



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., November 27, 2023

Northern Arena

- 324 attacks
- 86 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 14 other terrorist-organization operatives killed

Israeli Casualties

- Approximately 1,200 military and civilian dead (unofficial estimate)
- 177 abducted remaining in the Gaza Strip

Rocket Fire

- About 10,500 rockets and mortar shells
- About 10% failed launches

Overview¹

► **The deal to release the abductees:** On the evening of November 26, the third group of abductees held by Hamas was released. It included 13 Israeli women and children, three Thai citizens and an Israeli with dual Israeli-Russian citizenship. In return, 39 Palestinian prisoners were released. International officials, as well as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) senior terrorist operatives, are talking about the possibility of extending the pause in the fighting in exchange for the release of additional abducted women and children.

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 392 of them soldiers and officers; 177 civilian and military abductees are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.**

► **The Gaza Strip:** Calm prevailed following the pause in the fighting in Gaza and no unusual incidents were recorded.

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

► **The northern sector:** The northern border remains quiet. Hezbollah reported that Lebanese living near the border were compensated for damages they incurred.

► **Judea and Samaria:** Hamas called on the public to participate in a memorial service for the operative of the Hamas military-terrorist wing from Tulkarm who was killed in the Gaza Strip. A reception was held in Ramallah for the third group of released prisoners. The PIJ complained that the IDF was trying to interfere with the reception of the released Palestinian prisoners.

► **Iran:** Iran said it supported a permanent cease-fire in the Gaza Strip, but claimed it had no involvement in the actions of the "resistance groups" [Palestinian terrorist organizations] against Israel and the United States, and that "the groups" were not commanded by Iran. The deputy commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) claimed that the strategic achievements of the war in Gaza were even greater than the tactical achievements.

► **The pro-Iranian militias:** There were no attacks by militia operatives against United States military bases in Iraq and Syria. In Yemen, an attempt was made by the Houthis to hijack a tanker with connections to Israel. The ship was freed with the help of United States Navy ships sailing in the area.

The Pause in the Fighting and the Release of the Abductees

► On the evening of November 26, 2023, an additional 13 abducted children and women were returned to Israel through the center of the Gaza Strip. Three Thai citizens and an Israeli citizen with Russian citizenship were returned through the Rafah Crossing. Hamas announced it had released one captive who holds Russian citizenship in response to the efforts of Russian President Vladimir Putin and in light of his support for the Palestinian issue (Hamas Telegram channel, November 26, 2023). In exchange for the return of the abductees, 39 Palestinian prisoners were released from Israeli jails.

► International bodies, as well as the Palestinian terrorist organizations, are working to extend the pause in the fighting. **President Joe Biden** said the goal was to extend it. Referring to the release of the captives, including the little girl with American citizenship, Biden said that they expected Hamas would release more Americans, but had no concrete information (Reuters, November 26, 2023).

► **Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, Qatar's prime minister and foreign minister**, said efforts to extend the ceasefire depended on " Hamas' success in locating more than 40 additional women and children held in the Strip" by civilians and other "groups" [terrorist organizations]. He claimed they still did not have "clear information" regarding Hamas' ability to locate the captives and "one of Hamas' goals in extending the truce was to locate them." He also said Hamas and the PIJ were discussing the issue (Financial Times, November 26, 2023).

Reactions to the pause in the fighting and the release of the abductees

Hamas

► Hamas claimed it intended to extend the ceasefire for more than four days, through broad attempts to increase the number of prisoners to be released (Hamas Telegram channel, November 26, 2023). **Khalil al-Haya, a member of Hamas' political bureau and head of the Hamas office of Arab and Islamic relations**, claimed they "had been able" to locate 50 women and minors under the age of 19 who were being held by Hamas, the PIJ and other "organizations," as well as by Gazan families. He claimed that was why they had committed to handing over that number of abductees. He claimed that if they found more women and children, they would be prepared to hand them over "immediately." Therefore, if after the four days they "had managed" to locate more abducted women and children, it would be possible to extend it by a day or two. He "hoped" that by November 27, they would have a clear picture of additional abductees. He also claimed they were serious about reaching a comprehensive prisoner exchange deal (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, November 26, 2023).

