



War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

November 20, 2025 - October 7 War, Day 775, 3 hostage bodies remain in captivity

LATEST UPDATES

The UN Security Council approves the US proposal for Gaza's future as violence plagues Judea and Samaria.

Violence in Judea and Samaria (West Bank)

- On Tuesday, two Palestinians with explosive devices in their vehicle carried out a **ramming and stabbing terror attack** at the Gush Etzion Junction just outside of Jerusalem, murdering Aharon Cohen, 71, from Kiryat Arba. The terrorists exited the vehicle with knives and stabbed at least four Israelis. The perpetrators, both 18 years old, were shot dead on site. The father of one of the attackers, speaking to Arabic media after the attack, repeatedly thanked God, telling the interviewer that his highest aspiration was to be the father of a martyr.
- In another incident of what some are calling "settler violence," **Jewish extremists attacked a Palestinian village** near Bethlehem on Monday night, prompting an IDF manhunt and condemnation from Israeli leadership.
 - The recent wave of **violence against Arab villages** over the past two weeks, including vandalism and clashes with IDF forces, has sparked widespread criticism of the Israeli government. Some Israeli leaders have been accused of offering tacit support for the attacks; others fault the government for failing to crack down on violent elements within the settler movement, especially after Defense Minister Katz halted administrative detention without trial for such offenders. Many argue that the government's response has been too weak.
 - Nonetheless, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu **denounced the violence**, calling it the work of "a small, extremist group" that does not represent the broader settler population. The Prime Minister pledged to address the issue personally and urged law enforcement to act "to the fullest extent of the law."
 - Israel's Foreign Minister **Gideon Sa'ar issued a harsher rebuke**, stating that the rioters "harm the State of Israel, disgrace Judaism and damage the settlement project."
 - According to leading Israeli media figure Amit Segal, the perpetrators are **not, contrary to popular belief, typically ideological extremists**, but rather

criminal elements and troubled youths, many of whom are not affiliated with the settler movement. He said that these individuals often justify their actions with ideological rhetoric, but their behavior is closer to criminality than to political activism. Segal added that the broader settler community, numbering around 800,000, is increasingly frustrated by being tarnished by the actions of a violent minority.

The War

- Last Thursday, the **body of hostage Meny Godard, 73, was returned to Israel** from Gaza. A resident of Kibbutz Be'eri, Godard was murdered on October 7 alongside his wife Ayelet, 63, by Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists. They left behind four children, seven grandchildren, and multiple siblings.
- There are now fewer hostages in the Strip than there were on October 6, 2023. **Three hostages' bodies, two Israelis and one Thai, remain in Gaza.** Their names are Dror Or, Ran Gvili and Sudthisak Rinthalak.
- Following the release, after more than two years, the Hostages and Missing Families Forum has said that it will conclude its weekly rallies at the end of November. The group, founded on October 8, 2023, will redirect its remaining resources based on the wishes of the families of the three hostages whose bodies are still being held in Gaza. Israeli media pointed out that while the end of the rallies is not a moment of closure, it may signal the beginning of a broader healing process for Israeli society.
- After almost two years of debate, the **Israeli government has voted to form a government-appointed inquiry commission** into the failures of October 7, rejecting calls for a State Inquiry led by the judiciary. A new panel, headed by Justice Minister Yariv Levin and including Ministers Smotrich, Ben Gvir, Chikli and others, will define the scope of the investigation. Critics argue this move allows the government to avoid scrutiny of its own policies and decisions leading up to the massacre. Despite Prime Minister Netanyahu's claim that the commission will be "acceptable to all Israelis," polls show strong public support for an investigation by Supreme Court Chief Justice Yitzhak Amit.
- On Tuesday, the IDF carried out a **deadly airstrike on Hamas personnel in the southern Lebanese** city of Sidon. Since the November 2024 ceasefire went into effect, Israel has carried out over 640 strikes in Lebanon, responding to breaches of the agreement and eliminating over 200 Hezbollah personnel. Hezbollah has reportedly reestablished arms-smuggling routes through Turkey, Iraq and maritime channels, using Iranian funds and networks to rebuild its arsenal and shift its focus to importing components for local assembly in Lebanon. The IDF remains on high alert in the north; the US has warned the Lebanese government of significant consequences if Hezbollah is not disarmed.
- Earlier in the week, Prime Minister Netanyahu participated in a ceremony marking two years since IDF Major (Res.) Dr. Moshe Yedidya Leiter fell in battle in Gaza. Leiter was the **son of Israel's Ambassador to the US Yechiel Leiter**. At the ceremony, a Torah scroll was completed in Leiter's memory.
- The Israel Ministry of Defense signed a major contract to accelerate production of the Iron Dome defense system, with Rafael delivering a significant number of interceptors. The deal, supported by US aid, strengthens Israel's air defense alongside David's Sling and an upcoming laser defense system. Iron Dome has proven highly effective against rockets, missiles, UAVs and cruise threats in recent conflicts. Defense officials emphasized that the agreement reinforces Israel's multi-layered defense, technological edge, and the strategic US-Israel partnership.

