



Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update January 26, 2024

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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. JINSA will release the Swords of Iron Update on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below.

Analysis

- While UNRWA's [announcement](#) that it is investigating Israel's allegations that the organization's employees were involved in the 10/7 attacks and that it has dismissed those accused is welcome, the allegations lend credence to Israel's concerns about UNRWA's involvement in rebuilding Gaza.
- During a January 25 JINSA [webinar](#) on the latest developments in the Israel-Hamas war, Julian and Jenny Josephson Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish noted that "we have to cut the supply lines to Hamas from Rafah ... ammunition and other [materials] they can bring into Gaza through tunnels from Egypt."
- [Reports](#) that negotiations to reach a new hostage deal are [advancing](#) highlight the strategic conundrum that Israel faces, namely, on the one hand, growing domestic pressure to secure the release of hostages and, on the other, concerns that a lengthy fighting pause may compromise its ability to continue its campaign against Hamas even once the pause formally ends, as JINSA experts have noted.
 - » JINSA's Randi & Charles Wax Senior Fellow John Hannah argued during a January 25 JINSA [webinar](#), "only by defeating Hamas are you really going to get to any kind of 'day after' in Gaza ... I have a bit of worry about what lies ahead for any kind of hostage deals ... in terms of Israel's ability to continue what it's been doing [against Hamas] ... but of course I understand this is the [chance to rescue hostages], so of course it's a terrible, terrible dilemma that Israel faces."
 - » Hannah also [noted](#), "I do think [the Biden administration] believe[s] that this hostage deal may give them the basis on which they can begin to get the region to move past the Gaza problem" and enable the administration "to focus the region on this big diplomatic play between Israel and Saudi Arabia and then the wider region."
 - » Hannah cautioned that any fighting pause agreed to as part of a hostage deal may undermine Israel's strategic objectives by making resumption of its operations politically difficult, [saying](#), "I think that's the risk, that you create a political environment—a lot can happen in 30 or 60 days—that makes it very, very difficult for Israel to continue doing what it has been doing."

- The International Court of Justice (ICJ) [ruling](#) on January 26 indicates it found Israel's [evidence](#) that it is not committing genocide compelling enough to refuse South Africa's request for an immediate Israeli ceasefire.
 - » The court, however, did order Israel to "take all measures in its power" to prevent genocidal acts against Palestinians and prevent the killing or injuring of Gazan residents.
 - » JINSA Distinguished Fellow Col. Marc Warren, USA (ret.) said, "the preliminary ruling is an interim win for Israel. The ICJ did not direct Israel to halt military operations and did not find that the Gaza campaign violated international law. Instead, the Court admonished Israel to be vigilant to not violate the Genocide Convention. The Court ordered the immediate release of the hostages held by Hamas."
 - He also said, "while ICJ rulings have limited binding effect, their political effects can be significant. Here the ICJ did not allow itself to be used as an instrument of lawfare and instead exercised reasoned restraint. However, this is only a preliminary ruling, so the case will continue and afford ample opportunities for legal and political theater."
 - » JINSA Distinguished Fellow LTC Geoffrey S. Corn, USA (ret.) said, "the ICJ preliminary ruling was predictable, and reflects the low standard of proof required at this stage of the proceedings. The ruling did find the existence of a dispute between the two nations, but even based on this low proof standard declined to endorse South Africa's assertion that the evidence established genocidal intent."
 - He added, "here is the decisive sentence: '[Israel must] take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II of this Convention.' That is a blinding statement of the obvious, because that is already obligatory pursuant to the Convention. Article II prohibits acts (such as killing and inflicting injury) *with the intent* to commit genocide. This issue of intent was from inception the central point of dispute: Israel asserted that intent was not established; South Africa said it was clear. Had South Africa prevailed, the Court would have granted the request for an immediate cease fire. It did not."
 - He also noted, "instead, the court reaffirmed the existing obligation to prevent genocide and obviously rejected South Africa's assertion that Israel was violating it. It also called on Israel to punish any entity inciting genocide. Good. Any such incitement should be punished."
 - He also said, "this is analogous to a litigant requesting a preliminary injunction and the court denying that request. No one would consider that a 'win.'"
- Recent [reports](#) indicating that President Biden will not support another year of Israel's military campaign in Gaza underscore the risk that U.S. and international pressure may compel Israel to conclude its operations before it determines that it has achieved its objective of defeating Hamas, enabling the terror group to reconstitute itself.