► Senior **Hamas terrorist Bassam Na'im** stated that on November 26, more aid had entered the Gaza Strip than during the first two days of the pause in the fighting, but not as much as they expected. He said it had been agreed that at least 200 aid trucks would enter, of which at least 50 trucks would go to the northern Gaza Strip, and four fuel tankers and four gas tankers, half of them to the north. He claimed Israel had imposed "complicated conditions" regarding the inspection of incoming trucks, making it a lengthy, complicated process. Regarding the release of the Palestinian prisoners, he claimed that Israel did not release them according to seniority as agreed in advance and some of them were not even on the list of 150 women and children sent to the mediators. Regarding the extension of the pause in the fighting, he claimed it depended on "whether or not they had any more abducted civilians," and was

related to the situation on the ground. He claimed the delivery of the abductees in a different place every evening indicated they were not being held in one place or with one "group," and Hamas "needed time" to locate them (al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, November 27, 2023).

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

►Senior **PIJ terrorist Daoud Shehab** said that extending the "humanitarian truce" in the Gaza Strip was subject to the assessment of the "Palestinian resistance" [terrorist organizations], which continuously monitored the progress of the pause and Israel's conduct during it. He referred to the [alleged] "Israeli violations" during which several Palestinians had been killed and injured, and delays in humanitarian aid's entering the Gaza Strip and its arrival in the northern Gaza Strip. Shehab added that in addition to "evaluation and examination," they were waiting to see whether the extension of the pause would continue in its current format or would change, and he stressed that they would not allow Israel to change the terms. He also claimed that first of all, guarantees had to be provided that the "Israeli violations" would not be repeated. He also stated that the current pause was specifically related the civilian abductees, and that the issue of the military personnel required a different discussion and different conditions, and the price Israel paid for the civilian abductees would in no way be the price it would have to pay for the military personnel (al-Jazeera TV Facebook page, November 26, 2023).



Palestinian cartoons highlighting Gaza's victory in freeing the Palestinian prisoners. Left: The handcuffs are in the shape of the word "Gaza" in Arabic (al-Quds, November 25, 2023; Muhammad Saba'an's Facebook page, November 26, 2023)

The Combat Arena

►During the past day, the pause in the fighting was observed in all sectors in the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, the IDF continues to prepare for the day after the pause and the IDF Chief of Staff approved the plans for the continuation of the fighting (IDF spokesperson, November 26, 2023).

Rocket fire

►Since the announcement of the pause in the fighting, no rockets or mortar shells have been launched at Israel from the Gaza Strip, with the exception of a few launches at the area surrounding Gaza near the time it began.

Israeli casualties

►**According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 392 of them soldiers and officers; 177 civilian and military abductees are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.**

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The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

►The Hamas government media information bureau in Gaza reported that as of 8 p.m., November 23, 2023, the number of dead stood at 14,854 and the number of wounded at 36,000 (Facebook page of the Hamas government media information bureau in Gaza, November 23, 2023).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

►Since the pause in the fighting went into effect, al-Jazeera TV has been conducting an extensive campaign to present the destruction in the Gaza Strip "as a result of the aggression of the Israeli occupation." In videos from drones and documentation from the ground, the network's photographers and reporters show the ruins, and there are interviews with various figures in the Gaza Strip who claim "the Gaza Strip has become a disaster area unworthy of human life."

►Trucks carrying humanitarian aid continue entering the Gaza Strip in accordance with the conditions of the pause in the fighting. **Adnan Abu Hasna, UNRWA media advisor in the Gaza Strip**, who was interviewed from the Rafah Crossing, said the situation in the northern Gaza Strip was very difficult, and trucks had been sent there. He claimed that to supply the needs of the Gaza Strip, 200 trucks had to enter every day for two months. He called for an increase in the amount of fuel supplied to UNRWA to enable it to continue providing the Gazans with services (Wafa YouTube channel, November 26, 2023). In a conversation with al-Jazeera, he said the streets of the Gaza Strip were flooded with sewage which would pollute the beaches and spread disease. He added they were concerned that sewage would leak into the groundwater, a situation which could not be repaired, and large amounts of fuel had to be brought in to supply the Gazans with clean water (al-Jazeera TV, November 27, 2023).



