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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update January 8, 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.

Analysis

- Israel [announced](#) on January 6 that it had dismantled Hamas's military framework in northern Gaza, an important achievement toward eliminating the terrorist group. However, Israeli operations continue to pursue the dismantlement of Hamas's military framework in central and southern Gaza, and ensuring that the group cannot reconstitute itself will require long-term operations. IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#) on January 6 that the IDF would be fighting throughout 2024, and IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi [reiterated](#) on January 7 that fighting would stretch through 2024.
- The potential for an escalation to a full-scale war between Israel and Lebanon has significantly grown in recent days because of Hezbollah's increasingly large attacks against Israel and Israel's efforts to deter and degrade the threat. Disagreements between the United States and Israel about the need to confront Hezbollah could make a war more likely.
 - » Hezbollah launched a large [barrage](#) of at least 40 projectiles against Israel on January 6.
 - » An Israeli [drone strike](#) on January 8 that killed a senior commander of Hezbollah's elite Radwan force indicated Israel's willingness and ability to further degrade Hezbollah capabilities along the border at the potential risk of further escalation.
 - » With [reporting](#) over the weekend indicating that U.S. officials have sought to avoid a full-scale war between Israel and Lebanon, any pressure by the United States to restrain Israeli efforts to deter or degrade Hezbollah could invite further Iran-backed aggression that triggers a broader conflict.

Last 72 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

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

Gaza

- Rockets struck [Sderot](#) and [Yakhini](#), and sirens [sounded](#) in [Mefalsim](#), Ashkelon, Sderot, Nitzanim, [Ibim](#), Kibbutz Nir Am, [Nahal Oz](#), [Holit](#), and other locations.
- On January 7, a rocket [struck](#) a home in the southern Israeli town of Yakhini, causing one minor injury and property damage.
- On January 7, Israeli President Isaac Herzog [revealed](#) in an interview with *NBC News* that the IDF had uncovered a Hamas document in Gaza that discusses details about Hamas's summer camps.
 - » Herzog said that the document "is a directive by the commanders of Hamas as to how to manage summer camps for children in order to disseminate the values of jihad. It says it clearly to disseminate the values of jihad, and the values of the resistance meaning terror, and how to make it a militarized society."

Lebanon

- Rockets struck [Metula](#), and sirens [sounded](#) in [Shtula](#), [Even Menachem](#), Kiryat Shmona, and Giladi.
- On January 7, terrorists in southern Lebanon [fired](#) several rockets at the northern Israeli town of Metula. One rocket struck a building, causing property damage, while several other rockets landed in open areas.
- On January 7, an aerial threat—likely a drone—that [entered](#) Israeli airspace from Lebanon was intercepted near the northern Israeli town of Even Menachem.
- On January 6, Hezbollah [claimed](#) that it fired 62 projectiles at an IDF air traffic control base on Mount Meron in northern Israel. The IDF initially [said](#) that approximately 40 projectiles traveled into Israeli airspace and [damaged](#) the Mount Meron facility. The IDF did not specify the damage caused but said that systems at the base continued to function due to backup systems.
 - » Sirens [sounded](#) in roughly 90 communities across northern Israel during the attack. According to Israel's *Channel 12*, the attack was an [attempt](#) by Hezbollah to "blind" the IDF's air defenses.
 - » Hezbollah [released](#) footage of the incident, which purportedly showed two radar domes at the facility being struck by missiles. The group said the attack was "an initial response" to the killing of Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri on January 2 in Beirut.
 - » Approximately an hour after the Mount Meron projectile attack, sirens again [sounded](#) in approximately 40 communities across northern Israel. No impacts were reported.
 - » Hezbollah also [fired](#) projectiles that day at the northern Israeli towns of Margaliot and Metula, causing no reported injuries.
- On January 6, Lebanon's Jama'a Islamiya, a Sunni terrorist group, [announced](#) that it had fired two rocket barrages at the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona.
- On January 6, Israel's *Channel 12* [aired](#) a video purportedly showing an Israeli military helicopter shooting down a drone that had been launched from Lebanon.
- On January 6, Hezbollah [fired](#) a surface-to-air missile at an Israeli drone in Lebanese airspace, which missed the drone.
- On January 5, following [two earlier](#) rockets launched toward the city resulting in no damage, eight rockets were [fired](#) toward the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona from Lebanon, four

of which the Iron Dome intercepted. The other four struck unpopulated areas, resulting in no injuries or damage.