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

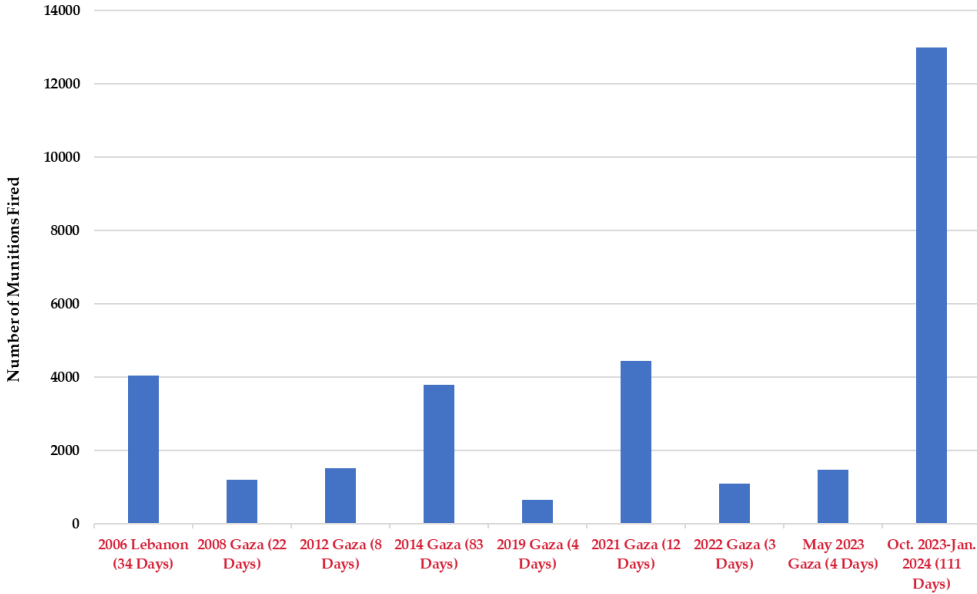
- Sirens sounded near [Nahal Oz](#) and in [Netiv Ha'asara](#).

- According to a January 24 *Bloomberg report* citing several officials at Israel’s National Bureau for Counter Terror Financing, Hamas is receiving \$8-12 million a month via online donations, most of which are sent to organizations posing as charities helping Gazan civilians.
 - » The report cited a U.S. official as saying that the United States also believes that Hamas is receiving sizable funding through online donation sites.
 - » According to the report, “officials said tracking and quantifying Hamas’s fund raising is difficult because the organization has years of experience of getting around financial sanctions and other tools designed to choke off or restrict its access to money.”
 - » The report states that Israel is part of a 16-country task force established after the October 7 attack, which also includes Germany, the Netherlands, the U.K., and Canada, aimed at cracking down on Hamas’s financial revenues.

Lebanon

- Sirens sounded in [Yir'on, Dovev, and Baram](#).
- On January 25, an IDF spokesperson [said](#) that two likely drones, or “aerial targets,” crossed from Lebanon into Israel’s airspace and struck unpopulated areas near Kfar Blum, a town close to Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel, causing no injuries or damage. The drones were [reportedly](#) explosive-laden drones.

Projectiles Fired Against Israel During Major Conflicts JINSA



IDF Operations

- On January 25, Israel’s *Channel 12 reported* that U.S. and Israeli officials have agreed to an arms deal in which the United States would send Israel 25 F-35 aircraft, 25 F-15 IA aircraft, a squadron of 12 Apache combat helicopters, and thousands of other unspecified munitions. The report states that the armaments will begin arriving in Israel “within days.”

