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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update January 24, 2024

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.

Beginning January 22, JINSA will release the Swords of Iron Update on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Analysis

- January 22 marked the [deadliest day](#) for Israeli forces since the war began, with 24 IDF soldiers killed in combat in Gaza on that day. Two rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) fired at Israeli troops triggered explosions that killed 21 IDF soldiers, and three other soldiers were killed in other attacks on that day. These attacks and the rising casualties among the IDF indicate that Hamas and other Palestinian terrorists still maintain the capability to endanger Israelis.
- The United States and the United Kingdom, with several other nations providing support, have continued striking Houthi targets in Yemen. The United States has assigned a [name](#) to the operation, "Poseidon Archer," likely indicating a more developed and long-term approach to targeting the Iran-backed terrorist group than the hitherto discrete airstrikes.
 - » In tandem with Operation Prosperity Guardian, the U.S.-led multinational task force to protect shipping through the Red Sea, the United States now has at least two organized operations conducting offensive and defensive missions in the waters near Yemen with the specific missions of countering the Houthis' attacks.
 - » Previous U.S.-led strikes had neither degraded the Iran-backed Houthis enough to prevent them from targeting ships in Middle Eastern waters nor deterred them from continuing these attacks. In addition to targeting the Houthis' ability to launch attacks against ships in the Red Sea, to deter the group, military efforts should also target the Houthis' ability to maintain control over territory in Yemen.
- During a JINSA [webinar](#) on January 23 about the competing demands of the U.S. defense industrial base, Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) argued that "you do have to throw money at the problem, but my supposition is that predictability is the most important thing. When you're just talking about critical munitions, you're not just talking about a lot of extra money on the topline ... if you had just an extra \$10 billion a year over the course of the five-year defense

plan ... I think you could see a massive increase in the top ten munitions that we think are a priority.”

- » JINSA Counselor Amb. Eric Edelman noted, “we have serious shortfalls when it comes to our stockpile of munitions ... We also have now the draw of the Hamas fight that Israel is in, which competes now a little bit for artillery rounds ... and we’ve got a \$19 billion backlog of military equipment that we are meant to be supplying Taiwan.”

Last 48 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least 13,000 rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been [fired](#) at Israel during the war.

Gaza

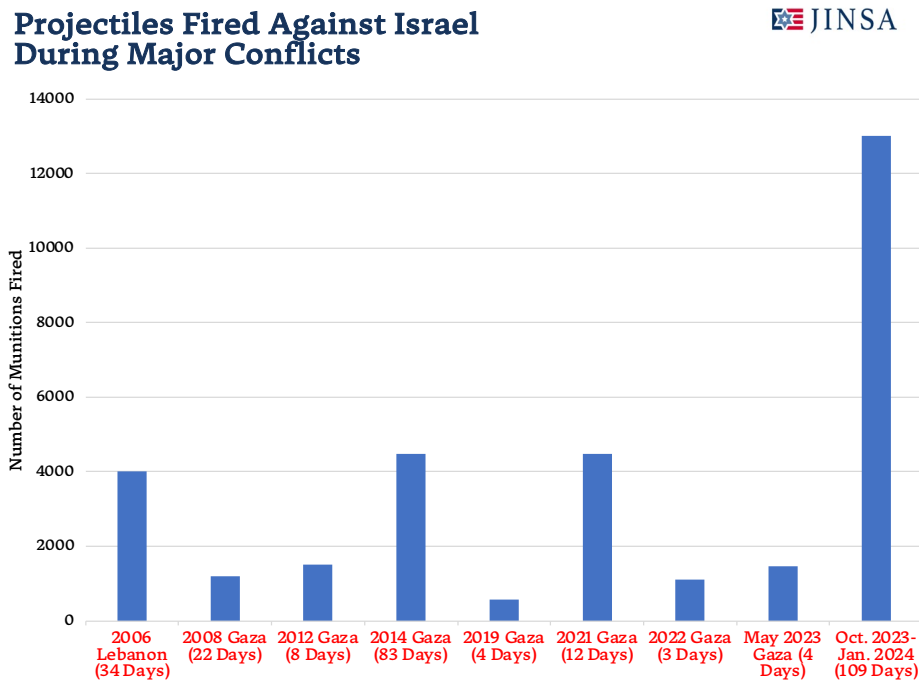
- On January 23, the U.K.-based *Asharq al-Awsat* [reported](#) that since 2009 Hamas has utilized an extensive covert telecommunications system in its tunnels, involving underground switchboards connected to conventional landlines above ground at various points. Hamas operatives reportedly relied on the network for communication with Hamas leaders outside of Gaza when they negotiated the week-long ceasefire deal with Israel in November.
 - » The report stated that Hamas relied on the network from 2009, when Hamas engineers first set it up (likely with smuggled equipment), until October 2023. After the October 7 attack, the report noted that Hamas operatives abandoned the network as a method for communicating among themselves in Gaza, resorting instead to passing paper messages to one another transported by Hamas members within Gaza.
 - » The report also stated that prior to October 7, Hamas operatives used the telecommunications system to communicate with Hamas leaders abroad. However, the report alleged that due to fears of communications being intercepted, Hamas leaders in Gaza have minimized their consultations with parties outside of Gaza and now have the final say on decisions relating to hostage swaps and ceasefire deals.
 - » The communications network was periodically maintained with new technological equipment, likely smuggled in from Egypt.
 - » According to the report, Israel has attempted to disrupt this network on multiple occasions since it was established—including blowing up a communications hub in Gaza in an operation in May 2018 that killed several Hamas engineers and a failed special forces mission in November 2018—but has not been successful at entirely degrading the system.
- On January 22, Hamas operatives [fired](#) an RPG toward a building from a nearby plantation, triggering the building’s collapse and killing 19 IDF soldiers. A subsequent RPG launch targeting an IDF tank whose operatives attempted to return fire killed two soldiers.
 - » Mines that the IDF placed within the building were likely activated from the RPG blast, destroying the structure.
 - » IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#) on January 23, when asked about the attack, that “there are still isolated terror cells close to the border” between Israel and Gaza, and that small terror cells “will continue to accompany us and it will be necessary to constantly go back and deepen the achievement.”