- On January 5, former leader of IDF military intelligence Major General (res.) Amos Yadlin [said](#), “the chief of staff, northern command chief and homefront command chief need to assume” that Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah will “fire rockets deeper into Israel, and with heavier warheads,” and “we also need to be prepared” for Nasrallah to orchestrate overseas attacks against Israelis.
 - » Yadlin recalled that “after [the 2008 assassination of Hezbollah leader Imad] Mughniyeh, he hit Israeli tourists in Bulgaria” in a 2012 suicide bombing targeting a bus carrying Israeli tourists.
- On January 5, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah [told](#) supporters at a rally in Beirut that he is opposed to Hezbollah participating in negotiations over Hezbollah’s presence near the Lebanese-Israeli border.
 - » Nasrallah stated that, “we stand before a historic opportunity to liberate every inch of Lebanese territory and to prevent the enemy from violating Lebanese sovereignty on land, in the air and at sea. Any discussion or negotiation on this matter will not start until the aggression against Gaza ceases.”
 - He [claimed](#) that Hezbollah has launched 670 military actions on Lebanon’s border with Israel since October 7 that destroyed a “large number of Israeli vehicles and tanks,” that Israel is hiding casualties induced by Hezbollah’s attacks, that Iraq has a “historic opportunity” to evict U.S. forces from the country, and that the United States is worsening the conflict through its actions against the Yemen-based Houthis.
 - Nasrallah also [insisted](#) that “we cannot sit quietly in the face of an assassination in the middle of the war, and the assassination [of Hamas official Saleh Al-Arouri] will not go unpunished,” and “the response is coming. The decision has already been made. The matter now depends on what will unfold on the ground and on Allah.”
 - He elaborated that “we are unable to remain silent in the face of such an action because this would expose all of Lebanon to IDF operations.”
 - » U.S. officials, including Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs Amos Hochstein, [arrived](#) in Israel on January 4 to meet with Israeli officials and discuss negotiations for a potential deal under which Hezbollah would withdraw from the border.
 - Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib [met](#) with top Middle East advisor Brett McGurk on January 3 in Washington to discuss a potential deal.
 - According to a January 4 [report](#) from *Axios*, citing U.S. officials, “little progress has been made” in negotiations thus far.

