



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., January 30, 2024

Northern Arena	Israeli Casualties	Rocket Fire
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 735 attacks• 176 Hezbollah operatives killed• 24 operatives of other terrorist-organization killed• One non-affiliated operative• One Lebanese army soldier killed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately 1,300 military and civilian dead (unofficial estimate)• 132 hostages remain in the Gaza Strip	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately 11,000 rockets and mortar shells• Approximately 9,000 rockets and mortar shells launched from the Gaza Strip• Approximately 2,000 rockets launched from Lebanon and 30 from Syria

Overview¹

► **The southern arena:** The IDF's activity in the last day focused on the Khan Yunis area, both above and below ground. The forces dismantled two battalions of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades' Khan Yunis Brigade, killed a large number of terrorists and damaged important terrorist facilities. East of Khan Yunis, the forces operated in a tunnel exposed under a cemetery which served as the headquarters of Hamas' military wing. In the afternoon, a barrage of rockets was launched towards central Israel and the greater Tel Aviv area. Hamas' military wing claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. Shortly after the attack, Israeli Air Force planes attacked and destroyed the launchers.

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7, 2023, approximately 1,300 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 557 of them soldiers and officers; 132 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip; 121 hostages have been returned to Israel.**

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

► **Negotiations for a hostage deal:** The mediators expressed optimism about progress towards a hostage deal. Senior Hamas officials expressed cautious optimism and a certain flexibility regarding a ceasefire, stating they would formulate their final position in the near future.

► **UNRWA:** The serious accusations against UNRWA regarding the involvement of the agency's employees in the terrorist attack and massacre on October 7, 2023, continue making headlines. The European Union announced it would deliberate the agency's continued funding. UNRWA announced that without funding it would be forced to stop its operations at the end of February 2024. The heads of the Arab states have called for agency's activities not to be halted.

► **The northern arena:** Hezbollah claimed responsibility for eight attacks using anti-tank missiles and rockets, including heavy Burkan and Falaq-1 rockets. In response, Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon. Hezbollah reported two deaths.

► **Judea and Samaria:** Israeli security forces killed three terrorists, one an operative of Hamas' military wing and two Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operatives who were hiding in a hospital in Jenin. The three planned to carry out a terrorist attack in Israel. Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh announced a new reform which will include the reorganization of the security forces and government offices. He said its objective was to overhaul the Palestinian government to improve its image in the eyes of the world.

The Southern Arena

► Palestinian media reported dozens of dead and hundreds of wounded in the past day in IDF attacks in the Gaza Strip (Ma'an, January 30, 2024). According to an al-Jazeera TV correspondent, the main centers of fighting were Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahia and the Jabalia refugee camp in **the northern Gaza Strip**; and heavy Israeli Air Force attacks in the western neighborhoods of **Gaza City**, al-Sabra, Rimal and al-Zeitoun. IDF tanks were positioned near Shifa Hospital and are encircling the western area of the city. In **the central Gaza Strip**, the main combat area was the Nuseirat refugee camp. In **Khan Yunis** there were heavy attacks throughout the city, primarily in the west where IDF forces continue to encircle Nasser and al-Amal Hospitals. In **Rafah** the IDF attacked the al-Janina neighborhood in the center of the city (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 30, 2024).



An al-Jazeera TV broadcaster describes the IDF's activities in western Gaza City (right) and in western Khan Yunis (left) (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 29, 2024)

► **The southern Gaza Strip:** IDF forces continued operations in the Khan Yunis area. So far, the forces have dismantled two of the four battalions of the Khan Yunis Brigade of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, operating in the area. The forces have killed more than 2,000 terrorists and destroyed underground terrorist facilities and prevented rockets from being fired at Israel. Three Hamas military wing operatives surrendered to the IDF forces in the tunnel and provided important intelligence information. During the fighting in Khan Yunis, the forces raided Hamas posts, battalion headquarters, training compounds, a communications post, the Khan Yunis Brigade operations room, the military intelligence building, a large factory for the production of rockets and the offices of many senior members, among them the office of Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, January 29, 2024).



