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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update March 4, 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. 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

- Over the weekend, as the United States conducted its first airdrop of humanitarian aid into Gaza, President Biden and Vice President Harris criticized Israel for what they claimed was an insufficient amount of humanitarian aid being allowed into Gaza, potentially causing further tensions between the U.S. and Israeli governments.
 - » Harris also called for Hamas to accept a ceasefire deal, while Israel has already reportedly [accepted](#) the framework for a six-week ceasefire. Any ceasefire that does not include hostages being released would undermine Israeli efforts to recover them by pausing Israeli operations without forcing Hamas to give up anything in return.
- The sinking on March 2 of the *Rubymar*, a British-owned cargo ship carrying fertilizer, marked the first vessel lost because of a Houthi attack and underscored the danger that the Iran-backed terrorist group poses to freedom of navigation and the environment in the Red Sea.

Last 72 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least 15,000 rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired at Israel from all fronts combined during the war, according to JINSA data.

Gaza

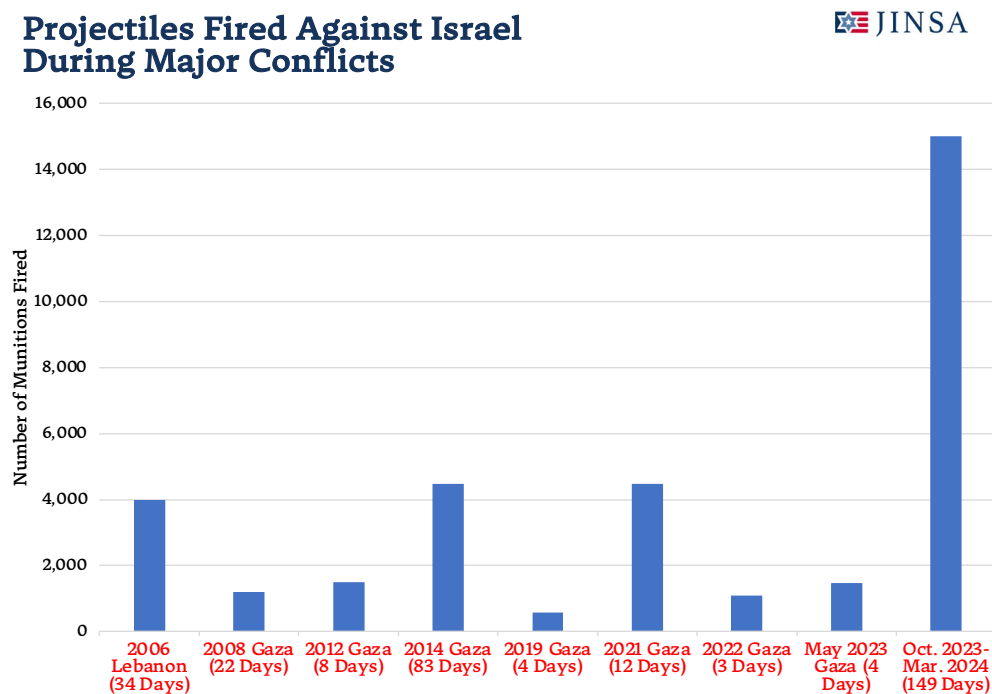
- Sirens sounded in [Zikim and Ashkelon](#).
- On March 2, the IDF [said](#) that terrorists in Gaza launched at least four rockets toward Beersheba's Hatzertim area. All the projectiles hit unpopulated areas, causing no reported injuries.

Lebanon

- Sirens sounded in [Ayelet HaShar, Gadot, Yesod Hama'ala, Sde Eliezer, Amuka, Hulata, Mishmar HaYarden, Shlomi, and Betzet](#).
- On March 4, an anti-tank missile [fired](#) from Lebanon killed one, a man in his 30s, and injured seven others, including two seriously, near Margaliot in northern Israel. Four men were moderately injured, and one is in good condition, according to Israel's Magen David Adom (MDA). All the victims are said to be workers from Thailand.
- On March 4, Hezbollah [said](#) that it shelled the region close to Zarit in northern Israel, but no one in Israel reported such an attack, no injuries or damage were reported, and the IDF's Homefront Command said no sirens were triggered.
- On March 3, an aerial target—likely a drone—[entered](#) Israel's airspace from Lebanon. The IDF fired an interceptor missile at the target. No injuries were reported.
- On March 3, the IDF [said](#) that terrorists in Lebanon launched projectiles toward Metula, Ghajar, and Malkia in northern Israel. The IDF also said that the attacks did not inflict injuries.