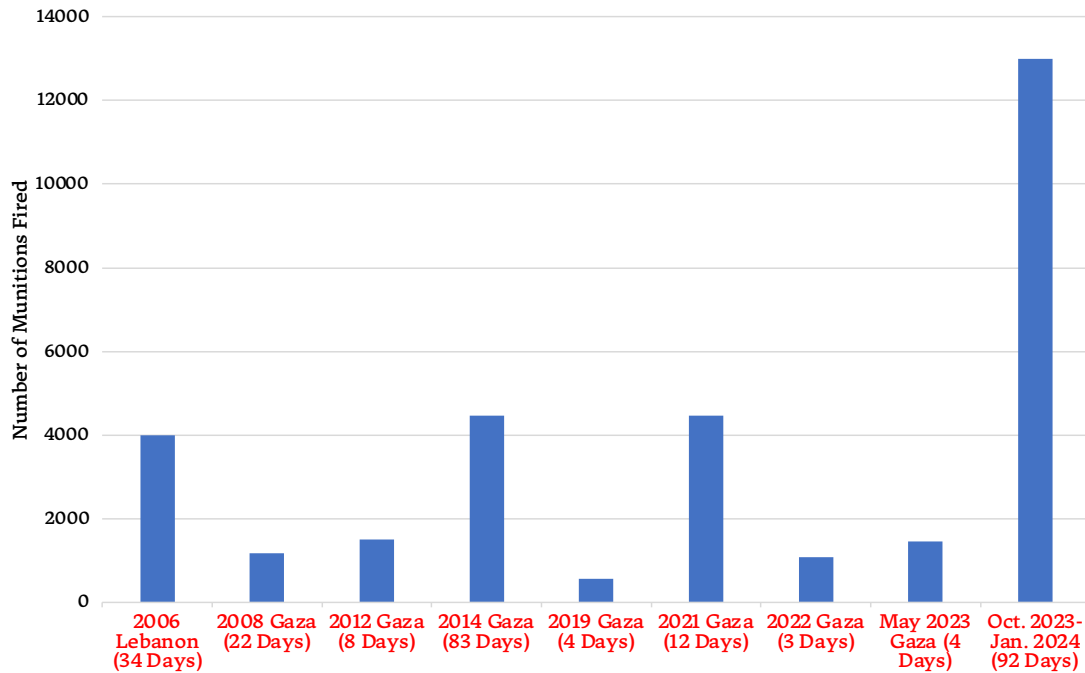
West Bank

- On January 7, terrorists [opened](#) fire on vehicles, killing one man and seriously injuring a woman, in a terrorist attack on Route 465 near the town of Ateret.
 - » Three suspects were later apprehended. According to Israeli media reports, the three terror suspects include two doctors and a nurse.
 - » The attack marked the first deadly terrorist attack in the West Bank since November.
- On January 7, terrorists [struck](#) an Israeli Border Police officer at a security checkpoint near the town of Biddu in a car-ramming attack, lightly injuring the officer. Forces returned fire

and killed the two perpetrators, and also unintentionally struck and killed a three-year-old Palestinian girl in a nearby vehicle.

- » Israeli Police said that it was [opening](#) a “thorough investigation” into the incident, according to the Associated Press.
- On January 7, four Israeli Border Police officers were [injured](#) in an overnight raid in the Jenin refugee camp when an explosive device detonated near the officers. Two officers were seriously injured, one was moderately injured, and one was lightly injured.

Projectiles Fired Against Israel During Major Conflicts



IDF Operations

Gaza

- On January 8, the IDF carried out [30 strikes](#) on terrorist targets in southern Gaza’s Khan Younis, including underground sites and weapons caches.
- On January 7, the IDF [said](#) that Golani Brigade troops identified members of Hamas’s elite Nukhba force putting weapons into a car in al-Bureij in central Gaza, and an IDF drone subsequently struck them. The troops also directed an airstrike against another Hamas operative approaching them and located a tunnel shaft leading to a cache of weapons in al-Maghazi nearby.
 - » The IDF’s 646th Reserve Paratroopers Brigade also found a weapons manufacturing plant and two tunnel shafts in central Gaza, killing Hamas operatives in combat in the area.