IDF forces in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, January 30, 2024)

► Meanwhile, IDF forces entered a tunnel located under the Bani Suheila cemetery east of Khan Yunis. Inside the tunnel the fighters encountered a number of terrorists, as well as explosives, sliding doors and blast-proof doors. they also located an office of the commander of the Khan

Yunis Brigade's Eastern Battalion where he directed the October 7, 2023, attack, battalion operations and combat management rooms and senior officers' bedrooms. The tunnel was part of an underground labyrinth with several branches, about a kilometer long and about twenty meters [six stories] deep (IDF spokesperson, January 29, 2024).



The tunnel route (IDF spokesperson, January 29, 2024)



The tunnel. Right: Inside the tunnel. Left: Destroying the tunnel (IDF spokesperson, January 29, 2024)

Palestinian perspective on the fighting

► **Taher al-Nunu, media advisor to Ismail Haniyeh, chairman of the Hamas political bureau**, claimed that the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] could continue fighting much longer than Israel estimated, and still had the means to surprise Israel. He also claimed that the number of IDF dead and wounded at the al-Maghazi disaster was much larger than what was reported (Hezbollah-affiliated al-Mayadeen TV website, January 29, 2024; al-Mayadeen TV X account, January 29, 2024).

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

► On the afternoon of January 29, 2024, a barrage of rockets was launched towards central Israel and the greater Tel Aviv area. The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, announced that its operatives had launched a barrage of rockets towards Tel Aviv in response

to the [alleged] "massacres of civilians" (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, January 29, 2024). An al-Jazeera TV correspondent reported that the barrage had been launched from the southern Gaza Strip (al-Jazeera TV X account, January 29, 2024).



Right: The rocket barrage (al-Arabi TV YouTube channel, January 20, 2024). Left: A rocket hits a gas station in Rishon LeTzion (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 29, 2024)

►Gazans in the Nasser Hospital complex in Khan Yunis were recorded watching the launch and chanting "Allahu akbar" (Shehab X account, January 29, 2024).



Gazans cheer the rocket fire from the Khan Yunis area (Shehab X account, January 29, 2024)

►Shortly after the launch, Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked and destroyed the launchers from which rockets were fired. According to an IDF assessment, there were additional rockets ready for firing. In another attack, a "military asset" of Hamas' anti-tank unit was destroyed (IDF spokesperson, January 30, 2024).



**Destroying the rocket launchers which attacked central Israel and the greater Tel Aviv area
(IDF spokesperson, January 30, 2024)**

Israeli casualties

► According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7, 2023, approximately 1,300 Israeli people have been killed. According to the IDF spokesperson, 557 of them are soldiers and officers (222 since the start of the ground maneuver on 27 October, 2023); 132 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip; 121 hostages have been returned.

The issue of the hostages and a ceasefire agreement

► Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, prime minister of Qatar, said that the talks regarding the hostages were progressing and that the current stage of the talks might lead to a permanent ceasefire. He said they were pressuring Iran to lower the security escalation in the region since, he said, a possible United States response to an attack on its base on the Jordanian border could affect the hostage deal talks and regional security (al-Jazeera, January 29, 2024).

► A "Palestinian source" claimed there was an agreement on the details of the first stage of the hostage deal between Israel and Hamas. According to the source, every day one Israeli hostage would be released in exchange for thirty Palestinians, and Israel would withdraw from the Gaza Strip and take up positions at points on the border. It was also reported that the third phase of the deal would deal with Israeli "officers" held in the Gaza Strip and that Hamas was demonstrating "cautious flexibility" regarding the situation in the Gaza Strip "the day after" the war (al-Arabiya, January 30, 2024).

► "Egyptian sources" informed about in the war in the Gaza Strip reported that on January 29, 2024, Egyptian General Intelligence figures and Hamas representatives met in Cairo where

Hamas was given the details of the understandings reached at the Paris summit. According to reports, the Hamas delegation is expected to go to Doha and then return to Cairo (al-Araby al-Jadeed, January 30, 2024).

►Senior Hamas members expressed cautious optimism and a certain flexibility on the ceasefire issue, but stated that they would formulate their final position in the near future.

►**Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, said they had been made aware of the summit meeting's proposal and were examining its content. He claimed they were willing to discuss any initiative on the condition that it led to a total ceasefire, a prisoner exchange and the rehabilitation of the Gazans' lives. He also claimed they had been invited to Cairo to discuss the agreement reached at the Paris summit and its terms. He thanked Egypt and Qatar for mediating and their efforts to reach a comprehensive ceasefire and stop the "aggression" against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Regarding the Philadelphia Axis, he said that Egypt's position was consistent with that of Hamas (Hamas Telegram channel, January 30, 2024).