West Bank

- On March 2, a Palestinian [stabbed](#) a resident of the coastal Israeli city of Ashkelon in Dahariya, a town near Hebron, in the West Bank. According to police, the 20-year-old attacker stabbed the victim upon hearing that he was Jewish. The IDF said that it subsequently arrested the suspect and transferred him to the Shit Bet security agency for interrogation.
 - » One of the two Arab-Israeli men traveling with the victim drove him to the Meitar Crossing, where MDA treated him before taking him to Beersheba's Soroka Medical Center.



Gaza

- On March 4, the IDF [announced](#) that it captured over 80 terror suspects hiding among some 8,500 Palestinian civilians being evacuated from the Hamad Town area of the southern Gazan city of Khan Younis that day. According to the IDF, over 1,200 terror suspects have been captured in Khan Younis in the current ground offensive.
- On March 4, the IDF [said](#) that the 98th Division operated extensively against Hamas in the Hamad Town area of Khan Younis, where there is substantial Hamas infrastructure.
 - » The IDF said that captured terrorists “provide[d] important information for the continuation of the fighting.”
- The IDF [said](#) on March 4 that less than 30 minutes after Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorists launched rockets toward Be’eri and Hatzerim on March 2, the IDF carried out a strike that killed the assailants.
- On March 3, the IDF and Israel’s Shin Bet security agency [said](#) that Israel killed senior Hamas member Mahmoud Muhammad Abed Khad, who had raised money for Hamas and recruited new operatives for Hamas’s Zeitoun Battalion, in an airstrike in central Gaza.
- The IDF announced on March 3 that it [concluded](#) a two-week-long raid in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City, during which troops killed at least 113 Hamas operatives.
 - » The operation, which was led by the IDF’s 401st Armored Brigade and some forces from the 162nd Division, eliminated approximately 35 terror targets, including weapons manufacturing sites, weapons depots, terror tunnels, rocket launching posts, hundreds of rocket launchers, and a site belonging to Hamas’s Gaza City Brigade commander.
 - » Troops also identified and captured dozens of Hamas operatives who provided important intelligence information.
 - » Hamas operatives in Zeitoun had been operating in small cells “without a military framework,” according to the IDF, as the IDF had previously eliminated the Hamas battalions in Zeitoun earlier in the war.
 - » The Zeitoun operation was the 401st Brigade’s fourth operation in the Gaza Strip in the war. Its previous operations targeted Hamas operatives in Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza; the Daraj and Tuffah neighborhoods of Gaza City; and the Rimal and Shati neighborhoods of Gaza City.
- On March 3, the IDF [conducted](#) a wave of airstrikes against approximately 50 Hamas targets in Khan Younis in a roughly six-minute span.
 - » The airstrikes, which targeted underground facilities, anti-tank launching posts, booby-trapped buildings, and other Hamas infrastructure, were launched to enable the 98th Division to conduct a ground maneuver in new areas of the city.
- On March 3, the IDF [announced](#) that the Nahal Brigade had killed dozens of Hamas operatives over the previous day and seized a number of Hamas weapons during operations in central Gaza.
 - » According to local Palestinian media reports, Israel [conducted](#) a large number of airstrikes targeting the Deir al-Balah area of central Gaza that day.
- *The New York Times* [reported](#) on March 3 that it viewed an unpublished report from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) whose authors allege that Israel abused Palestinian detainees from Gaza, according to detainee testimony. Detainees said “they

were beaten, stripped, robbed, blindfolded, sexually abused and denied access to lawyers and doctors, often for more than a month.”

- » The IDF said that such treatment was “absolutely prohibited,” denied that it had sexually abused detainees, and indicated that “concrete complaints regarding inappropriate behavior are forwarded to the relevant authorities for review.”
- On March 2, the IDF [said](#) that it launched a strike targeting several PIJ combatants in the southern Gazan city of Rafah. Hamas’s health ministry said that the strike killed 11 people, including a paramedic, and injured dozens.
- On March 2, the IDF [published](#) a video of its Commando Brigade fighting in Khan Younis and said that the brigade is fighting Hamas in the city’s western area. The IDF also said that the Egoz commando unit entered one of Hamas leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar’s compounds, confiscating an assault rifle.
- The IDF [said](#) on March 2 that minutes after terrorists in northern Gaza fired projectiles into Israel, for which PIJ took credit, the IDF struck the launch site and numerous additional Hamas targets.
 - » The IDF also said that in Khan Younis, its 7th Armored Brigade killed Hamas combatants, confiscated weapons, and guided airstrikes, while the Nahal Brigade and Ghost Unit operated against Hamas in central Gaza, killing more than 20 gunmen. The military added that the 215th Artillery Regiment operated in the Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City and requested an airstrike against three Hamas members, killing them.
- Referencing the deadly February 29 stampede near an aid convoy in Gaza, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#) on March 2 that “we are investigating this incident, we have all the footage we need to complete an exhaustive investigation and find out the truth of the facts of this incident, and we will present the findings.” Hamas had alleged that Israel fired upon the crowd.
 - » Hagari added, “this was a humanitarian operation we conducted, and the claim that we intentionally struck the convoy and intentionally harmed people is baseless.”