- » On January 6, Nahal Brigade troops raided the area in Beit Lahiya from which rockets were fired toward Ashkelon last week. Combat engineers subsequently destroyed several rocket launchers.
- On January 7, the IDF [said](#) that troops in the Kfir Brigade killed dozens of terrorists and destroyed over 100 Hamas targets, including tunnels, in the area of Khan Younis in southern Gaza. Soldiers directed an airstrike against a Hamas cell of five combatants in Bani Suheila near Khan Younis, subsequently destroying their hideout.
 - » In Khan Younis, the IDF said it found weapons including firearms, grenades, and explosives, including some stashed inside bags labeled with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) logo.
 - » According to the IDF, the Kfir Brigade worked with combat engineers to destroy a command center that Hamas used to plan its October 7 terrorist attack, among other targets.
- The IDF [said](#) on January 7 that Yiftah Reserve Brigade troops destroyed a tunnel network in the Shejaiya neighborhood in Gaza City and the home of senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) member Ahmed Samara in which they found weapons, an instructional booklet for PIJ, a plan for tactics to employ during the massacre on October 7, and a book about Adolf Hitler.
- On January 7, *Al Jazeera* journalists Hamza Wael Dahdouh and Mustafa Thuria were [killed](#) in an airstrike in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. The IDF Spokesperson's Unit said that one of its aircraft "identified and struck a terrorist who operated an aircraft in a way that put IDF forces at risk" and that the military is aware of "the claim that during the strike two other suspects who were with the terrorist in the same vehicle were hit."
- According to January 7 [reports](#) citing Palestinian media, Ali Salem Abu Ajwa, grandson of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and reportedly a journalist, was killed in an Israeli airstrike.
- On January 7, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi [said](#), "2024 will be challenging, we will be at war in Gaza, I don't know if all year — we will be fighting in Gaza all year, that's for sure" while visiting the IDF's West Bank division.
- On January 6, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [stated](#) that the IDF has "completed dismantling the military framework of Hamas in the northern part of the strip."
 - » Hagari added that the IDF was building on this accomplishment by strengthening the "barrier and defenses" along the Israel-Gaza border, likely referring to the new physical barrier being constructed to create a buffer zone on the Gaza side of the border.
 - » Hagari further stated that the IDF is concentrating on dismantling Hamas in central and southern Gaza, stating that the refugee camps of central Gaza are "dense and full of terrorists," and that the southern Gazan city of Khan Younis has an "underground city of branching tunnels."
 - » In his remarks, Hagari noted that sporadic fire from Hamas in northern Gaza is likely to continue despite the overall defeat of Hamas's forces in northern Gaza.
 - » Hagari said that the war would continue throughout 2024, and also showed reporters a photo of Hamas military commander Mohammed Deif, which was among the approximately 70 million digital files the IDF has recovered in Gaza during the war.

- On January 6, the IDF and Shin Bet [said](#) that two of the commanders of the Hamas battalion that carried out the massacre at Kibbutz Be'eri, Ismail Siraj, and his deputy, Ahmed Wahaba of the Nuseirat battalion, were killed in an airstrike in the Gaza Strip.
- On January 5, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#), “our goal is to always improve, to draw conclusions from the fighting, to deepen the achievement and minimize casualties to our forces,” and “the operational investigation is one of the basic principles of the IDF. Only a thorough investigation of the truth will allow us to learn from the failures and prepare for the security challenges in the future — 2024 will be a year of fighting, and there are lessons to be learned that will help us fight better, in all the arenas.”
 - » However, he noted that because of the ongoing fighting, the IDF has not yet started investigations into failures that enabled the October 7 attack, saying, “the General Staff is formulating these days the process of planning the investigations, and picking those leading the operational investigation.”
- On January 5, the IDF’s 14th Reserve Armored Brigade and elite Yahalom combat engineering unit uncovered and [destroyed](#) a Hamas tunnel network under a beach resort in northern Gaza. Troops located seven terror tunnel shafts on the property of the resort, Blue Beach Resort in Gaza City, and eliminated a tunnel network partially located under the resort.
 - » The IDF said troops recovered assault rifles, explosive devices and drones from the tunnel network. The IDF said that in November, IDF troops killed approximately 30 Hamas gunmen who were hiding in the resort.
- The IDF [said](#) on January 5 that the 646th Reserve Paratroopers Brigade and Yahalom combat engineering unit troops concluded an operation in a neighborhood in central Gaza that had been underway for the past week. The operation took place in what the IDF calls “the towers neighborhood,” where “the buildings of the neighborhood were used as anti-tank missile and machine gun fire positions,” according to the IDF.
 - » The IDF said further that its troops killed Hamas gunmen and found rocket launchers ready to fire, booby traps within buildings, tunnel shafts, explosive devices, and a warehouse and chemical lab used for weapons manufacturing. The infrastructure was destroyed by the combat engineers.