Lebanon

- Rockets struck [Mount Meron](#), and sirens sounded in [Arab al-Aramshe, Idmit, Eilon, and Goren](#).
- On January 23, Hezbollah [fired](#) twelve rockets at an Israeli Air Force air traffic control base located on Mount Meron. Israeli air defenses intercepted four, and six landed in open areas.
- On January 23, terrorists in Lebanon [fired](#) around 15 rockets toward Israeli towns near the Lebanese border, with no reports of injuries or damage.

West Bank

- According to the IDF, reservists [killed](#) a Palestinian gunman who opened fire on them while the soldiers guarded a highway in the West Bank town of Antaba.



IDF Operations

Gaza

- On January 24, the IDF [said](#) that in the southern Gazan city of Khan Younis, soldiers are “increasing the pressure” on Hamas and destroying “many terror cells.”
- On January 23, Israel’s *Kan* network [reported](#) that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told cabinet ministers that “it will take six months for the army to finish the third phase of the war, which has already begun in the northern Gaza Strip,” and that “as we said that the second part of the massive maneuver would last three months, and so it was, this is how we say that the third part of establishing control will last six months.”
- At a January 23 press conference, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari stated that in western Khan Younis, soldiers had [killed](#) over 100 Hamas operatives that day and destroyed a number of Hamas infrastructure targets.

- On January 23, the IDF [said](#) that 7th Armored Brigade and Givati Brigade troops encircled Khan Younis.
 - » The IDF said that over the course of the day, troops engaged Hamas gunmen and ordered airstrikes on Hamas positions, killing dozens of terrorists.
 - These included Hamas members who were laying explosive devices, operatives who were preparing rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attacks, and operatives who had opened fire on troops.
 - » Soldiers also located rockets prepared to launch and other weapons as well as terror tunnels.
- The IDF [announced](#) on January 23 that the Gaza Division's Southern Brigade reservists completed offensive and defensive operations in the south of Khan Younis.
 - » 630th Reserve Battalion and combat engineer troops jointly located and eliminated Hamas tunnel shafts.
 - » Reservists from the 261st Brigade also eliminated Hamas infrastructure near the Israel-Gaza border.
- On January 23, the IDF [said](#) that it uncovered a Hamas tunnel network in Khan Younis that contained southern Gaza's largest weapons production facility, and combat engineers demolished the tunnel shaft following intense battles.
- On January 22, an Israeli defense delegation [arrived](#) in the United States to discuss arms procurement with U.S. military and defense industry officials.
 - » The delegation will attempt to expedite the years-long process involved with purchasing and transferring fighter jets and helicopters to Israel.
- On January 22, the IDF [initiated](#) a large offensive in western Khan Younis, involving four brigades under the 98th Division's leadership, which commenced with airstrikes against Hamas targets and killed approximately 50 Hamas operatives.
- On January 22, the IDF [said](#) that it raided, and 401st Armored Brigade and combat engineers destroyed, Hamas's al-Jabari outpost in the Daraj and Tuffah neighborhoods of Gaza City, which the IDF called "one of the largest centers for the training of terrorists."
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on January 22 that the IDF sent soldiers equipped with dial-operated transistor radios into a conquered Hamas tunnel to determine the depth at which the radios could no longer receive AM transmissions from Israel, reaching about 10 to 12 meters.