►**Taher al-Nunu, media advisor to Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, said the first step should be a ceasefire, which he claimed would be the basis for every subsequent step, as well as the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip and the introduction of aid. He said they were talking about a comprehensive and complete ceasefire, not a temporary truce. He noted that what had been discussed in Paris was a proposal which Hamas would examine, not an agreement. He also said that Hamas had expressed its position regarding the proposals presented to it and had not presented one of its own. He claimed it was still too early to talk about the number of prisoners who would be released. Referring to the issue of the Philadelphia Axis, he said that Hamas maintained continuous contact with Egypt and was satisfied with Egypt's position. He added that Israel's attempt to take control of the Axis [allegedly] meant "the death of tens of thousands of displaced people" (al-Mayadeen TV website, January 29, 2024; al-Mayadeen X account, January 29, 2024).

►**Muhammad Nizal, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, said that when a concept formulated at the Paris meeting was presented to them it would be discussed in the movement's leadership institutions. He said they hoped the positive atmosphere following the meeting was genuine and could lead to practical results. He hoped that by the end of the week Hamas would have a final position regarding the Paris summit proposal. In principle, he said, Hamas had several objectives, which all parties were aware of. It wanted a permanent

ceasefire agreement, however, he claimed, Hamas had no problem with a ceasefire in stages, provided they led to a permanent one. Hamas also wants a complete withdrawal of IDF forces from the Gaza Strip, the introduction of all types of aid for the residents of the Gaza Strip, and for Gazans, especially the wounded and sick, to be able to leave the Gaza Strip and return. He claimed they were facing a negotiation process in which they would be "positive and very flexible," but in a way which would not harm the Palestinian's most important interests. Egypt, Qatar and the United States would be responsible for implementing the agreement. Regarding their position on the buffer zones that Israel is establishing within the borders of the Gaza Strip, he said that they would not allow such an "occupation" to continue (al-Arabi TV YouTube channel, January 29, 2024).

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The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

- ▶ **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip** reported that as of 12:30 p.m., January 30, 2024, the number of dead since the beginning of the war stood at 26,751 and the number of wounded at 63,636 (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, January 30, 2024).
- ▶ **Tarek al-Saafin, director of the laboratories and blood bank of the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in Gaza**, reported a substantial shortage of blood units due to the high volume of casualties, as well as a lack of equipment for performing tests and collecting blood (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, January 29, 2024). **Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip** reported on the difficult situation at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis. He claimed there were 150 medical staff members, 450 patients, and 3,000 displaced persons staying in the compound who were exposed to attacks from the IDF forces surrounding the site. He reiterated yet again that the hospital's generators were expected to stop working in about two days because the fuel supply was running out. He also reported a shortage of food for those staying in the hospital compound, adding that waste was piling up because the IDF forces would not allow it to be removed (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, January 30, 2024).
- ▶ **Muhammad Nizal, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, claimed Hamas did not publish the number of its dead operatives for security reasons, because the publication of the numbers required the publication of their names and photos, and then [allegedly] "the IDF

will punish and kill their families." He claimed that the IDF spokesperson's statement regarding the [number of the] dead was psychological warfare to raise morale in Israel, but the IDF spokesperson had not presented evidence. That, he claimed, was in contrast to Abu Obeida [spokesman for Hamas' military wing], whose statements about IDF casualties were accompanied by videos to document them (al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, January 30, 2024).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

►After the IDF issued notices to the residents of western Gaza City to evacuate, and after IDF tanks began to be positioned at the site, many residents began to evacuate from the west of the city and Shifa Hospital towards the east of the city (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 29, 2024).



Residents evacuate from the west of Gaza City towards the east
(al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 29, 2024)

►**Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas member**, held a press conference in Beirut where he said the humanitarian situation in Gaza was deteriorating every day, more than 90% of the residents had been displaced from their homes, and there was an "unprecedented increase" in the number of dead, wounded and missing, most of them [allegedly] women and children. He claimed Israel was carrying out [alleged] "massacres" in the Khan Yunis district, systematically repeating the [alleged] "horrible crimes" it committed in Gaza and the northern Gaza Strip, through indiscriminate attacks to force the people to leave their homes, and sniper fire or UAV attacks they did leave their homes. He claimed that the "massacres" took place 48 hours after the International Court of Justice had issued a decision requiring Israel to take measures to avoid continuing to commit [alleged] "genocidal crimes " against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. He also claimed there were more than 7,000 wounded in the Gaza Strip who need to go abroad for treatment, however, Israel set conditions and prevented

them from leaving through "the crossings" (al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, January 29, 2024).