Lebanon

- On January 8, an Israeli [drone strike](#) killed Wissam al-Tawil, the deputy head of a unit within Hezbollah’s elite Radwan force. He and another Hezbollah fighter were killed when a [missile](#) hit their car outside of the Lebanese village of Majdal Selm.
- On January 8, the IDF [said](#) it [carried out](#) airstrikes against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, including the site where an anti-tank missile was fired from towards Kiryat Shmona and a military compound and rocket launching post in the Lebanese town of Marwahin.
- On January 7, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi [said](#), “Hezbollah has decided to enter this war, we are exacting ever-increasing prices. It paid yesterday with seven deaths, it paid yesterday with two very, very important targets, and we are increasing the price it pays.”
- On January 7, the IDF [struck](#) a number of Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon, including a terror cell near the town of Marwahin and several Hezbollah buildings in the towns of Bint Jbeil, Labbouneh, and Majdal Zoun. The IDF said some of the buildings were believed to be weapons depots.

- On January 6, the IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes on several Hezbollah sites, including two “significant” Hezbollah military compounds, in southern Lebanon.
 - » The IDF eliminated a site used by Hezbollah’s air defense unit, and struck Hezbollah terror cells, rocket launching posts, a command center, and other terrorist infrastructure in sites near the southern Lebanese towns of Ayta ash Shab, Meiss el-Jabal, Rab El Thalathine, Ramyah, and Yaroun.
- On January 6, Lebanon’s state-run *National News Agency* [reported](#) that Israeli airstrikes struck the town of Kouthariyeh al-Siyad, causing casualties. The agency also reported that the IDF conducted artillery shelling in southern Lebanon near the Lebanese-Israeli border.
 - » Kouthariyeh al-Siyad is approximately 25 miles from the Lebanese-Israeli border, making it among the northernmost locations in Lebanon that the IDF has struck, if the report is accurate.
- On January 5, the IDF [struck](#) a Hezbollah command center near the Lebanese village of Blida and also conducted artillery shelling against Hezbollah targets near the Lebanese-Israeli border in response to earlier projectile attacks.
- On January 5, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [said](#) that time is running out for a diplomatic solution to end tensions between Israel and Hezbollah. Gallant stated, “we prefer the path of an agreed-upon diplomatic settlement, but we are getting close to the point where the hourglass will turn over.”

West Bank

- On January 7, during a raid on the Jenin refugee camp in which four Israeli Border Police officers were injured, the IDF launched an airstrike and [eliminated](#) six Palestinian terrorists who were launching explosives at IDF troops extricating the injured officers.
- On January 6, Israeli forces [arrested](#) several suspects in counterterrorism raids across the West Bank, including in the city of Nablus and the towns of Bal’a and Qatanna. During the raids, the IDF interrogated dozens of suspects and confiscated weapons, dozens of explosive devices, and funds used to support terrorist activities.
- Israeli forces have arrested around 2,600 terror suspects in the West Bank during the war, including roughly 1,300 alleged Hamas operatives.

Humanitarian Efforts

- On January 7, Israel’s Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), the agency responsible for Palestinian civil affairs, [announced](#) that 198 humanitarian aid trucks entered Gaza that day, among the highest single-day number of aid trucks that have entered Gaza in recent weeks.
 - » Of the 198, 121 trucks entered through the Rafah Crossing on the Egyptian-Gaza border and 77 entered via the Kerem Shalom crossing on the Israeli-Gaza border.
- French President Emmanuel Macron [announced](#) on January 5 that France and Jordan collaborated to airdrop approximately seven tons of aid to civilians and aid workers in Gaza using two C-130 transport planes.
 - » Macron’s office said the humanitarian operation was “extremely complex” and involved dropping supplies that were remotely controlled and which were remotely guided to a Jordanian field hospital in Gaza.