- *The New York Times* [reported](#) on January 25 that Israel released documents showing orders disseminated by its political and military officials that purportedly undermine South Africa's allegations that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.
 - » According to the report, the documents summarize Netanyahu's orders to permit the entry of aid into Gaza and to study how field hospitals in the territory could best be constructed by "external actors."
- According to [reports](#) from January 24, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi argued in a letter to Israel's State Comptroller Matanyahu Englman that Engleman's wide-ranging probe into Israeli security failures before, during, and after the October 7 attacks "will divert the attention of the commanders from the fighting, will damage the operational investigation ability, and will not allow drawing necessary lessons to achieve the goals of the war." Halevi added, "there is no precedent" in Israeli history for conducting such a probe during a war, rather than after.
 - » Engelman had [announced](#) on December 27 that his office would be conducting a probe throughout 2024 into a number of alleged Israeli security failures relating to the October 7 attacks, including "policy, military, and civilian" failures.
 - » Engelman stated that the probe would focus on a number of issues, including the conduct of policymakers and military leaders on October 7; intelligence failures leading up to the attack; the IDF posture on the Gaza border before the attack; the lack of preparedness of civilian security teams in Israeli border towns near Gaza; lack of IDF equipment; Hamas funding; government preparedness against cyberattacks; and government actions after the war began, including the relocation of Israeli civilians and public diplomacy efforts.
- Reports from January 25 [indicated](#) that IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi has halted assembling a team that would scrutinize IDF failures that enabled Hamas's October 7 massacre. Some ministers had expressed concern that certain would-be members of the team might implicate politicians in their findings due to the members' opposition to Netanyahu's judicial reform plans. However, the team would have only scrutinized the military, not politicians.

Gaza

- On January 26, the IDF [said](#) that during ongoing combat in Khan Younis, the 98th Division and the Air Force eliminated dozens of Hamas operatives.
- On January 26, *Israel Hayom* [reported](#) that Hamas's rocket supply, which was believed to be about 20,000 rockets and mortars at the beginning of the war, has dwindled down to just a few hundred.
- According to a January 25 *Wall Street Journal* [report](#), citing an unnamed IDF reservist, "everything has been flattened" in the one-kilometer-wide area along the northern Israel-Gaza border in which he and his fellow troops were instructed to build a security zone off limits to Palestinian entry. The soldier said that the area is now "a military zone, a complete no man's land."
 - » According to the report, U.S. officials expressed disapproval of the plan soon after the Israel-Hamas war commenced and have watched it "with growing dismay."
- On January 25, the IDF [said](#) that its Commando Brigade is "continuing the offensive in the Khan Younis area, and is deepening the operational control of the Hamas terrorists' stronghold."
- On January 25, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [said](#) while speaking to the IDF's Yahalom combat engineering unit troops that "Hamas is collapsing into its own tunnels that it

painstakingly dug. Every place it thought would be a trap for IDF soldiers becomes an area where we hit it.”