Lebanon

- On March 4, the IDF [said](#) that it carried out a strike against a group of Hezbollah operatives in Chihine in Lebanon and that it struck an additional Hezbollah target in Ayta ash-Shab earlier that day. The IDF added that it shelled the origin site of the earlier deadly anti-tank missile attack against Margaliot.
- On March 3, the IDF [said](#) that it launched strikes against Hezbollah infrastructure in Ayta ash-Shab and Kafr Kila in southern Lebanon, including a building that the terror group used. The strikes were in response to projectile attacks from Lebanon earlier that day against Metula, Ghajar, and Malkia in northern Israel.
- On March 2, the IDF [conducted airstrikes](#) against two Hezbollah facilities in the southern Lebanese town of Labbouneh and a Hezbollah facility in the town of Rameh.
- On March 2, the IDF [said](#) that it carried out a strike against Imam Hossein Division members who were driving through Naqoura in Lebanon and who were implicated in recent rocket attacks against Israel. Reports indicated that the strikes killed three, including a weapons technician and Abbas Ahmed Khalil, the [grandson](#) of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. The group is an Iranian militia allied with Hezbollah.
 - » The IDF added that it struck additional Hezbollah targets in Labbouneh that day and in Blida the previous night.

West Bank

- On March 4, Israeli forces [conducted](#) a raid in Ramallah that Palestinian sources called the largest in years. During the raid, Israel [arrested](#) two individuals. Israeli forces also operated elsewhere in the West Bank in Nur Shams, Hebron, Deir Amar, and Tuba, arresting 13 total individuals.
- According to Palestinian media, on March 3 in Jenin, Palestinian Authority forces [shot](#) and injured Qais al-Saadi, a senior Hamas member. The reports cited witnesses who said that al-Saadi subsequently escaped. Israel's *Kan* outlet said that Israel has sought al-Saadi's capture for two years.
- On March 4, Israel's Shin Bet internal security service announced that it [foiled](#) an Islamic State-inspired plot last month by four West Bank Palestinians who had manufactured roughly 100 explosive devices that they planned to use against IDF troops.
- On March 1, head of the IDF's Central Command Yehuda Fox [said](#), "readiness for escalation is fundamental. We must improve our [readiness] every day. There may be an event (whether Israel is to blame or not) that will cause hundreds of thousands to take to the streets. This needs to be imagined and prepared for in all respects."

Humanitarian Efforts

- On March 4, *The New York Times* [reported](#) that "Israeli officials have worked in recent days with multiple Gazan businessmen to organize private aid convoys."
 - » The report quoted a Palestinian businessman, Izzat Aqel, involved in the initiative as saying that a March 2 aid convoy of 16 trucks largely did not make it to its destination of Gaza City. Aqel said that 15 of the 16 trucks were seized and ransacked in the central Gazan area of Nuseirat and that only one truck made it to Gaza City.
- On March 4, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that the IDF has distributed food packages to Palestinians being evacuated from Khan Younis in recent days as Ramadan approaches.
 - » According to the report, the packages include a "greeting card with a Quranic verse." The report stated that the package deliveries are aimed "at driving a wedge between the civilian population and Hamas."
- On March 3, the United States conducted its first [airdrop](#) of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Three C-130 aircraft dropped more than 35,000 meals.
- On March 3, the IDF [announced](#) that it had coordinated 21 humanitarian airdrops by a number of countries in recent weeks, including France, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. The airdrops provided over 450 packages of food and medical supplies, according to the IDF.
- On March 3, Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) agency posted on X that 277 aid trucks [entered](#) the Gaza Strip that day, which the agency said was the highest single-day figure since the war began. COGAT also announced that 50 incubators for use in Gaza's hospitals [entered](#) Gaza that day.
- While speaking with reporters on a March 2 teleconference, an anonymous senior Biden administration official [stated](#), "none of these—maritime corridor, airdrops—are an alternative to the fundamental need to move assistance through as many land crossings as possible. That's the most efficient way to get aid in at scale. It's the most efficient way to flood the zone."