Post-War Gaza Planning

- While speaking at a news conference in Doha, Qatar on January 7, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [remarked](#) that Palestinian civilians must be allowed to “return home” after the war and must not be pressured to leave the Gaza Strip. Blinken also stated that when he visits Israel this week, he will press Israeli officials to do more to prevent civilian casualties in Gaza.
 - » Blinken also said that the recent deaths of several *Al Jazeera* journalists in Gaza is unimaginably tragic, and that too many journalists have been killed in Gaza.
 - The January 7 IDF airstrike that [killed](#) two *Al Jazeera* journalists in Rafah was conducted because one of the vehicle’s occupants was a terrorist who was operating an aircraft “in a way that put IDF forces at risk,” according to the IDF.
- On January 7, Israeli President Isaac Herzog [told](#) *NBC News* that the Israeli government does not support encouraging the voluntary mass displacement of Palestinians, adding that doing so is “totally not the position of the Israeli government or the Israeli parliament or the Israeli public” and that “people can say whatever they want, in a cabinet of 30 ministers, a minister can say whatever he wants, this is Israeli politics.”

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,300 people in Israel have been [killed](#), and another 6,900 have been injured in the war.
 - » 510 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 176 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - The IDF [announced](#) the death of Lt. Col. Roei Yohay Yosef Mordechai, 31, from Tel Aviv.
 - On January 7, Israel’s Border Police [announced](#) that Sgt. Shay Germany, 19, from Karmiel, had been killed during an overnight counterterrorism operation in Jenin when a roadside bomb hit her vehicle.
 - » 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, at least 23,084 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 58,926 have been injured during the war.
 - » On December 4, Associated Press and AFP [reported](#), citing an IDF official, that roughly 15,000 Palestinians have died since the war began and that roughly 5,000 of those killed were terrorists.
 - » 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 332 people have been [killed](#), and at least 4,042 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 5, Israel's *Channel 12* [reported](#) that the families of six hostages held in Gaza traveled to Doha, Qatar, in an effort to resume hostage negotiations. The families will meet with Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed Al Thani and U.S. Ambassador to Qatar Timmy Davis, according to the report.
- The families of several of the hostages [plan](#) to stage a demonstration at the Kerem Shalom border crossing on January 9 to protest the lack of humanitarian aid reaching the hostages.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On January 7, the IDF [claimed](#) its troops in Gaza found “components proving terrorists of the Hamas terror organization learned under Iranian guidance how to operate and build precision components and strategic weapons,” including guided cruise missiles.
- On January 7, Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, head of the Iran-backed Houthis' Supreme Revolutionary Committee, [posted](#) on X that the Houthis would not attack ships if they broadcast the sentence, “we have no relation with Israel,” as they approach the Bab al-Mandeb Strait in the Red Sea. The post said that if ships then head to Israel, they will be “blacklisted” and seized when they reenter the Red Sea.
- On January 6 at approximately 9:30 a.m. local time, the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen [launched](#) a drone over the Red Sea near multiple commercial ships. A U.S. Navy vessel later shot it down.
- Reports from January 5 [indicated](#), citing an unnamed source familiar with the matter, that “the intelligence is clear cut and indisputable” that ISIS's branch in Afghanistan orchestrated

the recent terrorist bombings in Iran. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi had [blamed](#) American and Israeli operatives for the attack.

- » The source and a second source said that communications intercepts informed the intelligence.
- Iran's intelligence ministry [said](#) that Iranian security forces detained two people for lending support to the two people who conducted the suicide bombings. They also detained nine others with suspected links to the attacks.
- On January 5, an armed drone [launched](#) by the "Islamic Resistance in Iraq," an Iran-backed militia, hit U.S. and coalition forces at al-Harir Airbase in Iraq.

