



War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

September 4, 2025 - October 7 War, Day 699, 48 hostages remain in captivity

LATEST UPDATES

With Israel poised to launch a major military operation to take-over Gaza City, negotiations towards a ceasefire continue.

Fighting and Ceasefire Negotiations

- IDF Sergeant First Class Ariel Lubliner, a reserve soldier, **was killed in Gaza on Sunday**. He became the 900th IDF soldier to be killed since October 7, 2023. Ariel made aliyah from Brazil ten years ago, was married and the father of one small child. Israeli television shared heartbreaking footage of Ariel's toddler son crawling next to the fresh grave of his father during the funeral.
- In a complex rescue operation in Gaza last Friday, the **IDF recovered the bodies** of Ilan Weiss, a member of Kibbutz Be'eri's emergency squad, and Idan Shtivi, a volunteer photographer at the Nova music festival. Both were killed during the terrorist attack and their bodies were held in Gaza for nearly 23 months. Their remains were returned to Israel and buried in separate ceremonies attended by family and friends. Forty-eight hostages now remain in the Strip, of whom no more than twenty are believed to be alive.
- Commenting on the recovery of Weiss, Israel's **President Isaac Herzog** [said](#), "Idan Shtivi.... was murdered while helping others fleeing the terrorist onslaught... I hope this will bring a measure of comfort to his beloved parents, Eli and Dalit, and to his siblings, who have shown remarkable strength in their determined struggle for his return. These moments of deep sorrow remind us of one truth: Hamas' crimes are crimes against humanity. The world must act with moral clarity and press for the release of all the hostages. Every last one."
- Reports suggest that some **80,000 Gazans may have fled the area of potential fighting** to seek refuge in humanitarian zones set up by Israel. In these safe zones, civilians receive food, medical treatment and other supplies far from the conflict zone. Hamas, which values the propaganda value of having civilians under fire, has been trying to prevent Gazans from escaping the fighting zone. Listen to [this conversation](#) in which a civilian explains that Hamas is preventing people from leaving the conflict area.
- As the IDF seems to move closer to a very large-scale operation, **thousands of Israelis have taken to the streets**, calling on the government to strike a deal to end the fighting and secure the release of all of the hostages. In addition to large gatherings, attempts to block highways and more, a dumpster was set on fire near the Prime Minister's Residence in Jerusalem. The fire spread, destroying a car and some property. Protesters raised funds to pay for the damage caused.
- As part of the preparations for a major offensive, the IDF has issued **40,000 new draft orders**, with tens of thousands of reservists already arriving at training bases in southern Israel. The operation is expected to involve over 130,000 reservists at its peak. However, turnout concerns persist, with recent mobilizations seeing only 60 – 70% participation, and even a small number of reservists now refusing to report, citing distrust in the government's motives and fears for the hostages' safety.
- Yesterday, **IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir** reportedly urged the government to reconsider its full-scale invasion of Gaza City, advocating instead for a strategy of encirclement and targeted raids to strike Hamas and rescue hostages. According to some Israeli media reports, Zamir warned that a full invasion would fail to eliminate Hamas, endanger hostages, cost many Israeli lives, strain national

finances and deepen Israel's global isolation. Nevertheless, he affirmed that if ordered to proceed, the IDF would execute the mission and be fully committed to it.

- Overnight, **Hamas announced that it would accept a deal** that would see all hostages released to avoid the IDF entering Gaza City. Initial responses from Israel suggested that Hamas' other conditions (including a "no" to disarmament) were not acceptable.
- Last weekend, the **IDF eliminated Hamas military spokesman** Abu Obaida (Hudayfa al-Kahlout) in a targeted airstrike in Gaza City; Obaida had built Hamas's propaganda and psychological warfare apparatus into a 1,500-strong network — 1,000 of whom were embedded in combat units to film and disseminate real-time battlefield footage, hostage videos, and influence campaigns. According to Israeli officials, his death marks a major operational and symbolic blow to Hamas's media strategy.
- In an unusual move, a **Mossad agent has spoken publicly about the September 2024 beeper operation** and subsequent IDF successes. He explained that before the attacks, Mossad agents operating under fire in central Beirut provided the precise intelligence that enabled the Israeli Air Force to eliminate Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah in a bunker beneath a residential building. He said that the operation was born from a "technological fantasy" and that it was the culmination of a ten-day campaign that began with the "pager operation" — a strike that crippled Hezbollah's communications and killed 3,500 operatives across Lebanon.

