

Ynet-News, January 24, 2025 – Friday Tevet 10<sup>th</sup> Month

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West Bank OP tactics go house-to-house, sweep camp & surrounding areas

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Lebanon army stalls; Israel finds weapons cache & cancels exit

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Trump placed envoy, Steve Witkoff to solve Iran issue without an Israeli strike

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Hamas is trying to rebuild, rearm, and run Gaza, making peace difficult

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Gaza prepares for mass return north on Saturday after hostage release

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Trump appointed Mideast envoy Witkoff to handle the Iran portfolio

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PA reporter ambushes IDF general in London with genocide questions

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Israel ambassador to Moscow working to get release of 4 Russia-connected hostages

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Huge 4 hr traffic jams in West Bank as IDF prepare for next prisoner release

01.23.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Security officials warn against delaying IDF withdrawal from Lebanon Sunday

01.23.25 – Th- - - News Placed in January 23 spot – Thursday

US security firm readies to inspect Gazans returning to north amid cease-fire

01.23.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Dolls resembling Hamas terrorists set up in a pickup truck in Jenin

01.23.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

IDF gun battle kills terrorists behind West Bank car shooting vehicles and buses

01.22.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Hamas celebration in Istanbul drew silence & sharp questions from Turkish intelligence

01.22.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Shin Bet blunders investigated after Tel Aviv terror attack by Moroccan

01.22.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Aid trucks flood Gaza amid cease-fire, sharply cutting local prices

01.22.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

West Bank settlers pepper-sprayed police officer, who fired in all directions

01.22.25 – We- - - News Placed in January 22 spot – Wednesday

PA to manage Rafah crossing under UN, US & Israel supervision in phase two

01.22.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

IDF must withdraw from Lebanon Blue Line border, by Sunday, January 26

01.21.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Q3 Moon 2:32pm

5 injured in stabbing attack in central Tel Aviv, terrorist eliminated

01.21.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Q3 Moon 2:32pm

Israel's Iron Wall operation in West Bank: IDF strikes terrorists planting IEDs in Jenin

01.21.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Q3 Moon 2:32pm

Axis is weak; but Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen & Gaza claim victory over Israel

01.21.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Q3 Moon 2:32pm

IDF chief & Maj-Gen resign; haunted by Oct. 7, finished by hostage deal

01.21.25 – Tu- - - News Placed in January 21 spot – Tuesday Q3 Moon 2:32pm

PA security launch different approach in Jenin; homes used for shooting are torched

01.21.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Q3 Moon 2:32pm

Hamas sends a message: chaos shows elite force at Gaza's hostage released

01.21.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Q3 Moon 2:32pm

Masked settlers riot in West Bank PA villages, set fires; two hurt in shooting

01.20.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Trump lifts Biden sanctions on West Bank settlers; time to annex Judea & Samaria

01.20.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Hostage advocate champion vows to continue efforts after daughters' return

01.20.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Trump takes a jab as Biden claims all credit for hostage deal

01.20.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Gazans shocked at devastation to northern homes; nothing but rubble

01.20.25 – Mo- - - News Placed in January 20 spot – Monday  
Red Cross medical checks delayed prisoner release seven hours past agreed time

01.19.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday  
The moment Israel waited for: Emily, Doron and Romi reunite with their families

01.19.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday  
Cynical and psychological exploitation: Hamas monsters deprived freedom

01.19.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday  
90 prisoners, 30 each exchanged for every living hostage, released in West Bank

01.19.25 – Su- - - News Placed in January 19 spot – Sunday  
Three women released to Red Cross, amid thousands of armed terrorists

01.19.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday  
IDF release WB PA prisoners & bolster forces to quell armed marches

01.19.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday  
Ben-Gvir resigns from coalition, will return if fighting in Gaza resumes

01.19.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday  
Trump envoy mulls relocation for Gazans to help rebuild the Strip

01.19.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday  
IDF carries out strikes on Hamas targets ahead of 8.30 am cease-fire

01.18.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday  
Hamas missed 4:30 hostage list deadline; first three hostages are expected 4 p.m. Sunday

01.18.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday  
IDF on high alert as cease-fire with Hamas implements a sensitive arrangement

01.18.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday  
Man severely wounded in Tel Aviv stabbing attack; terrorist killed

01.18.25 – Sa- - - News Placed in January 18 spot – Saturday  
Houthi's second launch on Israel in hours, intercepted near south city of Eilat

01.18.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday  
Trump envoy Witkoff told urged, make hostage deal or we pack up and leave

01.24.25 – Fr

West Bank OP tactics go house-to-house, sweep camp & surrounding areas

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'Cant defeat terror with defense': West Bank OP commanders say

Deputy commander of elite Duvdevan unit shares about fighting the terror cell in Jenin, how it recruits teens, and how prisoner release celebrations will be prevented

Elisha Ben Kimon|12:19

Since the signing of the hostage deal and the cease-fire agreements in both the north and south, the West Bank has emerged as the IDF's primary front. This shift is no coincidence, as just two days ago, IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi visited the area to oversee the Central Command's operations.

Since the launch of Operation "Iron Wall" on Tuesday, Israeli forces have eliminated over ten terrorists and arrested some 20 suspects.

IDF forces operate in Jenin

One of the busiest units in the West Bank is the elite Duvdevan unit, which has also been involved in operations in Gaza and Lebanon. Speaking with Maj. M., the unit's deputy commander, sheds light on the current mission in Jenin and the elimination of two key perpetrators of a deadly terror attack in Funduq.

"We had been tracking this cell for a long time, waiting for the right moment to close the circle," Maj. M. said. "It was a bold and highly complex operation in a challenging area. We waited for them to make a mistake, and then we acted decisively."

"The entire operation, from start to finish, lasted just a couple of minutes. The final stages took no more than one or two minutes. The area was filled with explosive devices, so precision was key. When other methods failed to force them out, we advanced engineering tools to collapse the house. We began by calling out to them, deploying drones, and allowing family members to persuade them to surrender. When all else failed, we escalated."

"Yes, they barricaded themselves inside the house, and we determined that advancing heavy engineering equipment was the only remaining option. During the operation, a soldier behind an armored vehicle was lightly injured. The gunfight lasted mere seconds, and the terrorists were killed just outside their doorway. They realized they were walking into an ambush. Their bodies were found with magazines for both short and long-range weapons. I'm glad we settled the score with two of the three leaders of this cell. It sends a clear message."

How Iron Wall differs from previous operations

Maj. M. described the operation as more organized and informed than similar missions earlier in the year. "The 'Summer Camps' operation in August was one of the first major missions since the Second Intifada's Operation Defensive Shield. Commanders and soldiers are now more experienced. While the tactics remain largely the same, we execute them with greater precision and coordination."

So far, the IDF has neutralized three terrorists in the operation. Maj. M. highlighted that the primary motivation for the terrorists is ideology, making it a long-term challenge. “As long as their beliefs don’t change, this will continue. However, these operations show civilians that supporting terrorism doesn’t pay off. We’ve seen residents cursing the terrorists, similar to how Gazans have turned against Hamas.”

With an estimated 100-200 armed terrorists operating in the region, how do they continue to survive?

“Our mission is like mowing the grass. After ‘Summer Camps,’ we saw that when you’re not present and active, the threat slowly regrows. These operations are crucial to prevent another October 7 scenario in the West Bank. Offensive action is the only way to defeat terrorism—you can’t win by playing defense.”

Maj. M. addressed criticism surrounding an operation where the unit used a vehicle marked as an ambulance. “While I can’t comment on the specifics, I can say our unit commander is one of the most capable and ethical leaders I’ve worked with. Every decision is made after careful consideration and thorough analysis.”

A Broader perspective from the field

Lt. Col. (Res.) A., who oversees operations in the Menashe Brigade, provided additional context on the evolving situation in Jenin. He noted the challenges posed by terrorist rehabilitation during a 21-day absence by Israeli forces, allowing the terrorists to regroup. “Terrorist cells in Jenin have seen a significant escalation. We’ve located hundreds of explosive devices and weapons, and over 400 terrorists have been apprehended. While the state may view this as a secondary front, for us, it’s a central battleground.”

The commander highlighted a shift in terrorist tactics, including support from surrounding villages and refugee camps. However, he emphasized the ongoing IDF efforts to systematically dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, saying, “We are operating with a larger force, going house-to-house, not just based on intelligence. While we may not reach every house, the goal is to thoroughly sweep the camp and surrounding areas.” Regarding the upcoming release of prisoners, including Zakaria Zubeidi, a prominent figure in Jenin, Lt. Col. A. expressed confidence in maintaining control. “They won’t be able to celebrate in the streets of Jenin. There might be gatherings in private homes, but there will be no public processions or displays of arms because they know we’re here, and they fear us.”

01.24.25 – Fr

Lebanon army stalls; Israel finds weapons cache & cancels exit

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Israel says holding off on exit as Lebanon army deployment under deal stalls

In statement PMO says Lebanon army not deployed to the south to enforce Hezbollah's removal north of the Litani, says gradual withdrawal of troops in cooperation with U.S.

Itamar Eichner, Lior Ben Ari, Elisha Ben Kimon|07:02

The Prime Minister's office (PMO) announced Friday that the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon would be delayed. The military was supposed to complete its pullout of troops by Sunday, 60 days after the cease-fire agreement in the war with Hezbollah was signed.

"The agreement was articulated with the understanding that the process may take more than 60 days," the PMO said. "It is conditioned on the Lebanese army is deployed in South and effectively enforcing the terms of the deal, as Hezbollah withdraws its forces north of the Litani River.

According to the PMO, since that has not yet been fully enforced by Lebanon, Israel will continue a gradual its commitments under the deal, and while Hezbollah forces would be pushed out of the region, north of the Litani River. Since that has not been fully enforced by Lebanon, the gradual withdrawal of troops would continue in full cooperation with the United States."

The cabinet decided on Thursday that it would react forcefully to Hezbollah's violation of the cease-fire agreement, but the ministers do not believe this would put the deal at risk. Although the Shi'ite terror group accused Israel of violations and speakers for the group warned that the war could resume, it only once used military force in response to the IDF's fire.

Leaders in the opposition also urged a delay in the IDF withdrawal, citing the danger to the residents of the north if the cease-fire terms are not fully implemented. "The IDF must continue and increase its actions in the face of even the slightest Hezbollah violation of the deal. We must insist that the resident of the north would never again be under threat," former defense minister Benny Gantz said.

"During IDF operational activity in the Saluki area last week, 769th Brigade troops located several significant underground routes intended to be used by Hezbollah terrorist operatives. Combat engineering and Yahalom Unit soldiers investigated the routes before dismantling them," the IDF said in a statement on Friday. "The troops also located a weapons cache inside a mosque, a vehicle loaded with weapons, hundreds of mortar shells, explosives, rockets, weapons, and additional Hezbollah military equipment."

The military said other forces located trucks carrying heavy rocket launchers, along with several weapons storage facilities containing a large number of rockets, shoulder-fired missiles, launchers, mortar shells, explosives, and military equipment. "All weapons were confiscated, and the weapons storage facilities were dismantled."

01.24.25 – Fr

Trump placed envoy, Steve Witkoff to solve Iran issue without an Israeli strike

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Trump says he hopes to solve Iran issue without an Israeli strike

President says would be nice to avoid an attack by Israel, does not confirm reports that Steve Witkoff would be appointed to head efforts; says cease-fire deal in Gaza should hold or there would be problems

Daniel Edelson, New York|01:04

Iran will hopefully make a deal but if they don't make a deal that's ok too.

President Donald Trump said late on Thursday that "it would be nice," to solve the problems with Iran without an Israeli attack on its military installations. "It would really be nice if that could be worked out without having to go that further step," he told reporters in the White House while signing executive orders.

Trump also said that the cease-fire and hostage exchange deal in Gaza should hold. "but if it doesn't there will be a lot of problems," Trump warned.

Earlier on Thursday, British Financial Times reported that the president would appoint Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, to be responsible for handling Washington's diplomacy with Iran, quoting sources familiar with the details. According to the paper, the move indicates that Trump was willing to consider a diplomatic solution before increasing pressure on the Islamic Republic.

A former senior Israeli official told the newspaper "I don't see the administration using force at the beginning of their term before at least trying to exhaust other means. This does not fit with the approach that war started with Biden and he's going to end them."

Trump was asked about the possible appointment and direct talks with the Iranian regime but did not confirm the report. He said he planned to use Witkoff who had done a "wonderful job" and go on well with people. He added that without Witkoff, the Israel – Hamas deal would not have been reached after the Biden administration had failed to secure it for a year and a half.

01.23.25 – Th

Hamas is trying to rebuild, rearm, and run Gaza, making peace difficult

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Hamas is trying to rebuild and run Gaza, making peace difficult

The Islamist organization has resumed building rockets in underground tunnels and is financing itself through the selling of humanitarian aid; despite heavy losses since October 7, 2023 the terrorist organization remains extensive in numbers, arms, and commitment to fighting

Nathan Klabin / The Media Line| | 17:13

As a new cease-fire takes hold in Gaza, Hamas fighters, who normally dress as civilians during combat, have seized the opportunity to wear their uniforms and parade through the streets in a show of force.

The images shared online of Hamas brandishing weapons atop trucks and surrounded by civilian supporters, cheering them on amid the ruins, make clear that despite heavy losses since October 7, 2023 and the elimination of Hamas leaders, the terrorist organization remains extensive in numbers, arms, and commitment to fighting. For now, however, they may focus on rebuilding their ability to fight while trying to continue controlling Gaza.

While the first phase of the cease-fire deal is still in its early days, many experts are questioning the sustainability of the situation, given the possibility of Hamas remaining entrenched in Gaza, and doubting the possibility of rebuilding the razed area. According to Yoni Ben-Menachem, a senior Middle East analyst for the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs, “Israel dismantled 24 military battalions in the Gaza Strip, killing between 20,000 to 25,000 of Hamas’s military wing operatives” over the last year and almost four months.

However, he added, during the last three months, while Israel was also fighting Hezbollah on its northern border, the army “eased the pressure on Hamas with many troops transferred to southern Lebanon. This shift gave Hamas the opportunity to rebuild, and just last month Hamas recruited 4,000 new terrorists to replenish their ranks using money generated from selling humanitarian aid that enters Gaza,” according to Ben-Menachem.

The returning Palestinians are but a “drop in the bucket” he added, cautioning that “Hamas is rebuilding, and it’s possible they’ll try to maintain control of Gaza. With the cease-fire, Hamas can do whatever it wants, and it has survived militarily,” Ben-Menachem said.

Israeli security estimates suggest that Hamas still has around 25,000 armed terrorists in Gaza, and it is the increase in humanitarian aid entering Gaza that is enabling them. “As of yesterday, 600 trucks carrying aid are entering Gaza daily – a significant increase. Hamas will exploit this aid by selling it and using the money to recruit more terrorists,” added Ben-Menachem.

Professor Eyal Zisser, vice-rector of Tel Aviv University and an expert in Middle Eastern studies and security, said that he believes this situation only exists because Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government failed to plan a “day after” strategy for Gaza.

“If Hamas continues to exist, achieving peace will be very difficult. But the real question isn’t whether Hamas will survive – it’s whether there is an alternative to Hamas.

Unfortunately, the current Israeli government doesn’t seem interested in planning for the ‘day after,’ and this plays into Hamas’ hands,” he said.

For Yohanan Tzoreff, a senior researcher at the Institute of National and Security Studies in Tel Aviv, this cease-fire deal could be very short-lived.

“Israel is currently in the first stage of this agreement, and both sides are committed to continuing negotiations for a second stage. The problem will become very sensitive during the second stage because Hamas is asking for the war to end, while Israel is demanding the dismantling of Hamas’ military power by either leaving Gaza or putting



down their weapons,” he said, adding that “from Israel’s perspective, there is no way weapons can remain in Gaza, especially after October 7.”

There are ways to stop or at least delay Hamas’ rebuilding efforts. Zisser underscored the critical role of international cooperation in containing Hamas. “If Israel and Egypt can coordinate and control the Philadelphi Corridor, preventing smuggling tunnels and weapons transfers, it could significantly delay Hamas’ rebuilding efforts,” he explained.

Other actors potentially involved in building a sustainable “day after” for Gaza also hold great sway in this process, according to Tzoreff. He noted the potential role of global and regional actors in shaping Gaza’s future, including the United States and Gulf countries. “The Gulf states and even Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas are unwilling to engage in Gaza’s reconstruction unless Hamas dismantles its military power,” he said.

Abbas’ criticism of Hamas has grown louder in recent months. He has already indicated that the PA would not return to Gaza unless Hamas dismantles its military power.

Furthermore, in a show of disapproval, he publicly asked whether freeing 1,000 Palestinian prisoners justifies the deaths of over 50,000 people in Gaza, revealing a broader anti-Hamas sentiment within the PA.

This story is written by Nathan Klabin and reprinted with permission from The Media Line.

01.23.25 – Th

Gaza prepares for mass return north on Saturday after hostage release

01.23.25 – Th

No life, no hope: Gaza prepares for mass return of displaced residents

In parallel with the second wave of the release of the kidnapped women on Saturday, the IDF will begin withdrawing from the Netzarim Corridor and allow hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to return to the northern Gaza Strip; There, destruction and devastation await

Einav Halabi, News Agencies | 16:40

Taking over the Netzarim Corridor was one of Israel's significant strategic achievements in the war, but as part of the hostage deal with Hamas the IDF is expected to withdraw on Saturday from the western part of the corridor that bisects the Gaza Strip in its center, thereby enabling the mass return of Palestinian refugees to the northern Strip. In Gaza City, tent camps are already being prepared for the refugees who will return to the ruined city, and the desperation there is evident everywhere.