- » He added, “in the past day and a half, we have [arrested] over 100 captives, some of them who came up from underground, in the Khan Younis area and also in other places, because they realize that they can’t fight against the IDF.”
- The IDF [said](#) on January 25 that it killed dozens of Hamas combatants in Khan Younis’ al-Amal neighborhood and “destroyed terror infrastructure and weapons in the area.”
- On January 24, the IDF [said](#) that combat engineers and 646th Brigade reservists found, and the combat engineers subsequently destroyed, a Hamas tunnel in central Gaza close to the Israel-Gaza border.
- Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz [wrote](#) on X on January 25 that he told Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Tajani during a meeting, “we have no choice but to complete our mission in Gaza - bring all the abductees home and neutralize Hamas.”
- On January 24, the IDF [criticized](#) U.K.-based *ITV News* for airing footage purporting to show the IDF shooting and killing an unarmed Palestinian man that the *ITV News* outlet had just interviewed moments prior.
 - » In the footage, the interviewee explains that IDF troops had just evacuated him and four other men—who were holding white flags—from a building in advance of an IDF operation, and that he was trying to return to the building to help evacuate his mother and brother, who were still inside.
 - » The footage then cuts to a video taken, according to the reporter, moments later, in which gunshots ring out from an unknown source and the five men running, followed by the interviewee being shot in the chest and falling to the ground.
 - » The IDF told the outlet in a statement that “it is imperative to emphasize that the alarming, libelous and a gross mischaracterization of the war with these despicable accusations can only be deemed as an extension of Hamas’s propaganda effort to defame the IDF and undermine our objective to dismantle Hamas and ensure the terrorist entity never again holds the power to build a terrorist army, invade Israel, murder, burn, rape and abduct Israelis.”
- On January 24, United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Gaza director Thomas White [wrote](#) on X that “two tank rounds hit building that shelters 800 people – reports now 9 dead and 75 injured.”
 - » The IDF subsequently [said](#) on January 24, “after an inspection of the operational systems, the IDF has now ruled out the possibility that the incident was caused by an airstrike or artillery fire by IDF forces,” and “at the same time, the IDF is conducting an in-depth examination of the ground forces’ activity in the area of the facility.”
 - » The IDF also said that it is “investigating the possibility that the strike was caused by Hamas fire.”

Lebanon

- On January 26, the IDF [struck](#) Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon in response to rockets fired at the Mount Hermon area. The Israeli Air Force struck a building used by Hezbollah in Bint Jbeil, and overnight struck another building in Khiam.
- On January 25, in response to an earlier drone attack, the IDF [struck](#) Hezbollah targets across southern Lebanon, including an airstrip constructed by Iran. Hezbollah utilized the airstrip, according to the IDF, to launch drone attacks.

- During a January 25 meeting with Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Tajani, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz “requested [Tajani’s] intervention vis-a-vis the Lebanese government to oust Hezbollah from southern Lebanon, or else Lebanon will face a devastating blow it won’t recover from,” Katz [announced](#) on X.
- On January 24, the IDF [said](#) that it struck military buildings and additional Hezbollah infrastructure in the Lebanese town of Yaroun and also struck other targets in Lebanon’s south to “remove threats.”

West Bank

- On January 25, the IDF, the Shin Bet, and the Israel Border Police [conducted](#) overnight raids across the West Bank, arresting 16 Palestinian terror suspects. Forces located improvised explosive devices (IEDs) hidden under roads, seized weapons, and confiscated a 3D printer used to manufacture weapons.
 - » Officers shot and killed a wanted suspect in the town of Bir al-Basha, near the city of Jenin, after he opened fire on them.
- Videos from January 25 [showed](#) an altercation between IDF troops and Palestinian Authority police officers in Bethlehem, which the IDF said it is investigating.

Humanitarian Efforts

- On January 25, *NBC News* [reported](#) that an unnamed diplomat confirmed the story originally reported by *The Washington Post* that CIA Director Bill Burns, Mossad Director David Barnea, and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani will meet in Europe this weekend to attempt to advance negotiations toward additional hostage releases.
- On January 24, Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [said](#) that Hamas’s leadership abroad has adopted a hardline stance towards hostage swap negotiations, telling soldiers during a visit that “most extreme people in the Hamas negotiations are the ones who are the furthest away from the Gaza Strip, those who fly in luxury planes [and] sit in luxury hotels.”
 - » Gallant added, “those who suffer in Gaza and are constantly under your tanks’ chains are not such heroes. I hear what they say; most of them want to stop” fighting.
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on January 24, citing Israel’s *Kan* broadcaster, that Hamas rejected Israel’s most recent proposal for releasing Palestinian prisoners and pausing combat. *Kan* reported that Qatar relayed the development to Israel, citing two unnamed sources.
 - » Israel’s *Channel 12* also said that a recent Hamas offer involves a 10-15 year ceasefire, which *The Times of Israel* noted is similar to an agreement in place immediately before Hamas’s October 7 massacre.
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on January 24, citing Israel’s *Channel 12*, that Prime Minister Netanyahu permitted tens of thousands of tons of flour to enter Gaza but hid the decision to do so from ministers, war cabinet members, and the Israeli public.
- On January 24, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby [told](#) reporters that U.S. National Security Council Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk was in Doha, Qatar to discuss potential hostage swaps. Kirby stated that negotiations were “very sober and serious.”

