Israel’s defense and emphasized the need to protect civilians, increase humanitarian aid delivery, and ensure military operations comply with international humanitarian law.”
- According to multiple recent polls, Americans continue to support Israel and its operations against Hamas in Gaza, while that support may have waned since the war began.
  - » A [Marist/PBS News Hour/NPR](#) poll from November 6-9 showed 55% of Americans believe Israel’s response has been appropriate (38%) or has been “too little” (17%), while 38% think Israel’s military response has gone too far.
    - According to the poll, 61% of Americans sympathize with Israelis compared to 30% who sympathize with Palestinians.
  - » According to a [Reuters/Ipsos poll](#) from November 13-14, 57% of Americans view Israel favorably, a 7% drop from October’s 64%. When asked what role the United States should play in the war, one in three Americans say it should support Israel, which is a 9% drop from October’s 41% and 39% say it should be a neutral mediator, which is up 12% from October’s 27%.
  - » A [YouGov poll](#) from November 8-9 showed that more Americans sympathize with Israelis than Palestinians by 37-15%, while 27% said they sympathize with both sides.
  - » A [Fox News poll](#) from November 10-13 found 66% of Americans side more with Israel and 22% with the Palestinians. 66% support sending military aid to Israel and 37% oppose it.

### *Rising Antisemitism and Protests*

- On November 16, a car [crashed](#) into a temporary barricade near the Israeli Embassy in Tokyo, Japan. Japanese police refused to confirm details of the incident.
- On November 16, a truck belonging to JewBelong, a national nonprofit organization, which displayed the message “Let’s be clear: Hamas is your problem too,” was [vandalized](#) on the George Washington University campus. According to the organization, a person shouted, “Free Palestine,” and threw a large rock at the truck.
- On November 15, a synagogue in Yerevan, Armenia, was [set on fire](#). According to Azerbaijani media, the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On November 15, U.S. Capitol Police [reported](#) that about 150 anti-Israel demonstrators were “illegally and violently protesting” near the Democratic National Committee (DNC) Headquarters.
  - » Six officers [sustained](#) injuries “ranging from minor cuts to being pepper sprayed to being punched.” One protester was arrested.
- On November 15, the *Washington Post* [reported](#) a Montgomery County teacher “may be on leave” after she posted false claims on social media that the October 7 terrorist attacks were a hoax and that Israel was stealing organs, among other falsehoods.

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- Ari Cicurel, [Iranian Regime Continues Escalation, Despite Limited U.S. Strikes](#), November 9, 2023
- Webinar: [Gaza Update](#), with JINSA President and CEO Michael Makovsky, JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, and JINSA Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, November 9, 2023
- Webinar: [Hamas's Assault and the Antisemitic Aftermath](#), with Michael Makovsky, JINSA President and CEO, and Natan Sharansky, Chairman of The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy and Former Deputy Prime Minister of Israel, November 8, 2023
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- Yoni Tobin, [U.S. Aid to Gaza Almost Certain to End Up in Hamas Hands](#), November 6, 2023
- Thomas Trask and Jacob Olidort, "[The Case for Upgrading Israel's 'Major Non-NATO Ally' Status](#)," *RealClearDefense*, November 6, 2023