



Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update November 3, 2023

Yoni Tobin
Policy Analyst

Zachary Schildcrout
Policy Analyst

Anna Schafel
Programs and Outreach Associate

On October 7, Hamas launched an unprovoked and unprecedented multi-pronged attack on Israel by land, air, and sea. JINSA has launched a webpage dedicated to its commentary, webinars, and media coverage about [Israel at War](#). Yesterday, JINSA hosted a [webinar](#) with JINSA President and CEO Dr. Michael Makovsky, IDF Major General (ret.) and JINSA Distinguished Fellow Yaakov Amidror, and JINSA Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF Major General (ret.) Yaacov Ayish to discuss developments in Israel's war against Hamas. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below, which JINSA will regularly produce.

Analysis

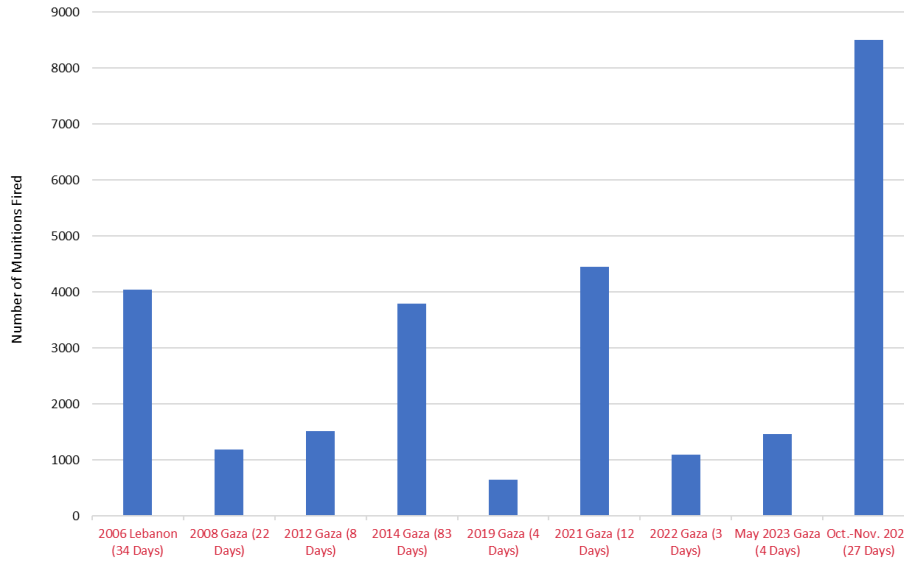
- In a November 2 webinar, JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF Major General (ret.) Yaakov Amidror argued that a ceasefire would be strategically disadvantageous for Israel: “A ceasefire now would stop the momentum of the offensive [and] would be a huge mistake. It would be against all the rules of war to have a ceasefire now... A pause on the whole battlefield would be a huge mistake... if there is a need for something limited in a time and area, we have experience doing this.”
 - » He elaborated, “I think that Americans are emphasizing the issue of the humanitarian crisis that they want to avoid... I know that Americans want to bring gas, oil in... from our calculation, there is no shortage of both in the Gaza Strip. Hamas keeps a huge amount of that for itself.”
 - » JINSA Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF Major General (ret.) Yaacov Ayish noted that rocket fire from Gaza has diminished in recent days: “You can see a very significant decline in the number of rockets that are launching, although... they are calibrating their timers and triggers and they are able to make them launch while they are away. The number dropped from 350 rockets a day at the beginning to a few dozen today.”
 - » In Lebanon, Ayish argued, “at the strategic level, it seems like [Hezbollah is] stretching the level of escalation to a level at which it would not drag us into total offensive towards Hezbollah.”
- The U.S. House of Representatives [passed](#) a \$14.3 billion aid package for Israel on November 2, an important demonstration of U.S. support for Israel. However, as JINSA has [noted](#), the legislation's political future is uncertain. It is just one of two dueling proposed aid packages for Israel, the other a broader \$106 billion White House request that includes aid for Israel, Ukraine, and other partners to which the Senate has been far more receptive.

- » Senate Foreign Relations Committee chair Ben Cardin (D-MD) [said](#) this week that the House-advanced Israeli aid bill is “a poison pill and non-starter.” And the White House has [threatened](#) to veto the House legislation even if it passes the Senate.
- » Read the differences between the two packages and what is included for Israel in each in this [JINSA analysis](#).