“Life is very difficult – there's no life, no hope,” Wael Jundiya, one of several who set up a tent complex in an open area of the city, surrounded by ruined buildings, told Reuters. He prepared a tent for his children, who are now staying in the Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone on the coast in southern Gaza, the area where hundreds of thousands of refugees have gathered in the past year. An now, a large part of them are expected to return to the

north. Wael is worried that the conditions in the tent will be too difficult and crowded for his family. "Is this the tent that we dreamed of?" he asks sarcastically. "Really, is this adequate space?"

"The tent barely fits two people, and I have eight family members. Each of my children has 5, 6, 7 family members. I used to have a five-story house, it was completely lost, and now after being homeless and suffering for a year and a half, I will live in a tent, with neighbors who hear our voices, and my house exposed to them? Is this the life we dreamed of?" he added.

He demanded that the reconstruction of the Strip be "accelerated."

"This is not a place to live, this is not a place fit for humans." He estimates that the entire complex he and his friends are currently building will only have room for up to 200 people, but "1.5 million people will return from the south, where will they go?"

Another Palestinian woman who spoke to Reuters there, Safa Dado, also expressed great frustration: "Our families will return from the south to their blessed land in Gaza City, but they will not find their homes, because they were destroyed by the Zionist occupation. They will find tents that were erected to provide the most basic needs." She added that "our people will suffer – they have already suffered from the destruction, the bombings and the fear caused by the occupation, and now they will suffer from tragic displacement and tents. The tents will not protect from the cold now or the heat in the summer. This is not a livable situation, but this is what we have now."

An estimated 2.1 million people now live in the Gaza Strip (a decrease of about 160,000 from the figure before the war began), and the vast majority of them were displaced from their homes at the beginning of the war – while those who fled from the north to the south have not been allowed to return until now via the Netzarim Corridor, a route that the IDF has turned into a real territory with permanent outposts over the past few months.

Now, according to the agreement, the IDF is required to gradually withdraw from the route. On Saturday, in parallel with the implementation of the second phase of the deal in which four hostage women (one civilian and three female IDF observers) will be released in exchange for dozens of terrorists, the IDF will be required to withdraw from the a-Rashid coastal road east of the Salah a-Din road, and dismantle the military installations in the area.

**Hamas power and rule:** 'We will rebuild every house that is not completely destroyed'

This will begin the return of the displaced Palestinians northward via the same road that crosses the Strip along its length near the Gaza coast. The agreement stipulates that there will be no security checks on those walking – but only on vehicles moving north, checks that will be carried out by a private American company that will cooperate with an Egyptian company.

The U.S. company will send about 100 armed security personnel, most of whom are Americans and some of whom speak Arabic. The security personnel will be from elite units or former CIA personnel. On the 22nd day of the agreement, the withdrawal from the Netzarim Corridor is scheduled to continue and the forces are required to leave the Salah ad-Din Road as well, and dismantle the military installations in this area.

In a statement released Thursday by Hamas ahead of the return of the displaced to the north, it emphasized that it will begin on Saturday after the release of the kidnapped women is completed; Israel expects that the civilian Arbel Yehoud will be one of them. In its statement, Hamas emphasized that refugees returning to the north are not allowed to carry weapons, but no one would be surprised if the terrorist organization tried to violate the terms of the agreement and transfer weapons to the north through covert means. Hamas, which has been trying to demonstrate its power and governmental capabilities since the ceasefire began on Sunday, including deploying armed police in various areas of the Gaza Strip, is now also trying to present itself as working to help the refugees, and announced that it will help set up tents for those returning to the north. Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters Thursday that the terror organization is in talks with several Arab countries and "international parties" about helping the refugees return, including providing tents. Abu Zuhri promised that Hamas would immediately begin rebuilding homes that were not completely destroyed. "We are going to invest all our capabilities to help our people. Municipalities have plans in place to welcome the families returning to the north, including setting up tents for them," he said. There is not a single house standing: 'The smell of dead bodies in the streets' Hamas spokesman Hazem Qasim claimed Thursday that the expected return of the refugees is an expression of Israel's apparent "failure" in the war, and its attempt, he said, "to uproot the Palestinian people from their lands."

In an interview with the Palestinian news agency Shehab, he added: "The steadfastness and courage of the Palestinian people in Gaza have thwarted Israel's plan to uproot the Palestinian people from their lands. The demands of our people are clear, and they are the right to establish an independent state on the liberated lands. No force will destroy our march toward freedom and independence."

Since the cease-fire began, crowds of refugees already in the north have returned to their neighborhoods – and are shocked by the extensive destruction. In Jabaliya, some are now living right in the rubble, trying to warm themselves on freezing nights around bonfires. "They are talking about a truce, a cease-fire, and the delivery of aid. It has been three days since we came back, and we cannot find water to drink. We cannot find covers to keep our children warm. We depend on bonfires all night. We wish to have some firewood for the bonfire, we use plastic, which causes diseases," said Mohammed Badr, a father of 10.

His wife, Umm Nidal, said she was still in shock at the destruction in Jabaliya. "There is nothing left, you cannot walk in the streets. Houses collapsed on top of each other. You get lost, you don't know if this is your home or not," she said. "The smell of dead bodies, and the martyrs are in the streets."

At the same time, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, relatively unusual footage was released Thursday of a gunfight between armed men – whose identities are reportedly unclear – around a humanitarian aid truck that had gotten stuck. According to Reuters, the battle lasted about 10 minutes. In the Rafah area, the Hamas government also claimed Thursday that two Palestinians were killed by Israeli tank fire, and the IDF said that the claims were being investigated.

As part of the deal, Israel allowed a surge in the volume of humanitarian aid flowing into the Gaza Strip – and although according to the agreement the number is supposed to be 600 trucks a day, on Wednesday, according to reports, 897 trucks entered the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, as part of its attempts to demonstrate its governing capabilities in the Gaza Strip, and thus claim victory over Israel, which promised to destroy the terrorist organization, Hamas also promises to help secure the aid convoys and prevent their looting.

"We want to prevent any kind of security vacuum," said Ismail al-Thawbata, director of the Hamas government's communications office in the Gaza Strip. He claimed that about 700 Hamas police officers would help protect the aid convoys, and that since the cease-fire began, not a single truck had been looted - in contrast to the numerous cases of looting and robbery by gangs during the war. A UN spokesman confirmed to Reuters that, as of Tuesday, no cases of looting of aid trucks had been reported. Al-Thawbata also claimed that, although Israel has eliminated many Hamas operatives throughout the war, it still employs about 18,000 workers "who provide services to civilians on a daily basis," as he put it.

01.23.25 – Th

Trump appointed Mideast envoy Witkoff to handle the Iran portfolio

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Trump to appoint Mideast envoy Witkoff to handle the Iran portfolio

Before reactivating 'maximum pressure' campaign against the Islamic Republic's nuclear program, Trump plans to examine whether he can reach a diplomatic settlement with Iran, the Financial Times reports; Trump: 'It would be nice if the Iranian issue could be resolved, without Israel attacking military facilities on its territory'

Ynet | 14:46

U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to appoint his Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, as responsible for handling Washington's diplomacy with Iran, the British Financial Times reported on Thursday. Sources familiar with the details claimed that the move indicates that Trump is willing to consider a diplomatic solution before increasing pressure on the Islamic Republic.

A former senior Israeli official told the newspaper that "I don't see the administration using force at the beginning of their term before at least trying to exhaust other means. This does not fit with the approach that war started with Biden and he's going to end them."

Witkoff, who played a crucial role in reaching agreements on the hostage deal and cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, is expected to head the team that will handle the U.S. response to the Iranian nuclear program, as part of Trump's promise to "stop the wars" in the Middle East, according to the sources.

In his first term, Trump withdrew from the nuclear agreement with Iran in 2018, imposing severe sanctions on the Islamic Republic, warning that if it fought Washington and worked to obtain nuclear weapons, "that would be the official end of Iran."

After the November election, during the period between administrations, Trump's team outlined plans to relaunch the "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran, whether through new sanctions or toughening existing measures. However, Trump and his aides have expressed a desire in early meetings to leave room for avoiding a full-scale confrontation with Iran, and several administration officials have told foreign diplomats and their counterparts that they expect Witkoff to lead efforts to see if a diplomatic settlement can be reached with Iran.

However, Witkoff's main focus is expected to continue to be the implementation of the Gaza cease-fire and hostage deal. At the same time as speculation has risen about Witkoff, Trump appointed Morgan Ortagus, State Department spokeswoman in his first term, as Witkoff's deputy. Ortagus previously served in the Middle East and is familiar with the region.

U.S. officials say that Trump's approach toward Tehran, and Witkoff's powers, have not yet been clarified, but several of the new president's appointments hold positions that negotiations with Iran should be considered, and have also expressed doubts about attacking its nuclear facilities.

Among the new appointments are Michael DiMino, a senior Trump administration official in the Pentagon on Middle East issues, who previously served in the CIA, and who has expressed support for implementing a restrained policy toward Tehran. Elbridge Colby, Trump's nominee for undersecretary of defense for policy, has also warned against any military action against Iran. The two stand against more hawkish elements in the new administration, including National Security Advisor Mike Waltz and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who said in his Senate confirmation hearing that he would support "any arrangement that allows us to have safety and stability in the region but one in which we're clear-eyed."

White House National Security Council spokesman Brian Hughes said that "we have no announcements to share at this time," when asked about the new administration's approach toward Iran. At the same time, Western sources believe that Iran is in its weakest position in decades, after the destruction of the Hamas terror army in the Gaza Strip and the severe blow that the IDF inflicted on Hezbollah in Lebanon. Added to these is Israel's extensive air attack on Iran, which resulted in the destruction of most of its air defense systems.

Iran, for its part, has also signaled that it is open to negotiations, although analysts estimate that any dialogue with the Islamic Republic will be difficult for it and for Trump. Iran's vice-president for strategic affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif recently said at the Davos forum that he hopes Trump will be "more serious, more focused, and more realistic" with Iran. He noted that the sanctions have imposed a heavy economic burden on Iranian citizens and its government, but refused to admit that his country has a hand in the terrorist activities of organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis in

Yemen. "We have never had 'proxies,'" he claimed. At the same time, the Saudi Al-Hadath TV channel reported that the Iranian foreign minister said that the Islamic Republic is "ready for negotiations" with Washington."

Witkoff's appointment as Iran special envoy has sparked opposition from some of his opponents in Congress and in Washington in general, who worry he will be too quick to drop pressure on Iran in trying to achieve a possible deal.

"He's already lifting pressure on Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran, and in the process abandoning American hostages and endangering Israel," said a senior Republican Congressional staffer. "He keeps saying he knows what Trump wants, but he doesn't understand what Trump believes."

01.23.25 – Th

PA reporter ambushes IDF general in London with genocide questions

01.23.25 – Th

Palestinian-supporting reporter ambushes IDF general in London

A British pro-Palestinian journalist accosted the IDF Operations Chief, Major General Oded Basiuk, who arrived in London to discuss cease-fire; Meanwhile, anti-Israel Hind Rajab Foundation files another complaint in Central Europe against IDF reservist who served in Gaza

Gal Ganot | 13:26

A pro-Palestinian journalist in London accosted the head of the IDF Operations Department, Major General Oded Basiuk, at the entrance to a research institute building in the city. "Are you a war criminal?" Basiuk was asked on Wednesday. He seemed surprised by the encounter, but did not answer and entered the building.

Basiuk reportedly was accompanied by Brigadier General Elad Goren, the head of the humanitarian-civilian effort in Gaza, and other officers. The journalist who accosted Basiuk reported that the Israeli delegation arrived in Britain to review the cease-fire efforts with the local army, and to discuss what would happen if it collapsed.

"General Basiuk, what did you discuss at the Ministry of Defense? Are you worried that you will be investigated by the International Criminal Court in The Hague for war crimes?" journalist Alex Morris also asked.

After the Israeli delegation entered, Morris tried to follow it into the building and was pushed back by the guard. In a video he posted, he reported that "I photographed Israeli General Oded Basiuk, who was the head of the operations in Gaza as part of Israel's brutal genocide in the last 15 months in Gaza. He entered the RUSI building in Whitehall, London."

Meanwhile, in recent days, the anti-Israel Hind Rajab Foundation, which is behind a global campaign against IDF soldiers, which is behind an attempted legal battle against IDF soldiers, has filed another complaint in Central Europe against another reservist who served in combat engineering in the Gaza Strip. D., 35, a Tel Aviv resident against whom

the complaint was filed, told Ynet "I think they are focusing on images of combat engineering soldiers because it is easiest to get caught up in this. In engineering work, you see the destruction of houses which are terrorist infrastructures. Every house we have destroyed is a terror house, which we have intelligence for."

The Hind Rajab Foundation, an offshoot of the pro-Palestinian March 30 movement, was established by two Lebanese nationals, Dyab Abou Jahjah and Karim Hassoun, now residing in Belgium. Named after a six-year-old Palestinian girl allegedly killed in Gaza by the IDF on January 29, 2024, the organization claims to focus on bringing justice to Palestinians.

D. said that no one in the IDF or the Defense Ministry has contacted him. "Yesterday, reporters and friends sent me messages and I understood the problem I was in. Six months ago, I saw photos of me that were distributed on antisemitic websites. This is the state forsaking IDF soldiers, ignoring obvious things. It does not make sense that reporters and friends get information before our security agencies," he said.

According to him, "Another point is the diplomatic problem. If I am arrested abroad, it is true that it will be unpleasant for me, but the entire State of Israel is in trouble. With proper work, this too could have been easily avoided. Again, the State of Israel thinks that if you ignore a problem, it will disappear. It will not disappear. There is a complex issue here that needs to be addressed. What mother would want to send her son to be a combat soldier if she knows that he is exposed to lawsuits? He has no protection. This can hurt you if you are traveling, or if you want to work for an international company. The first thing that will come up about you on the internet is that you took part in genocide."

"On a personal level, I am afraid," added D. "I returned to Israel a few days ago. I don't know what would have happened if this had been filed before I returned, I might have been arrested in a foreign country. This is a big problem, especially when no official has bothered to contact me until now. I am worried about the next time this happens to me, when I want to travel, and also in terms of career and investments. Even in the future, this thing will exist. What goes online will be there forever, and I will be associated with it."

01.23.25 – Th

Israel ambassador to Moscow working to get release of 4 Russia-connected hostages

01.23.25 – Th

Israel's ambassador to Moscow says working to get release of Russia-connected hostages Jerusalem and Moscow are working together to release three hostages who are not included in Phase 1 of the release deal; One of them, she noted in an interview with a local news website, is Maxim Herkin, whose daughter and mother hold Russian citizenship; The names of the other two hostages were not given  
Itamar Eichner|10:57



Israel's **ambassador to Moscow**, Simona Halperin, revealed Thursday in an interview with the Russian news website RBC that Israel and Russia are working together **to release three Russia-connected hostages** being **held in the Gaza** Strip who are not included in Phase 1 of the deal.

She noted that **one of them** is the kidnapped Maxim Herkin, a 36-year-old native of the Donbas region from Tirat Carmel, who **does not hold Russian citizenship, but his daughter was born and lives in the Russia**. After Herkin was kidnapped, his mother also received Russian citizenship. The names of the **two other kidnapped people** whom Moscow and Jerusalem, according to the **ambassador, are working to free** were not disclosed.

"We really **hope that the Russian side can help with this**. I truly believe that if the **Russian side demands it** persistently enough, **it will** be able to **facilitate the release of these three** hostages," Halperin emphasized.

The ambassador noted that Sasha Trupanov, a **Russian** national whose name is included in Phase 1 of the deal, is **expected to be released at this stage**, not thanks to Russian efforts, but due to the fact that **he was injured during his kidnapping** on October 7.

Since the morning of the massacre, several **videos and signs of life have been received** from Trupanov -who is being held by Islamic Jihad, the **last** of which was **in November**. According to the ambassador, his inclusion in the humanitarian deal was discussed at the beginning of the negotiations with Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.

Earlier this week, Russian President Vladimir **Putin instructed Russian** Foreign **Minister** Sergei Lavrov to **"work for the release** of Trupanov," who was kidnapped by gunmen along **with his grandmother, mother, and partner** - all three of whom were released in the hostage deal in November 2023.

Meanwhile, Hamas is expected to publish on Friday the list of the **four female hostages** who **will be released on Saturday** as part of the deal. Among those to be released, Israel expects to see civilian **Arbel Yehoud** and **three female observers**.

**01.23.25 – Th**

**Huge 4 hr traffic jams in West Bank as IDF prepare for next prisoner release**

**01.23.25 – Th**

**Huge traffic jams in West Bank as IDF prepares for deal's next prisoners release**

**Military sets up checkpoints to prevent drive-by shootings; security officials warn disruption of traffic cannot last long and would eventually raise tensions, provoke further violence**

**Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi|Updated:08:18**



West Bank traffic was delayed in massive traffic jams caused by IDF roadblocks and checkpoints set up to bolster security ahead of the release of terrorists from Israeli prisons on Saturday, as part of the cease-fire agreement in Gaza.

The move aims to minimize the risk of drive-by shooting attacks on roads shared by Israelis and Palestinians but has resulted mounting frustration among Palestinian residents.

