



War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

August 21, 2025 - October 7 War, Day 685, 50 hostages remain in captivity

LATEST UPDATES

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has directed the IDF to accelerate the timeline for its upcoming offensive in Gaza City. In a [public statement](#), Netanyahu said he has told the army to "shorten the timelines for seizing the last terror strongholds and for the defeat of Hamas." This directive comes as the IDF's plans for the offensive are set to be presented to Netanyahu's office today. The prime minister also expressed his "deep appreciation" to both reserve and active-duty soldiers, as well as to their families.

On August 17, a nationwide "[day of stoppage](#)" organized by hostage families drew hundreds of thousands, including over half a million in Tel Aviv. Protesters chanted, "We don't win a war over the bodies of hostages." Netanyahu criticized the protests, saying they "play into Hamas' hands." Leading tech firms, including Wix and Fiverr, joined the effort while Israel's Manufacturers Association warned that the war and political deadlock are causing long-term economic damage. The Hostages and Missing Families Forum postponed its planned second national day of stoppage scheduled for this coming Sunday out of concern that it might impact ongoing ceasefire and hostage exchange negotiations.

To learn more, join us for a webinar on Wednesday, August 27 at 2 pm ET with Nadav Shoshani, Spokesperson of the Israeli Navy. To register, click [here](#).

IDF News

- In the southern Gaza Strip, a cell of at least 18 Hamas operatives attempted to raid an IDF encampment in the Khan Younis area on Wednesday morning. Hamas terrorists emerged from a known tunnel in an effort to breach a military encampment and building. During the [attack](#), three Israeli soldiers were injured, one seriously. The IDF believes the Hamas gunmen intended to abduct troops.
- The IDF acknowledged a "failure" in the fact that the attack occurred, even though the soldiers successfully fought back, repelling the attack and killing approximately 15 of the militants.
- Since the end of the last ceasefire in March, the IDF has reportedly eliminated over 2,100 terror operatives, including several high-ranking Hamas commanders. In addition, the IDF reports that its air, naval, and drone forces have struck more than 10,000 terror targets since March 18.
- Jihad Kamal Salem Najjar, a Hamas terrorist responsible for the kidnapping of Yarden Bibas on October 7, 2023, was killed in an Israeli airstrike on August 10 in Gaza. The IDF and Shin Bet jointly announced his death on Tuesday.

Hostage Situation and Ceasefire Negotiations

- Of the 50 remaining hostages, approximately 20 are believed to be alive, while 28 have tragically been confirmed dead.
- Hamas has formally [accepted](#) a new ceasefire and hostage-release proposal that Qatar has described as "almost identical" to a previous US-backed plan. The proposal includes a 60-day truce, the release of 10 living hostages and the bodies of 18 deceased hostages, and the release of 150 Palestinian prisoners. Israel is still considering the proposal.
- Netanyahu stated publicly his preference for a single, comprehensive deal for all remaining hostages, not a phased release, and has vowed to continue the war until all hostages are returned and Hamas is disarmed.
- Egyptian security officials are reportedly pressuring Hamas to temporarily place their weapons in Egyptian custody to address Israel's demands for demilitarization.
- The Cabinet remains divided over the Hamas proposal. Opposition Leader Yair Lapid has pledged his party's full support for any potential hostage deal, offering his 24 Knesset votes to help pass the agreement without demanding anything in return from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. But Netanyahu's far-right coalition partners, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, have vowed to oppose the proposed ceasefire deal and have threatened to quit the government if it is approved.
- Reports yesterday indicate that MK Benny Gantz, Chair of the centrist Blue and White-National Unity party, may rejoin the government in a show of support for the proposed ceasefire and hostage-release deal with Hamas.

Humanitarian Situation

- COGAT reported 370 trucks of humanitarian aid entered Gaza on Tuesday, with an additional 350 collected by international organizations. The UN says 600 are needed daily; Israel reports only 43% are collected by the UN.
- On August 17, Israel announced new humanitarian corridors and a new humanitarian zone in southern Gaza. Work with medical organizations is underway to expand water infrastructure.
- The Gaza Humanitarian Fund (GHF), backed by the US and Israel, delivered 23 truckloads in the last 24 hours and more than 129.2 million meals to date. Earlier this week, GHF introduced a pilot program allowing families to reserve aid packages in advance.
- Airdrops from the UAE, Jordan, Germany, and France delivered 185 pallets of food (6–9 truckloads). A ship carrying 1,200 tons of aid from Cyprus was expected to dock on Tuesday at the port in Ashdod.
- The Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants, reports the death toll has exceeded 62,000, with women and children accounting for about half of that number. It claims that at least 229 people (129 adults and 100 children) have died of malnutrition since June 2024.
- A Reuters/Ipsos [poll](#) found that 59% of Americans believe Israel's response to the October 7 massacre has been "excessive." The same poll found that a majority of Americans, 58%, believe that every country in the United Nations should recognize Palestine as an independent nation. There is a significant difference between the parties: 78% of Democrats hold this view, versus only 41% of Republicans.

International Relations and Diplomacy

- New Zealand joined Australia, Canada, France, and the UK in announcing plans to recognize a Palestinian state this Fall.
- Following backlash, the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) reversed its decision to cancel the screening of *The Road Between Us: The Ultimate Rescue*, a documentary on the October 7 massacre. Following an outcry from the Jewish community, TIFF apologized, reinstated the film, and pledged to enhance security.

- France is collaborating with partners and the UN on a temporary stabilization mission in Gaza, authorized by a Security Council mandate.
- The Trump administration imposed new sanctions on four ICC prosecutors, including those pursuing arrest warrants for Prime Minister Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Netanyahu praised Secretary of State Marco Rubio for the move.

Qatargate Probe

- Police are considering summoning senior politicians to testify in the "Qatargate" investigation, which has implicated several advisers to Prime Minister Netanyahu. This would require approval from both the state prosecutor's office and the attorney general.
- The investigation has expanded to include former senior security officials suspected of facilitating the transfer of money from Doha. Law enforcement sources claim Qatar paid about \$10 million to Israeli security veterans, ex-Mossad officials, and Netanyahu associates between 2022 and 2024.

Other Important News

- The IDF intercepted a hypersonic ballistic missile fired from Yemen by the Houthis on August 17, reportedly targeting Ben Gurion Airport.
- Israel struck Houthi targets in Yemen, including a power plant in Sanaa.
- Hezbollah vowed to resist any Lebanese government attempt to seize its weapons, warning of unrest.
- The US Navy destroyer USS *Carney* shot down multiple Houthi drones in the Red Sea headed toward Israel.

Further Reading

- Ehud Yaari, [Make Hamas Face a Choice](#)
- Dahlia Sheindlin, [Israel's Emerging Occupation Consensus](#)
- James Jeffrey, [How "Day After" Governance of Gaza Can Draw from Existing Plans](#)

To Watch

In last week's episode of "ILTV Security Brief," IDF Lt.-Col. (Res.) Yaron Buskila of the Israel Defense and Security Forum (ISDF) discussed the military's final preparations for its Gaza City offensive. He also covered Hamas's failed attempt to kidnap soldiers and offered commentary on how the Israeli government should respond to the latest ceasefire and hostage-release proposal. To watch, click [here](#).

For more information, please contact: Jewish Federations of North America's Dani Wassner dani.wassner@jewishfederations.org. Subscribe to this weekly update [here](#).