Lebanon

- On January 24, Lebanon's Hezbollah-affiliated media outlet *Al Manar* [reported](#) that Israel was shelling positions in southern Lebanon near the town of Naqoura.
- On January 23, the IDF [said](#) that it destroyed "a military asset used by the Hezbollah terror organization and operated by Iranian forces" in Lebanon, likely a response to Hezbollah's earlier missile attack targeting a northern Israeli air traffic control base.
- The IDF [said](#) that it conducted airstrikes against several targets in five areas of southern Lebanon on January 22. Sites targeted included a building in the Maroun al-Ras area believed to have been housing Hezbollah members and weapons, as well as another military building and three observation posts in the Lebanese towns of Marwahin, Chihine, Taybeh, and Tayr Harfa.

Humanitarian Efforts

- On January 24, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi [said](#) that the Rafah Crossing on the Egyptian-Gaza border is open 24/7, but that Israel is intentionally slowing down the flow of aid with their security procedures. Sisi stated, “this is part of how they exert pressure on the issue of releasing the hostages.”
 - » Israel’s Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) responded in a statement, saying that “Israel’s role in the humanitarian aid operation for Gaza is one: Inspecting the aid for security reasons. Our inspection process is efficient, with us scaling up our capacities to maximize inspection capabilities. There is no limit to the amount of aid that can enter Gaza.”
- On January 23, U.S. National Security Council Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk [visited](#) Cairo for discussions aimed at securing the release of hostages held by Hamas from Gaza and a humanitarian pause.
- American, British, and European officials are urging Israel to permit humanitarian aid to transit from Cyprus to the Ashdod port to Gaza via the Kerem Shalom crossing, according to a *New York Times* [report](#) from January 21.
 - » U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken reportedly advocated for the policy during discussions in Israel earlier in January.
- On January 23, according to an unnamed Egyptian official who discussed the matter with the Associated Press, Hamas [rejected](#) a [ceasefire deal](#) that Israel proposed on January 22 that would have included a two-month cessation of hostilities and an exchange of all of the hostages within Gaza for Palestinian prisoners within Israel.
 - » An Israeli official [told](#) Israeli media on January 24 that “the reports of progress in the talks and a breakthrough are incorrect,” and “there are very large gaps and no progress in the talks. It is very complicated and there is a constant hardening of positions on the part of Hamas. No one should be fooled—it will take a long time.”
- On January 23, Reuters [reported](#), citing three sources, that Israel and Hamas broadly agreed on the general parameters of a hostage deal, namely the phased release of Israeli hostages in exchange for the release of Palestinians from Israeli prisons and a month-long fighting pause. However, negotiations have reportedly stalled over how to bring an end to the war, as Hamas is insisting on a permanent ceasefire.
 - » According to the report, negotiations have focused on a sequential release of different categories of hostages, with civilians being released first and then soldiers at a later phase.
 - » Israel reportedly offered a proposal that included a two-month ceasefire, the safe passage of top Hamas leaders, including Yahya Sinwar, out of Gaza, and the phased release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli custody in exchange for the phased release of all hostages held in Gaza.
 - » The report cites six sources as saying that Hamas rejected Israel’s proposal and refuses to agree to any deal that does not include a permanent ceasefire.
 - » *The Washington Post* [reported](#) on January 23 that the deal would involve three phases, including:

- An initial phase of 10 women and children who were supposed to have been released in last month’s deal;
 - A second phase including the release of 40 sick or elderly hostages released along with female Israeli soldiers; and
 - Finally, a third phase in which the remaining group of roughly 86 male hostages would be released, along with the remains of those hostages in Hamas captivity who have not survived or who were killed on October 7.
- » According to *The Washington Post* report, citing U.S. and Israeli sources, three or more Palestinian prisoners would be released for every one hostage released. The prisoners released would potentially include Marwan Barghouti, one of the [leaders](#) of the Second Intifada.