“I left work at noon and didn’t arrive home until 8 p.m. There’s no explanation – just an attempt to make life harder for innocent Palestinians,” Ahmad, a resident of Nablus said. Ahmad also added that he has stopped going to work due to the gridlock. “These traffic jams have become living spaces. People pray, eat, and wait outside their cars until the roads clear.”

Ahmad noted that the impact has been particularly hard on women. “There are no bathrooms, and they are left with no choice but to endure the humiliation.”

Said Issa, a resident of Yatta near Hebron, shared a similar experience: “I was stuck from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. for no apparent reason. When I finally passed, no one even checked my car. It’s absurd – what should be a five-minute trip takes hours.”

The situation has disrupted daily life and business. Taxi driver Omar Burayni, who operates the Ramallah-Nablus route, said ridership has plummeted. “There used to be 200 taxis a day; now, it’s barely 40. Everyone is waiting for this nightmare to end.”

Security concerns and rising tensions

The checkpoints coincide with the first phase of a hostage exchange deal but were implemented earlier to counter the threat of shooting attacks from passing vehicles. The IDF, the Shin Bet, and the Border Police have held situational assessments with Central Command Chief Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth to prevent armed demonstrations during the prisoner release, which could provoke further violence. Seven additional battalions have been deployed to reinforce the region.

Initially, the West Bank was considered a secondary front in the ongoing conflict, and security forces succeeded in preventing widespread unrest despite Hamas' efforts to incite violence. However, with most fronts now under cease-fire and the IDF focused on operations in Jenin, attention has returned to the West Bank.

Palestinian sources report that major checkpoints causing gridlock are located near Ramallah, Qalqilya, Nablus, the Jordan Valley and Tubas. According to the Palestinian Authority’s Committee Against the Separation Wall and Settlements, the number of Israeli checkpoints and gates in the West Bank has risen to 898 since the start of the war. While the measures aim to enhance security, some Israeli defense officials acknowledge the risk of prolonged unrest. “This level of disruption fuels tensions in Palestinian society, and sustaining it long-term will be challenging,” one source noted.

01.23.25 – Th

Security officials warn against delaying IDF withdrawal from Lebanon Sunday

01.23.25 – Th

Security officials warn against delaying IDF withdrawal from Lebanon

Some in political circles say Netanyahu may try to slow walk to delay pullback amid pressure from far-right finance minister; the officials say it would be devastating to the extraordinary military achievements in the war

Nadav Eyal|07:01

Senior security officials warned on Thursday that a delay of the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon would be devastating. According to the cease-fire agreement negotiated to end the war with Hezbollah, that stipulated that the terror group must be kept north of the Litani River, IDF troops must leave South Lebanon on Sunday, 60 days after the agreement came into effect.

"The IDF is effectively enforcing the deal," the officials said. "If we don't show the Americans and the Lebanese that we are complying with the terms of the agreement, we are putting our outstanding military achievements at risk," the officials said, amid their concerns that Hezbollah will rebuild its strength if Israel does will not stay true to its commitments to Lebanon.

Some in political circles believe Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is trying to slow-walk or delay the military withdrawal, because of among other things, pressure from his far-right Finance Minister, Bezalel Smotrich.

The security officials pointed to the presence of Americans in Lebanon as one of the clear advantages in the deal, that could be in danger. "The current American administration could reexamine its position there, if the deal collapses. The fact that they are there, provides a high level of certainty for stability," an official said.

"There is today, an extraordinary and historic potential, the best since the 1980s, to reduce the terrorist forces including Hezbollah and achieve calm. There is Saudi and American will to rebuild there and a new president whom Israel may be able to work with," the official said, warning that this chance must not be lost. officials claim the IDF will continue to enforce the terms of the deal and initiate attacks over any violation from Hezbollah.

According to the cease-fire agreement, only Lebanon's army forces will be allowed to bear arms or use military force in South Lebanon, as of Sunday. The Lebanese army must work to dismantle any military or terror infrastructure built by Hezbollah in the areas south of the Litani.

According to Arab media reports, Lebanon's army has been trying to deploy to the South in accordance with UN resolution 1701, but have been coming across Israeli forces in some areas. In one report, a Lebanese army force was surprised to encounter three IDF tanks in the South Lebanon village of Talusa and delayed its deployment there. Lebanese

troops completed preparations to deploy elsewhere in the area and were preventing the return of villagers from areas where IDF troops had not left.

Lebanon's former prime minister Najib Mikati said earlier this week that in a meeting of the international Cessation of Hostilities Implementation Mechanism, the committee that oversees the compliance with the cease-fire deal, the American chairman Major General Jasper Jeffers told him that the Israeli withdrawal might be delayed by a number of days.

The Hezbollah-affiliated al Akhbar newspaper quoted an official who claimed that the IDF had complained about the refusal of the Lebanon army to take control of Hezbollah assets, including warehouses and homes, and to confiscate weapons.

Lebanon's new president Joseph Aoun said his government is insistent on Israel's withdrawal. "The fact that Israel is not committed to pulling its troops out is contrary to the promises given to Lebanon during the negotiations."

01.23.25 – Th

US security firm readies to inspect Gazans returning to north amid cease-fire

01.23.25 – Th

US security firm readies to inspect Gazans returning to north amid cease-fire

Hostage and cease-fire deal stipulates displaced Gazans returning north by foot would not be inspected while all traffic will be held for searches in efforts to prevent terrorists and weapons from moving into the area

Itamar Eichner|04:51

Representatives from U.S. security company tasked with conducting security inspections on the Netzarim Corridor to prevent the return of terrorists and weapons in vehicles to northern Gaza have arrived in Israel in recent days.

Preparations for the company's first inspection pilot, scheduled for Sunday, are underway. The company employs about 100 armed personnel, mainly Americans, including some Arabic speakers. Many are veterans of elite units or former CIA operatives.

Under the cease-fire agreement in Gaza, the IDF is required to withdraw from the coastal Al-Rashid Road eastward to Salah al-Din Road by Saturday, the seventh day of the agreement, and dismantle its military installations in the area.

The move will allow displaced Palestinians to return northward. The agreement stipulates that inspections will apply only to vehicles heading north, conducted by the private security firm, while pedestrians won't be inspected.

By the 22nd day of the agreement, the IDF is expected to withdraw from the Netzarim Corridor, vacate Salah al-Din Road and dismantle additional military installations in the area. Vehicle inspections will take place at a designated inspection facility secured by an Egyptian security company.

Israel's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) will oversee the entry of the American team and coordinate their operations in Gaza.

A multinational commission has been established to manage and oversee the safe passage of vehicles, facilitating the return of Palestinians to northern Gaza. It includes Safe Reach Solution (SRS), a strategic planning and logistics firm; UG Solutions, a recognized global provider of integrated security solutions and the Egyptian security and inspection company.

A statement from the consortium stressed its neutrality, commitment to high professional standards and role in supporting the cease-fire agreement while promoting long-term stability in Gaza.

Funding for the consortium and involved companies does not come from Israel but is managed by the deal's mediators — Qatar, Egypt and the U.S. Qatar is believed to provide the majority of the funding.

As part of the agreement, the IDF will withdraw from populated areas while maintaining control over a 700-meter buffer zone along the border with Gaza, within Gazan territory.

The deployment along the Philadelphi Corridor will be adjusted in the deal's first phase, with withdrawal from that area expected to begin on the 42nd day. By the 50th day — assuming hostilities do not resume — the IDF is scheduled to complete its withdrawal from the route.

01.23.25 – Th

Dolls resembling Hamas terrorists set up in a pickup truck in Jenin

01.23.25 – Th

'Nukhba exhibit' sows confusion and terror in K far Saba

Police dismantle installation showing puppets dressed in Hamas terrorists' grabs placed in a pickup truck after worried locals informed forces

Raanan Ben-Zur|04:07

Police forces on Thursday launched an investigation after a display featuring dolls resembling Hamas' Nukhba terrorists on a pickup truck was set up in K far Saba.

Residents passing by Tel Hai Street near the K far Saba municipal building were alarmed by the sight of the pickup truck and the "terrorists" inside, prompting some to call the police. The display was dismantled and the circumstances behind the incident are being examined.

Right-wing activist Ayelet Lash, a resident of the West Bank, posted a photo of the display on X (formerly Twitter), writing: "This morning in K far Saba — a display showing a glimpse of what will happen if the State of Israel doesn't quickly conquer Jenin, expel its terrorists and establish Jewish settlements there. No operation, no halfway measures. All-out war or the girls of K far Saba will be dragged to Jenin."

The IDF launched a counterterror operation in Jenin on Tuesday, a campaign planned for weeks and executed after waiting for U.S. President Donald Trump's inauguration, alongside demands from Religious Zionism party leader and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich.

As part of the operation, two terrorists responsible for a shooting attack in the West Bank, which claimed the lives of three Israelis, were eliminated on Wednesday.

01.23.25 – Th

IDF gun battle kills terrorists behind West Bank car shooting vehicles and buses

01.23.25 – Th

IDF kills terrorists behind fatal West Bank attack

Mohamad Nazzal and Katiba Shalabi, residents of Qabatiya, who were affiliated with the Islamic Jihad were killed during the Shin Bet and IDF counter terrorism operation in Jenin after troops surrounded the building where they had barricaded themselves  
Elisha Ben Kimon|01:17

Security forces late on Wednesday killed two terrorists who carried out the fatal attack in the West Bank earlier this month, murdering three people. A third terrorist is still at large.

The two men, Mohamad Nazzal and Katiba Shalabi, residents of Qabatiya, who were affiliated with the Islamic Jihad were killed during the Shin Bet and IDF counter terrorism operation in Jenin after troops surrounded the building where they had barricaded themselves, in the nearby village of Burqin and a gunfight ensued. One soldier was moderately hurt in the four-hour long gun battle. Others who were involved in the fatal attack were arrested and were in the custody of Shin Bet.

The security forces said that they had had the terrorists under surveillance continuously and observed their movements soon after their attack until they were surrounded.

Aliza Reiss, Rachel Cohen, Elad Winkelstein from Kedumim and Police officer Elad Winkelstein were killed in the terror attack in the village of Al-Funduq when the terrorists, traveling in a car, opened fire on passing vehicles and buses along Highway 55 before fleeing toward Nablus.

The IDF has launched a manhunt, sealing off nearby villages and conducting intelligence operations to locate the suspects and their accomplices. At least two of the assailants are known to Israeli security forces and are believed to be linked to Jenin and Qabatiya in the northern West Bank.

Of the injured, a bus driver was in severe condition and five others, including two elderly women suffered moderate injuries.

01.22.25 – We

Hamas celebration in Istanbul drew silence & sharp questions from Turkish intelligence

01.22.25 – We

'What's the next step?': Report exposes Hamas' lack of strategy after October 7 attack  
Turkish outlet reveals Hamas leaders celebrated Oct. 7 attack during meeting in Istanbul, drawing silence and sharp questions from Turkish intelligence; report blasts Hamas over Gaza devastation and handing Netanyahu grounds for massive retaliation

Itamar Eichner | 15:09

Members of Hamas' political bureau met with Turkish intelligence officials on October 7, 2023, the same day Hamas launched a devastating attack on Israel, killing over 1,200 people, Turkish news outlet 10HABER reported on Tuesday.

The report includes rare, pointed criticism of Hamas, accusing it of causing catastrophic consequences for Gaza while failing to prepare for the aftermath. "What victory are you celebrating? You brutally murdered 1,200 Israelis and handed Netanyahu the excuse to kill 46,000 people," the report read.

According to the article, the Hamas delegation arrived at the headquarters of Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) in Istanbul on the morning of October 7. As news of the assault on Israel unfolded, members of the Hamas delegation reportedly shouted "Allahu Akbar" and celebrated, unaware of the full scale of the massacre. Turkish officials present at the meeting were said to have remained silent as the delegation expressed their elation.

Turkish officials question Hamas' strategy

The report noted that while Hamas representatives exulted, MIT officials maintained silence. A senior Turkish intelligence officer reportedly asked the Hamas delegates: "You've carried out an extraordinary, unexpected operation. But what's the next step? Have you thought about that? You've gone 1-0 against Israel, but this won't just end at 1-1. Do you have a second phase or a plan to follow this?"

The Hamas delegation, the article claims, did not respond to these questions. The Turkish official persisted: "Understand that Israel won't leave the score at 1-1. It won't end at 2-1, 3-1, or even 4-1. We know Netanyahu and Israel. They'll take it to 10-1, or even 12-1. Do you have a strategy for what comes next?"

The article states that Turkish intelligence officials concluded Hamas' delegation had no awareness of the massacre's scope and had not planned for the aftermath. The MIT's message to Hamas during the meeting was reportedly clear: "Do not place too much trust in Iran."

The article's author offered an unflinching critique of Hamas, accusing the organization of causing immense suffering in Gaza. He revealed that he had been aware of the meeting's details for some time but decided to publish them now. "I watched for minutes

as masked men in Gaza celebrated and raised their hands in victory. I stared in disbelief,” he wrote. “I kept shouting internally, ‘My friends, what victory is this?’”

Addressing Hamas directly, the author added: “Don’t you see the devastation behind you? What victory is this? Do you never look at the balance sheet? Forty-six thousand people are dead. More than 100,000 are injured, many of whom will live with those injuries—amputated hands and legs—for the rest of their lives. Over a million people have been displaced from their homes. Ninety percent of Gaza’s homes and workplaces are in ruins. Schools and hospitals have been flattened. Electricity is gone. You’ve lost all your regional allies. Your leadership has disappeared. Hezbollah, your closest supporter, is not even on its knees—it’s flat on the ground.”

The author continued: “Israel has entered Lebanon. Tons of bombs fall daily on your allies in Yemen. Assad, the only leader who supported you militarily, has fled. His successors now say, ‘We won’t allow further actions against Israel from Syria.’ Your entire leadership team has been killed. Two, even three future generations have been destroyed. Yet you stand there making victory signs. What kind of victory is this? Can there ever be victory in such a war?”

A condemnation of Hamas’ actions on October 7

The writer posed pointed questions about Hamas’ motivations: “Friends, why did you carry out the bloody attack on October 7? Why did you brutally murder 1,200 people— young and old, men and women, including those enjoying a music festival? Why did you abduct hundreds, causing dozens to die underground? Why did you give a savage like Netanyahu the excuse to mercilessly kill 46,000 people? The war is over now. Let us be clear: the fingers that yesterday pointed at Israel will now point at Hamas.”

He continued his condemnation: “Tell me, did you gain anything from this ruthless campaign? What did you win? Global public opinion? The world didn’t support you; it supported the children, women, elderly, and innocent civilians who died. Don’t think for a moment that those protesting Netanyahu worldwide supported your barbaric attack, in which you killed 1,200 people and took hundreds of hostages. Now the bloodshed has stopped.”

The article concluded with a stark warning for Hamas. “Be sure that the fingers pointing at Netanyahu worldwide will now also turn on you because we now know that if Hamas’ irresponsible military wing doesn’t reform, the Palestinian people will never see happiness. Anyone seeking true peace in Gaza must now deliver the necessary message to these reckless individuals who make victory signs with their two open fingers. Netanyahu is a war criminal. But Hamas, you are not innocent either.”

01.22.25 – We

Shin Bet blunders investigated after Tel Aviv terror attack by Moroccan

01.22.25 – We

Shin Bet security blunders under the microscope after Tel Aviv terror attack

Moroccan-born US Green Card holder enters Israel despite being flagged at airport, only to carry out stabbing spree days later; incident exposes gaps in security protocols, prompting investigations into Shin Bet and border control failures  
Itamar Eichner, Iris Lifshitz-Klieger, Roy Rubintein, Lior Ohana, Alexandra Lukash, Elisha Ben Kimon | 14:12

Less than a day after the stabbing attack in Tel Aviv, new details have emerged about how the attacker, a 29-year-old Moroccan citizen with a U.S. Green Card, managed to enter Israel. These revelations raise serious concerns about what appears to be a major security lapse.

Despite being flagged and initially denied entry by a border control officer at Ben Gurion Airport, the attacker was ultimately approved by Shin Bet after undergoing questioning and a security screening at the Israeli consulate in New York.

The attacker, Kaddi Abdelaziz, carried out a stabbing spree in Tel Aviv's bustling Nahalat Binyamin area, crowded with nightlife-goers as usual. Five people were injured in the attack—one seriously, one moderately and three lightly.

The attacker was neutralized by soldiers from the elite Sayeret Matkal unit, who responded to the screams of one of the victims, an American tourist. Surveillance footage captured Abdelaziz buying pizza on Allenby Street just moments before launching his attack, three days after arriving in Israel on January 18.

Haim, owner of the pizzeria, recounted his encounter with the attacker: "He bought two slices for himself, grabbed a drink, and left. Then he returned to bring back the plate—which Israelis never do—and was very polite. He said, 'Thanks,' and walked off. When he ordered the pizza, he spoke English with an Arabic accent. He had an Arab appearance but spoke English. My employee and I thought he seemed strange. This was at 8:30 PM, and just a few minutes later, the attack happened. When I heard the screams, I didn't connect it at first. Later that night, I saw his picture on the news. It was exactly what he had been wearing—and how he looked. I was in shock. I immediately called my employee, and neither of us could believe it."

It soon became clear that a series of missteps had allowed him to enter the country. Upon his arrival in Israel on a connecting flight from Poland, a border control officer at Ben Gurion Airport grew suspicious and refused to approve his entry. Her concerns were based on his inability to provide a convincing answer about where he intended to stay during his visit and the fact that he was carrying little money. A police officer on the scene also noted his "tense body language" as suspicious.

The attacker was referred to Shin Bet for further questioning, but after their interrogation, they determined there were no security grounds to deny him entry. Shin Bet has since announced that the incident will be thoroughly investigated.

