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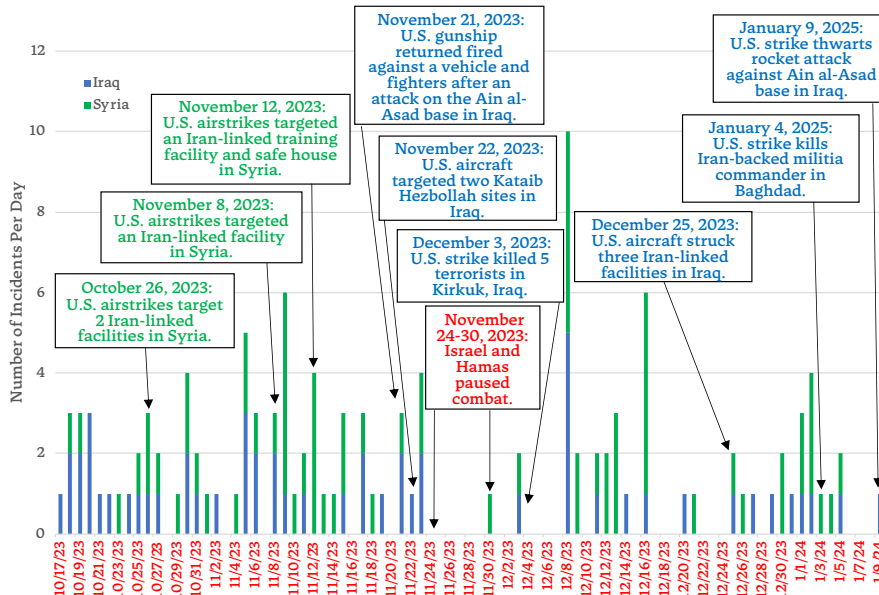
Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update January 9, 2024

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

- Along with the strike on January 8 that had killed a senior commander of Hezbollah's elite Radwan force and increased strikes in Syria, the Israeli [drone strike](#) that killed the commander of Hezbollah's aerial forces in southern Lebanon on January 9 further indicated Israel's desire to further deter and degrade the threat that Hezbollah poses.
- A U.S. strike in Iraq that [thwarted](#) an attack against the Ain al-Asad base that hosts U.S. personnel indicates greater U.S. efforts to neutralize threats before attacks occur. Such a defensive posture, however, is unlikely to prevent future attacks from occurring. Detering Iran-backed attacks will require the United States to, as Israel does, target the commanders responsible for planning and conducting attacks, as it did on January 4 when a U.S. strike [killed](#) a senior leader of an Iran-backed militia in Iraq who was responsible for attacks on U.S. personnel.
- » This was the ninth U.S. strike against Iran-baked groups amid an escalation of at least 124 attacks on U.S. personnel in Iraq and Syria since October 17.

Iran-backed Attacks Against U.S. Personnel in Iraq and Syria Since the Start of the Israel-Hamas War JINSA



- During a JINSA [webinar](#) on January 8, Dr. Cole Bunzel, a fellow at the Hoover Institution, noted that “in the aftermath of the October 7 attack, there was a lot of commentary to the effect that Hamas equals ISIS ... [while the atrocities are similar], on a more analytical level, I think it’s important that we understand that ISIS and al-Qaeda belong to a different tendency in the broader Islamist movement... Groups like Hamas ... are much more willing to operate in the international arena ... and as we’re seeing, they’re willing to cooperate with Iran.”
 - » Dr. Aaron Zelin, the Gloria and Ken Levy Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, argued that “there has been an evolution in the way [Hamas has] discussed the attacks ... in the beginning ... there was a lot of boasting around the attack and excitement ... however, quickly, as they realized that there was this negative press considering how horrific it was, you started to see a lot of obfuscating of it.”

Last 24 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 in [Sderot, Dan, and Shfela](#).
- On January 9, six IDF combat engineers were [killed](#) in an explosion in central Gaza’s Bureij area. The incident occurred close to where IDF officers were leading reporters on a tour of a nearby Hamas rocket manufacturing plant.
- On January 8, terrorists in Gaza [fired](#) 14 rockets toward Sderot, according to the municipality, several of which the Iron Dome intercepted, while others landed in open areas. The projectiles caused no damage or injuries.
- On January 8, Israel’s *Army Radio* [said](#) that terrorists in Gaza fired eight rockets from southern Gaza toward central Israel, triggering sirens. The Iron Dome intercepted three, and the rest struck open areas. The projectiles caused no injuries.
- Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh [called on](#) Muslim countries to provide Palestinian terrorists with weapons during a speech in Doha on January 9.
 - » Haniyeh said, “we see countries of the world pouring weapons into the occupation [Israel]... the time has come [for Muslim states] to support the resistance with weapons, because this is... not the battle of the Palestinian people alone.”