U.S. and International Response

- On January 7, Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman al-Thani [said](#) during a press conference with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken that Qatar will continue its efforts to broker agreements for hostage releases and a ceasefire despite the heightened difficulty of doing so due to Israel's presumed assassination of Hamas deputy leader Saleh Al-Arouri in Beirut last week.
 - » The prime minister also called hostilities in the Red Sea "unacceptable" and a regrettable consequence of the Israel-Hamas war.
- According to a [report](#) in *The Washington Post* on January 7, over a dozen Biden administration officials are worried that Prime Minister Netanyahu will start a war with Lebanon to save his political career. The report indicates that President Biden has sent diplomats, including Secretary of State Antony Blinken and special envoy Amos Hochstein, to prevent a full-scale war between Israel and Lebanon.
- In response to South Africa's case against Israel at the International Court of Justice at The Hague, Israel has [appointed](#) retired Israeli Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak to serve on the 15-judge panel that will hear the case. Both parties in the case get to appoint one judge.
 - » South Africa will present its case on January 11, followed by Israel on January 12.
- On January 6, the USS *Laboon* [shot down](#) the drone that the Houthis had launched over the Red Sea.
- On January 6, while [speaking](#) to reports in Greece, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that "one of the real concerns is the border between Israel and Lebanon, and we want to do everything possible to make sure we see no escalation."
 - » Blinken added that the United States wants to make sure the conflict does not spread and is working to ensure that its partners in the region are "using their influence, using their relationships with some of the actors that might be involved, to keep a lid on things."
 - » Blinken stated that, regarding the situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border, Israel "does not want escalation" but that "they also have to be fully prepared to defend themselves."
- After visiting the border between Egypt and Gaza, U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR) [said](#) on January 6 that Israeli inspections of humanitarian aid deliveries are hampering speedy delivery of the aid to the Gaza Strip and that the system is "totally broken."

- » During a press briefing with Van Hollen in Cairo, Merkley said, “what struck me yesterday was the miles of backed-up trucks. We couldn’t count, but there were hundreds.” The senators argued for a simpler process to deliver aid to Gaza’s residents.
- » During their three-day visit to Egypt, the senators met with Egyptian officials, UN aid agencies, relief groups, doctors who worked in Gaza, and a truck driver awaiting entry to the territory.
- » This week, Col. Elad Goren, an official in Israel’s Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), acknowledged that while Israeli inspections of aid shipments may be slowing aid deliveries, the fault mainly lies with international agencies and the United Nations.
- During a meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on January 5, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken “emphasized the need to prevent the conflict from spreading, secure the release of hostages, expand humanitarian assistance and reduce civilian casualties, and work toward broader, lasting regional peace that ensures Israel’s security and advances the establishment of a Palestinian state,” according to a State Department [readout](#).
 - » Blinken and Erdogan also discussed “European security priorities, including defense of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, completing Sweden’s accession to NATO, and strengthening trade and investment.”
- On January 5, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) [announced](#) that the United States had concluded a six-day-long deployment of six F-15 fighter jets to the Nevatim Airbase in southern Israel.
 - » According to the IAF, the six F-15s participated in joint drills with the IAF’s F-35 fighter jets and intelligence-gathering Gulfstream G550 planes.
 - » The IAF described the deployment in a statement as a “significant milestone in establishing joint operational activities in the region and in deepening the cooperation between the Israeli and American air forces.”
- The U.S. State Department [announced](#) on January 5 that the United States will reward \$10 million for information about five Hamas financiers—Abdelbasit Hamza Elhassan Khair, Amer Kamal Sharif Alshawa, Ahmed Sadu Jahleb, Walid Mohammed Mustafa Jadallah, and Muhammad Ahmad ‘Abd Al-Dayim Nasrallah—or for information that frustrates Hamas’s finances.
 - » Khair is based in Sudan, and Alshawa, Jahleb, and Jadallah are associated with Hamas’s Turkey-based investment network. Nasrallah is closely affiliated with Iranian entities and is based in Qatar.
- On January 6, European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Josep Borrell [met](#) with Hezbollah official Mohammad Raad, head of Hezbollah’s parliamentary bloc in Lebanon, to discuss the war and ways to de-escalate the situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border. According to an EU source cited by AFP, the EU is “engaging in diplomatic dialogue with all relevant political representatives who have influence on the situation on the ground or have a stake in it.”
- On January 5, AFP, citing a Lebanese judicial official, [reported](#) that Lebanon has charged seven people for their involvement in an attack on United Nations peacekeepers in December that killed an Irish soldier.
 - » On December 14, Irish Pvt. Sean Rooney was killed and three other peacekeepers in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) were injured when their UNIFIL

vehicle came under gunfire near the Hezbollah stronghold of al-Aqbiya in southern Lebanon.