Aid for the Gaza Strip



The delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing (right) and the Kerem Shalom Crossing (left) (Wafa YouTube channel, January 29, 2024)

UNRWA

►The serious accusations against UNRWA regarding the involvement of the agency's employees in the events of October 7, continue to be discussed:

- ◆ **UNRWA** announced that as long as the agency's funding was not renewed, they would not be able to continue operating in the Gaza Strip and the region beyond the end of February (Reuters, January 29, 2024).
- ◆ **The European Union** decided to reexamine the upcoming funding decisions for UNRWA and called on the agency to immediately examine all its employees to confirm they had not participated in the attacks (EU website, January 29, 2024).
- ◆ **Antonio Guterres, the UN secretary general**, met with the head of the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services to ensure that the ongoing investigation against the agency employees would be carried out rapidly and with maximum efficiency. He is also scheduled a meeting of UNRWA's donor states (Reuters, January 29, 2024).
- ◆ **Abdullah II, King of Jordan**, spoke with **Antonio Guterres** and noted the need for the international community to continue supporting UNRWA and an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. Abdullah also emphasized the importance of the UN's role in providing humanitarian aid (Petra, January 29, 2024).
- ◆ **The Saudi Arabian foreign ministry** called on all UNRWA donors to fulfill their role in humanitarian support for the residents of the Gaza Strip and noted the importance of continuing the agency's activities and, at the same time, the importance of continuing to investigate the issue (Saudi Arabian foreign ministry X account, January 29, 2024).

◆ **Abdullah Bou Habib, the Lebanese foreign minister**, met with **Lisa Johnson, the American ambassador to Lebanon**. He called stopping aid to UNRWA "a historic mistake" that would deny the Palestinian refugees any hope for life and a future. He noted that the issue was considered a threat to regional security as well as to the security of both the donor and host countries (al-Nashra, January 29, 2024).

◆ **Isma'il Haniyeh** condemned the positions and decisions of the United States and several Western countries towards UNRWA and the suspension of their financial "obligations" to the agency. He claimed the decisions were clearly in violation of the International Court of Justice's most recent ruling, which called for increased aid to the Gaza Strip, and that the decisions indicated a systematic policy to support Israel through the [alleged] "starvation and siege" of the Palestinians. He claimed the reasons given by the countries for the suspension of donations were flimsy and not based on evidence other than the [allegedly] unfounded claims and propaganda provided by Israel, whose purpose was to pressure the UN and punish it for the reports submitted to the Court on the effects of the [alleged] "brutal aggression against the Palestinians," and for the statements of the UN secretary general on which the International Court based its decision (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria January 30, 2024).

◆ **Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas member**, held a press conference where he stated that the UNRWA management's decision to dismiss a number of employees based on Israeli claims for their participation in the October 7, 2023, attack, without investigation or verification, was a "reprehensible, unprofessional step" which skewed the agency's compass from its basic mission, which is to protect the Palestinian refugees and provide them with assistance, and not to adopt Israel's narrative. Hamdan strongly condemned the statement of the UNRWA commissioner general, who described the Palestinian "resistance" as terrorism or heinous acts, adding that it was more appropriate that he and the UNRWA administration condemn Israel's [alleged] acts of "aggression" against the agency's offices and facilities. He claimed that to "finish choking" the Palestinian people, especially in the Gaza Strip, nine countries, led by the United States, announced the suspension of their funding to UNRWA and thus were complicit in the collective punishment of the Palestinians and actual complicit in the [alleged] war of "extermination" against them (al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, January 29, 2024).

Hamas-Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine meeting

►A Hamas delegation visited the headquarters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in Beirut and met with the organization's representatives. Both sides said that before a hostage deal took place, the "aggression" had to stop and the deal would be based on "everyone in return for everyone." They welcomed the decision of the International Court of Justice and called on the international community to force Israel to implement it. During the meeting, the importance of Palestinian unity was stated through the creation of a unified national leadership and the establishment of a national consensus government to oversee the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip (Hamas Telegram channel, January 29, 2024).