Lebanon

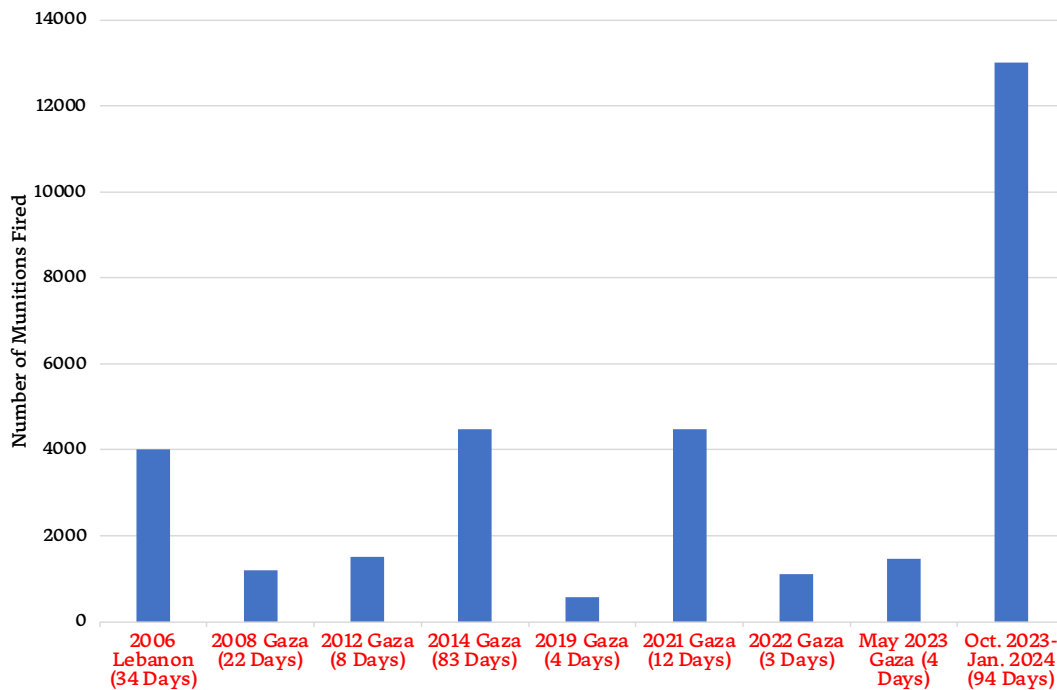
- Sirens sounded in [Safed, Yiftach, Malkia, Dishon, Ramot Naftali, Ayelet Hashachar, Avivim, Yiftah, Dishon, and Biriye](#).
- On January 9, Hezbollah [launched](#) a drone that struck the IDF Northern Command headquarters in Safed. No injuries were reported, and the IDF reported minor property damage to the facility.
 - » The IDF said it launched interceptor missiles at additional projectiles that entered Israeli airspace from Lebanon during the incident.

- » Hezbollah [claimed](#) credit for the attack, saying it launched “a number of explosive attack drones” at the base in retaliation for the alleged Israeli role in the assassinations of senior Hezbollah commander Wissam al-Tawil on January 9 and senior Hamas official Saleh al-Arouri on January 2.
- On January 9, terrorists in southern Lebanon [fired](#) several rockets and missiles at the Malkia and Yiftah areas in northern Israel. No injuries were reported.
- On January 8, Hezbollah [fired](#) an anti-tank missile toward the Israeli town of Shtula near the border with Lebanon, striking an apartment building and lightly injuring one.
- On January 8, Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdullah Abu Habib [said](#) in a meeting with United Nations Coordinator-General in Lebanon Joanna Wronecka that Israel and Hezbollah should mitigate tensions by reaching a “full implementation” of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.
 - » He specified in a statement, “that is, through Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Lebanese territories and an end to land, sea and air violations.”
 - » The August 2006 [resolution](#) calls for “the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that ... there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State.”

West Bank

- On January 9, IDF reservists shot and [killed](#) a Palestinian who attempted to stab the soldiers during a routine inspection at a checkpoint near the town of Ateret. No soldiers were injured in the incident.