**Right: Trucks carrying humanitarian aid trucks enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing.
Left: Adnan Abu Hasna interviewed from the Rafah Crossing
(Wafa YouTube channel, November 26, 2023)**

►Meanwhile, the Palestinian media report that residents of the north part of Gaza City are taking advantage of the ceasefire to evacuate to the south of the Strip (Wafa YouTube channel, November 26, 2023).



**from Gaza City continue to evacuate to the south of the Gaza Strip
(Wafa YouTube channel, November 26, 2023)**

►Muhammad al-Da'our, a correspondent for al-Ghad TV in Khan Yunis, reported that many residents wanted the pause in the fighting to continue and were very tense as the end of the ceasefire approached. He noted that the introduction of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing is continuing, and claimed UNRWA was the central agency in the Gaza Strip, receiving the aid and navigating its distribution throughout the Strip. He said that for the most part, the aid was distributed to refugees supported by UNRWA and did not reach "ordinary Gazans" staying in shelters which do not belong to UNRWA (al-Ghad TV, November 27, 2023).



Al-Ghad TV reporter updates the situation from Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis (Al-Ghad TV, November 27, 2023)



Volunteers from the ministry of health in Gaza clean the area around Shifa Hospital (Hassan Aslih's X account, November 26, 2023)

The Rafah Crossing

►Senior **Hamas terrorist operative Bassam Na'im** complained about the mechanism for bringing humanitarian aid trucks into the Gaza Strip during the pause in the fighting. He said the trucks entered the Rafah Crossing, from there they went to the Nitzana crossing for inspection by Israel, after which they returned to the Rafah Crossing, where they were transferred to the UN, which transferred them to the Palestinian Red Crescent or distributed

the aid itself among UNRWA centers. He complained it was a long, complicated process (al-Jazeera Mubasher TV YouTube channel, November 27, 2023).



Trucks carrying humanitarian enter the Palestinian side of the Rafah Crossing from Egypt (al-Ghad TV, November 26, 2023)

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The Northern Arena

Lebanon

► During the past day the Israel-Lebanon border has been quiet.

Hezbollah

► **Hassan Fadlallah, a member of Hezbollah's parliamentary faction**, said Hezbollah had begun to pay compensation to people living in the villages along the border who had been directly harmed by the "Zionist aggression," adding that Hezbollah units were operating in villages, towns and on the line of fire to assess the damage. He said they had not waited for the truce but had been providing health and livelihood assistance around the clock (al-Ahed, November 27, 2023).

The Lebanese government

► **Lebanese interim Prime Minister Najib Mikati** said Lebanon wanted peace and they were trying to keep Lebanon away from bloody battles. However, he stressed that for the time being, the rules of the confrontation on the Lebanon-Israel border remained the same and there were no international promises on the issue that they could rely on. He stressed that Lebanon fully supported the Palestinians (NAA, November 27, 2023).

Syria

- ▶ Pro-Iranian militia fighters in Syria were reportedly moved from the Albukamal area in eastern Syria to the south of the country (Ayn al-Furat, November 26, 2023).
- ▶ Sham Radio reported that Israel had attacked the runways of Damascus International Airport. It was also reported that the flights that were supposed to land at the airport were diverted to airports in Aleppo and Latakia (Radio Sham, al-Watan Telegram channel, November 26, 2023). According to a "Syrian military source," at around 3:50 p.m., Israel attacked Damascus International Airport and several areas near Damascus from the air. The air defense forces reportedly intercepted most of the missiles. According to the report, the airport sustained material damage and was put out of commission (SANA, November 26, 2023).

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Judea and Samaria

Preventive and counterterrorism activities

- ▶ The Palestinian media reported that during the past day, Israeli security forces had detained 56 Palestinians throughout Judea and Samaria (Wafa, November 27, 2023).

Solidarity with the Gaza Strip

- ▶ Hamas called on the public to participate on November 27, 2023, after evening prayers, in a memorial ceremony for Farsan Khalifa, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative and jihad fighter who was expelled to the Gaza Strip in the Gilad Shalit exchange deal and killed by the IDF. The ceremony will take place in the Haifa Hall in the Nur al-Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm (social media, November 27, 2023).