- » According to the AFP report, one of the suspects is already in custody after Hezbollah handed him over to Lebanese authorities in December.
- On January 5, the UN Security Council held an [emergency meeting](#) about Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir's visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.
 - » Alternate Representative of the United States of America for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations Robert A. Wood said, "we are concerned by any unilateral acts that exacerbate tensions or undermine the viability of a two-state solution ... The US firmly supports the preservation of the historical status quo with respect to the holy sites in Jerusalem, especially on the Haram al Sharif Temple Mount."
 - » UAE representative to the UN Mohamed Abushahab said his country "strongly condemns the storming of Al Aqsa Mosque courtyard by an Israeli minister."
 - » Ahead of the meeting, Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan said that the UN is lending "legitimacy" to Palestinian "lies" about the Temple Mount. Erdan [claimed](#), "there is absolutely no reason that this emergency session today should be held. None. To hold a Security Council Session on a non-event is truly absurd ... Israel's minister of national security's visit to the Temple Mount lasted 13 minutes in a peaceful and orderly fashion, without causing any destruction."
- On January 5, Lebanon [filed](#) a formal complaint to the United Nations Security Council over Israel's alleged killing of Hamas deputy chief Saleh al-Arouri on January 2 in an airstrike on a building in southern Beirut.
 - » The complaint said the strike, which killed five other Hamas operatives, involved the firing of six missiles.
 - » Lebanon's complaint alleges that the strike marks "the most dangerous phase" of the war and also records Lebanon's objection to Israel using Lebanese airspace to conduct airstrikes in Syria against Hezbollah targets.
- On January 4, a spokesperson for Germany's Foreign Ministry [announced](#) that German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock would be traveling to the Middle East to visit Israeli, Palestinian, and Egyptian officials.
 - » Baerbock traveled to Israel on January 7 to meet with Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz, and will also be traveling to the West Bank to meet with Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas and PA Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki, and subsequently will be traveling to Egypt to meet with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukhy.
 - » The spokesperson noted that Germany's Foreign Ministry is concerned about potential escalation on the Lebanese-Israeli border, noting that "the risk of escalation is unfortunately very real."

Rising Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Protests, and Attacks

- On January 7, information display screens at the Rafik Hariri International Airport in Beirut, Lebanon were [hacked](#) and displayed the message, "Hassan Nasrallah, you will no longer have supporters if you curse Lebanon with a war for which you will bear responsibility and consequences."

- » The screens also had the logo of two hardline Christian groups called “Soldiers of God” and “The One Who Spoke,” implying they were responsible for the hack. Soldiers of God denied their involvement.
- On January 7, police in Berlin opened a [probe](#) after a 27-year-old woman and a 24-year-old man from Israel were verbally assaulted and then physically attacked by an Arabic-speaking man who heard them speaking in Hebrew.
- On January 6, anti-Israel protesters [blocked](#) northbound traffic on Interstate 5 in Seattle, Washington, delaying drivers for several hours.
- On January 6, pro-Palestinian protestors blocked roads outside of the British Parliament building in London and [clashed](#) with police who prevented them from crossing Westminster Bridge.

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- Webinar: [Gaza War Update](#) with JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror and JINSA Assistant Director of Foreign Policy Ari Cicurel, January 4, 2024
- Gen Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., USMC (ret.), “[Lesson of the Strike That Killed Soleimani](#),” *The Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2024