International Diplomacy

- Some Israeli leaders are celebrating what some have called “**a rare diplomatic win**” at the United Nations, after the Security Council approved the US-sponsored Gaza Plan (Resolution 2803), which emphasizes demilitarization, deradicalization, and disarmament.
 - The Security Council **approved the resolution with a 13-0 vote**. There were two abstentions, by Russia and China.
 - Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Herzog **hailed the vote as a historic achievement**, while Hamas rejected it outright.
 - The plan allows the **IDF to remain in its current positions** in Gaza with legal backing, tasks the Palestinian Authority with reform before regaining control; and shifts implementation authority to Trump’s Peace Council. The latter is intended to govern Gaza in coordination with Israel and Egypt for an initial two-period, with a potential one-year extension.
 - Crucially, the resolution **avoids explicit calls for a Palestinian state** and introduces recognition of a non-PA authority in Gaza, marking a strategic shift that Israeli officials view favorably.
 - The plan also includes **deploying an international force** to enforce the ceasefire, disarm Hamas and Islamic Jihad, prevent rearmament, demilitarize the Gaza Strip and train a new local police force.
 - Some members of Israel’s government, including Ministers Ben Gvir and Smotrich, **criticized the resolution** for suggesting the possibility of a Palestinian state and potentially involving the Palestinian Authority in Gaza’s future governance. Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar asserted that “Israel will not agree to the establishment of a Palestinian terror state in the heart of the Land of Israel,” and Defense Minister Israel Katz clarified that “Israel’s policy is clear: A Palestinian state will not be established.”
 - Additional criticism came from outside the government, notably from Avigdor Lieberman, who **opposed the internationalization of the conflict** through foreign military involvement.
- President Donald Trump has confirmed that the **US plans to sell advanced F-35 fighter jets to Saudi Arabia**.
 - On a visit to Washington this week, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman **stated his desire to join the Abraham Accords**, contingent on a clear path to a two-state solution.
 - Some Israeli defense officials have warned that the F-35 sale could **compromise Israel’s qualitative military edge in the region**. Channel 12’s Nir Dvori explained, that “from the Air Force’s perspective, this is an ‘unbearable reality,’ in which an F-35 aircraft in the hands of another country can threaten Israel’s air superiority and the defense of the nation’s skies.” If Riyadh gets its hands on F-35s, it “will know about every movement occurring in the air and on the ground” thanks to the jet’s advanced sensor system.
 - On the other hand, others say that the **jets would likely not significantly compromise Israel’s qualitative edge over** its neighbors, given the important technological modifications the IDF makes to the aircraft.