Farsan Khalifa's father being interviewed at the mourning tent in memory of Khalifa set up in the Nur al-Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm (al-Fajr TV, November 26, 2023)



Right: Farsan Khalifa in uniform and armed (Arkan X account, November 26, 2023). Left: Past photo of Khalifa with Yahya al-Sinwar in the Gaza Strip (Amjad X account, November 25, 2023)

Palestinian Authority

► **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** said "words could not describe" the destruction revealed by the truce, attesting to "the extent of the criminal Israeli killing machine." He said the world had to treat the Gaza Strip as a disaster area, for which the State of Israel had to bear responsibility. He also welcomed the release of the prisoners and expressions of solidarity with the Palestinians, especially the statements made by the prime ministers of Spain and Belgium (Wafa, November 26, 2023).

► Muhammad Shtayyeh met with Lindsay Hoyle, speaker of the British Parliament, to discuss presenting the proposal to the British government, calling for a ceasefire without restrictions and an end to "the aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria." He called for an end to attempts to forcibly uproot the Gazans in the north and for keeping Israel from occupying the Gaza Strip or cutting off parts of it. He called on the British House of Commons to persuade the British government to recognize the Palestinian state (Wafa, November 26, 2023).



Mohammed Shtayyeh meets with British House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle
(Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, November 26, 2023)

► **Jibril Rajoub, secretary of Fatah's Central Committee**, said at a press conference in Kuwait that what happened on October 7 was "an earthquake and an unprecedented event" and part of the 75-year "defensive war" waged by the Palestinian people. He expressed hope that the current truce would turn into a complete ceasefire and serve as a road map for resolving the Palestinian issue. Referring to Hamas, Rajoub said that although "political Islam" headed by Hamas was part of their social and political fabric, they should not lose what they had, such as a state and a legitimate representative, stressing that they were "a project of liberation rather than martyrdom" (al-Qabas, November 26, 2023).

Return of released prisoners

► The PIJ complained that the IDF was trying to interfere with the reception of released Palestinian prisoners by using force and dispersing crowds. According to the organization, Israel was attempting to hide its defeat and political and military failure (PIJ Telegram channel, November 26, 2023).



Reception in Ramallah for the third group of released Palestinian prisoners. Calls of thanks to Gaza were heard (Palestine Post X account, November 26, 2023)

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Iran

► **Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi** spoke with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to discuss Israel's attacks in Gaza, the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gazans and efforts to establish a permanent ceasefire. Raisi said it was the Palestinian people who had to decide the future of the Gaza Strip through Hamas, which was its legal and legitimate government, and that the United States had no right to intervene and decide for the residents of the Gaza Strip (Iranian president's website, November 26, 2023). Erdoğan said Turkey would continue to work to make the temporary ceasefire in the Gaza Strip permanent (Anadolu News, November 26, 2023).

► **Nasser Kanani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry**, said at his weekly press conference that Iran wanted a permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and a complete cessation of the "crimes of the Zionist regime" against the Gazans. He once again accused the United States of providing military and political support for Israel, including by supplying equipment and weapons from its military bases in the region. He claimed the United States was trying to achieve by political means what could not be achieved by military means, but the Palestinian people would not allow it or Israel to realize their "illegitimate goals" and would determine its own fate. Kanani also said Iran was not involved in the activities of the "resistance groups" [terrorist organizations] against Israel and the United State, claiming they did not operate under Iranian command (Fars, November 27, 2023).

► **Ali Fadavi, deputy commander of the IRGC**, told a conference in Tehran that the strategic achievements of the war in the Gaza Strip for the "resistance" were even greater than its tactical achievements. He claimed more than a million Israelis had left their homes as a result of the war and 92% of the world's population had demonstrated against the "Zionists" (Tasnim, November 27, 2023).

Activity of pro-Iranian militias

Iraq and Syria

► **Jawad al-Talibawi, military spokesman for the Asa'ib Ahl al-Haqq militia**, attacked Kata'ib Hezbollah's announcement in which the militia declared it was reducing its activities until the end of the truce in the Gaza Strip, claiming it was disappointing. He also claimed the militia violated the secrecy of the resistance activity, considered an important element, because it enumerated the militias taking part in the attacks against the American forces but

did not mention Asa'ib Ahl al-Haqq. According to him, even though whoever wrote the announcement knew the situation on the ground, it was strange that he decided to mention the names of certain organizations and omit the names of others, stressing that they hoped they would not encounter such statements again (the military spokesman's Telegram channel, November 26, 2023).