Post-War Gaza Planning

- On January 24, Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki [said](#) that if Hamas agrees “to our conditions that they have to ... accept all international resolutions pertaining to Palestine” and stops ignoring “Israel’s existence while Israel is there already occupying the whole of Gaza and continuing to occupy ... the West Bank and East Jerusalem,” then “we will do our utmost in order to incorporate them and to turn Hamas into a political party without any military wing.”
- The IDF is considering constructing a one-to-two-kilometer demilitarized zone on the Gaza side of the border because, as JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror said in a January 23 *Semafor* [report](#), “[i]f we want to prevent this [October 7] happening in the future, what we need is a barrier—sort of a no man’s land—a zone in which no one can enter from their side.”
- On January 23rd, Egypt [warned Israel](#) that attempts to take control of the Philadelphi Corridor along the Egyptian-Gaza border to prevent weapons smuggling into Gaza will result in a deterioration of relations between the two countries.
 - » Egyptian State Information Service head Diaa Rashwan said in a statement, “it must be strictly emphasized that any Israeli move in this direction will lead to a serious threat to Egyptian-Israeli relations.”
 - » Rashwan further [stated](#) that allegations that weapons have been smuggled into Gaza from Egypt are “ridiculous accusations” and that “Egypt had destroyed over 1,500 tunnels and reinforced the 14-kilometer (nearly nine miles) long Gaza fence with a concrete wall. There are three roadblocks separating the Sinai from Palestinian Rafah, so no smuggling can take place above or below ground.”
- A January 22 *CNN* report indicated that the head of Israel’s Mossad, David Barnea, [proposed](#) that Hamas leaders could [leave Gaza](#) as a condition for a ceasefire agreement.

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 556 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 219 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.

- The IDF [named](#) 24 soldiers [killed](#) in combat on January 22, including 21 soldiers killed in a Hamas RPG attack. The fallen soldiers included Sgt. Maj. (res.) Matan Lazar, 32, from Haifa; Sgt. First Class (res.) Hadar Kapeluk, 23, from Mevo Beitar; Sgt. Maj. (res.) Sergey Gontmaher, 37, from Ramat Gan; Sgt. First Class (res.) Elkana Yehuda Sfez, from Kiryat Arba; Sgt. First Class (res.) Yuval Lopez, 27, from Alon Shvut; Master Sgt. (res.) Yoav Levi, from Yehud-Monosson; Sgt. First Class (res.) Nicholas Berger, 22, from Jerusalem; Sgt. First Class (res.) Cedrick Garin, 23, from Tel Aviv; Sgt. Maj. (res.) Rafael Elias Mosheyoff, 33, from Pardes Hanna-Karkur; Sgt. Maj. (res.) Barak Haim Ben Valid, 33, from Rishon Lezion; Sgt. First Class (res.) Ahmad Abu Latif, 26, from Rahat; Cpt. (res.) Nir Binyamin, 29, from Givatayim; Master Sgt. (res.) Elkana Vizel, 35, from Bnei Dakalim; Sgt. First Class (res.) Israel Socol, 24, from Karnei Shomron; Cpt. (res.) Ariel Mordechay Wolfsthal, from Elazar; Sgt. First Class (res.) Sagi Idan, 24, from Rosh Haayin; Sgt. Maj. (res.) Mark Kononovich, 35, from Herzliya; Sgt. Maj. (res.) Itamar Tal, 32, from Mesilot; Sgt. Maj. (res.) Adam Bismut, 35, from Karnei Shomron; Sgt. Maj. (res.) Shay Biton Hayun, 40, from Zichron Yaakov; Sgt. Maj. (res.) Daniel Kasau Zegeye, 38, from Yokneam Illi; Maj. David Nati Alfasi, 27, from Beersheba; Maj. Ilay Levi, 24, from Tel Aviv; and Cpt. Eyal Mevorach Twito, 22, from Beit Gamliel.
- » Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 33 [American](#) nationals, 34 [Thai](#) nationals, 39 [French](#) nationals, 19 [Russian](#) nationals, 12 [British](#) nationals, 10 [Nepalese](#) nationals, 9 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 6 [Canadian](#) nationals, 4 [Philippines](#) nationals, 4 [Austrian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 4 [Chinese](#) nationals, 3 [Brazilian](#) nationals, 3 [Belarusian](#) nationals, 3 [Italian](#) nationals, 3 [Peruvian](#) nationals, a [Cambodian](#) national, a [Chilean](#) national, an [Irish](#) national, a [Spanish](#) national, an [Australian](#) national, an [Azeri](#) national, a [Honduran](#) national, a [Swiss](#) national, a [Tanzanian](#) national, and a [Turkish](#) national.
- According to unverified figures from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry, 25,490 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 63,354 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, 370 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 4,348 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.
- So far, [105](#) hostages in Gaza have been released, [one](#) has been rescued by the IDF, [seven](#) have been [found](#) dead, one was [mistakenly](#) killed by the IDF, and one was [killed](#) during an IDF attempt to rescue him.
 - » 81 Israeli hostages have been released.
 - » 46 hostages with foreign nationalities—some also holding Israeli citizenship—have been released.
 - Thus far, 23 [Thai](#) nationals, 6 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 5 [German](#) nationals, 3 [French](#) nationals, 4 [Russian](#) nationals, 1 [Dutch](#) national, 1 [Filipino](#) national, 1 [Mexican](#) national, 1 [Uruguayan](#) national, and 1 [American](#) national have been released.
 - Hamas has released [36 children](#) and still holds two as hostages.