- During a press briefing with Italy’s Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni on March 1, President Biden [said](#), “the United States will do more and in the coming days, we are going to join with our friends from Jordan and others to provide airdrops of supplies into [Gaza] and seek to open up other avenues into [Gaza], including the possibility of a marine corridor delivering large amounts of humanitarian assistance.”
 - » He added that he and Meloni will talk about “the Middle East and yesterday’s tragic and alarming event in north Gaza, trying to get humanitarian assistance in there ... The loss of life is heartbreaking.”
- *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) on March 1 that amid Hamas’s lack of communication with hostage negotiators following the deadly February 29 stampede in Gaza, Egypt may unilaterally airdrop humanitarian aid in the territory.
- According to a Reuters [report](#) on March 1, a U.S. official indicated that the United States was considering shipping aid to Gaza via Cyprus, in addition to airdropping aid.

Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations

- *CNN* [reported](#) on March 3, citing a senior source in Hamas, that Hamas will refuse to agree to any hostage deal unless Israel agrees to end its operations in Gaza.
 - » According to the report, two other unresolved areas of disagreement in negotiations include Hamas’s demands that the IDF withdraw its troops from Gaza and permit Palestinian civilians to return to northern Gaza.
 - » The report also stated that Hamas is “demanding a certain amount of aid be allowed into both the southern and northern Strip before the organization agrees to a deal.”
- According to Hebrew-language [reports](#) from March 3, Israeli officials believe that Hamas’s leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar seeks an escalation of violence during Ramadan and “has no intention of agreeing to a temporary ceasefire in the coming days.”
 - » Officials reportedly are bracing for an escalation in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, as well as in the West Bank and Jerusalem, particularly near the Temple Mount.
- Hamas official Basim Naim [told](#) *BBC* on March 3 that Hamas is unable to provide negotiators a list of living hostages due to logistical hurdles.
 - » Naim said, “technically and practically, it is now impossible to know exactly who is still alive and who has been killed because of the Israeli bombardment or who has been killed because of starvation because of the Israeli blockade.”
 - » Naim further stated that hostages “are in different areas with different groups and therefore we have called for a ceasefire to be able to collect the data.”
- According to a March 3 [report](#) from *The Wall Street Journal*, Hamas officials believe that the first week of Ramadan—which begins March 10—is a “realistic” deadline for reaching a deal. According to the report, Israel did not send negotiators to the latest round of talks over the weekend in Egypt after being told by mediators “that Hamas officials had arrived ... without answers to several of Israel’s main demands.”
 - » Egyptian officials cited in the report said that while Hamas and Israel are “making slow progress,” a deal could still be reached by Ramadan.
 - » The report asserts that Hamas’s leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar has not been in touch with negotiators since February 25, complicating negotiating efforts.

- » According to the report, Sinwar’s last message to Hamas political leadership in Qatar was that there should be “no rush” to secure a deal and that Sinwar is hoping that an IDF offensive into Rafah will be a catalyst causing “Palestinians living in Israel and the West Bank to rise up against Israel.”
- On March 2, Reuters [reported](#), citing a senior U.S. official, that the framework for a deal for a six-week ceasefire was in place, and that Israel had agreed to the framework, which is now dependent on Hamas agreeing to release hostages.
- The senior U.S. official told Reuters, “the deal is basically there. But I don’t want to create expectations one way or the other.”
- During the March 1 press briefing with Prime Minister Meloni, Biden [said](#), “hopefully we will know shortly ... We are trying to work out a deal between Israel and Hamas—the hostages being returned and the immediate ceasefire in Gaza for at least the next six weeks, and to allow the surge of aid to the entire Gaza Strip, not just the south.”
- According to a March 1 [report](#) from *Axios* citing two senior Israeli officials, Israel has conveyed to Egypt and Qatar that it will not participate in another round of hostage release negotiations unless Hamas provides a list of living hostages and a “serious response to the number of Palestinian prisoners” to be released in a deal.
 - » The report stated that Egypt and Qatar had promised Israel earlier that week that it would secure a list of living hostages from Hamas and put pressure on the terror group to be more “flexible” on the number of Palestinian prisoners to be released in a deal.
 - » However, according to an Israeli official quoted in the report, “the mediators promised that Hamas would give numbers and that didn’t happen.”