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 557 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 220 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - The IDF [announced](#) the death of Sgt. Maj. (res.) Eliran Yeger, 36, from Tel Aviv.
 - » 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, 26,083 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and at least 64,400 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, 373 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 4,354 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 four 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.
- On January 24, freed hostage Adina Moshe told Israel’s *Channel 12* that Hamas’s leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar [visited](#) her and other hostages twice in tunnels underneath Gaza.

Moshe stated that Sinwar asked the hostages in Hebrew how they were doing, and if they were okay. The hostages did not respond, according to Moshe.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On January 26, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) [said](#) it received reports of an incident around 60 nautical miles off the coast of the Yemeni city of Al Hudaydah. The UKMTO said a ship reported hearing explosions and seeing missiles approximately four miles from the vessel, and that a second explosion was reported less than a nautical mile from the ship. No injuries or damage were reported.
- On January 24 at approximately 2 p.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) three anti-ship ballistic missiles from Yemen toward the U.S.-flagged, owned, and operated *Maersk Detroit* in the Gulf of Aden. One of the missiles landed in the sea while the other two missiles were intercepted by a U.S. warship. No injuries or damage were reported.

U.S. and International Response

- *The New York Times* [reported](#) on January 26 that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) said it fired numerous employees who allegedly participated in Hamas's October 7 massacre in Israel.
 - » In the wake of the news, the U.S. State Department noted that it "temporarily paused additional funding" to UNRWA, and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged "a thorough and swift investigation" during a conversation on January 25 with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.
 - » The European Union's chief diplomat Josep Borrell Fontelles said that he was "extremely concerned" about the accusations.
 - » UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini said that anyone involved should be subject to criminal prosecution, and "these shocking allegations come as more than 2 million people in Gaza depend on lifesaving assistance that the Agency has been providing since the war began." He added, "anyone who betrays the fundamental values of the United Nations also betrays those whom we serve in Gaza, across the region and elsewhere around the world."
- On January 26, the International Court of Justice [issued](#) provisional measures against Israel, ordering it to "take all measures in its power" to prevent genocidal acts against Palestinians as defined by Article 2 of the 1949 Genocide Convention, but did not demand an immediate ceasefire as South Africa had requested.
 - » The court voted 15-2 to support the measures, which also include orders that Israel prevent the killing or injuring of Gazan residents, prevent conditions intended to partially or entirely destroy Gaza's population, and prevent conditions intended to prevent births among Gaza's population.
 - » The court [urged](#) the unconditional release of hostages held in Gaza.
- According to an *Axios* [report](#) from January 26, U.S. President Joe Biden told Prime Minister Netanyahu during their recent phone conversation that he will not support a year-long Israeli war effort in Gaza and that Israel should curtail its operation in Gaza.
- According to [reports](#) from January 25, citing two unnamed U.S. officials, U.S. concern about frequent reports of civilian casualties in Gaza has prompted it to implement a channel to discuss the incidents with Israel.