- In addition, historical precedent suggests that **delivery delays are likely**; five years after the UAE was promised F-35s, it has yet to receive them.
- Some Israeli commentators have suggested that the sale of the aircraft could serve as a **substitute for meaningful progress on Palestinian statehood**, allowing Saudi Arabia to enter the Abraham Accords even in the absence of concrete steps for the Palestinians.
- On the other hand, Israeli media says that **Saudi normalization with Israel is unlikely before Israeli elections** (which must be held by October 2026), as the Kingdom seeks to avoid being used in domestic political campaigns.
- Israel is proposing a **new 20-year security agreement with the United States** to replace the current 10-year Memorandum of Understanding set to expire in 2028. The plan includes shifting part of the aid toward joint US-Israeli research and development in areas such as defense technology, AI and missile defense, presumably to align with the “America First” priorities of the Trump administration. While some critics urge Israel to reduce its reliance on U.S. assistance, others say that the move reflects a strategic pivot toward mutual investment and deeper military collaboration, rather than dependency.
- The Israel Ministry of Defense marked a significant milestone this week as the **1,000th aircraft in its massive wartime airlift operation landed in Israel**, delivering critical military equipment. Since the war began, over 120,000 tons of weapons, munitions and protective gear have arrived via air and sea, in what has become the most extensive logistical operation of its kind in Israel’s history. Led by the IDF’s Defense Procurement Directorate and supported by international missions and the Israeli Air Force, the operation aims to ensure that the IDF remains fully equipped and combat-ready.
- Last night, it was announced that a joint operation led by Mossad and European intelligence agencies has **successfully dismantled significant Hamas terrorist infrastructure across Europe**, uncovering weapons caches and arresting operatives in Germany and Austria. Key figures linked to Hamas leadership — including Muhammad Na’im, son of senior official Basem Na’im — were implicated in efforts to coordinate attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets. Investigations also point to Hamas activity in Turkey and meetings in Qatar, suggesting high-level involvement. European authorities say they are intensifying legal and diplomatic measures to combat Hamas’s extremist networks, while Mossad said it continues global efforts to prevent future attacks.
- Texas Governor Greg Abbott has announced that the state is **designating the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Muslim Brotherhood as Foreign Terrorist and Transnational Criminal Organizations**. The move, the first of its kind by a US governor, prohibits both groups from acquiring land in Texas and authorizes heightened enforcement against their activities and affiliates. Abbott cited concerns over alleged efforts to impose Sharia law and support global terrorism. In response, CAIR has threatened to sue the governor.
- Last weekend, Prime Minister **Netanyahu spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin** over the phone. According to a statement, the conversation was initiated by President Putin. It was “in continuation of a series of conversations that have preceded it recently, and which dealt with regional issues.”
- On Monday, Netanyahu met with **outgoing Mayor of New York, Eric Adams**, at the Kirya (IDF Headquarters) in Tel Aviv. Netanyahu thanked Adams for his “great

support of Israel and for being a true friend of the Jewish people.” Consul General of Israel in New York, Ofir Akunis also took part in the meeting.

Good News

- Israeli companies Remilk and Gad Dairies have unveiled “New Milk” (Hahalav Hahadash), a “cow-free” dairy product that tastes like traditional milk but contains 75% less sugar and is rich in vitamins and calcium. The milk is kosher, parve and vegan-friendly, making it especially appealing to observant Jews who avoid dairy after meat meals. Currently available only in Israel, Remilk plans to expand to the US market soon, citing ongoing talks with major partners.

Further Reading

- Latest Study: [Israelis Think US Administration Has Greater Influence on Israel's Security Decisions Than Israeli Government](#)
- [Is Benjamin Netanyahu Getting Royally Trumped?](#)
- [The Mamdani Moment and the Future of American Jewry](#)
- [Two presidents presented two proposals this week to end Benjamin Netanyahu's trial. What will the prime minister choose?](#)
- [We Won the War, but We're Losing the Peace](#)

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