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The Northern Arena

Hezbollah attacks

►During the past day, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for carrying out **eight attacks**, launching anti-tank missiles and rockets, Burkan heavy rockets (with a warhead weighing 300-500 kg) and Falaq 1 rockets (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, January 29, 2024).

►In response, Israel Air Force fighter jets attacked Hezbollah terrorist targets in Markaba, al-Taybeh and Maroun al-Ras, destroying terrorist infrastructure and a surveillance post. Another attack destroyed two military buildings in which Hezbollah operatives were present in the Yaroun area. IDF forces also attacked a launching post from which rockets were fired into Israeli territory (IDF spokesperson, January 29, 2024).



Attacks on Hezbollah surveillance posts (IDF spokesperson, January 29, 2024)



Attack on Hezbollah military buildings in Yaroun (IDF spokesperson, January 29, 2024)



Results of the Israeli Air Force airstrikes in Yaroun (Bint Jbeil X account, January 29, 2024)

Hezbollah fatalities

► Hezbollah reported the deaths of two operatives from south Lebanon (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, January 29, 2024).

- ◆ Hussein Fadel Awada, aka Abu Zaynab, born in 1998, from Aitaroun, a resident of Haruf.
- ◆ Hussein Khalil Hashem, aka Sajed, born in 1996, from Shebaa.



Hezbollah fatalities (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, January 29, 2024)

New weapons introduced into the campaign

► The Hezbollah-affiliated al-Ahed news website published an article explaining why the organization recently revealed several high-quality weapons in its possession, including a missile launched with a bow and homing in on the target using a camera installed in its head, and a heavy Falaq 1 rocket. According to the article, by revealing them, Hezbollah is trying to deter Israel with high-quality tactical weapons, without using strategic deterrence weapons, knowing that the use of such weapons will almost certainly lead to a widespread conflict and an open war. The article also claimed that if Israel thinks that "aggression" will extricate it from the difficult situation imposed on it by Hezbollah on the northern front, all the capabilities recently revealed would necessarily be accompanied by infiltration operations by elements in the "resistance," Radwan Force operatives in particular (al-Ahed, January 29, 2024).

The Lebanese government

► "Diplomatic sources" reported that the United States had learned through communication channels with Lebanon that Hezbollah had decided to "suspend" Najib Mikati, Lebanon's interim prime minister, and Nabih Berri, the parliament speaker, from conducting negotiations regarding the land border with Israel, and that it was not known which channel of communication was currently in use between Hezbollah and the United States (Nidaa al-Watan, January 30, 2024)

► Hezbollah denied the report, saying that the statements were "fabricated and offensive." According to Hezbollah, indirect negotiations were solely in the hands of the Lebanese government, and therefore the content of the statements was completely false (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, January 30, 2024).

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Judea and Samaria

► The day after the attack in Haifa, Hamas issued a statement praising the "heroic operation" carried out by a resident of Tamra "inside the occupied country" near an army base in Haifa. According to Hamas, the operation was carried out as part of Operation al-Aqsa Flood (Hamas Telegram channel, January 30, 2024).

Counterterrorism activities

► Before dawn on January 30, 2024, Israeli security forces operated at Ibn Sina Hospital in Jenin. The forces killed three wanted senior operatives who were hiding there and planning to carry out attacks against Israel in the immediate future. The wanted terrorists were (Israeli Security Agency and Israel Police spokespersons, January 30, 2024):

- ◆ Muhammad Walid Jalamneh: 27 years old, an operative of Hamas' military wing, who was recently promoting terrorist activity and hid in the hospital. He was in possession of a pistol, which was seized by the Israeli forces. He had spent some time in the Jenin refugee camp and maintained contact with Hamas headquarters abroad. In the past, he had been wounded while preparing to carry out a car bomb attack. Jalamneh also delivered weapons to operatives intended for shooting attacks and planned a raid inspired by the terrorist attack and massacre on October 7, 2023.
- ◆ Muhammad al-Ghazawi: Resident of the Jenin refugee camp, senior PIJ operative in the Jenin Battalion. One of the founders of the battalion, he was involved in carrying out several shooting attacks against IDF forces.
- ◆ Basel al-Ghazawi: brother of Muhammad al-Ghazawi. PIJ military wing operative, involved in terrorist activities in the Jenin area.