"Upon his entry into Israel, a security evaluation was conducted, including both questioning and additional checks, and it was determined there was no basis to deny his entry on security grounds. This case will be reviewed," Shin Bet said.



However, warning signs may have been apparent even earlier. Before flying to Israel, the attacker had visited the Israeli consulate in New York with his Moroccan passport to apply for a tourist visa. He made several visits to the consulate and was asked to provide various documents.

According to sources familiar with the visa process, the purpose of the consular review was to ensure that he did not intend to settle in Israel illegally. At the request of the consulate, he provided documentation proving he was a successful Uber driver with a five-star rating and nearly 3,000 completed rides. He also showed bank statements reflecting a balance of over \$10,000, demonstrating financial stability. Additionally, his possession of a U.S. Green Card suggested he intended to return to the United States to continue his naturalization process.

As a Moroccan citizen, his visa application was forwarded to Shin Bet for review, following standard protocol. Shin Bet approved the application within two days—a notably quick response. Based on this approval, the consulate issued his visa. Sources familiar with the process maintain that there were no irregularities in the consulate's handling of the case or in the conduct of the Foreign Ministry.

Nevertheless, key questions remain unanswered—chief among them, whether anyone had reviewed his Facebook profile. A cursory glance at the page, which was deleted immediately after the attack and his identification, would have revealed posts that were overtly anti-Israel and supportive of Gaza.

In the posts, the attacker accused Israel of "starving northern Gaza" and claimed that "half a million Gazans face death by starvation." He shared a video praising Islam with the caption "Free Palestine" and an image of Ibrahim al-Nabulsi, a terrorist killed in Nablus in 2022. Following the October 7 massacre, he posted, "What is happening now may double the number of martyrs for Islam."

Security officials involved in the visa process argue that reviewing his Facebook page falls squarely under Shin Bet's purview. Consular officials, they claim, are neither authorized nor trained to evaluate security threats or incitement on social media. "The consulate has no authority over security matters. Their role is to assess whether the individual has a stable economic life to return to and does not intend to settle illegally. Security checks are the responsibility of Shin Bet," said one official.

Kaddi Abdelaziz lived in Brooklyn, and his U.S. ID indicated he was born in Morocco. In a Facebook post from September 14, 2022, he uploaded a photo of himself flying from New York, captioning it, "Alhamdulillah."

Another pressing question is why, despite the suspicions raised by the border control officer, the Shin Bet ultimately allowed his entry after the interrogation at Ben Gurion Airport. It is important to clarify that this was not a case of the Shin Bet overriding a border control decision to deny entry. Shin Bet is not authorized to approve entry—it can only recommend denial based on security concerns. In this instance, the border control officer flagged the individual for further review, and Shin Bet conducted its checks, concluding there were no grounds to deny his entry. The incident is now under investigation. Preventing entry to Israel requires concrete evidence or clear indications of malicious intent, neither of which were apparent in this case.

A senior security official highlighted the challenges of screening the large number of foreign arrivals to Israel: "Tens of thousands enter Israel each week, over a million annually. Of these, tens of thousands undergo detailed Shin Bet screenings, and hundreds are denied entry each year. Wartime protocols have tightened screenings significantly, leading to a rise in denials. These decisions often lead to legal appeals, and in rare cases, the decisions are overturned."

Former senior Shin Bet official Dvir Kariv acknowledged the agency's limitations: "Shin Bet is not infallible—it learns and investigates thoroughly, but mistakes do happen. While it prevents the majority of threats, it is not a machine with a 100% success rate." Speaking about the interrogation at Ben Gurion Airport, he added, "I've conducted hundreds, maybe thousands, of interrogations in my career. Only three times did I recommend denial based on a gut feeling that I was dealing with someone problematic. It's possible the officer here simply misjudged this time."

Adv. Tomer Warsha, head of the Immigration Committee of the Israel Bar Association, criticized the handling of the case. "This serious incident raises heavy questions about the performance of both border control and the Foreign Ministry. Despite clear signs of suspicion, the attacker was allowed entry with a Moroccan passport and a pre-issued visa. This was a case where denial should have been unequivocal, based on existing protocols," he said.

Shin Bet reiterated: "Upon his entry into Israel, a security evaluation was conducted, including questioning and additional checks. It was determined there was no security basis to deny his entry. The case will be thoroughly investigated."

01.22.25 – We

Aid trucks flood Gaza amid cease-fire, sharply cutting local prices

01.22.25 – We

'If only it had come sooner': Aid trucks flood Gaza amid cease-fire, sharply cutting prices  
UN reports hundreds of aid trucks entering Gaza daily since cease-fire began, with 897 trucks crossing into enclave on Tuesday alone

Einav Halabi | 13:09

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs confirmed that 897 aid trucks entered the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, marking the third day of the cease-fire between Israel and Hamas.

Humanitarian aid began flowing into Gaza on Sunday, immediately after the cease-fire took effect at 11:15 a.m. That day, 630 trucks entered the Palestinian enclave. The number increased to 925 on Monday and reached 897 on Tuesday.

The UN reported these figures based on information from Israeli authorities, Arab nations involved in brokering the cease-fire—Egypt and Qatar—and the United States.

Under the cease-fire agreement, Israel is obligated to facilitate increased aid deliveries to Gaza, allowing up to 600 trucks daily during the first six weeks of the truce. Among the

daily shipments are 50 trucks carrying fuel. Additionally, half of the aid trucks are designated for Gaza's northern region, the focal point of intense Israeli operations in recent months.

Data from the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) showed that in December, 2,892 aid trucks entered Gaza. Much of the aid remains on the Gazan side of the border with Israel, awaiting distribution by UN agencies.

Markets in Gaza are beginning to recover, with goods returning to shelves and prices dropping. Maher Haboush, a Gaza-based blogger, shared his observations from the bustling markets: "There's so much available now—three cans of tuna for 20 shekels. Just one used to cost 30. Thank God, everything is changing."

Mahmoud Zaki Al-Moudi, a Hamas activist from Jabaliya, posted a picture of himself with a roasted chicken and wrote, "You shared our pain, hunger and hardships. It's your right to share our joy—we haven't had a tray of chicken like this in ages. Come and enjoy."

Another Gaza blogger, Mahmoud Zaiter, noted the steep drop in food prices: "A kilo of apples was 50 shekels, now it's 10. Flour was 30 shekels a kilo, now it's 5. This is because of the cease-fire. If only it had come sooner."

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority's statistics bureau reported an unprecedented inflation rate of 237.98% in 2024.

01.22.25 – We

West Bank settlers pepper-sprayed police officer, who fired in all directions

01.22.25 – We

Settlers say police officer fired wantonly in West Bank clashes

One of four settlers injured in shooting accuses police officer of 'firing in all directions' during clash; his lawyer criticizes officer's release to house arrest as 'troubling'

Elisha Ben Kimon|11:18

A settler injured during violent clashes in the West Bank accused a police officer of reckless behavior after opening fire on a group of settlers during confrontations in the villages of Funduq and Jinsafut.

The settler, one of four injured in the incident—two critically—spoke out Wednesday, describing the chaotic scene. "There were about 40 of us. Suddenly, we started getting shot at from all directions," he said. "Then we realized it was a police officer, firing in all directions like he'd lost control of his weapon."

The settler, who suffered a gunshot wound to the jaw, added, "Miraculously—thank God—I'm still here. I'm scheduled for surgery to remove the bullet. Thankfully, it didn't hit any arteries."

The shooting occurred after settlers clashed with Palestinians in what became a flashpoint since a shooting attack there earlier this month that killed three Israelis: police officer Elad Winkelstein, 35, and civilians Rachel Cohen, 70, and Aliza Reiss, 73.

Reports suggest the officer, who was reportedly pepper-sprayed during the confrontation, opened fire as tensions escalated.

The officer has since been questioned by the Department for Internal Police Investigations and released on house arrest under restrictive conditions. The investigation is ongoing, but concerns about a potential cover-up are already being raised.

Attorneys Nati Rom and Haim Bleicher, representing the wounded settlers, have demanded access to the officer's body camera footage and police communication recordings. They are also calling for the officer's arrest until the investigation is complete. "It's troubling that the officer was only placed on house arrest," Adv. Rom said. "We hope there won't be any attempts to cover this up, as has happened before. This is a grave incident that demands an immediate and serious investigation."

Police confirmed Tuesday night that no arrests have been made in connection to the incident, revealing that both a police officer and a soldier were involved. Military Police have joined the investigation, and the officer is now under scrutiny for alleged unlawful discharge of a firearm.

The officer has been placed on house arrest until Friday, barred from entering police facilities for eight days, and prohibited from contacting others involved in the incident. Witnesses reported a heated argument between the officer and settlers before the shooting.

Accounts from the scene suggest the officer and soldier appeared shaken after the incident, with reports that the soldier also fired his weapon. Questions persist regarding the officer's claim that shots were intended to create distance, as the victims sustained injuries to their upper bodies.

Defense Minister Israel Katz addressed the incident at a meeting of Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, saying, "I strongly condemn any violence or attacks against Palestinians, and I deeply regret the tragedy that resulted in injuries."

He called for accountability, emphasizing, "Those who break the law must face criminal proceedings, not administrative orders. Settlers must be subject to the same laws as anyone else in Israel."

Katz also urged settler leaders to condemn violence in the region, amid rising tensions following clashes in nearby Palestinian villages. Investigations into both the shooting and the broader unrest are ongoing.

01.22.25 – We

PA to manage Rafah crossing under UN, US & Israel supervision in phase two

01.22.25 – We

Palestinian Authority reportedly to manage Gaza's Rafah crossing under UN supervision. Netanyahu publicly opposes the arrangement, but according to a source in the Saudi newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat, during the visit of the Mossad and Shin Bet heads in Cairo, an agreement was reached that has Palestinian Authority managing crossing on the Gaza side 'under international supervision'; There are still remaining disputes - and the question of withdrawing from Philadelphi Corridor: 'We want to return to the situation that existed before the war'

Lior Ben Ari|03:56

Following the visit of Mossad head Dedi Barnea and Shin Bet head Ronen Bar to Egypt, the London-based Arabic language Saudi newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat reported that an agreement had been reached on the control mechanism at the Rafah Crossing, which the IDF took over in May. According to a source in the joint cease-fire monitoring team, the talks also dealt with security arrangements on the Philadelphi Corridor, and not just the issue of the Rafah Crossing on the Gaza side.

"The parties reached an agreement regarding the management of the crossing on the Palestinian side. It was agreed that it would be managed by the Palestinian Authority, under international supervision and monitoring by the UN," claimed the same source, who spoke to the newspaper on condition of anonymity, noting that it had not yet been decided when the crossing would be returned to operation. In addition, according to the source, no agreement was reached regarding the Philadelphi Corridor.

The Rafah Crossing served as a central hub for transferring aid to the Gaza Strip at the beginning of the war and has been closed since it was taken over by the IDF.

The appendix to the cease-fire agreement, signed last week in Qatar, stated that Israel would now be required to work to reopen it, and that its forces would "redeploy around" the crossing based on maps to be agreed upon between the parties, without specifying whether there would be an actual withdrawal from there. The maps themselves, which depict the IDF's gradual withdrawal and redeployment of its forces during the cease-fire, have not yet been revealed.

Netanyahu has previously opposed the possibility of Palestinian Authority representatives activating the crossing, and the appendix did not specify exactly how it would be activated. "The crossing will be activated based on the discussions from August 2024 with Egypt," the appendix stated, without elaborating.

According to the Saudi report, the meetings that began in Cairo on Monday lasted until the early hours of Tuesday morning - and were attended by Barnea and Bar, as well as Egyptian intelligence chief Hassan Rashad, and a number of senior officials responsible for the Palestinian issue in Egyptian intelligence. "The remaining disputes are technical and logistical and they will be resolved," the source said.

Regarding the **Philadelphi Corridor**, the report claims, Israel has proposed implementing **partial withdrawals** from the axis, **but Egypt insists on a full withdrawal**. "Cairo wants to return to the situation that existed before the war," the source noted. "We also discussed in the meeting the **possibility of changing the crossing agreement later**. What has been determined now is **temporary and concerns this stage only**."

Meanwhile, Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan said that "the responsibility **to maintain the cease-fire** in Gaza **is the responsibility of all of us** in the region."

Israel did not commit to a full withdrawal from the corridor **in the first phase** of the deal and cease-fire, but **only to a "reduction" of its presence**. According to the appendix to the deal, the details of which were obtained last week, the **withdrawal** from there is supposed **to begin only on the last day of the first phase, day 42, when the last hostages** of 33 hostages will be **released** as part of that phase.

However, since that agreement was signed, Israeli officials have **insisted that there will be no actual withdrawal** - and their statements cast doubt on the fact that the **agreement stipulates** that even **if an agreement on Phase Two is not reached by the end of the first phase**, the temporary cease-fire will continue as long as the **negotiations continue** - with the mediators, including the **U.S., committed to guarantee this**.

Last week, Palestinian Authority officials claimed in a conversation with Ynet that President-elect Donald **Trump asked Ramallah to control the Gaza Strip's crossings**, and "especially" the **Rafah crossing, in coordination with Israel and Egypt**.

01.22.25 – We

**'Go to Gaza': Mall clerk hurls racist insults at Arab shoppers before being fired**

01.22.25 – We

**'Go to Gaza': Mall clerk hurls racist insults at Arab shoppers before being fired**

**Two Arab shoppers** recount their **attempts to return a coat to a mall store** because it was the **wrong size** only to be **denied** and **face racially charged comments**

Hassan Shaalan|01:52

A **mother and daughter from the Arab city of Tayibe in central Israel** experienced **racist treatment on Monday** from a **saleswoman at a clothing store** in a mall in the Sharon region. The **saleswoman mocked and cursed at them** during the incident.

Following the event the **store owner decided to fire the saleswoman**, who was **caught on video insulting the mother and her pregnant daughter**, saying, "**You and your fetus are wh\*res. Go to Gaza; maybe there's a mall there.**" The mother and daughter responded: "**You've crossed all lines. No saleswoman ever called us wh\*re before.**"

"A few days ago, we **bought a coat** from the store and **wanted to return it because the size didn't fit**," the **mother told Ynet**. "The **saleswoman told us, 'I've closed the register and I can't accept anything,**' even though there was **still an hour and a half until closing time.**"

"I asked to speak to the manager and she called someone, then came back claiming: 'You've worn the coat, and it has cigarette marks.' We told her that wasn't true, that we're well-mannered and don't deceive people," she recounted.

"We've been shopping at this place for years. At that moment, I was shocked when the saleswoman said, 'Why are you shouting?' — even though I wasn't shouting. She continued to curse at me and my daughter, calling us wh\*res and saying, 'Go to Gaza.' Her words deeply hurt us."

The mother added, "I personally wasn't willing to stay silent about such behavior. I called everyone in charge and they apologized for what we went through and informed me that they had fired her. It's very important not to stay silent about incidents of racism and to raise your voice; otherwise, this phenomenon won't stop."

The store manager told Ynet that "I condemn such behavior. Speaking to people this way is unacceptable anywhere. I deeply apologize. Following the employee's actions, she has been fired and will not be returning to work."

01.22.25 – We

IDF must withdraw from Lebanon Blue Line border, by Sunday, January 26

01.22.25 – We

IDF must now withdraw from Lebanon: 6,000 Lebanese soldiers said operating against Hezbollah

Under cease-fire agreement, the IDF must complete its withdrawal from southern Lebanon by Sunday; Western diplomats report that the Lebanese Armed Forces have already carried out 100 operations targeting Hezbollah infrastructure, noting, 'It's likely some requests came from the IDF'

Itamar Eichner | 16:04

Under the terms of the cease-fire agreement between Israel and Lebanon, the IDF is required to complete its withdrawal from southern Lebanon and redeploy along the Israeli side of the Blue Line, the internationally recognized border, by Sunday, January 26.

"The deadline itself is not critical, but it's important to create a sense of momentum, and we hope it can be maintained as the IDF continues its withdrawal," a senior Western diplomat said.

The diplomat noted that Israel has already withdrawn from two areas: Al-Khiam in December and Al-Naqoura in early January, following a meeting of the cease-fire enforcement mechanism and a visit by U.S. Special Envoy Amos Hochstein to Lebanon.

"We expect further Israeli withdrawals and a new deployment," the diplomat added. The cease-fire enforcement mechanism is preparing a plan for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to redeploy in areas vacated by the IDF, including detailed timelines and locations.

Since the cease-fire began, the LAF has deployed 6,000 soldiers in southern Lebanon, conducting over 100 operations to neutralize Hezbollah infrastructure, including the destruction of rocket launchers, buildings and other facilities. According to Western diplomats, about one-third of these operations were initiated by the LAF, with the remainder carried out at the request of the U.S.-led enforcement mechanism. It is believed that some of these requests originated from Israel.

Diplomats emphasized that the withdrawal process requires political commitment from both sides. "The IDF is acting based on decisions from Israel's political leadership. We believe they understand what needs to be done, but it's difficult to predict how it will unfold," one diplomat said.

"The LAF must continue dismantling Hezbollah infrastructure, while the IDF needs to facilitate the LAF's access to vacated areas. It's a parallel process that must move forward together," the diplomat added.

Lebanon has entered a period of political opportunity following the appointment of a new president and prime minister. "Our message to Israel is to support – or at least not hinder – the efforts of Lebanon's new government. They deserve a chance," said the diplomats.