Humanitarian Aid

- The IDF continues to provide daily summaries of the **food and other aid entering Gaza**. Over the past 24 hours, more than 300 humanitarian aid trucks entered Gaza through the Kerem Shalom and Zikim crossings. Additionally, 380 truckloads of aid were collected and distributed by the UN and international organizations, while the contents of several hundred more remain on the Gaza side of the crossings. The IDF also noted that it facilitated the entry of UN fuel tankers for the operation of essential humanitarian systems.
- Israel stressed that it continues to allow a **virtually unrestricted flow of humanitarian aid** into Gaza. To improve distribution, the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) is completing two new aid centers in southern Gaza, bringing the total to five. Over the past three months, GHF has distributed more than 2.3 million food packages weekly through its existing centers, aiming to bypass Hamas interference and ensure direct aid delivery to civilians.
- The **total amount of Israeli-facilitated aid** to Gaza is now more than two million tons. See complete data [here](#).
- A [new study](#), based on quantitative-statistical analysis, forensic documentation, primary sources and comparative military history, has examined accusations that Israel has committed crimes against humanity, such as planned starvation, deliberate massacres, and genocide during the Israel-Gaza War. The study aims to distinguish propaganda from fact and highlight systemic failures in major international information bodies. Key findings included:
 - **More food entered Gaza** during the war than before October 7, 2023.
 - **Misrepresented aid needs:** UN claims of 500 trucks/day were inaccurate; pre-war average was 73/day, wartime average was 101/day (IDF) or 83/day (UNRWA).
 - **Aid during the ceasefire** should have lasted until late July 2025; looting by Hamas likely explains shortages.
 - **UNRWA reporting issues:** Initial claims of a 70% aid drop post-May 2024 were later corrected quietly, yet the false figure persists.
 - **Gaza's agriculture** likely contributed no more than 12% of caloric intake even in 2005; it is far less today. Even if all 2011 crop yields were used, wartime aid per capita was still 58% higher than in 2011.
- The **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)** is a global initiative that provides a standardized framework for analyzing and classifying food insecurity and famine, working with UN agencies, governments, and NGOs (including FAO, WFP, UNICEF and regional organizations) to assess hunger conditions.
- On August 30, 2025, the IPC issued a [formal response](#) to **criticisms of its Gaza famine declaration**, dated August 22. That declaration was unprecedented: it marked the first time famine had been classified in Gaza, based on highly contested evidence. [The official Israeli response](#), together with analyses by multiple independent researchers, had already highlighted fundamental flaws in the analysis. According to Israel, rather than engaging with these concerns, the IPC's

response restated its conclusions while sidestepping the core methodological problems, and in doing so revealed further misrepresentations, factual inaccuracies and deeper methodological violations.

- Read **Israel's complete response and explanations** [here](#). It concluded that the data “proves, once again, that when it comes to Gaza and Israel, the IPC is willing to trample over its own standards and guidelines to declare a famine at all costs.” The most serious issues raised can be summarized as follows:
 - IPC used a famine threshold **suitable for some parts of the world but not the Middle East**, including Gaza.
 - It presented new data (admitting that the initially presented data was incorrect), but again, **distorted and manipulated** it to create a false appearance of a spike in malnutrition.
 - IPC justified **cherry-picking phone survey data** that fit its narrative by downplaying the significance of dramatic discrepancies between the surveys.
 - It **ignored criticism for omitting evidence** of improvement, such as a documented drop in food prices.

International Developments/Diplomacy

- Some members of the Israeli government have demanded that **Israel annex certain areas** of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) as a response to numerous countries saying they would recognize a Palestinian state. Yesterday, the United Arab Emirates warned that there would be “serious” repercussions for any annexation, including a possible threat to the Abraham Accords.
- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accelerated **efforts to establish a governmental commission of inquiry** into the October 7 massacre, aiming to preempt a state commission that could be formed by a future opposition-led government and potentially implicate him; the proposed panel would have state-level powers but be appointed by the government rather than Supreme Court President Yitzhak Amit, whom Netanyahu reportedly distrusts.
- Last Friday, the **US State Department revoked visas for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas** and 80 senior PA and PLO officials, barring them from attending the UN General Assembly in New York. Citing national security concerns, the US said the move was in response to the PA's failure to repudiate terrorism and its push for unilateral recognition of Palestinian statehood, marking the first such ban since the 1988 denial of entry to Yasser Arafat. With multiple US allies set to recognize a Palestinian state at the UN, some Israeli media have suggested that the US Administration is signaling that unilateral moves on Palestinian recognition are contrary to American security interests.
- Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met in Jerusalem with **US Senator Lindsey Graham and World Food Programme Chief Cindy McCain** to discuss Gaza's humanitarian situation. McCain reportedly acknowledged that Hamas loots aid and sells it at extortionate prices, and noted improvements in food availability and pricing during her recent Gaza visit. Netanyahu later criticized McCain for issuing public statements that contradicted her remarks in Jerusalem, and urged the WFP to cooperate with the Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.
- Israel's Ministry of Defense announced its **withdrawal from the DSEI UK 2025 defense exhibition** in London after the British government imposed unilateral restrictions barring Israeli government and military officials from attending. The Ministry condemned the move as discriminatory and politically motivated, stating it undermines cooperation against shared threats. While Israel will not establish a national pavilion, Israeli defense firms that are attending independently will receive full government support.

Other Important News

- On Tuesday, Israel successfully launched the **Ofek 19 reconnaissance satellite** from Palmachim Airbase using a Shavit rocket that Israel Aerospace Industries developed. The satellite entered orbit and began transmitting data, enhancing Israel's day-and-night, all-weather surveillance capabilities across the Middle East. Defense Minister Israel Katz hailed the launch as a “message to all our enemies” and a milestone in Israel's space-based intelligence. Israel ranks among the top 15 global space powers, with its space agency classified at Operational Level 3, alongside countries like Japan, France and Canada. With multiple satellites operating successfully for over two decades and rapid innovation cycles, international commentators say that Israel's space program is a critical pillar of its defense and intelligence infrastructure.
- The **Prime Minister met last week with Sabine Taasa**, who lost her husband and son in the October 7 massacres. The Taasa family agreed to distribute footage filmed by security cameras in their family home in Netiv Ha'asara. The never-before-seen footage is alarming; the government has asked that, out of respect for

the family's wishes, the video should not be broadcast or distributed inside Israel. If you still want to view it despite the graphic content, it can be downloaded [here](#).

Further Reading

- Elliot Abrams: [There Never Will Be a Palestinian State. So What's Next?](#)
- Post-Ceasefire Eliminations Report: [Hezbollah Operatives Targeted in Southern Lebanon](#)
- [U.S. Lessons from Iran's Jihad in Australia](#)
- [Letter to Jewish College Students: You Are Not Alone](#)

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