► According to security camera video and Palestinian reports, the Israeli special force entered the area disguised as doctors, nurses and Palestinian women. They went up to the third floor where the three wanted men were staying and killed them with pistols equipped with silencers (Shehab X account, Israeli media, January 30, 2024).



Right: Hamas announcement of the deaths of the three (Hamas Telegram channel, January 30, 2024). Left: The funeral of brothers Muhammad and Basal al-Ghazawi in Jenin, their bodies draped in PIJ flags (Shehab X account, January 30, 2024)

- Following their deaths, it was reported that a strike and a general mobilization had been declared in Jenin (Wafa, January 30, 2024).
- **The PA foreign ministry** strongly condemned the "war" waged by the Israeli security forces against the Palestinians, including the "heinous crime" at Ibn Sina Hospital in Jenin. The ministry called on the Security Council to take responsibility for obligating Israel to implement the International Court of Justice decision (PA foreign ministry X account, January 30, 2024).
- **Mei al-Kayla, PA minister of health**, condemned the incident and called on the UN, international institutions and human rights organizations to put an end to the series of "daily crimes" committed by Israel and provide the necessary protection for treatment centers and medical teams (Wafa, January 30, 2024).
- **Hamas** issued a statement saying that the "occupation forces" had executed three civilians inside Ibn Sina Hospital in Jenin and that one of the "murdered" belonged to the movement's military wing. Hamas stressed that it was a "war crime" for all intents and purposes and a continuation of "Israel's crimes" against the Palestinians, adding that it would not go unanswered (Hamas Telegram channel, January 29, 2024).
- The **PIJ** said two of the victims belonged to the organization's Jenin Battalion and were in the hospital for treatment, claiming it was a new violation of international law. According to the statement, they would not let that "crime" pass without an appropriate response (PIJ Telegram channel, January 29, 2024).

►The Israeli security forces also operated in the Nur al-Shams and Tulkarm refugee camps in eastern Tulkarm, exposing IEDs planted on the sides of the roads (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, January 30, 2024).



Right: Israeli security forces entering the Tulkarm refugee camp. Left: Tulkarm refugee camp after the security forces' activity there (QudsN X account, January 29 and 30, 2024)

Palestinian Authority (PA)

► **Muhammad Shtayyeh, PA prime minister**, announced at the weekly cabinet meeting that following Mahmoud Abbas' instructions, he would launch a new reform which would include the reorganization of security bodies and government ministries, including new appointments. Shtayyeh said structural changes would be made in broad areas of the government, including the judicial system, the economy, health and education. He added that the objective of the reform was to overhaul the Palestinian government to improve its image in the eyes of the world and to stop the "Israeli crimes" against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria (Wafa, January 29, 2024).

►In the ITIC's assessment, it was a public announcement intended to placate the United States and Western countries because of their demand that the PA promote such a move. It is a very complex process and is expected to take a long time. More than six months have passed since Mahmoud Abbas dismissed the PA district governors and no new governors have yet been appointed.

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Iran

► In a communiqué to the president of the UN Security Council, **Saeed Iravani, Iran's permanent ambassador to the UN**, rejected the claims about Iran's involvement in operations against American bases in Iraq and Syria. He claimed that no group connected to

the Iranian armed forces, whether in Iraq, Syria or anywhere else in the region, was under Iran's command or acting on its behalf. Therefore, Iran bore no responsibility for the actions of any person or group in the region (IRNA, January 30, 2024).

► **Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Iranian foreign minister**, wrote that the White House was fully aware that the solution to ending the war, the [alleged] "genocide" in the Gaza Strip and the current crisis in the region was political. He added that diplomacy was active in that direction and that Prime Minister Netanyahu was at the end of his political career (Iranian foreign minister's X account, January 30, 2024).

► **Esmail Khatib, Iranian minister of intelligence**, told a conference in Tehran that the actions of Ansarullah [the Houthis in Yemen] and the "resistance" in the region showed the Muslims' determination and readiness for jihad. He compared the activity of the "resistance" to the wars waged by the Prophet Muhammad against his infidel enemies. Referring to the targeted killings of Iranian "military advisors" in Syria, Khatib said the "resistance" in the region was acting against the "aggressive presence of the United States" in accordance with its decisions and policy and would take any action it saw fit (IRNA, January 29, 2024).