- Terrorists in Gaza currently [hold](#) 136 hostages, according to Israeli government spokesperson Eylon Levy, a figure that includes the dead bodies of 25 hostages and those of four individuals abducted prior to October 7.
 - » Many of the hostages are foreign or dual nationals, including up to 8 [American](#) nationals, 6 [German](#) nationals, 13 [Thai](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 3 [British](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals.
 - » According to IDF spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the 136 hostages [include](#) two Israeli civilians and the bodies of two IDF soldiers held in Gaza since 2014 and 2015.
- According to a January 22 [report](#) in the *New York Times*, the daily death rate among Palestinian civilians has fallen to nearly half of what it was in early December and almost two-thirds since its peak in late October.
- In a January 23 [video statement](#) addressing the deaths of the 21 soldiers killed in Central Gaza on January 22, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi stated, “we share in the grief of their families for the heavy loss, and know that the pain is too great to bear.”
 - » Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and Minister without portfolio Benny Gantz also [delivered](#) a [joint video statement](#) in which they said Israel will continue fighting despite the heavy losses on January 22.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On January 24, an armed drone [targeted](#) a base with U.S. personnel close to Iraq’s Erbil airport.
- On January 24, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) [said](#) that authorities are looking into a reported incident in the Gulf of Aden that occurred 45 nautical miles south of the Yemeni city of Aden.
- On January 23, multiple attack drones [targeted](#) the Ain al-Asad base in Iraq, where U.S. personnel are stationed.
- On January 22, Iran-backed militia [conducted](#) two attacks in Syria and one against Iraq’s Ain al-Asad base, according to a U.S. Department of Defense official.
- European Union Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis said in a [statement](#) on January 23 that trade through the Red Sea has fallen by 22 percent in a month due to Houthi attacks and that this figure may grow “now that shipping companies are rerouting their vessels around the Cape of Good Hope.”
- According to reports from January 23, in a letter dated January 20, the Iran-backed Houthis [ordered](#) all American and British staff of the United Nations and its agencies to prepare to leave Yemen within a month. The letter states that a follow-up letter giving the staff 24 hours to leave the country would be sent a month from January 20.

U.S. and International Response

- On January 24 at approximately 2:30 a.m. local time, the United States launched airstrikes that [struck](#) two Houthi anti-ship missiles that were prepared to launch at targets in the Red Sea.
- On January 24 at 12:15 a.m. local time, the United States launched airstrikes against three facilities of the Iran-backed militia Kataib Hezbollah in response to the group’s attacks

against U.S. personnel. These included a strike on the al-Asad Airbase on January 20 and another on January 24. The U.S. strikes targeted Kataib Hezbollah “headquarters, storage, and training locations for rocket, missile, and one-way attack UAV capabilities,” according to a [statement](#) from U.S. Central Command.