Meanwhile, Syria's new government issued a statement pledging to maintain stability along its shared border with Lebanon. Syria has also signaled to the international community and Israel its intent to prevent Iran and Hezbollah from resuming arms transfers from Syria into Lebanon. This development is seen as a significant step forward for both Lebanon and Israel.

As the deadline approaches, all eyes are on the region to see if the delicate balance of military withdrawal and political cooperation can be sustained to ensure long-term stability.

01.21.25 – Tu

5 injured in stabbing attack in central Tel Aviv, terrorist eliminated

01.21.25 – Tu

5 injured in stabbing attack in central Tel Aviv, terrorist eliminated

They were stabbed in the middle of a busy street in Tel Aviv and were evacuated to a nearby hospital; One of them was stabbed in the neck and was moderately to seriously injured; Attacker is identified as a permanent resident of the US originally from Morocco who arrived in Israel three days ago

Lior Ohana | 13:32

At least five people were injured Tuesday evening in a stabbing attack on Nahalat Binyamin Street in central Tel Aviv, one seriously, one moderately and three lightly. According to Magen David Adom emergency service, two young men in their 20s were moderately injured and a man in his 50s was lightly injured. They were evacuated to



Ichilov Hospital, which reported that the condition of one of the injured, who was injured in the neck, is moderate to serious.

The Tel Aviv police commissioner later arrived at the scene of the attack and announced that there was only one attacker and that the incident is over.

The attacker has been identified as Kaddi Abdelaziz, a permanent resident of the U.S. originally from Morocco, who arrived in Israel three days ago.

Panic during the terror attack in central Tel Aviv

Interior Minister Moshe Arbel noted that border control officers from the Population and Immigration Authority identified Abdelaziz as a threat in real time and sought to prevent him from entering Israel. He was transferred to Shin Bet security officials for further questioning, who ultimately allowed him to enter Israel. "I commend and appreciate the border control officers of the Population and Immigration Authority who identified in real time and sought to prevent the entry into Israel of the terrorist from the attack in Tel Aviv upon his arrival at Ben Gurion Airport on 18.1.25 and transferred him for questioning to security officials who unfortunately decided to allow his entry into Israel," Arbel said.

The stabbings occurred while the street was bustling with life, as it is every evening.

People who heard the gunshots fired at the stabber panicked, entered restaurants and hid under tables.

Passersby who witnessed the stabbings, who are IDF soldiers from an elite unit, neutralized the terrorist. "We came down from the house, and saw the terrorist knocking a civilian to the floor. We shouted at him to stop and shot him when he refused. We fired four bullets in total," they said. According to an eyewitness, "the terrorist got off the scooter and the driver continued driving."

Aviyah, who works at a bar near the scene of the attack, said: "We didn't hear anything outside, and then we saw a lot of people running and people with guns drawn. We closed the bar with everyone inside and now we're waiting to figure out what's happening."

Another eyewitness, Dor, said: "He ran from the direction of Sofer Yehuda with a knife. He stabbed one person and immediately after a few moments they shot him."

On Saturday, a 28-year-old man was seriously injured in a stabbing attack at the intersection of Levontin and Mikveh Yisrael streets in Tel Aviv. He was taken to Ichilov Hospital in the city, where he underwent surgery and his condition stabilized. The terrorist, an illegal resident from Tulkarm, was eliminated at the scene. Police received reports of a suspect who attempted to stab passersby. An armed citizen who was at the scene neutralized him.

01.21.25 – Tu

Israel's Iron Wall operation in West Bank: IDF strikes terrorists planting IEDs in Jenin

01.21.25 – Tu

Israel's Iron Wall operation in West Bank: IDF strikes terrorists planting IEDs in Jenin  
The IDF struck a terrorist cell using a drone as part of fresh operation Iron Wall; Military plans to deploy bulldozers in the city to expose and clear booby-trapped routes  
Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi | 11:37

The IDF eliminated a terrorist cell in Jenin on Tuesday as they were planting explosive devices in Jenin.

The attack was carried out with drones as part of Israel's counter-terrorism Iron Wall operation in the West Bank. Palestinian sources initially reported air raid sirens sounding throughout the city as the operation began with drone strikes, followed by a combat helicopter assault.

The Palestinian Authority's Health Ministry reported six fatalities and at least 35 injuries from IDF airstrikes, with casualties ranging from mild to critical. Following the drone strike, IDF bulldozers, including D9s, are expected to enter the area to clear roads suspected of being booby-trapped.

The operation, which began with targeted strikes on infrastructure, continued with ground forces entering Jenin. It is anticipated to continue for several days, involving significant military resources, including special forces, the Shin Bet security agency, and Border Police units.

The IDF aims to maintain operational freedom across the West Bank, dismantle terrorist infrastructure, and neutralize imminent threats. The decision to launch the operation was approved by Israel's Security Cabinet on Friday.

The timing reflects the influence of Finance Minister Bezale Smotrich, who reportedly pressured Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to action following a shooting attack in the northern West Bank Palestinian village of Funduq that killed three Israelis, including two women in their 70s. Initial concerns about potential international backlash, particularly from the Biden administration, delayed the operation, despite months of planning by the IDF as part of its offensive strategy.

The IDF has also intensified arrests across the West Bank, with Palestinian sources reporting 11 arrests in Idna near Hebron and seven in Qalqilya. Earlier in the day, the Palestinian news agency WAFA claimed that Israeli forces tightened restrictions in Ramallah and Al-Bireh, closing additional roads.

IDF helicopter above Jenin

The operation coincides with the winding down of an unprecedented six-week crackdown by Palestinian security forces targeting terrorist activities in the Jenin refugee camp.

According to an IDF source, the Palestinian Authority sought to demonstrate its ability to curb terrorist presence and assert control. "They signaled to the Palestinian public and the international community – especially the U.S. and EU – that they can exercise authority, even in areas heavily impacted by Hamas," the source said.

01.21.25 – Tu

Axis is weak; but Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen & Gaza claim victory over Israel

01.21.25 – Tu

Iran's axis is weakened, but threats persist

While Tehran's control in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza has been severely impacted during the war, Iran and its proxies make efforts to portray victory in cease-fire and hostage deal  
Lior Ben Ari | 10:10

The hostage release and Gaza cease-fire agreement took effect on Sunday, with the Iranian-Shiite axis continuing its rhetoric of boasting and threats. Despite significant setbacks in Lebanon, Syria and elsewhere, "victory speeches" persist in Iran and elsewhere.

Iranian officials, allied militias in Iraq, Hezbollah and the Houthis have issued statements celebrating the cease-fire, claiming it as a triumph.

"The people of Gaza stand firm like a mountain. Despite the loss of figures like Yahya Sinwar, the resistance front will not falter. Hamas is alive and will remain alive," Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei posted on X in Hebrew. He attached a video showing Hamas terrorists and the release of three Israeli hostages Romi Gonen, Emily Damari and Doron Steinbrecher.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian added: "We congratulate the resilient people of Gaza and Palestine on this victory. The Palestinian people stood with strength and dignity against Israel and achieved a great accomplishment."

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei declared that "the Gaza cease-fire is a complete defeat for the Zionist entity and its allies, another example of the triumph of resistance and confrontation against the occupation."

Iranian Chief of Staff Mohammad Bagheri called the cease-fire a sign of Israel's "collapse of authority" and an "important turning point for the region and the Islamic world." He claimed, "The resistance axis emerged victorious, imposing this agreement on the enemy."

Iranian Revolutionary Guard Quds Force commander Esmail Qaani also claimed that Israel "was forced to accept Hamas's terms, the same ones it proposed in earlier negotiations." Meanwhile, Iranian outlets showcased military capabilities, with the Tasnim news agency revealing a strategic naval base and Mehr agency highlighting new defense systems added to Iran's navy.

According to the Iranian news agency IRNA, a military drill began in the Kermanshah region of western Iran on Tuesday and will last nine days. The drills aim to enhance military readiness, demonstrate the forces' defensive capabilities, improve regional security and signal the army's readiness to defend Iran.

Hezbollah, which reached its own agreement with Israel nearly two months ago, echoed similar sentiments. In an official statement, it praised the cease-fire as a "political and military victory" that demonstrated Israel's failure to achieve its goals. It thanked Iran, Iraqi resistance factions and the Houthis, reaffirming its commitment to supporting Palestinians "until the occupation ends."

In Yemen, the Houthis hailed the agreement as a "historic victory," vowing to monitor its implementation and confront any Israeli escalation. "We will limit attacks in the Red Sea to Israeli-linked vessels," the terror group's military spokesperson Yahya Saree said, while reaffirming ongoing support for the Palestinian cause.

Hezbollah's acting Secretary-General Naim Qassem, who replaced Hassan Nasrallah after he was killed during the war, said in a recorded speech that the "Palestinian resistance achieved its goals, while Israel failed to meet its objectives. Violations by Israel cannot continue and our patience toward them is given to allow time for Lebanon and the mediators. I warn them not to test our patience."

01.21.25 – Tu

IDF chief & Maj-Gen resign; haunted by Oct. 7, finished by hostage deal

01.21.25 – Tu

IDF chief of staff resigns; 'failings of military on Oct. 7 will haunt me for life'

Herzi Halevi says in a statement he informed the defense minister of his intention to end his tenure at the head of the military after accepting responsibility for IDF failings on Oct. 7 and after achievements in the war

Elisha Ben Kimon|Updated:07:25

IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi said on Tuesday he is resigning from his post at the head of the military and will leave the position in March. He said the failings of the IDF in the Oct. 7 massacre would haunt him for life.

"I informed the defense Minister on today that in recognition of my responsibility in the failures of the IDF on Oct. 7, and while the military has made significant achievements and is in the midst of carrying out the agreement to free hostages, I am asking to end my term on March 6, 2025," Halevi said in a statement.

"In the remaining time I will complete the inquiries and bolster the IDF's preparedness to face the security challenges. I will transfer command of the IDF in an orderly and meticulous fashion to my replacement. I sent my letter to the prime minister and the defense minister.

Levi's resignation comes after a deal to free Israeli hostages from Hamas captivity was put into effect, which was an objective of the war, and after the Hamas military wing was defeated in Gaza and Hezbollah suffered considerable losses.

Immediately after the chief of staff's announcement, the IDF Southern Command head Maj.-Gen. Yaron Finkelstein also announced his resignation from the military.

01.21.25 – Tu

PA security launch different approach in Jenin; homes used for shooting are torched

01.21.25 – Tu

IDF launches counter terror operation in West Bank city of Jenin

Shin Bet and border police join effort to eliminate terror infrastructure and seize illegal weapons as Palestinian Authority operation nears conclusion

Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi, Yoav Zitun|06:26

The IDF, Shin Bet and Border Police on Tuesday launched a counterterrorism operation in the West Bank's Jenin. The operation began with a drone strike in the city. Palestinians reported alarms in Jenin, claiming the discovery of an "Israeli special forces unit" and the arrival of military vehicles from the Dotan checkpoint.

The operation, which began with airstrikes targeting terror infrastructure and continued with ground forces entering the area, is expected to last several days and involves numerous Israeli forces including special units, Shin Bet and Border Police.

The mission's goals were said to be maintaining operational freedom across the West Bank, dismantling terror infrastructure and neutralizing "ticking time bombs." The Palestinian Health Ministry, operated by Hamas, reported one fatality and at least ten injuries from the strikes. Earlier, Palestinian news agency WAFA claimed Israel intensified actions across the West Bank, including road closures near Ramallah and al-

Arrests continued prior to the Jenin offensive, with 11 individuals detained in Idna near Nablus and seven in Qalqilya.

"The threat to settlements and residents in the West Bank and the seam line is growing." Defense Minister Israel Katz told the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. "Our enemies see this as the only open front now, a space for confrontations, gunfire and terrorism against Israel."

"The Iranian axis continues to fund, direct and arm these activities." Katz said he directed the IDF to "act forcefully to protect all communities and residents, to strike hard and prevent terrorism."

Overnight masked men entered Palestinian villages in the West Bank, vandalizing property and setting buildings, cars and shops on fire. Two people were hurt during clashes with security forces that arrived on the scene, according to initial investigations, a police officer shot and seriously wounded the two after he was attacked with pepper spray and fired to push back the crowd.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority's (PA) extensive security operation targeting terrorism in Jenin's refugee camp, ongoing for over a month and a half, is nearing completion. The IDF observed a decline in arrests and activity in the past two weeks, with a military source saying the operation achieved its goal.

"They demonstrated to Palestinians and the world that they won't tolerate such terrorist presence." The source added, "It's also their signal to the U.S. and EU that they're capable of controlling parts of Gaza in place of Hamas, particularly areas hit hardest by the IDF."

However, the operation resumed in recent days after pausing under Palestinian pressure following Israeli strikes in the area. Senior figures in the camp reached agreements with the Palestinian Authority, which aims to tackle illegal arms and crime in a region plagued by weapons trade and money laundering.

Still, terrorist Jenin Brigades members aligned with Islamic Jihad detonated two explosive charges against PA security vehicles on Monday.

Israeli security sources reported that the Palestinian security forces arrested around 340 terrorists, eliminated 10 (including a senior figure described as the camp's second-in-command) and seized 290 explosives, 23 car bombs and numerous drones intended for military use.

Six Palestinian security personnel were killed and 59 armed terrorists were injured during the operation. Unlike IDF protocols, Palestinian forces adopted a different approach to homes used for shooting during clashes by torching them.

01.21.25 – Tu

Hamas sends a message: chaos shows elite force at Gaza's hostage released

01.21.25 – Tu

'This sends a message': the chaos at Gaza's central square as hostages released

In an attempt to reconstruct its powerbase in Gaza, Hamas stages spectacle at Saraya Square including hundreds of people and terrorists in a bid of power projection  
Einav Halabi, Hagar Kochavi|03:29

Hamas exhibited an image of hoards of people and many armed fighters on the streets during the transfer of the three first hostages, released on Sunday, to the hands of the Red Cross. But drone footage shows that the area around the crowd that had gathered was mostly empty. Only hundreds of Palestinians were seen gathering around Red Cross vehicles in an otherwise empty area.

Hamas's propaganda was directed not only at Israel but also at Palestinians and the broader Arab world to project a victory narrative and reinforce its military and civilian control. Only hundreds of Palestinians were seen gathering around Red Cross vehicles in an otherwise empty area.

Images released by Hamas, which faced international criticism, depicted armed terrorists and civilians swarming the hostages' vehicle. The release took place in Saraya Square, a

symbolic location connecting Gaza City's north and south, chosen by Hamas to enhance its propaganda.

The terror group sought to showcase its elite Nukhba Force and "Shadow Unit," responsible for hostage operations, to solidify its position.

Al Jazeera journalist Tamer Almisshal, known for his ties to Hamas, said that the choice of Saraya Square had strategic and political significance, especially during the initial days of the cease-fire agreement. "This area, heavily targeted by Israeli operations, sends a message: You didn't break us — Hamas is still here."

The square, heavily damaged by IDF activity, previously housed Hamas leadership tunnels. Almisshal claimed the release's location symbolized Hamas's defiance and highlighted Israeli failures to dismantle its military infrastructure.

Before the war, Saraya Square was a bustling hub surrounded by banks, shopping centers and government buildings, including a central prison dating back to the British mandate, later used by various Palestinian factions.

According to Gaza residents, Hamas operatives frequently used hidden tunnels in the area during airstrikes. Red Cross officials described the scene of armed terrorists surrounding the vehicles as "complex and threatening," but the transfer proceeded. The organization plans to address future security concerns with Hamas.

Sunday also marked widespread Palestinian celebrations for the cease-fire, which Hamas framed as a dramatic victory over Israel. However, as refugees returned to their devastated homes, many expressed shock and frustration at the extensive destruction.

For Hamas, the cease-fire provided an opportunity to re-emerge from hiding, displaying its strength across Gaza. Armed terrorists roamed openly and Hamas police officers were spotted in blue uniforms in several areas. The peak of these displays coincided with the hostage release in central Gaza City.

Although the IDF attacked Hamas vehicles in Khan Younis shortly before the cease-fire, the truce has since limited Israel's ability to counter Hamas's public displays of strength. The terror group aims to demonstrate that its military and governance capabilities remain intact despite suffering significant losses during the 15-month war.

The issue of replacing Hamas as Gaza's governing body was a central point of contention between Israel and the U.S. throughout the war. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu firmly rejected proposals involving the Palestinian Authority taking control of Gaza. Former U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken repeatedly voiced frustration over the matter, calling for "political courage" to find an alternative to Hamas. He noted that the terror group had successfully rebuilt its forces and recruited new terrorists, nearly matching the number lost in battles with Israel.

01.21.25 – Tu

Masked settlers riot in West Bank PA villages, set fires; two hurt in shooting

01.21.25 – Tu

Masked men riot in West Bank Palestinian villages, set fires; two hurt in shooting  
Military investigates serious injury to two people in suspected friendly fire incident while  
dozens of settlers vandalize Palestinian property, burn buildings, homes, cars  
Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi, Raanan Ben-Zur, Liran Tamari|00:00

Dozens of masked West Bank settlers rioted in two Palestinian villages late on Monday,  
vandalizing property and setting buildings, cars and shops on fire.

In the village of Jinsafut, the rioters clashed with security forces who arrived on the scene and emergency services reported that at least two people in their 20's were seriously hurt by gunfire. Shortly before midnight, the IDF said its forces dispersed rioters in the village of Al-Funduq, where three people were killed in a terror attack earlier this month.