Last 24 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least [8,500](#) rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Gaza during the war.
 - » Sirens [sounded](#) in Kerem Shalom, Kissufim, Ashdod, and Be'er Sheva, as well as other locations in southern Israel.
 - » Families of Israeli hostages have reportedly [received](#) Hebrew text messages from senders who claim to be from Hamas's Al-Qassam Brigades that say, “we have offered your government a prisoner swap, but it was not accepted,” and “this is our message: the release of all Zionist prisoners in exchange for the release of all Palestinian prisoners.”
- Several rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired from Lebanon in the last 24 hours.
 - » On November 3, the IDF [said](#) that an anti-tank guided missile was fired from Lebanon toward Israeli troops in Mattat in northern Israel, causing no injuries.
 - » Hezbollah [claimed](#) that it attacked nineteen Israeli positions along the Lebanese-Israeli border, though Israel has not commented on these claims.
 - » Hamas [claimed](#) responsibility for firing twelve rockets from southern Lebanon into Israel on November 2.
 - » A rocket [struck](#) a restaurant in Kiryat Shemona on November 2, wounding two people.
 - » The IDF [said](#) on November 2 that the Iranian militia Imam Hossein Brigade deployed from Syria to Lebanon to assist Hezbollah.



IDF Operations

- The IDF continued ground operations against Hamas cells in Gaza in the last 24 hours.
 - » IDF forces have begun [encircling](#) Gaza City, according to a November 2 statement from IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi, who stated that IDF troops are in the “heart of a ground operation in the northern Gaza Strip.”
 - Halevi added, “our forces are fighting in a built-up arena, which is crowded, complex and requires professional fighting and a lot of bravery.”
 - IDF forces are focused on bisecting the Gaza Strip in order to isolate terrorist targets in the northern part of the strip, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) on November 2, citing senior Israeli military officials.
 - » According to Israeli media reports on November 2, citing a senior IDF Southern Command officer, approximately 100 tunnels have already been [destroyed](#) in Gaza. The report added that IDF Army engineers have begun to use a variety of assets, including robots, to destroy Hamas’s tunnels and detonate booby traps set by Hamas near tunnel entrances.
 - » On November 3, the IDF [announced](#) that it eliminated Mustafa Dalul, a battalion commander in Hamas’s Gaza City Brigade.
 - » On November 3, the IDF [said](#) that the Golani Brigade’s 13th Battalion and the Armored Corps’ 53rd Battalion fought several terrorist cells in Gaza overnight and directed aircraft and artillery strikes to neutralize the terrorists.
- The IDF stated that it launched several strikes on targets in Lebanon in the last 24 hours.
 - » The IDF [fired](#) artillery toward the source of the anti-tank guided missile attack against troops in Mattat.
 - » On November 2, the IDF [retaliated](#) against targets in Lebanon after earlier rocket attacks, striking Hezbollah infrastructure targets, command and control centers, rocket launching posts, weapons depots, and military compounds.
 - » According to Lebanese news outlets, four people were [killed](#) in the strikes.

- The IDF [carried out](#) raids across the West Bank overnight, arresting dozens of suspected terrorists, including suspected Hamas members.
 - » According to unverified Palestinian sources, ten Palestinians were [killed](#) in the raids and dozens were injured.



Source: War Mapper ([@War Mapper](#))

Casualties and Hostages

- Over [1,400](#) people in Israel have been killed and another [5,431](#) have been injured in the war.
 - » [339](#) Israeli soldiers have been killed.
 - 24 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza.
 - Five IDF soldiers were [killed in the past 24 hours during ground combat in Gaza](#).
 - » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 32 [American](#) nationals, 30 [Thai](#) nationals, 21 [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 [Chilean](#) 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, 9,200 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza and [at least 32,000](#) 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, [145](#) people have been killed and approximately 2,100 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's latest press release, the families of [241](#) individuals have been notified that their loved ones were taken hostage.
- 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, 20 [Thai](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals have been taken hostage.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah will [deliver](#) remarks on November 3, his first public address since the war began.
- Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh traveled to Iran on November 2, [according](#) to IDF spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari.
- *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) on November 2, citing senior U.S. defense officials, that the Wagner Group is considering providing Hezbollah with an SA-22 air defense system.
 - » The SA-22 uses anti-aircraft missiles and guns to shoot down aircraft up to a [range](#) of 12 miles.
- Reports on November 3 [indicated](#) that the Iran-backed Islamic Resistance in Iraq militia coalition announced that “intense and expansive” attacks against U.S. bases and troops in the region will begin next week.