Projectiles Fired Against Israel During Major Conflicts



Gaza

- IDF forces continued advancing in the southern Gazan city of Khan Younis in the past 24 hours.
 - » The IDF [conducted](#) roughly 30 strikes overnight against “significant” targets, according to the IDF, and eliminated underground facilities, weapons depots, and other terrorist infrastructure.
 - » Troops from the IDF’s 98th Division [conducted](#) strikes which killed approximately 40 Hamas operatives, and they located weapons caches and significant terror tunnel shafts.
 - » The Golani Brigade and 626th Combat Intelligence unit [eliminated](#) a Hamas cell and a Hamas weapons depot by calling in an airstrike. The IDF Navy conducted a number of operations, including eliminating Hamas weapons depots and naval vessels along the coast.
 - » The IDF [revealed](#) that troops from the 7th Armored Brigade located a tunnel shaft next to a school and found other terrorist infrastructure in residential neighborhoods. Soldiers also located weapons, explosive devices, and intelligence materials in offices next to civilian residences.
- On January 9, soldiers from the 179th Armored Brigade located a Hamas tunnel in central Gaza [containing](#) large amounts of weapons as well as thousands of dollars.
- According to [reports](#) from January 8, Israel has identified the location of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar but cannot strike him because he is hiding among several Israeli hostages. On January 7, the former head of Israel’s Military Intelligence, Amos Yadlin, said something similar on Israel’s *Kan* radio.
- Reports from January 8 [indicated](#) that Idan Amedi, an actor featured in the Israeli hit TV show *Fauda*, was seriously wounded in battle in Gaza and subsequently airlifted to Sheba Medical Center at Tel Hashomer for treatment. He has regained consciousness, is responsive, and his condition is listed as [moderate](#).
- Clarifying remarks he made to *The New York Times* earlier on January 8 that Israel had “shifted a stage” to less intense combat in northern Gaza, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#) that day that “there are still terror operatives and weapons in the north of the Gaza Strip, but they do not function within an organized military framework and now we operate there in [a different] way, and with a different mix of forces.”
 - » He elaborated, “at this stage, we are focusing on the center of the Gaza Strip and the south of the Gaza Strip. This is still an intense and complex operational activity.”
- On January 8, Israel’s *Channel 12* [aired](#) footage of a group of Palestinians detained by the IDF sharply criticizing Hamas while being stripped and bound.
 - » One of the detainees in the video said that “for 17 years, we’ve lived under tyranny,” and that “I swear to God, we waited for you to free us from the tyranny.”
 - » The detainee added, “you know what the situation is like in Gaza. Everything has turned upside down on us.” When one of the soldiers filming the clip queried, “whose fault is that?” a number of detainees exclaimed that the situation was “because of Hamas.”

Lebanon

- On January 9, an Israeli drone [strike](#) killed Ali Hussein Barji, the commander of Hezbollah's aerial forces in southern Lebanon. His car was hit in Khirbet Selm shortly before the nearby funeral for slain senior Hezbollah commander Wissam al-Tawil, who was killed in an airstrike on January 8.
 - » Barji was responsible for dozens of drone attacks against northern Israel in recent months.
- On January 9, the IDF [conducted](#) strikes on Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon's Kafr Kila area, including a Hezbollah cell preparing to launch a drone attack.
 - » Hezbollah later [announced](#) that two of its members were killed in the Israeli strike. Reuters reported, citing a Hezbollah-linked source, that a third Hezbollah member was also killed in the strike and that a senior Hezbollah commander was among those [killed](#).
- On January 8, the IDF [launched](#) airstrikes and conducted artillery shelling against several Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon, including a terror cell preparing to launch an anti-tank guided missile attack and Hezbollah military infrastructure, in response to earlier projectile attacks.

Syria

- On January 8, Reuters [reported](#), citing six sources including a source who is a commander in the Iranian proxy network—likely in Hezbollah—and a Syrian military intelligence source, that Israel has significantly intensified its campaign in Syria since the October 7 attacks. The report said that Israel has been targeting “Iranian weapons shipments to its regional proxies” at an unprecedented rate.
 - » The commander stated, “they used to fire warning shots – they'd hit near the truck, our guys would get out of the truck, and then they'd hit the truck. Now that's over. Israel is now unleashing deadlier, more frequent air raids against Iranian arms transfers and air defense systems in Syria. They bomb everyone directly. They bomb to kill.”
- On January 8, the IDF [announced](#) it killed a Hamas official in Syria, Hassan Akasha, in an airstrike near the town of Beit Jinn. The IDF said Akasha was responsible for several recent rocket attacks on northern Israel from Syria.

West Bank

- Israel's *Channel 12* reported on January 8 that several top Israeli officials have recently [warned](#) Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the West Bank is on the precipice of a major deterioration in the security situation there.
- On January 8, undercover Israeli Border Police officers shot and [killed](#) three wanted Palestinian gunmen during a raid in the West Bank town of Iktaba.
 - » During the raid, three wanted suspects fired at Israeli Border Police officers and were killed, and an additional suspect was injured and arrested. An assault rifle and a handgun were seized from the detained suspect.
 - » Two more Palestinians were later shot after opening fire on Border Police officers as the officers concluded the raid, and their condition was unclear.