According to the military, a police officer and a soldier were involved in a shooting incident that was under investigation and the police later said an officer was placed on house arrest pending an inquiry. Initial probes indicate the men were mistakenly shot by a member of the security forces who was hurt by pepper spray and fired shots to disperse any potential immediate threat.

The riots came as security forces were attempting to prevent an uptick in West Bank violence at a time when Palestinian prisoners were being released from Israeli jails as part of the negotiated cease-fire and hostage release deal that came into effect on Sunday and after Defense Minister Israel Katz lifted administration detention from some violent settlers, imposed on them by his predecessor, Yoav Gallant. Katz made the move without consultation with security services including the Shin Bet. "I decided to release detained settlers to send a clear message of strength and support for Jewish settlement," he said.

Earlier on Monday, the IDF announced that Sergeant first class (res.) Eviatar Ben Yehuda, was killed and four others were hurt from an explosive device that detonated under their vehicle while operating in the West Bank village of Tammun. Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi said on Monday that the military must be prepared to operate significantly against terrorists in the West Bank, "before they can reach our civilians."

U.S. President Donald Trump announced a few hours after the riots that he was reversing the decision of the previous administration and lifting the sanctions imposed on violent West Bank settlers.

01.20.25 – Mo

Trump lifts Biden sanctions on West Bank settlers; time to annex Judea & Samaria

01.20.25 – Mo



### Trump lifts sanctions imposed on West Bank settlers

Hours earlier settlers riot in Palestinian villages setting property on fire; decision is a reversal of a major policy action by former President Joe Biden's administration; Settler leader calls for Israeli sovereignty over West Bank 'a golden age for settlements' ynet, Reuters | 23:22

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday rescinded sanctions imposed by the former Biden administration on far-right West Bank settler groups and individuals accused of being involved in violence against Palestinians, the new White House website said.

The website said Trump rescinded Executive Order 14115 issued on Feb. 1, 2024, which authorized the imposition of certain sanctions "on Persons Undermining Peace, Security, and Stability in the West Bank."

Trump's decision is a reversal of a major policy action by former President Joe Biden's administration which had slapped sanctions on numerous Israeli settler individuals and entities, freezing their U.S. assets and generally barring Americans from dealing with them.

U.S. sanctions on settlers landed after the Biden administration repeatedly urged the Israeli government to take action to hold extremists to account for actions that Washington believes set back hopes for a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Trump's approach to settlements was significantly different. During his first term in 2019, Trump had abandoned the long-held U.S. position that the settlements are illegal before it was restored by Biden.

Yossi Dagan, head of the West Bank Samaria Regional Council welcomed the decision, adding that this is a golden age for settlements and the time to announce Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank.

"President Donald Trump's decision to reverse the outrageous sanctions of his predecessor as he entered the White House is not only moral and important but a message that the United States was once again becoming a friend to Israel," he said in a statement. "This indicates more than anything, the historic opportunity the Israeli government and its prime minister has in Judea and Samaria and in the state of Israel, to do great historic things, whether the Trump administration agrees or whether there is disagreement. The ball has never been in Jerusalem's court as it is now. I call on the prime minister and the government not to miss this opportunity."

01.20.25 – Mo

Hostage advocate champion vows to continue efforts after daughters' return

01.20.25 – Mo

Hostage struggle champion vows to continue after daughters' return; 'Give me a moment to breathe her in'

Merav Leshem-Gonen, reunited Sunday with her freed daughter Romi, pledged to keep fighting for release of 94 hostages still in Gaza; 'I promise to be back,' she wrote, adding, 'Our world has nothing but family. I'm sorry'  
Lior Ohana, Hagar Kochavi|05:04

Merav Leshem-Gonen, mother of freed hostage Romi Gonen and a leading advocate in the campaign to free the hostages held in Gaza, said Monday that she will continue her efforts. "It will take me, us, a minute to breathe her in and to believe in the reality we were able to achieve together," she wrote in a social media post. "I promise to be back. There are 94 loved ones that need this reality to come to fruition."

In a subsequent post, she described the family's current state as being in an "alternate universe," disconnected from the outside world. "Our world has nothing but family. I'm sorry. Give us a minute and we will pull ourselves together and be back," she wrote.

Leshem-Gonen became one of the most prominent voices for the families of hostages during the 471 days of her daughter's captivity following her abduction from the Nova music festival during the October 7 Hamas-led massacre. From the outset, she gave interviews to international media outlets, met with world leaders, and addressed global forums, all while steadfastly advocating for the hostages' release. She maintained a united front, describing the families of the hostages as "one big family" and refusing to separate herself from their collective struggle.

On Sunday, Leshem-Gonen was reunited with her daughter. "Where is my mother?" Romi reportedly asked upon her arrival in Israel. After their emotional embrace, the pair joined the rest of the family waiting for them at Sheba Medical Center.

Leshem-Gonen's advocacy began shortly after her daughter's abduction, and she refused to be drawn into political debates. In a November 2023 interview with Al Jazeera, she rejected efforts to shift the conversation to the "occupied territories" or the siege on Gaza. "My daughter has been a captive for the past six weeks and she is wounded. I want her and all of the hostages to return," she said.

When pressed about Romi's military service and whether politics were central to the crisis, she pushed back. "Stop asking questions about the territories," she said, countering accusations that her refusal to address such issues was a lack of courage.

After receiving confirmation from a freed hostage that Romi was alive but injured and not receiving proper treatment, Leshem-Gonen described the news as both reassuring and troubling. "This is enough to give me some peace," she said, while acknowledging the ongoing challenge.

Throughout her advocacy, Leshem-Gonen emphasized unity among the hostage families. "We are one big family, and as such, we march together," she said in an interview. "I may have an easier time in interviews, but I do not have any more rights than the other families to receive information."

When hostilities resumed following the initial release of some hostages, Leshem-Gonen demanded clarity from the government regarding continued negotiations. "I am not a strategist; I am a mother," she said.

In June, Leshem-Gonen addressed the United Nations Human Rights Council, where she shared details of her daughter's abduction and their final conversation. "Trying to escape from their murderous hands, she was shot while driving in a car with three other young people," she recounted.

"As the only survivor, she was brutally dragged by her long, beautiful hair from the car, along the road. I was a witness to this reality while speaking with her on the phone, hearing her helplessness and frustration without being able to help my baby. That was 257 days ago."

During the same address, which marked the first official UN meeting with hostage families, she criticized the international community for its inaction. "Twenty-three-year-old girls should not be taken hostage. No one should," she said.

"Mr. President, we should be on the same side—the side fighting hostage-taking, never accepting the use of young women as political tools. I hope my Romi still believes in the free world, still believes in us, and still believes that together we will end the nightmare she is in. I believe we can do more for them, we can do better for them. The hostages need us, and the world needs them. Please help me hug my daughter again."

Leshem-Gonen's unwavering dedication to the cause continues, even as she reunites with her daughter, reaffirming her commitment to fight for the remaining hostages still held in Gaza.

01.20.25 – Mo

Trump takes a jab as Biden claims all credit for hostage deal

01.20.25 – Mo

Trump takes a jab at Biden as he claims credit for hostage deal

Incoming president says deal underway one day before he takes office, thanks Steve Witkoff for doing 'very well' to secure the deal; 'We took in the first hostages today and they're coming in tomorrow and they're going to keep coming in,' he says  
Daniel Edelson, New York|01:21

Incoming U.S. President Donald Trump did not want to share credit with the outgoing Biden administration for the cease-fire and hostage release that began on Sunday.

In a speech he gave in Washington, on the eve of his inauguration Trump wondered if the Biden team had anything to do with the successful outcome. "It just happened to be one day before we took office," he said taking a jab at the outgoing president and thanked his envoy Steve Witkoff. "He just came back from the Middle East. He had a little project and he did very well on." Trump who appeared not familiar with the terms of the deal

said hostages would be released on Monday. "We took in the first hostages today and they're coming in tomorrow and they're going to keep coming in," he said.

The deal began as the administrations were changing hands and with it was the battle for credit. While outgoing U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke to Qatar's Prime Minister Mohammed Al Thani. The Secretary thanked the Prime Minister for his critical role in mediation efforts to reach a ceasefire that will end fighting in Gaza, bring the hostages home, and enable a surge in humanitarian assistance," the State Department said in a statement.

"The Secretary highlighted the need to continue advancing post-conflict planning for Gaza, expressed his gratitude for the Prime Minister's support and wished him well on continued efforts to build lasting peace in the region."

01.20.25 – Mo

Gazans shocked at devastation to northern homes; nothing but rubble

01.20.25 – Mo

Gazans shocked at devastation; 'We have no life. We will live on the streets' OCHA says 436,000 buildings destroyed, 276,000 damaged in war; residents return to search for their homes flattened by bombings; 'Nothing is left from my home but the key' Eliasaf Kosman, Einav Halabi|00:19

Gazans who were displaced by the war began returning home on Sunday to discover the devastation bringing some to express shock and extreme frustration.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said 436,000 buildings were destroyed in the Strip and 276,000 were severely or partially damaged after 90% of Gazans were displaced.

"What have we achieved? I have four houses and they are all flattened," Mohammed Abu Bilal, who returned to Rafah told CNN. "Where am I? Is this my house? Is this my life?" Another resident who returned to the city said he came to see if his house was standing but found it destroyed. "We are defeated. We have no life. We will live on the streets." The IDF began withdrawing from populated areas on Sunday as the cease-fire and hostage exchange deal came into effect after a three-hour delay after Hamas failed to deliver the names of the three first hostages that were to be freed. Thousands of people returned to areas in the northern parts of the Strip, even before the truce was announced.

They came carrying their belongings on bicycles to mule-drawn buggies and voiced their concern over how they would manage amid the rubble. "My house was destroyed six months ago. We may be living in a tent, one resident of Jabaliya said.

Nadia Abu Khalub, from Beit Lahia in northern Gaza, said she could not believe the destruction. "The entire area was bombed, and the devastation affected everything: people, stones and trees. There is nothing left of my house except the key," she said. "all our memories were destroyed with the house. May God compensate and reward us for this catastrophe. This is Hamas's victory."

"It's an indescribable scene. It's like you see in a Hollywood horror movie," Mohamed Abu Taha, a Rafah resident, told AP as he and his brother were inspecting his family home. "Flattened houses, human remains, skulls and other body parts, in the street and in the rubble." He shared footage of piles of rubble that he said had been his family's house. "I want to know how they destroyed our home." Ahmed Abu Ayham, 40, of Gaza City said that while the ceasefire may have spared lives, the losses and destruction made it no time for celebration. "We are in pain, deep pain and it is time to hug one another and cry," he said.

For Hamas the cease-fire allowed armed fighters to come out of hiding onto the streets to demonstrate power. Hamas police officers in uniform were seen in several areas of the Strip and when the three Israeli hostages were brought to the Red Cross team a large group of Hamas members of the military wing entered Gaza City center in a show of force.

"All the resistance factions are staying in spite of (Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu," one told Reuters. "This is a ceasefire, a full and comprehensive one God willing, and there will be no return to war in spite of him."

01.20.25 – Mo

Red Cross medical checks delayed prisoner release seven hours past agreed time

01.20.25 – Mo

Israeli officials accuse Red Cross of delaying prisoner release  
Officials claim humanitarian movement stalling on purpose to portray Israel as failing to uphold its commitments under hostage deal; despite setback, issue resolved with considerable delay and prisoners ultimately released

Liran Tamari|16:54

Israeli officials involved in the release of Palestinian prisoners from Ofer Prison as part of the hostage-prisoner exchange deal accused Red Cross representatives late on Sunday of intentionally delaying the process to extend it past the agreed-upon timeline.

Israel initially intended to release the prisoners shortly after the hostages were returned. Despite the setback, the issue was resolved with a considerable delay early on Monday, and the prisoners were ultimately released more than seven hours after the hostages had returned to Israeli soil.

Israeli Prison Service (IPS) officials attributed the delay to routine medical checks and Red Cross supervision required for the prisoners' transfer. However, as midnight approached, Israeli officials claimed the move aimed to portray Israel as failing to uphold its commitments under the agreement. The matter has been referred to Israeli security authorities for investigation.

Under the terms of the deal, 90 Palestinian prisoners are slated for release, including 69 women and 21 men. Red Cross officials have yet to respond to the allegations.

The move comes hours after the release of three Israeli hostages—Romi Gonen, Emily Damari and Doron Steinbrecher—from Hamas captivity.

At Ofer Prison, where the prisoners were gathered under tight security involving 1,500 security personnel, tensions mounted among inmates. Some banged on doors and shouted in frustration. Outside the prison, police and Border Police forces dispersed dozens of protesters attempting to storm the facility, arresting three individuals. Demonstrators also tried to block roads leading to the prison, but officers preemptively secured key routes.

Of the 90 prisoners, 78 were slated for release at the Beitunia checkpoint near Ramallah, while 12 from East Jerusalem were transferred to the Russian Compound detention facility in Jerusalem before returning home. While Israeli authorities plan to suppress public celebrations in East Jerusalem, they acknowledge they cannot prevent festivities in Palestinian Authority territories.

In Beitunia, Palestinian crowds waving Hamas and Hezbollah flags gathered in anticipation of the release. Photos of slain Hamas leaders, including Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar, were displayed, prompting clashes with Israeli forces, who deployed tear gas to disperse the crowd.

The prisoners being released include individuals convicted of incitement, affiliation with terror groups and attempted terrorist attacks. Among them are minors involved in significant terror incidents, including a 15-year-old who carried out a shooting in Jerusalem's City of David and a 17-year-old who injured two people in an attack in the capital's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. High-profile detainees include A'blaa Saadat, wife of Popular Front leader Ahmed Saadat, and Khalida Jarrar, a senior Popular Front figure linked to the 2019 murder of Israeli teen Rina Shnerb.

The release has heightened concerns among Israeli settlers about a potential wave of renewed terrorism. The IDF has bolstered its presence along major routes and stated its intent to act decisively against any attempts by released prisoners to reestablish terror networks. "We will identify any activity and respond with force to suspected terror actions," said a senior security official.

The release is part of the first phase of a broader exchange deal, under which Israel is expected to release nearly 2,000 prisoners for 33 Israeli hostages.

01.19.25 – Su

The moment Israel waited for: Emily, Doron and Romi reunite with their families

01.19.25 – Su

The moment Israel waited for: Emily, Doron and Romi reunite with their families | watch After 471 days in Hamas captivity, Romi Gonen, Emily Damari and Doron Steinbrecher reunited with their mothers in Israel before being airlifted to Sheba Medical Center; Emily, who lost 2 fingers during her abduction, seen smiling despite her injuries Eitan Glikman, Gal Ganot, Itamar Eichner, Meir Trugeman, Roni Green Shaulov, Yoav Zitun and Yossi Yehoshua|Updated:15:44

Romi Gonen, 24, from Kfar Vradim, Emily Damari, 28, and Doron Steinbrecher, 31, both from Kfar Aza, were released Sunday afternoon after 471 days in Hamas captivity and arrived at Sheba Medical Center near Tel Aviv on Sunday evening.

The three women were reunited with their mothers at a specialized reception center in southern Israel before being flown by military helicopters to the hospital for medical evaluations.

Dr. Yael Frenkel-Nir, director of Sheba Medical Center, described the event as "an emotional evening." "We have welcomed the three freed hostages, and their condition allows us to prioritize their reunification with their families over immediate medical evaluations. Detailed assessments will continue in the coming days," she said, emphasizing the hospital's commitment to supporting the women and their families and adding, "We eagerly await the return of all remaining hostages and will receive them with the same care and sensitivity."

The IDF confirmed that the women traveled with their mothers aboard Air Force helicopters to the hospital, where they were expected to reunite with other family members and receive comprehensive medical care.

It was revealed that Damari and Gonen were held together during captivity. The three hostages were handed "gift bags" by Hamas upon their release, containing "souvenirs" of their time in captivity, including a photo of Gaza. A video released by Hamas showed Emily pushing a terrorist while exiting a vehicle and receiving a "release notice," which was placed in the bag.

Israeli officials condemned the act, calling it "a cynical and psychological exploitation of captives whose freedom was stolen by monstrous individuals."

The IDF confirmed that the hostages crossed into Israeli territory at 5:53 p.m., with emotional footage showing their first contact with IDF forces inside Gaza. After reaching the reception center, the three embraced their mothers in scenes of relief and joy.

Emily Damari's mother, Mandy, awaited her daughter alongside the mothers of Gonen and Steinbrecher. The two were photographed smiling together during a video call with Emily's friends. In another image, Emily, whose hand was bandaged, raised it in a victory sign, though it was visibly missing two fingers, likely lost when she was shot during her abduction from her home in Kfar Aza on October 7.

The IDF said that the three hostages, accompanied by their mothers, were en route to Sheba Medical Center via an Air Force helicopter for medical assessments and to reunite with other family members.

Emily, a dual Israeli-British citizen, expressed gratitude through her mother Mandy in a statement to the BBC issued shortly after it was confirmed she was in the country: "After 471 days Emily is finally home. I want to thank everyone who never stopped fighting for Emily throughout this horrendous ordeal, and who never stopped saying her name. In Israel, Britain, the United States and around the world. Thank you for bringing Emily home."

"Where is my mother? Where is my mother?" Gonen called out to IDF representatives at the reception center immediately after crossing the border from Gaza. Romi's mother, Merav Leshem Gonen—one of the leading advocates for the release of hostages over the past 15 months—was waiting for her alongside the Damari and Steinbrecher's mothers at the Re'im crossing near the Gaza border. An IDF helicopter prepared to transport Romi to Sheba Medical Center had a leopard-print blanket, her favorite color, waiting for her.