Yemen

- ▶ On November 26, 2023, it was reported that the Houthi movement had hijacked a tanker called Central Park, which had connections to Israel while sailing under the Liberian flag (AP, November 26, 2023). The British Army Shipping Organization (UKMTO) announced that two small vessels carrying eight people dressed in military uniforms approached the ship on both sides south of the coast of Aden in Yemen. It was also reported that the ship and its crew were safe (the Shipping Organization X account, November 26, 2023).
- ▶ It was reported that the ship had been diverted towards the coast of Aden and that the American Navy had acted on the issue (Agence France-Presse, November 26, 2023). "Two American sources" reported that an American Navy vessel had responded to a distress call from the tanker Central Park and taken care of its safety and release (Reuters, November 26, 2023). A Yemeni military source also reported that an American naval force had regained control of the Central Park (Sputnik, November 26, 2023).
- ▶ The American Army Central Command (CENTCOM) reported that at around 1:41 a.m. Yemen time, two ballistic missiles had been fired from Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen at the American destroyer Mason and the ship Central Park, which was linked to Israel. CENTCOM also noted that the missiles had landed in the Gulf of Aden, about 16 kilometers (about 8.6 nautical miles) from the ships. The ship and its crew suffered no damage or casualties. CENTCOM Commander Michael Kurilla said that securing the maritime sphere was vital to the stability of the region and they would continue to work with their allies to ensure the security of international shipping lanes (CENTCOM X channel, November 27, 2023).

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The Arab Arena

Conference of human rights organizations in Algeria

► Jurists from a number of countries and representatives of international human rights organizations arrived in Algeria to participate in an international conference entitled "Justice for the Palestinian People," which will promote the prosecution of Israeli leaders at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and courts of various countries for "war crimes in the Gaza Strip." Palestinian, Jordanian and Lebanese representatives are supposed to take part in the conference, as well as **Gilles Devers**, a lawyer who reportedly recruited 500 lawyers from around the world to represent the Palestinians in the ICC against Israel's alleged "genocide and war crimes" in the Gaza Strip (Rai al-Youm, November 26, 2023).

► Attorney **Gilles Devers** is a Frenchman born in 1956, blogger, teacher-researcher and lecturer and member of the Lyon Bar Association. He is one of the speakers of a group of 350 NGOs represented by 40 lawyers responsible for handling a war crimes petition to the ICC. He represented the PA before the ICC during Operation Cast Lead (2008-2009). He claimed that after the PA had given him the mandate to file a complaint on its behalf, he filed another complaint against Israel in July 2014, on behalf of the PA justice minister regarding the events of Operation Protective Edge.²



The lawyer at a demonstration in Lyon against the "siege" of the Gaza Strip (YouTube, August 6, 2014)

² For further information, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from July 4, 2023, " [Hamas operatives seek to prosecute Israel in the International Criminal Court in The Hague.](#)"

Jordan

► **Jordanian Prime Minister Bisher al-Khasawneh** said that after diverting considerable medical resources to the Gaza Strip, King Abdullah II ordered the establishment of a field hospital in Nablus due to the urgent shortage of medical services in Judea and Samaria (al-Mamlaka, November 26, 2023).

The International Arena

European Union

► In an op-ed written by **Josep Borrell, EU foreign policy chief**, titled "Why a Palestinian state is the best security guarantee for Israel," he wrote that the atrocities committed by Hamas and other extremists harmed Palestinian interests and that senior PA figures he met even admitted that. For them, however, the fundamental issue was the "Israeli occupation." According to Borrell, his recent visit to the region reinforced his belief that the best guarantee for Israel's security was the establishment of a Palestinian state. The territory had to be administered by a state that represented its residents to prevent the Gaza Strip from falling into the hands of armed groups that could destabilize the region (The Financial Times, November 27, 2023).

► Speaking at the Mediterranean Union Forum in Barcelona, Borrell said that a political solution had to be found that would end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict permanently. He said the PA's return to the Gaza Strip was the best solution to the current situation. He also said that the entire Gaza Strip had been reduced to rubble, which was unacceptable, and claimed Israel had exceeded the limit of self-defense in the Gaza Strip (al-Arabiya, November 27, 2023).