Humanitarian Efforts

- On January 8, Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), the Israeli agency responsible for implementing Israeli policy regarding Palestinian civilian issues in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, [said](#) that 202 humanitarian aid trucks entered into Gaza that day after being inspected by Israel.
 - » 75 percent of the trucks, or roughly 151 trucks, carried food, while the rest of the trucks carried water, medical supplies, and shelter equipment.
 - » COGAT said in a press release that "there is no limit to the amount of humanitarian aid that can enter the Gaza Strip."
- Israeli Health Minister Uriel Busso [said](#) on January 8 during his testimony before the Health Committee in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, that Israel's health system has treated 13,000 wounded people, including 2,500 soldiers.
- He also said that NIS 2 billion, or \$538 million, was allocated for mental health treatment, and the rehabilitation system will grow from 900 to 1,500 beds. He added that the system will gain 2,300 more hospital beds and multiple resilience centers in the coming years.
 - » This comes after a Defense Ministry Rehabilitation Division representative said last month that Israel does not have the capacity to treat those injured and traumatized from the war: "If we don't get additional resources and standards, we won't be able to take care of everyone."

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,300 people in Israel have been [killed](#), and another 6,900 have been injured in the war.
 - » 519 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 185 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - On January 9, the IDF [announced](#) the [deaths](#) of nine soldiers in combat in Gaza, including Master Sgt. (res.) Amit Shahar, 25, from Ramat Yohanan; Cpt. (res.) Denis Krokmalov Veksler, 32, from Beersheba; Cpt. (res.) Ron Efrimi, 26, from Hod Hasharon; Master Sgt (res.) Roi Avraham Maimon, 24, from Afula; Sgt. Maj. (res.) Akiva Yasinskiy, 35, from Ramat Gan; Sgt. First Class (res.) Gavriel Bloom, 27, from Beit Shemesh; Sgt. First Class (res.) Yakir Hexter, 26, from Jerusalem; Sgt. First Class (res.) David Schwartz, 26, from Elazar; and Sgt. Roi Tal, 19, from Kfar Yehoshua.
 - » 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, 23,210 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 59,167 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, 350 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 4,068 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.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- Overnight on January 9, Iran-backed groups were likely responsible for an [attempted rocket attack](#) against the Ain al-Asad base in Iraq, which was foiled by a U.S. airstrike. The strike destroyed a truck-mounted rocket launcher with at least two rockets that was 4 miles (7 kilometers) from the Ain al-Asad base.

U.S. and International Response

- Overnight on January 9, a U.S. airstrike [foiled](#) the attempted rocket attack against the Ain al-Asad base in Iraq, which hosts U.S. personnel.
- On January 9, while delivering a speech in South Carolina, U.S. President Joe Biden said in response to pro-Palestinian protestors who interrupted the speech that “I understand their passion, and I’ve been quietly working with the Israeli government to get them to reduce and significantly [get out](#) of Gaza.” Biden added, “I’ve been using all that I can to do that.”

- On January 9, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [began](#) his closed-door meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, both of whom will subsequently meet with Netanyahu's war cabinet.
- On January 9, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Israeli President Isaac Herzog in Israel, where they [discussed](#) the region, this week's hearing at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, efforts to return the [hostages](#), and plans for post-war Gaza.
- During a meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz on January 9, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [noted](#) the progress that Israel has made toward expanding normalization with its Arab neighbors and that "there are actually real opportunities there" once they "get through this very challenging moment and ensure that October 7 can never happen again and work to build a much different and much better future."
- On January 8, after meeting with Saudi Arabia's and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.)'s leaders, Secretary Blinken [said](#), "there's a clear interest in the region in pursuing [normalization with Israel], but it will require that the conflict end in Gaza and it will also clearly require that there be a practical pathway to a Palestinian state," adding that normalization "could be transformative."
 - » He also said that the West Bank and Gaza should have a united Palestinian-led government and that the region should move toward more normalization of ties, not conflict, which he argued requires "the establishment of an independent Palestinian state."
 - » He added, "everywhere I went, I found leaders who are determined to prevent the conflict that we are facing now from spreading" and pledged to "press [Israel] on the absolute imperative to do more to protect civilians and to do more to make sure that humanitarian assistance is getting into the hands of those who need it" while focusing on securing the release of the hostages.
- After speaking with U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, Israeli President Isaac Herzog [said](#) on January 8 in a post on X that he "was pleased to speak this evening with U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris who stressed the steadfast commitment of U.S. President Joe Biden along with her own and that of the Administration, to the well-being and security of the State of Israel."
 - » Herzog also said, "I thanked her for the U.S.'s continued support for Israel's right and duty to defend itself — on all its borders. I also thanked her for the U.S.'s ongoing efforts to see all the hostages returned home, which must be an urgent priority for the whole world."
 - » The White House readout said that Harris "reiterated our steadfast support for Israel and its right to defend itself in the face of threats from Hamas, and she again condemned Hamas as a barbaric terrorist organization that perpetrated a horrific massacre on October 7 and engaged in brutal sexual violence."
 - » It also said that the two leaders "discussed efforts to prevent the conflict in Gaza from spreading to the broader region, including in Lebanon and the Red Sea," and "spoke about the shift to lower intensity operations in Gaza, securing the release of all hostages, and the importance of protecting of civilian lives and increasing humanitarian assistance into Gaza."
 - » The readout also said that Herzog and Harris "discussed ongoing planning for post-conflict Gaza and progress made on that front," while Harris "reiterated U.S. positions, including that Israel must be secure, there must be no forced displacement of