- » U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken reportedly told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and Minister Benny Gantz during a meeting in early January that he must know “what the answers are” about the reports and needs a “reliable channel” to discuss them.
- U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [spoke](#) by phone with Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on January 25.
 - » According to an Israeli readout, Gallant thanked Austin for U.S. support for Israel’s security and their efforts to bring about the release of hostages in Gaza, provided updates about the war effort in Gaza, and discussed the ongoing Hezbollah attacks on Israel.
 - » A U.S. readout stated that Austin reiterated “U.S. support for Israel’s right to defend itself and the importance of ensuring uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza.” The readout added that Austin “reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to the pursuit of diplomacy to resolve tensions along the Israel-Lebanon border and the shared goal of avoiding regional escalation.”
- On January 24 at approximately 2 p.m. local time, the U.S. warship USS *Gravelly* [intercepted](#) two anti-ship ballistic missiles that the Houthis fired from Yemen toward a commercial vessel, the *Maersk Detroit*, in the Gulf of Aden, according to a U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) statement. A third Houthi-fired missile landed in the sea nearby. No injuries or damage were reported.
- On January 24, shipping firm Maersk [reported](#) that two U.S.-flagged vessels that were traveling northbound in the Red Sea and were being escorted by U.S. Navy warships turned around after seeing nearby explosions. Maersk’s statement also noted that “the US Navy accompaniment also intercepted multiple projectiles.” It was unclear if Maersk was referencing the same incident noted by CENTCOM.
 - » The two vessels, according to Maersk, are part of a fleet that transports cargo for the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and other U.S. agencies, which is why the two ships were being escorted by U.S. naval vessels.
 - » Houthi spokesperson Yahya Saree [said](#) in a statement that the Houthis targeted several U.S. warships that day with ballistic missiles while they were escorting two U.S. commercial vessels. Saree claimed that one warship was directly hit, forcing the two commercial vessels to “withdraw and return.”
- On January 24, Reuters [reported](#), citing four sources, that the United States and Iraq are set to begin talks on ending the U.S.-led international military coalition in Iraq. The report states that talks are expected to take months and that it is unlikely that U.S. troops will withdraw from Iraq soon.
 - » The report stated, citing three sources, that U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Alina Romanowski had given a letter to Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein on January 24 in which the United States agreed to begin talks on ending the coalition deployment.
 - » The letter reportedly conveyed that the United States had dropped its precondition that Iranian proxies in Iraq stop attacks against U.S. troops and personnel prior to beginning talks on ending the deployment. According to a U.S. official cited in the report, “we have been discussing this for months. The timing is not related to recent attacks. The U.S. will maintain full right of self-defense during the talks.”
 - » Iraq’s foreign ministry said in a statement that it had been given an “important” letter and that Prime Minister Mohammed Shia’ Al Sudani would review it.

- A January 24 [report](#) in *Politico* citing two unnamed U.S. officials noted that U.S. military deployments to the Middle East after Hamas's October 7 massacre will cost \$1.6 billion, according to the Department of Defense (DoD), but Congress's failure to pass a budget renders DoD unable to afford the cost.
 - » According to *Politico's* sources, the cost of the deployments could rise to \$2.2 billion once the cost of the missiles used against Houthi targets are factored into the estimate.
- During a press briefing on January 24, Deputy State Department spokesperson Vedant Patel [said](#) of the report of a strike against a UN facility in Khan Younis at which civilians were sheltering, "we deplore today's attack on the UN's Khan Younis training center," and that "civilians must be protected, and the protected nature of UN facilities must be respected, and humanitarian workers must be protected so that they can continue providing civilians with the life-saving humanitarian assistance that they need."
- On January 26, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) [reported](#) that freight shipping through the Suez Canal has decreased significantly since persistent Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping began roughly two months ago. The agency said freight tonnage shipped through the Suez Canal has dropped by 45 percent, and the number of ships has declined by 39 percent.
- On January 25, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that Australian-based mining company BHP Group, among the largest mining corporations in the world, would be diverting its shipments from Asia to Europe away from the Red Sea due to ongoing Houthi attacks.
- According to [reports](#) from January 24, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi's office turned down a request for a phone call from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office. Israel's *Channel 13* speculated that the snub arose from tensions between Israel and Egypt over plans for post-war control of the Gaza-Egypt border.
- After Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, "Qatar, from my point of view, is no different in essence than the United Nations ... and the Red Cross, [Qatar] is even more problematic," and "they have leverage [over Hamas]... Because [Qatar] funds them," Qatari foreign ministry spokesperson Majed Al Ansari [retorted](#), "if the reported remarks are found to be true, the Israeli PM would only be obstructing and undermining the mediation process, for reasons that appear to serve his political career instead of prioritizing saving innocent lives, including Israeli hostages."
 - » He also said, "instead of concerning himself with Qatar's strategic relations with the United States, we hope Netanyahu decides to operate in good faith and concentrate on the release of the hostages" in response to Netanyahu's earlier remarks that he got "very angry recently with the Americans" for extending their military presence there. Al Ansari also called Netanyahu's remarks "irresponsible and destructive to the efforts to save innocent lives."
- On January 24, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) [announced](#) on X, "the #ICJ will deliver its Order on the request for the indication of provisional measures submitted by South Africa in the case #SouthAfrica v. #Israel this Friday, 26 January 2024, at 1 p.m."
 - » The announcement comes in the wake of South Africa's attempt to charge Israel with genocide through the ICJ. *The Times of Israel* [noted](#) that the court's forthcoming ruling is distinct from rulings on the genocide allegations.