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 586 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 246 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - On March 3, the IDF [announced](#) the death of Sgt. Maj. (res.) Dennis Yekimov, 33, from Beersheba.
 - On March 2, the IDF [announced](#) the deaths of Sgt. Dolev Malka, 19, from Shlomi; Sgt. Afik Tery, 19, from Rehovot, and; Sgt. Inon Yitzhak, 19, from Mitzpe Ramon. The three soldiers were killed in an incident in which another 14 troops were wounded after a booby-trapped building they were operating in was hit by two explosive devices.
 - » 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 30,534 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 71,920 have been injured during the war.

- » On October 25, 2023, 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.”
- » The IDF [said](#) on February 29 that it has killed approximately 13,000 Hamas operatives over the course of the war.
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, 420 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 4,650 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, [three](#) have been rescued by the IDF, [seven have](#) been [found](#) dead, three have been [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.
- Israel has said that terrorists in Gaza currently [hold](#) 134 hostages, and according to IDF spokesman Rear Adm Daniel Hagari, the IDF has [notified](#) the families of 31 of the 136 hostages that their loved ones died, including two who were 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.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On March 3, Iranian state television [announced](#) that the regime’s judiciary had executed an individual it claimed had “planned to explode the workshop complex of the Ministry of Defense in Isfahan under guidance of the intelligence officer of Mossad.” The date of the execution and identity of the individual were not released.
- On March 2, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency [indicated](#) that there was an attack 15 nautical miles west of Yemen’s port of Mokh. According to the UKMTO, “the crew took the vessel to anchor and were evacuated by military authorities.”
- On March 2, the *Rubymar*, a British-owned cargo ship that the Houthis had struck on February 18, [sank](#) in the Red Sea, the first vessel lost since the terrorist group began launching attacks in November.
 - » The *Rubymar* carried fertilizer, posing an [environmental risk](#) to the Red Sea.
 - » Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, the head of the Houthis’ supreme revolutionary committee, [posted](#) on X that U.K. Prime Minister Rishi “Sunak has a chance to recover the Rubymar by allowing aid trucks into Gaza.”

- On March 2, the Houthis [launched](#) a drone over the Red Sea. An Italian navy vessel later shot down the drone.
- On March 1 at 10:46 p.m. local time, the Iran-backed Houthis [launched](#) one anti-ship ballistic missile from Yemen over the Red Sea. The missile did not hit any ships.

U.S. and International Response

- On March 3, Vice President Kamala Harris [argued](#) that “given the immense scale of suffering in Gaza there must be an immediate ceasefire ... For at least the next six weeks, which is what currently is on the table.” She added, “ Hamas claims it wants a ceasefire. Well, there is a deal on the table. And as we have said, Hamas needs to agree to that deal.”
 - » Harris added, “the Israeli government must do more to significantly increase the flow of aid. No excuses ... They must not impose any unnecessary restrictions on the delivery of aid. They must ensure humanitarian personnel, sites, and convoys are not targeted.”
- On March 3, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) released a [statement](#) that CENTCOM Commander General Michael Erik Kurilla had traveled on February 27 to the Al Arish and Rafah Gate in Egypt, “where he met with representatives from several international and nongovernmental organizations, the Egyptian 2nd Field Army, and U.S. embassy leadership to discuss the process of delivering humanitarian aid from Egypt into Gaza.”
 - » Kurilla also met in Jordan with Jordanian military officials and visited U.S. military personnel in Jordan and Syria, including Tower 22, Al Tanf Garrison, Rumalyn Landing Zone, Mission Support Site Euphrates, and Mission Support Site Green Village.
- On March 1, President Biden [noted](#) that “in addition to expanding deliveries by land ... we’re going to insist that Israel facilitate more trucks and more routes to get more and more people the help they need. No excuses.”
 - » Biden argued, “aid flowing to Gaza is nowhere near enough ... Innocent lives are on the line and children’s lives are on the line.” Biden added, “we should be getting hundreds of trucks in, not just several. And I won’t stand by, we won’t let up and we’re ... trying to pull out every stop we can to get more assistance in.”
- On March 1 at approximately 12:40 p.m. local time, the United States [struck](#) one Houthi surface-to-air missile in Yemen that was prepared to target ships in the Red Sea.
- On March 1, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen [criticized](#) Israel for withholding work permits and blocking travel for Palestinians from the West Bank.
- On March 2, a United Nations team visiting a hospital in Gaza [claimed](#) there were “a large number of gunshot wounds” among dozens of Palestinians injured during the stampede surrounding humanitarian aid on February 29.
 - » The IDF stated that most of the injuries were caused by the stampede and that Palestinian gunmen opened fire in the area.
 - » On March 1, the head of the Gaza hospital treating Palestinian patients injured in the incident [claimed](#) that 80% of the 176 wounded had been hit by gunfire and the remainder had injuries from the stampede.
- On March 1, South Africa [condemned](#) the killing of Palestinians during the stampede around humanitarian aid convoys on February 29 and claimed that it violated the International Court of Justice’s provisional orders for Israel to take all measures to prevent its troops from committing genocide.