- According to January 24 [reports](#) citing the *Financial Times*’ correspondence with U.S. officials, the United States has asked Chinese officials to pressure Iran to curb the Houthis’ attacks in the Red Sea, yet these diplomatic efforts have not been successful.
- The U.S. Department of Defense [stated](#) on January 23 that since January 11, U.S. strikes in Yemen have resulted in the degradation or destruction of over 25 Houthi missile launch facilities and more than 20 missiles, as well as Houthi drones, vehicles, radars, air surveillance systems, and weapon storage areas.
 - » According to a January 21 *Sky News Arabia* [report](#) citing Yemeni sources, U.S. airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen since early January have killed 75 people, including IRGC and Hezbollah operatives.
 - The report stated that nine of those killed were foreign experts, including three IRGC members and six Hezbollah members.
 - According to the report, most of the casualties occurred during airstrikes targeting Houthi military sites in the cities of Hodeidah, Hajjah, Dhamar, Taiz, and Al-Bayda.
- On January 23, 210 members of Congress signed a [letter](#) organized by Rep. Kathy Manning (D-NC) and Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemning South Africa’s claims that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza.
 - » The signatories “vigorously denounce South Africa’s deeply hostile stance toward Israel and thoroughly reject its charge of genocide” and “urge you [Secretary Blinken] to continue to do the same, to offer Israel all appropriate support in opposing the South African application to the ICJ, and to encourage our allies to join us in speaking out against this unfounded attack on Israel, particularly at the United Nations and in other intergovernmental organizations.”
- A Harvard CAPS-Harris [poll](#) of registered American voters found 83% of respondents said October 7 was a terror attack, while 17% said it was not.
 - » 74% of respondents said Hamas’s attack was genocidal and 75% said Palestinian grievances could not justify the attack. These answers varied widely by age group.
 - » 80% of all respondents said they support Israel more than Hamas.
 - » 69% of those polled said Israel was trying to avoid civilian casualties in Gaza, and 66% said Israel was just trying to defend itself. 34% said they believe Israel was not acting in self-defense and was “committing genocide” in Gaza.
 - » 74% said Hamas would like to commit genocide against Jews in Israel.
 - » 67% said a ceasefire should only happen once Hamas releases the hostages and is removed from power in Gaza.
- On January 22, the United States and the United Kingdom, with support from Australia, Bahrain, Canada, and the Netherlands, [conducted](#) eight missile strikes on Houthi assets in Yemen. The [targets](#) included missile systems and launchers, air defenses, radars, and deeply buried weapons storage facilities.
 - » The United States also revealed that it has [named](#) the ongoing operation against the Houthis in Yemen “Operation Poseidon Archer.”

- On January 22, U.S. National Security Council Spokesperson John Kirby [said](#), “we know that Hamas deliberately uses places like hospitals to store weapons, house their fighters, even to some degree, for command and control. So that places a special need on the Israeli Defense Forces, but also a special burden.”
 - » He also said that Israel has a right to defend itself, but that “we expect them to do so in accordance with international law and to protect innocent people in hospitals, medical staff and patients as well, as much as possible.”
- On January 22, the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) [rejected](#) the Houthis’ claims to have launched a missile that struck the U.S.-flagged cargo ship *Ocean Jazz*.
- Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, commander of the U.S Navy Fifth Fleet, [stated](#) on January 22 that Iran is “very directly involved” in Houthi attacks targeting commercial ships throughout the Israel-Hamas war. Cooper told the Associated Press that Iran’s distribution of weapons to proxies extends from the Red Sea to the far reaches of the Indian Ocean.
 - » Since November, the Iran-backed Houthis have conducted at least 40 strikes on international shipping, according to JINSA’s [Iran Projectile Tracker](#).
- On January 22, the United States and United Kingdom [froze](#) the assets of and implemented travel bans against five “key figures”—Zuheir Shamlakh, Ahmed Sharif Abdallah Odeh, Ismail Barhoum, Hassan Al-Wardian, and Jamil Yusuf Ahmad Aliyan—and an entity implicated in Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) leadership and financing, according to the British government.
- On January 22, the U.S. Department of Defense [identified](#) the two Navy SEAL operators who died intercepting Iranian supplies for the Houthis as Navy Special Warfare Operator 2nd Class Nathan Gage Ingram and Navy Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Christopher J. Chambers.
- On January 22, the United States [announced](#) sanctions on Iraqi airline Fly Baghdad, claiming that it had assisted Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Iranian regime proxies.
 - » According to the U.S. Treasury Department, Fly Baghdad [supported](#) the Quds Force, the IRGC’s branch in charge of external operations, by “delivering material and personnel throughout the region,” and the airline was involved in transferring “hundreds of Iraqi fighters, including fighters affiliated with U.S.-designated terrorist organization and Iranian proxy militia Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), in support of the Iranian proxies’ attacks on Israel.”
- On January 24, South Africa’s *News 24* [reported](#) that South Africa expects the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to decide whether or not it will grant emergency measures to stop the war on January 26 as part of the proceedings against Israel for alleged violations of the 1949 Genocide Convention.
 - » The report stated that a South African government delegation had arrived in The Hague in advance of the expected decision concerning potential emergency measures, which would reportedly not involve a ruling regarding whether or not Israel is committing genocide. The latter ruling could take years, according to the report.
 - » South Africa’s Justice Ministry denied the report, and Israel’s Foreign Ministry said that it was unaware of the report and was investigating the claim.
- On January 24, the U.K. Foreign Office [announced](#) that British Foreign Secretary David Cameron was traveling to the Middle East that day to meet with regional leaders in an effort