U.S. and International Response

- The House of Representatives voted on November 2 to [approve](#) an [aid package](#) of \$14.3 billion to Israel. The House voted 226 to 196 in approval of the legislation.
 - » Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has [said](#) that he will not take up the legislation, and the White House has threatened to veto the legislation even if it does pass the Senate, so the likelihood of the legislation becoming law is low.
 - » Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) said in a statement that the legislation is “necessary and critical assistance as Israel fights for its right to exist ... with antisemitism on the rise both domestically and abroad, it’s imperative that the U.S. sends a message to the world that threats made against Israel and the Jewish people will be met with strong opposition.”
- On October 31, the United States [redeployed](#) two nuclear-capable hypersonic B-1B Lancer bombers from the United Kingdom’s Fairford Royal Air Force Base to a base in Turkey.
 - » According to the U.S. military’s European Command (EUCOM), the deployment was “long-planned.”
- On November 2, *Reuters* [reported](#) that, according to two U.S. officials, the United States has deployed surveillance drones over Gaza to attempt to locate hostages that Hamas abducted on October 7. Reportedly, the flights have been underway for more than one week.
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [arrived](#) in Israel on November 3 to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other top Israeli officials. Blinken [laid out](#) several agenda items for his trip to Israel:

- » strategizing Israel’s military campaign in Gaza;
- » containing the fighting so that it does not spread regionally;
- » increasing humanitarian aid flow to Gaza;
- » helping American citizens and foreign nationals leave Gaza;
- » securing the release of every hostage Hamas is holding; and
- » “setting the conditions” for a two-state solution once the war ends.
- » Secretary Blinken will also reportedly [urge](#) the Israeli government to agree to a series of pauses in IDF military operations.
- On November 2, Secretary Blinken [said](#) before departing for Israel, “Israel has not only the right but the obligation to defend itself and also to take steps to try to make sure that this never happens again,” and Hamas is “quite literally” at fault for civilian casualties because of the group’s use of human shields.
 - » He also said that “we’ve also said very clearly and repeatedly that how Israel does this matters. We’ve seen in recent days Palestinian civilians continuing to bear the brunt of this action, and... We want to look at concrete steps that can be taken to better protect them.”
- Secretary Blinken and his deputies are [speaking](#) with their counterparts in Arab states about the governance of Gaza after Israel concludes its military operations, *The Wall Street Journal* reported on November 2.
- Bahrain’s parliament [issued](#) a statement on November 2 that the country had severed economic ties with Israel, expelled the Israeli ambassador to Bahrain, and recalled the Bahraini ambassador to Israel.
 - » The statement [said](#) that the actions “confirmed Bahrain’s historic position in support of the Palestinian cause” and that “the [Bahraini] parliament affirms that the continuation of war and military operations, and the continuing Israeli escalation in light of the lack of respect for international humanitarian law, prompts it to demand more decisions and measures that preserve the lives of innocent people and civilians in Gaza and all Palestinian areas.”
 - » Israel said it had no knowledge of ties being downgraded, and Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Lior Haiat [issued](#) a statement that “we would like to clarify that no notification or decision has been received from the Bahraini government or the Israeli government to recall the countries’ ambassadors,” and “the relations between Israel and Bahrain are stable.”
- The Palestinian Red Crescent said that 102 trucks containing humanitarian aid [crossed](#) the Rafah crossing from Egypt to Gaza on November 2, the largest quantity in one day since the crossing’s opening on October 21.
 - » The trucks contained food, water, relief supplies, medicine, and medical equipment, but no fuel.

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- Jonathan Ruhe, “[Deterrence Through Strength](#),” *The Dispatch*, November 2, 2023
- Webinar: [Gaza Update](#) with JINSA President and CEO Dr. Michael Makovsky, JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, and JINSA Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, November 2, 2023

- Matt Kenney, [Emergency Supplemental Funding for Israel – The Current State of Play](#), November 1, 2023
- Dr. Michael Makovsky [Appearance](#) on *Live Now Fox*, November 1, 2023