Palestinians from Gaza, and the Palestinians must have a hopeful political horizon” and “also reiterated that the United States wants to see a more integrated, connected and prosperous Middle East.”

- On January 8, independent UN-appointed experts demanded accountability for sexual violence against Israelis on October 7 in a [statement](#) arguing that “the growing body of evidence about reported sexual violence is particularly harrowing.” The experts added, “these acts constitute gross violations of international law, amounting to war crimes which, given the number of victims and the extensive premeditation and planning of the attacks, may also qualify as crimes against humanity.”
- On January 8, *Axios* reported, citing an Israeli official, that U.A.E. President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed had [refused](#) a request from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to pay unemployment stipends to Palestinian workers in the West Bank who are currently unable to enter Israel for work.
 - » Since the October 7 attack, Israel has not permitted Palestinians to enter into Israel from the West Bank due to security risks. This includes roughly 150,000 Palestinians with permits to work in Israel.
 - » Bin Zayed reportedly told Netanyahu to “ask [Ukrainian President Volodymyr] Zelensky for money.” An Emirati official told *Axios* that “the notion that Arab countries will come in to rebuild and pay the bill for what’s currently happening is wishful thinking.”

Rising Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Protests, and Attacks

- On January 9, President Joe Biden was briefly [interrupted](#) while delivering a speech in Charleston, South Carolina by protestors who chanted “ceasefire in Palestine” and “ceasefire now.”
- On the morning of January 8, pro-Palestinian demonstrators [blocked off](#) entrances to the Holland Tunnel and the Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Williamsburg Bridges during morning rush hour. 325 people were arrested.
 - » The protestors blocked the roads and held banners reading “end the occupation” and “end the siege on Gaza.”
 - » According to the organizers of the protest, the protest was organized by a number of activist groups, including the Democratic Socialists of America, Jewish Voice for Peace, and others.
- On January 8, U.S. deputy antisemitism envoy Aaron Keyak [told](#) *The Washington Post*, “what we saw after October 7 was a drastic change in the social media within China. The antisemitism became more unplugged, more free-flowing.”
 - » He added, “because we know that the Chinese internet is not free, that’s a conscious decision by the Chinese government to allow that kind of rhetoric to be greatly increased,” and “this is not some kind of uptick, this was a tsunami of antisemitic rhetoric that was allowed to spread on China’s social media.”
 - » Kayak also said, “this sort of drastic increase that has been sustained since October 7 coming out of China does not happen by accident,” and the Chinese government denied promoting online antisemitism.

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- Webinar: [Hamas, Iran, and the Future of Jihadism Post-10/7](#), with Dr. Jacob Olidort, Dr. Aaron Zelin, and Dr. Cole Bunzel, January 8, 2024
- Morgan Lorraine Viña and Yoni Tobin, [Actions by the United Nations Undermine Israel's Right to Self-Defense](#), January 5, 2024
- VADM Mark Fox, USN (ret.) and Jacob Olidort, " [Bahrain: Bold Partner for Middle East Peace](#)," *RealClearDefense*, January 5, 2024
- Gen Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., USMC (ret.), " [Lesson of the Strike That Killed Soleimani](#)," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2024
- Sander Gerber and Robert Wexler, " [To solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: First confront Iran](#)," *The Hill*, January 4, 2024
- Webinar: [Gaza War Update](#) with IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror and Ari Cicurel, January 4, 2024