“to get more aid into Gaza, hostages out and reach a sustainable, permanent ceasefire.” Cameron will be meeting with leaders in Israel, Qatar, and Turkey, and will be meeting with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to discuss a two-state solution.

- » According to a U.K. Foreign Office [statement](#), Cameron will tell Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu more should be “done, more quickly to significantly increase the flow of life-saving aid into Gaza” and will express “concerns over the high number of civilian casualties.”
- » The statement continued, “no one wants to see this conflict go on a moment longer than necessary. An immediate pause is now necessary to get aid in and hostages out. The situation is desperate.”
- On January 23, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov [met](#) with his Iranian, Turkish, and Lebanese counterparts ahead of the United Nations Security Council meeting on January 23 to discuss the Middle East, focusing on the Gaza Strip and Houthi attacks in the Red Sea.
- New Zealand [said](#) on January 23 that it is sending a “six-member team” to participate from regional operational headquarters in an international security coalition in the Red Sea to counter Houthi attacks.
- EU Foreign Affairs Chief Josep Borrell [said](#) on January 23 that Israel cannot be allowed to unilaterally block the creation of a Palestinian state, claiming that “the United Nations recognizes and has recognized many times the self-determination right of the Palestinian people,” and that “nobody can veto it.”
- In a [meeting](#) with Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Israel Katz on January 22, EU foreign ministers pressed Israel to ease civilian suffering in Gaza and support the establishment of a Palestinian state. Katz also presented an idea to create an artificial island off of Gaza as a logistics base to inspect incoming cargo and passengers arriving by sea.
- Russian aircraft have begun [joint patrols](#) with the Syrian Army along the Bravo Line, Syria’s southern border with Israel, which Moscow says will be carried out on a “regular basis,” according to a report in *Ynet* on January 22.

Rising Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Protests, and Attacks

- On January 24, women’s groups [planned](#) nationwide protests in Israel and a protest in New York City calling for the Israeli government to secure the release of the hostages still held by Hamas in Gaza.
- On January 24, dozens of Israelis [protested](#) the Israeli government’s allowance of aid trucks into the Gaza Strip at the Kerem Shalom crossing, accusing the government of “aiding the enemy.”
 - » One protester told the *Times of Israel*, “while the people in Israel await a victory, the government is feeding, clothing and fueling the enemy, even as it tries to kill our troops and civilians with rockets and tortures our starving hostages.”
- On January 24, the Royal Dutch Mountaineering and Climbing Club (NKVB) [announced](#) that Israel’s rock climbing team will be barred from participating in an international competition, “Dock Masters 2024,” in Utrecht, Netherlands. The NKVB released a statement, saying “we fear disturbances during the event and are concerned about [the Israeli team’s] safety, the safety of the other competitors, our team, and the visitors.”

- On January 23, anti-Israel protesters [repeatedly interrupted](#) a Biden campaign event at George Mason University in Virginia, shouting “genocide Joe” and “Gaza is a reproductive issue” while waving Palestinian flags.
- On January 21, three Israelis were [attacked](#) by a mob of about 20 men in London, U.K., who asked them if they were Jewish before verbally and physically assaulting them, shouting “free Palestine” and “f*** the Jews.”
- On January 21, a group of people [projected](#) a swastika on a residence hall at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, and [chanted](#), “we are everywhere. There will be blood, blood, blood.”

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