Romi's friends gathered at the Tel Aviv restaurant where she worked, watching her release unfold. Romi's grandmother, Deborah, expressed her joy, telling Channel 12 that Romi appeared "excellent" as she was seen standing on her feet during her handover by Hamas terrorists to the Red Cross in Gaza.

Deborah added emotionally, "This is the only reason I'm still alive. I pray for the release of all the other hostages. We must do everything to bring them home. My heart is with everyone, not just my granddaughter. I know how much they're suffering, just as Romi suffered. We must bring them all back."

Doron Steinbrecher was seen surrounded by thousands of armed terrorists during her transfer to a Red Cross vehicle. Friends of Doron celebrated her release and her arrival in Israel about an hour later.

"After 471 unbearable days, our beloved Dodo has returned to our arms," her family released a statement. "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported us throughout this journey. Special thanks to the people of Israel for their unwavering support and strength during the hardest times. We also thank President Trump for his involvement and significant support."

"Our heroic Dodo, who survived 471 days in Hamas captivity, begins her journey of recovery today. We will continue standing alongside all the families and do everything possible until all their loved ones are home."

Ophir Cohen, Doron's best friend, who received her final recording on October 7, shared: "We set up speakers, brought tons of alcohol and closed off our room in Ruhama. I'm feeling every emotion—crying and laughing at the same time. Thank God she's finally in good hands. God, she's home. I only saw her sister Yamit in the morning and promised to take out her dog. Soon, they'll all reunite. Finally."

She added: "We're so happy they're together, and that they're okay. What a dream, what a joy to see them after all this time. Her hair is brown! We recognized her—she's healthy and on her feet. Thank God. We're in tears of joy."



01.19.25 – Su

Cynical and psychological exploitation: Hamas monsters deprived freedom

01.19.25 – Su

'Cynical and psychological exploitation': 'Release notices' handed to hostages in staged Hamas propaganda

Terror group gifts hostages bags with 'souvenirs,' including symbolic 'release notice' and photo of Gaza; footage shows Emily Damari pushing Hamas terrorists as she exits vehicle

Itamar Eichner|15:30

Emily Damari, Romi Gonen and Doron Steinbrecher, freed Sunday in the first phase of a hostage deal, revealed new details of their harrowing 471-day captivity in Gaza.

Emily and Romi were held together, and Hamas handed each woman a bag containing "souvenirs" of their time in captivity, including a photo of Gaza. A video released by Hamas showed Emily pushing a terrorist while exiting a vehicle and receiving a "release notice," which was placed in the bag.

The bags were visible when Emily and Doron arrived at a reception site in Re'im, after Israeli forces transported the hostages from Gaza to Israeli territory. Israeli officials called the items a "cynical and psychological exploitation of women who were deprived of their freedom by monsters."

Following their handover to the Red Cross, the hostages were driven by IDF and Shin Bet personnel to the border, where they reunited with their mothers. After an emotional reunion and initial medical checks, the three women were flown by Air Force helicopters to Sheba Medical Center near Tel Aviv for further care.

At the reception site, Romi was heard calling, "Where is my mom? Where is my mom?" Her mother, Merav Leshem-Gonen—one of the leaders of the campaign to free the hostages—embraced her, fulfilling a 15-month-long struggle. A leopard-print blanket, Romi's favorite color, awaited her in the helicopter.

Emily's mother, Mandy, was seen smiling in a video call Emily made to friends. Another photo showed Emily raising her bandaged hand in a victory gesture, though two fingers were missing, a result of gunfire during her abduction from her home in Kfar Aza on October 7.

Doron Steinbrecher's family expressed gratitude in a statement: "After 471 unbearable days, our beloved Dodo has returned to our arms," her family released a statement. "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported us throughout this journey. Special thanks to the people of Israel for their unwavering support and strength during the hardest times. We also thank President Trump for his involvement and significant support."

01.19.25 – Su

90 prisoners, 30 each exchanged for every living hostage, released in West Bank

01.19.25 – Su

As dozens of Palestinian prisoners set for release, Israeli security forces vow revenge. Police and Border Police forces announce heightened readiness to counter any attempts by released prisoners to reestablish terror networks, following imminent release of 90 inmates as part of ongoing hostage-prisoner exchange deal.

Liran Tamari | 12:18

With the return of three Israeli hostages — Doron Steinbrecher, Emily Damari and Romi Gonen — on Sunday, the release of Palestinian prisoners is set to begin as well. Some 90 prisoners are expected to be released in the first batch, consisting of women and minors.

Police and Border Police forces have prepared outside Ofer Prison, where the prisoners, gathered from various detention facilities, will be released through the Bitunya checkpoint. Dozens of protesters opposing the releases attempted to rush toward the prison compound but were blocked by police. Two individuals were arrested in the ensuing clashes, authorities confirmed.

The Israel Prison Service (IPS) hung a sign at the prison entrance conveying a vow of retribution against the released prisoners, reading, "The eternal nation does not forget. I will pursue my enemies and overtake them!" The message was displayed in both Hebrew and Arabic. Twelve of the released prisoners are set to be released to East Jerusalem. Members of the Nachshon unit, the IPS's primary prisoner transport unit, are tasked with transferring the prisoners to the central intake point at the prison. A total of approximately 1,500 IPS officers participated in the operation.

Upon arrival, the prisoners will be identified by International Red Cross Committee representatives and held until the Israeli hostages return. The prisoners will be transported by the Red Cross from Ofer Prison to their release points only after receiving confirmation from officials.

The IPS received the full list of prisoners to be released on Sunday, though it has not been publicly disclosed. However, it is known that 90 prisoners are being released from a previously published list of 95.

According to the government-approved framework, 30 Palestinian prisoners (minors or women) are to be released in exchange for a living hostage or kidnapped children under 19 (excluding soldiers).

The IDF plans to reinforce key routes ahead of the return of prisoners to the West Bank and will act decisively against any attempts by released prisoners to reestablish terrorist networks.

"We'll identify any attempted gatherings and act against any suspected terrorist activity. The gloves are off. We're operating from the air and the ground. There's a shift in how we think about the area," a security source said.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian security apparatus has expressed significant concern over the release of prisoners and Hamas' potential strengthening in the West Bank. They plan to allow limited celebrations — permitting festivities in homes or villages but preventing armed parades in the streets and the display of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad flags.

01.19.25 – Su

Three women released to Red Cross, amid thousands of armed terrorists

01.19.25 – Su

Amid thousands of armed terrorists: Hostages released to Red Cross, families celebrate. Surrounded by armed terrorists, hostages handed to Red Cross in central Gaza in grim display by Hamas; despite unsettling scene, relief and joy prevailed as women freed, ending 471 days of captivity in harrowing conditions. Ynet correspondents|10:43

After 471 harrowing days in Hamas captivity, Israeli hostages Romi Gonen, Doron Steinbrecher and Emily Damari were handed over to Red Cross vehicles on Sunday afternoon before being transferred to Israeli forces in Gaza and then to Israel, marking a pivotal moment for their families and the Israeli public.

The handover took place at Saraya Square in central Gaza City, amid a staged public spectacle by Hamas, with crowds and armed terrorists gathering at the site.

Footage showed the three women walking unaided as they were transferred to Red Cross custody. The organization later confirmed to the IDF that the hostages were in "good condition."

IDF Spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, in a televised statement, condemned Hamas' "cynical and horrific display," calling it a stark reminder of the group's "murderous nature that glorifies death."

The hostages were escorted by Red Cross representatives and met IDF personnel inside Gaza before being transported to Israel. Their mothers awaited them at the border, where the IDF facilitated an emotional reunion ahead of their transfer to Sheba Medical Center near Tel Aviv for further medical evaluations.

The moment of their release, broadcast across Israel, elicited widespread emotion and relief as the nation watched the hostages return after more than 15 months in captivity.

01.19.25 – Su

IDF release WB PA prisoners & bolster forces to quell armed marches

01.19.25 – Su

IDF readies for release of Palestinian prisoners back to West Bank

Troops spread across the area ahead of release of 50 expected convicts in attempts to prevent celebration marches; IDF bolsters forces in region

Elisha Ben Kimon|07:37

The IDF on Sunday made ready for the expected release of about 50 terrorists into the West Bank as part of the hostage deal signed with Hamas. The military's focus is on bolstering forces along roads and in settlements across the area. Efforts will also be made to prevent celebratory marches by the freed terrorists in Palestinian cities and refugee camps.

Police and Border Police forces have begun transporting prisoners set to be released into a central collection point within Ofer Prison. According to officials, over 1,500 prison personnel will take part in the operation.

The prisoners will be transported in Israeli buses with blacked-out windows from Ofer Prison to the center of Ramallah, a short drive away. From there, each will continue to their respective villages and cities. Some 12 of the 90 prisoners estimated to be set free will be sent to East Jerusalem.

Last week it was reported that the IDF's activities in the West Bank are expected to shift in the coming weeks. IDF Central Command plans to increase operational actions and adopt a more aggressive approach, particularly in the northern West Bank.

Reinforcements, including from the Egoz Unit, are expected to be deployed from the Gaza Strip and other locations.

The northern West Bank will be reorganized between the Ephraim and Menashe Brigades to enhance offensive capabilities and increase the continuity and pace of operations. IDF Central Command chief Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth approved relatively lax operational freedom to brigade commanders in the area.

Another region where the IDF has recently operated is an area near the Jordan Valley encompassing the villages of Tammun, Tubas and Tayasir. The IDF conducted airstrikes against terrorist cells in the area, with special forces conducting operations in the region for several days. Security officials claimed these operations have brought some change to the region.

Security sources highlighted that the situation in the West Bank is different from that before October 7, 2023. A security official stressed that forces will act firmly against any attempt by freed terrorists to establish terrorist infrastructure in the heart of the West Bank.

"We'll identify any attempted gatherings and act against any suspected terrorist activity.

The gloves are off. We're operating from the air and the ground. There's a shift in how we think about the area," the official said.

Palestinian security forces recently operating in the Jenin refugee camp are deeply concerned about the prisoners' release and the public's response. The legitimacy of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in the northern West Bank has been eroded during the operation, raising fears that Hamas will gain influence in the area, being seen as the one who secured the prisoners' release.

The forces are deploying reinforcements in Palestinian city centers to maintain public order. They plan to allow limited celebrations — permitting festivities in homes or villages but preventing armed parades in the streets and the display of Hamas and Islamic Jihad flags.

Abbas' associates are running an awareness campaign online, aiming to frame the prisoners' release as coming at a high cost due to the destruction in Gaza. Last week, a few dozen Palestinians gathered in Ramallah's Al-Manara Square to celebrate the deal but were confronted and dispersed by security forces.

01.19.25 – Su

Ben-Gvir resigns from coalition, will return if fighting in Gaza resumes

01.19.25 – Su

Ben-Gvir resigns from government, coalition to return if fighting in Gaza resumes  
Far-right police minister warns Netanyahu in letter, warning he repeatedly cautioned against appeasing Hamas before Oct. 7, claims cease-fire and hostage deal represent capitulation to terror; coalition holds narrow 63-seat majority in 120-member Knesset  
Moran Azulay|04:31

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir handed in his resignation from the government on Sunday along with the other ministers of his Otzma Yehudit Party.

The hardline politician said last week that he would resign if the cease-fire and hostage release deal would be implemented but said he would return to the post if the IDF resumes "fierce fighting" in Gaza after the completion of the first phase of the deal.

The coalition of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu now has a 63-seat majority in the 120-seat Knesset. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich did not join Ben-Gvir in resigning, claiming he would remain in the government to ensure that fighting is resumed until "all of the objectives of the war are achieved."

In a statement, Ben-Gvir said the deal signed was reckless and lamented "the release of hundreds of murderers who have the blood of men, women and children on their hands who are released to Jerusalem and the West Bank while abandoning the achievements of the IDF in the war, withdrawing troops from parts of Gaza and suspending the fighting in what is a capitulation to Hamas." The party is no longer a member of the ruling coalition, the statement went on to say.

Ben-Gvir wrote in a letter to Netanyahu that he had joined what was to be a full right-wing government.

"I must admit that, in addition to the great things we have done, there were things that were not as good. We did not always see eye to eye on policies, including the appeasement in the face of Gaza, which I repeatedly warned about before October 7. This dangerous deal that the government, under your leadership, signed is unfortunately a capitulation to terror."

01.19.25 – Su

Trump envoy mulls relocation for Gazans to help rebuild the Strip

01.19.25 – Su

Trump envoy plans to visit Gaza, mulls relocation for Gazans to help rebuild  
Steve Witkoff considers visiting Gaza regularly to resolve issues during the implementation of the deal, NBC reports; Will Gazans live in Indonesia until Gaza is rebuilt?

Ynet|04:00

Steve Witkoff, U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's Middle East envoy, is considering visiting the Gaza Strip as part of his efforts to preserve the cease-fire and hostage release deal between Israel and Hamas, that went into effect at 11:15 a.m., American news network NBC reported.

To emphasize how fragile the president-elect's team believes the deal is, Witkoff also plans to serve as a "near-constant" presence in the Middle East in the coming months. This, according to the source, is to resolve problems on the ground that he believes could derail the agreement and stop the release of hostages held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip.  
Top Videos

"You have to be right on top of it, ready to snuff out a problem if it happens," an official said. At the same time, Trump's envoy is working to achieve long-term stability for Israelis and the roughly two million displaced Palestinians, through the three-phase agreement reached last week.

For now, Witkoff's main concern is an unforeseen incident that would arise from the daily interaction between Israelis and Palestinians in and around the Gaza Strip, despite the cease-fire.

"Remember, there's a lot of people, radicals, fanatics, not just from the Hamas side, from the right wing of the Israeli side, who are absolutely incentivized to blow this whole deal up," the transition official said.

A source said that Witkoff visiting Gaza will allow him to see the dynamics there for himself, rather than relying on the word of Israel or the Palestinians on the matter. "You got to see it, you got to feel it," he said.

While Trump and his team are working on the first phase of the deal and helping negotiate the second phase, they are also working on long-term solutions. "If we don't help the Gazans, if we don't make their lives better, if we don't give them a sense of hope, there's going to be a rebellion," the official said.

The question of how to rebuild Gaza remains, as does where to relocate some two million Palestinians at the same time. According to the source, Indonesia is a possible host country being discussed where some of the Palestinians could be sent. The question of whether the Gazans would be willing to relocate for a while also arose.

The idea of relocation is controversial among Palestinians and their Arab counterparts. Many believe that relocation would be the first step in Israel forcing them to leave their land.

However, at this stage, the issue of bringing humanitarian aid into the Strip, as agreed in the first phase of the deal, remains a challenge. Israel still worries that Hamas will steal any aid that is brought into Gaza, while the humanitarian crisis there worsens. Despite the entry of aid to Gaza, hunger and disease are still prevalent in the Gaza Strip.

Witkoff, a real estate developer who has known Trump for decades, entered the negotiations alongside Joe Biden's team, which has been working for a deal for more than a year. Trump's one directive in these negotiations was bring the hostages home, and if not, come back and explain why you couldn't, the source explained.

The president-elect's envoy used Trump's history with Israel and his dynamic with Netanyahu to pressure the Israelis. For example, he went to meet the prime minister on Saturday to have a harsh exchange. Witkoff told people privately that his words to Netanyahu that Saturday, January 11, were not a threat, and that he had been invited to his residence by one of his close aides, Minister Ron Dermer.

According to the source, Witkoff gave Netanyahu a reality check about his intentions with the deal, telling him what was needed to reach an agreement, including Israel sending a senior representative to negotiate in Doha who could make decisions in real time. In talks with Israeli officials, Witkoff didn't hesitate to point out everything Trump has done for Israel. During his first term as president, he moved the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, recognized the Golan Heights as Israeli territory, and cut humanitarian aid to the Palestinians.

01.19.25 – Su

IDF carries out strikes on Hamas targets ahead of 8.30 am cease-fire

01.19.25 – Su

IDF carries out strikes on Hamas targets ahead of cease-fire

Military completes deployment of troops along Netzarim, Philadelphi Corridors, established compounds to receive hostages, beefs up deployment of aerial defenses along the border and of troops in the West Bank

Yoav Zitun|Yesterday | 23:20

The IDF carried out strikes against Hamas targets in Gaza as overnight and in the early hours of Sunday, before the cease-fire is to come into effect at 8.30 am. Hamas media outlets in the Strip reported that forces began withdrawing from the area of Rafah to the Philadelphi Corridor along the border with Egypt.

The military also published maps showing civilians in Gaza where troops would be deployed in the coming weeks, to ensure their safety. In the post the Arabic Language spokesperson warned Gazans not to attempt to return to areas in the northern parts of the Strip.

Schools along Israel's border with the Strip will open at 10 am at the request of local leaders and with the approval of the Defense Ministry and the military chief of staff. "Additionally, the areas of Yad Mordechai and Kerem Shalom have been declared as closed military zones until January 24th, 2025," the IDF said.

The military completed the construction of three compounds to receive hostages near the border, at Kerem Shalom, Re'im and Zikim. The IDF believes that it would be about two hours between the arrival of hostages into IDF hands, an initial medical examination and until they arrive at hospitals. Representatives of the Ministry of Health, the Shin Bet, Israel Police and the IDF are already positioned at those locations.

The IDF is also on high alert in the West Bank to prepare for the release of Palestinian prisoners. Although there are no new instructions issued to the public from the Homefront command, the military said it was prepared for Hamas to launch rocket fire at Israeli communities during the hours leading up to the cease-fire, and aerial defenses have been deployed to respond.