Pro-Iranian militias

Iraq

► The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for a drone attack on "a Zionist military target in our occupied lands in Palestine" on the morning of January 29, 2024 (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, January 29, 2024). No attack was identified in Israeli territory.

► According to a "senior American official," the al-Shadadi base in southeastern Syria was attacked (X account of Lara Seligman, reporter for Politico, January 29, 2024). Saber News, a Telegram channel affiliated with the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq, also reported that the al-Shadadi base had been attacked with rockets (Saber News Telegram channel, January 29, 2024).

► The pro-Iranian Iraqi Nujaba militia issued a statement saying that the United States had to know that it would not dissuade them from achieving their goal and that its soldiers would leave their lands. The statement added that the United States disrespected the region to such an extent that "its president does not know where his soldiers were, in Syria or Jordan," that the United States had to know that the balance of deterrence was in the hands of the "resistance fighters" who mocked its threats and that the "resistance" was not a temporary

activity but a firm belief that was not deterred by threats (Saberin News Telegram channel, January 29, 2024).

Yemen

► The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said that on January 29, 2024, at 3:35 p.m. (Sana'a time), three small vessels approached a container ship sailing in the Bab al-Mandeb area, one of them equipped with a machine gun. The security crew on board the container ship fired a warning shot, the vessels left the area, and the container ship continued on its way (UKMTO X account, January 30, 2024).

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The Arab Arena

Egypt

► **Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** spoke with **UN Secretary-General António Guterres** to discuss the latest developments in the Middle East and Egyptian efforts to bring about a ceasefire and a hostage deal. El-Sisi praised the role played by the UN in achieving a ceasefire and stressed the importance of UNRWA in providing support and assistance to the residents of Gaza. Guterres thanked el-Sisi for Egypt's vital role in promoting calm (Egyptian president's website, January 29, 2024).

► **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** spoke with **King Abdullah II of Jordan** and discussed the ongoing efforts to calm the situation in the Gaza Strip and the efforts to provide urgent humanitarian aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip. El-Sisi confirmed Egypt's full support for Jordan and its desire for security and stability (al-Qahera, January 29, 2024).

Qatar

► **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken** met in Washington with **Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman** to discuss the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the need to find an urgent permanent solution to the Palestinian issue. Abdulrahman condemned the attack on the American base in Jordan (Qatari foreign ministry X account, January 29, 2024).

The International Arena

The International Criminal Court (ICC)

► In an interview given by **Karim Khan, chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC)**, he noted that the ICC in The Hague had carried out a preliminary investigation into the events in the Gaza Strip and the ICC had the jurisdiction to hear the issue of the Gaza Strip and had an obligation to investigate the matter. He said the ICC's activity on the issue would be accelerated (al-Hadath, January 29, 2024).

Sanctions imposed on Iranian officials

► The United States and Britain, acting at the same time, imposed sanctions on a number of Iranian officials involved in assassination and abduction attempts of Iranian journalists, dissidents, and opposition activists on British and American soil and in other countries, on the orders of the Iranian regime. It was also reported that the Iranian officials were members of Unit 840 (United States Department of the Treasury website, January 29, 2024). It is an Iranian operational unit responsible, among other things, for planning and establishing terror infrastructure outside Iran against Western targets and opposition elements.

United States

► In response to Qatari Prime Minister Abdulrahman's statement that the American response to the attack on its base would affect the agreement between Israel and Hamas, **White House spokesperson John Kirby** said that their response would not affect the efforts to release the hostages from the Gaza Strip. He also said that the United States was not looking for escalation or war with Iran. Regarding the hostage deal, Kirby said a lot of work was still needed. **Secretary of State Antony Blinken** said the American response to the attack could be in several levels and stages and could continue over time. Regarding the hostage deal, Blinken said the proposal currently on the table was strong and convincing and that the countries involved in the issue agreed on it (Reuters, January 29, 2024).

Germany

► **German Chancellor Olaf Scholz** spoke with **Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi**. The German government spokesman said the chancellor and the Egyptian president had agreed that there was an urgent need to significantly improve access of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip (Reuters, January 29, 2024).