Rising Antisemitism and Protests

- On January 26, the Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive (SPCJ) [Jewish Community Protection Service] in France [released](#) data on antisemitism in France in 2023, showing a 1,000% increase in antisemitic acts compared to 2022.
 - » The number of antisemitic attacks from October 7 to the end of the year was higher than the cumulative number of attacks over the past three years combined.
- On January 25, Israel's *Kan* network [broadcast](#) footage purporting to show dozens of protesters in the Gazan city of Khan Younis calling on both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Hamas leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar to end the war. Protesters chanted, "the people want a ceasefire! Netanyahu and Sinwar, we want a ceasefire. Enough with war and enough with the destruction!"
- On January 24, hundreds of Israeli protesters successfully [blocked](#) the entry of 51 out of 60 aid trucks slated to enter Gaza that day to protest Israel's provision of aid to Gaza as long as hostages remain in captivity.
 - » The protesters, a number of whom are affiliated with the Tsav 9 and Combatants' Mothers activist groups, stood on Israel's side of the Kerem Shalom Crossing along the Israeli-Gaza border and physically blocked the trucks from entering Gaza.
 - » The 51 trucks reportedly returned back to Egypt after six hours of waiting at the crossing, while nine aid trucks were able to enter Gaza. An additional 106 aid trucks reportedly entered Gaza through the Rafah Crossing along the Gaza-Egypt border that day.
 - » Reports indicated that similar protests [recurred](#) on January 25 and [again](#) on January 26.
- The IDF's Arabic-language spokesperson [posted](#) a video on X on January 24 showing roughly 30-40 Palestinian protesters chanting anti-Hamas slogans and calling for the release of Israeli hostages in order to bring an end to the war. The protest, which took place at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the Gazan city of Deir al-Balah, was a "spontaneous demonstration," according to the IDF.

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- Webinar: "[Gaza War Update 1/25](#)," with IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, John Hannah, and Blaise Misztal, January 25, 2024
- Webinar: "[The U.S., Israel, Ukraine, Taiwan: Competing Demands for the U.S. Defense Industrial Base](#)," with Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) and Amb. Eric Edelman, January 23, 2024
- Webinar: "[Gaza War Update 1/18](#)," with IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, IDF MG (ret.) Amikam Norkin, IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, and Blaise Misztal, January 18, 2024
- Webinar: "[Forgotten Threat: Iran's Accelerating Nuclear Program](#)," with Hon. Stephen Rademaker, Gabriel Noronha, and Blaise Misztal, January 17, 2024
- Ari Cicurel, [Strikes Against the Houthis Should Not Be a One-Off](#), January 12, 2024
- Zac Schildcrout, [U.S. Diplomacy Won't Deter Hezbollah](#), January 12, 2024