The military said the release of hostages from Hamas captivity was an objective in the war and although there are dangers, the IDF was prepared to respond to them, respond to any violation of the agreement and renew the fighting.

"Alongside the excitement and anticipation, we in the IDF are committed to all the hostages and their families – soldiers and civilians alike. We will not stop or rest until they all return," Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi said in a message to troops.

"For more than a year and three months, the IDF has been fighting Hamas and has important achievements – we have defeated Hamas' military wing and eliminated the organization's chain of command and its leader, Yahya Sinwar. The work doesn't end here. We still have a lot more to do.

"We will do this with great strength and determination. The IDF's powerful fighting has created the conditions necessary to achieve the critical objective before us today: returning the hostages to their homeland and their families. The fighting comes at a heavy cost. We have lost some of our finest sons and daughters, who gave their lives for the security of the State of Israel and its citizens. We remember them at all times, their righteousness, and we accompany the bereaved families."



01.18.25 – Sa

Hamas missed 4:30 hostage list deadline; first three hostages are expected 4 p.m. Sunday

01.18.25 – Sa

Hamas expected to submit hostage list in coming hours

Despite prior commitments, terror group misses 4:30 p.m. deadline but reportedly assures mediators it would submit list soon after transferring hostages to secure location; Israeli officials remain confident plan will proceed as scheduled

Itamar Eichner, Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun|14:34

Hamas is expected to provide the list of hostages slated for release on Sunday within hours, the Saudi television channel Al Hadath reported on Saturday.

Despite prior commitments, Hamas missed the 4:30 p.m. deadline but reportedly assured mediators it would submit the list soon after transferring them to a secure location, according to Saudi network Al Arabiya. Israeli officials remain confident that the plan will proceed as scheduled.

The government approved the cease-fire agreement with Hamas early Saturday, set to take effect Sunday at 8:30 a.m., 415 days after the first truce following the December 2023 hostage deal and 471 days since the October 7 massacre that sparked the war. Under the deal's initial phase, 33 hostages will be released over 42 days, starting with three hostages scheduled for release Sunday evening in exchange for dozens of Palestinian prisoners.

The truce requires the IDF to begin a gradual withdrawal from populated areas in Gaza. The release of the first three hostages is expected to start no earlier than 4 p.m. Sunday. Israeli officials have expressed readiness for delays and violations, with one senior source warning of Hamas' likely use of psychological warfare and propaganda throughout the deal.

The agreement's first violation has already occurred, with Hamas missing the deadline to deliver the names of the first hostages. "There is a high probability of delays and manipulations by Hamas, starting on day one," an Israeli official said. "As a terrorist organization, they will subject Israeli families to psychological warfare."

Once the hostages are handed over to Israel under Red Cross mediation, 90 Palestinian prisoners will be released from Israeli prisons and transferred to the West Bank or East Jerusalem.

The deal's future remains uncertain, as the agreement's second phase, involving the release of additional hostages in exchange for an end to the war and a full withdrawal from Gaza, has not been finalized.

As part of the first phase of the deal approved by the government, hostages described as belonging to "humanitarian categories" will be released, including women, children (Kfir and Ariel Bibas), IDF observer soldiers abducted from the Nahal Oz outpost, elderly men

over 50 and civilians with medical needs. Long-term captives Avera Mengistu and Hisham al-Sayed, held in Gaza for over a decade, are also included.

The first hostages to be released are women, beginning with those abducted from kibbutzim and the Nova music festival, followed by five female observers. The full list of living hostages is expected on the seventh day of the agreement, but all living hostages are set to be released before the remains of the deceased are returned. Israeli officials estimate that out of the 33 hostages to be returned in the first phase, at least 25 are alive. The second phase of the agreement is set to begin on the seventh day, though it is unclear whether it will fall on the following Saturday or Sunday. In this phase, four additional women will be released. Starting on the 14th day of the deal, three hostages will be released every seven days until the end of the fifth week. During the sixth and final week, the remaining 13 hostages, including al-Sayed and Mengistu, will be released.

01.18.25 – Sa

IDF on high alert as cease-fire with Hamas implements a sensitive arrangement

01.18.25 – Sa

IDF on high alert as cease-fire with Hamas set to begin

Military readies for Hamas cease-fire with repositioning in Gaza, bolstering forces in West Bank and protocols for safe return of hostages; officials warn of potential cease-fire violations and psychological warfare campaigns

Yoav Zitun|11:59

The IDF announced on Saturday that preparations are underway for the implementation of the cease-fire agreement with Hamas, which is set to take effect Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m.

The military emphasized its readiness to execute the operational framework agreed upon in the deal while ensuring the safe return of hostages from Gaza.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi conducted a situational assessment, focusing on the readiness of Southern and Central Commands for the agreement's execution.

The IDF has established three reception centers near the Gaza border to process the released hostages, who will undergo medical and psychological evaluations before being transferred to hospitals. Heavy security measures will accompany the transfer of Palestinian prisoners to designated facilities for their release.

As part of the agreement, the IDF will reposition along newly defined defensive lines in Gaza. The Gaza Division will secure the southern Philadelphi Corridor near the Egyptian border, while the 162nd Division will oversee northern Gaza and the 99th Division will maintain internal positions near the Netzarim Corridor in central Gaza.

The military has bolstered its air defenses in the south and remains on high alert for potential violations of the cease-fire, including rocket fire from Hamas. Officials also

warned of likely psychological warfare and disinformation campaigns from Hamas aimed at the Israeli public during the cease-fire.

To prevent celebrations following the release of Palestinian prisoners, the IDF has reinforced the West Bank with additional forces, including a full brigade-size force from the Kfir and Commando Brigades. Security measures in border towns and along major routes have been heightened, and offensive counter-terrorism operations will continue. The deal stipulates the release of three hostages on Sunday in exchange for 95 Palestinian prisoners. Subsequent releases will see hostages and prisoners exchanged over a period of weeks. Hamas will provide lists of hostages 24 hours before each phase, which will be vetted by Israel's intelligence agencies and approved by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The agreement also includes operational oversight at the Rafah border crossing, where non-Hamas-affiliated personnel approved by the Shin Bet security service will manage the passage of patients and wounded individuals under international supervision. Hamas announced plans to deploy its security personnel across Gaza once the cease-fire begins. The EU is expected to provide technical oversight at the Rafah crossing. An American private security company will conduct inspections in Netzarim to prevent the reintroduction of arms and terrorists into northern Gaza.

In an overnight Cabinet meeting, ministers were briefed on the agreement's conditions, including logistical and security arrangements. Netanyahu said that the release of hostages is a central objective of the war, affirming that the IDF is prepared to respond to any cease-fire violations and resume hostilities if necessary.

As the agreement takes effect, Israeli officials urged the public to remain patient and resilient amid the complexities of implementing such a sensitive arrangement.

01.18.25 – Sa

Man severely wounded in Tel Aviv stabbing attack; terrorist killed

01.18.25 – Sa

Man severely wounded in Tel Aviv stabbing attack; terrorist killed

Police say attacker, identified as 19-year-old Palestinian from Tulkarm in West Bank, charged at passersby with a knife on the street; suspect eliminated at scene by armed civilian

Dan Raban|09:13

A 28-year-old man was severely wounded in a stabbing attack in Tel Aviv on Saturday afternoon, police said.

The attacker, identified as Saleh Yahya, 19, a Palestinian from the West Bank city of Tulkarm who entered Israel illegally, was shot and killed at the scene by an armed civilian.

Earlier reports of a second incident on Tel Aviv's Ibn Gabirol Street were investigated, but no evidence was found.

Tel Aviv Police District Commander Chief Superintendent Haim Sargaroff, who arrived at the scene, described the sequence of events: "The suspect observed the area from behind, waiting for the right moment, and then stabbed at least one person." He noted that a civilian at the scene identified the stabbing, opened fire at the suspect, struck him and eliminated him. "This was an impressive and significant action by the civilian," he added.

Sargaroff said multiple forces were present at the scene and coordinated their efforts. He urged the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity. "There are officers deployed in many locations, and anyone who notices something suspicious should report it to us, and we will handle it." He ruled out, for now, the presence of additional assailants. "Footage from cameras shows him acting alone, but the Shin Bet investigation will provide further answers." Police Commissioner Dani Levy later arrived at the scene.

The wounded victim was transported to Sourasky Medical Center in moderate-to-serious condition. "We arrived quickly with multiple units and found a man in his late 20s lying on the ground, conscious and suffering from an upper-body stab wound," said Magen David Adom paramedic Itai Attias. "We provided life-saving treatment, and he was responsive and speaking with us as we transported him to the hospital."

Eyewitness Itay Rozin, who was nearby with friends, described the shock of hearing gunfire. "We were just heading to eat when we suddenly heard a burst of shots. We didn't understand what happened. Minutes later, police and ambulances arrived. We later learned it was a terror attack."

01.18.25 – Sa

Houthi's second launch on Israel in hours, intercepted near south city of Eilat

01.18.25 – Sa

Eilat under fire as Houthi launch second strike on Israel in hours

IDF reports intercepting missile outside Israeli territory after warning sirens sounded in Arava Desert and southern port city of Eilat; incident came just hours after central Israel targeted by missile fire

Ynet|08:03

The IDF reported Saturday that its air defenses intercepted a missile launched from Yemen toward the Arava Desert and the southern city of Eilat. The missile was intercepted outside Israeli territory, according to the military.

Earlier on Saturday morning, sirens sounded across central Israel, including Jerusalem and surrounding areas, as the Houthi rebels in Yemen launched a ballistic missile.

The Magen David Adom emergency service said that it received no calls for assistance or reports of injuries following the missile fire.

The Houthi rebels, Iranian proxies active in Yemen, claimed responsibility for the attacks, saying they had fired a missile targeting the Israeli Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv, which they alleged "reached its target." Israeli authorities did not confirm this claim. The Iranian-backed group has vowed to escalate attacks if the cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas collapses.

01.18.25 – Sa

Trump envoy Witkoff told urged, make hostage deal or we pack up and leave

01.18.25 – Sa

Report: Trump envoy told Netanyahu to make hostage deal or 'we pack up and leave' Steve Witkoff delivers 'stark message' from Trump to Netanyahu, prompting PM to instruct Israeli negotiation team to head to Qatar and strike agreement; envoy reportedly said Trump 'has been a great friend of Israel' and now it's time to be a friend back' Daniel Edelson, New York|04:45

Incoming U.S. President Donald Trump has instructed his nominee for Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff to relay a "stark message" to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last week: "Make the deal," the Wall Street Journal reported on Saturday.

Witkoff, who arrived in Israel from Qatar last Saturday to meet with the prime minister, told him "the president has been a great friend of Israel and now it's time to be a friend back."

"I would say that the president is exasperated," Witkoff told reporters last week. Trump warned there would be "all hell to pay" if a deal was not reached. According to a source familiar with the conversation who spoke to The Journal, Witkoff told Netanyahu that choices had to be made and Israel's negotiators needed the authority to make decisions, adding, "If Netanyahu didn't want to work that way, everyone should just pack their bags and go home."

Netanyahu reportedly instructed the negotiating team—comprising the heads of Mossad and Shin Bet, an IDF representative and a political advisor—to travel to Qatar for intensive talks to finalize the deal.

Witkoff delivered the same message to Qatari and Egyptian mediators when he met with them a day earlier, saying, "The diplomatic back and forth must end."

The deal agreed upon in Doha on Wednesday and approved by the government early Saturday was similar to the one proposed by U.S. President Joe Biden in May, the Journal

reported, but Netanyahu reportedly told families of hostages in July that he was not ready to end the war as he depended on his far-right coalition partners to maintain his government. “If we give up on victory over Hamas, we are all in danger from every front,” he said, pounding on the table, in a recording heard by the paper.

After Witkoff’s meeting with Netanyahu, Trump posted on Truth Social that Arab officials claimed Trump had more influence on Netanyahu in one meeting than Biden had over the past year.

Israeli and American officials told the Journal the deal remains fragile. A key breakthrough Witkoff helped achieve was alleviating Hamas’ concerns that the IDF would resume fighting after the most vulnerable hostages were freed in the first phase. “Witkoff said if everyone abides by the agreement, then Trump would encourage meaningful negotiations in Phase 2,” the source told the paper.

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Ynet-News, January 17, 2025 – Friday 10<sup>th</sup> Month

01.17.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Government approves hostage deal with Hamas after seven-hour debate

01.17.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Houthis threaten to resume attacks on Israel if Gaza cease-fire collapses

01.17.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Israel names 95 PA prisoners to be released in first phase of hostage deal

01.17.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Spins have dissipated; we stay in Philadelphi & perimeter, Israel can return to fight

01.17.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Settlers to ban "West Bank", to mandate "Judea and Samaria" in US documents

01.17.25 – Fr- - - News Placed in January 17 spot – Friday

Confirmed list of 33 hostages set to be released in deal's first 42 days (six weeks)

01.17.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Likud defends deal: Allows Israel to return to fighting under US guarantee

01.16.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Hostage release pushed to Monday, will coincide with Trump's inauguration

01.16.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Ben-Gvir threatens resignation over proposed reckless hostage deal

01.16.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Russia demands Hamas fulfill release of Sasha Trupanov as part of the deal

01.16.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Miles of tunnels and thousands of terrorists: Hamas still has two brigades

01.16.25 – Th- - - News Placed in January 16 spot – Thursday

Cease-fire in effect Sunday at 12:15 p.m. - 3 hostages will be returned to Israel

01.16.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

PM thanks Trump & Biden for ending suffering of hostages and their families

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Amnesty International Venice presented “Gaza genocide”; backlash changed the title

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Trump to sanction ICC officials over arrest warrants for Netanyahu, Gallant

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Gazans celebrate cease-fire deal, Hamas terrorists join crowd

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

33 hostages, at least 3 each week over 6 weeks, 30 prisoners exchange for each

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Trump pushed hostage deal: ensures Gaza never becomes a terrorist safe haven

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Russia sponsored wave of package detonations at airports in Europe

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Erdogan demands Israeli withdrawal from Syria, warns of unfavorable outcomes

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

West Bank man arrested hanging signs inciting violence against IDF troops

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

PA prisoner caught on body camera, smuggling notes in mouth ahead of release

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Hamas accused of stalling hostage deal, PA shift blame to Israel

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Israeli guards to film prisoners during hostage releases to prevent false claims

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Saudi normalization a huge priority to Trump & future of Israel

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Military jeep hit explosive device in West Bank, wounding three Israeli soldiers

01.15.25 – We- - - News Placed in January 15 spot – Wednesday

Iran official alleges Israel sabotaged sourced nuclear equipment with explosives

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Hostage deal Phase II explained: What's next and why the silence?

01.15.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Phases, numbers & conditions | emerging deal as negotiations continue

01.14.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

IDF launches airstrike on Jenin in West Bank, supporting PA security forces

01.14.25 – Tu- - - News Placed in January 14 spot – Tuesday

Supreme Court rejects appeal to terror compensation law; PA must pay victims

01.14.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

ICC prosecutor tells Judges to reject Israeli appeal on Gaza war probe

01.14.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Katz introduces Haredi law drafting 4,800 first year, 5,700 in second year

01.14.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Warning: Iranians bait Israeli civilians abroad, to kidnap them

01.14.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Ben-Gvir & Smotrich announced they would vote against the hostage deal

01.14.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Hamas list of hardened prisoners must be released when a deal is agreed

01.14.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

IDF intercept Yemen missile early on Tuesday, launched by Yemen Houthi rebels

01.13.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Full Moon 4:27pm

Agreement may be Tuesday; most of 33 hostages on Hamas list are alive

01.13.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Full Moon 4:27pm

Hamas engaging in guerrilla warfare, using rubble for hidden explosives

01.13.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Full Moon 4:27pm



Annual 2024 report: 1,866 terror acts, 134 killed, 16,300 rockets, 399 drones

01.13.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Full Moon 4:27pm

Hind Rajab Foundation (HRF) filed ICC arrest of top Israel general in Italy

01.13.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Full Moon 4:27pm

IAF intercept a missile from Yemen to Jordan Valley, Samaria, no injuries or damage

01.13.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Full Moon 4:27pm

Key issues for 33 hostages; north Gaza, Egypt Corridor, hard-prisoners

01.13.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Full Moon 4:27pm

Emerging deal; 42 days IDF stay on Egypt border, 33 released for 100s of prisoners

01.13.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Full Moon 4:27pm

Knesset to approve 1 billion shekels for massacre victims, but it's not enough

01.13.25 – Mo- - - News Placed in January 13 spot – Monday Full Moon 4:27pm

24 dead since Tuesday: Wildfires continue to rage through Los Angeles

01.12.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Israeli Druze leader travels to US to rally support for Syrian Druze protection

01.12.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Israel strikes Lebanon smuggling targets near Syrian border, presented by monitors

01.12.25 – Su- - - News Placed in January 12 spot – Sunday

Biden urges PM for cease-fire before he leaves White House

01.12.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

PA official claims over 3,000 prisoners to be released for 25 hostages in first phase

01.12.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Pro-PA critics claim Hamas rapes did not happen; victims died or have no evidence

01.12.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

IDF intensifies West Bank operations; tactic plans to seize camp areas

01.11.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday

Mossad, Shin Bet & US hope to secure hostage deal in Qatar

01.11.25 – Sa- - - News Placed in January 11 spot – Saturday

West Bank mosques used as training centers & sniper base to attack IDF soldiers

01.11.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday

Hind RIjab Foundation barred from Denmark pro-Palestine conference