- On March 1, Nicaragua [filed a case](#) at the International Court of Justice against Germany for providing financial and military aid to Israel and for halting its funding to UNRWA.
- On March 1, U.K. Foreign Minister David Cameron [said](#) that “the deaths of people in Gaza waiting for an aid convoy yesterday were horrific. There must be an urgent investigation and accountability. This must not happen again.”
 - » He added, “we can’t separate what happened yesterday from the inadequate aid supplies. In February only half the number of trucks crossed into Gaza that did in January. This is simply unacceptable.”
 - » Cameron also argued, “Israel has an obligation to ensure that significantly more humanitarian aid reaches the people of Gaza. We have identified a series of bottlenecks that need addressing: Israel must urgently open more crossings into Gaza; eliminate bureaucratic obstacles; enable aid operations in Gaza; and ensure there is a robust de-confliction mechanism in place to protect ordinary Palestinians, NGOs, medics and others providing aid.”
- On March 1, the European Union [announced](#) that it would pay \$54 million to UNRWA and “indicated that [UNRWA] stands ready to ensure that a review of its staff is carried out to confirm they did not participate in the attacks and that further controls are put in place to mitigate such risks in the future.”
 - » The EU also noted that a further tranche of \$16 million will be provided as UNRWA complies with the audit.
- During an [interview](#) with *The Times of Israel* that was released on March 1 but took place before the deadly stampede surrounding humanitarian aid in Gaza on February 29, EU special envoy for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process Sven Koopmans said that “it’s a violation of international law to use humanitarian assistance as a variable, as it is to use hostages as a political tool. That goes against everything we stand for.”
 - » Koopmans argued, “humanitarian assistance, which is saving the lives of innocent civilians, cannot be made subject to political negotiations—[in which Israel agrees to allow more food in if Hamas agrees to certain conditions], even more when the other side, in this case, is a terrorist organization.”
 - » He added, “how can you say, ‘we’re not going to feed these starving children unless that terror organization does something?’ It’s not just a matter of humanity and values, even though these are very important. It’s also a matter of international law.”

Rising Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Protests, and Attacks

- On March 2, a 15-year-old attacker [stabbed](#) a 50-year-old ultra-Orthodox man in Zurich and reportedly shouted “death to all Jews.”
- On March 2, thousands of protesters [gathered](#) in Jerusalem’s Paris Square, outside Prime Minister Netanyahu’s official residence, to demand a hostage deal.
- A March 1 [report](#) in *NBC News* indicated that the Biden campaign has taken measures to try to avoid pro-Palestinian disruptions at events by holding smaller gatherings, not revealing the exact locations until the president has arrived, and avoiding college campuses.
- On March 1, Barnard College in New York [banned](#) external dorm room decorations after complaints about signs related to the Israel-Hamas war, including antisemitic messages that read “Zionism is terrorism.”

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- Ari Cicurel, [Monthly Iran Projectile Tracker: February 2024](#), March 1, 2024
- The Gaza Futures Task Force, [The Day After: A Plan for Gaza](#), February 29, 2024
- The Gaza Futures Task Force, [The Day After: A Plan for Gaza Action Plan](#), February 29, 2024
- Webinar: [Gaza Update 2/29](#), with IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish and Blaise Misztal, February 29, 2024
- LTC Geoffrey S. Corn, USA (ret.), “[Ground Truth: The Disconnect, Context and Challenges of Israel’s War against Hamas](#),” *The Cipher Brief*, February 29, 2024
- LTG Raymond Palumbo, USA (ret). and Jacob Olidort, “[A U.S. Hostage Rescue Operation in Gaza Should Not Be off the Table](#),” *RealClearDefense*, February 29, 2024
- Jonathan Ruhe and Yoni Tobin, [Don’t Fall for Iran’s Empty Nuclear Gesture](#), February 27, 2024