



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., January 31, 2024

Northern Arena	Israeli Casualties	Rocket Fire
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 740 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:** Over the past day the activity of the IDF forces continued focusing on Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, with additional activity in the northern Gaza Strip. In western Khan Yunis a military building used by a Hamas terrorist squad to ambush IDF forces was attacked. The fighters also raided a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) site for the manufacture of weapons, locating and destroying a lathe for the manufacture of rockets and long-range rockets.

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7, 2023, approximately 1,300 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 560 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.**

► **Negotiations for a hostage deal:** Senior Hamas members reported that they had received the document formulated at the Paris summit for a three-phase hostage deal, during which the military operations of both sides would cease. Senior Hamas members stated they were

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

checking the details of the proposal and claimed Hamas represented all the "organizations" in the Gaza Strip. Senior PIJ members said they had not received the document.

► **UNRWA:** Dealing with the claims against UNRWA continues. Sweden announced that it would stop funding the agency. The UN secretary general has been appealing to the donor countries to restore their funding for the agency.

► **The northern arena:** Hezbollah claimed responsibility for five attacks. Senior Hezbollah members continue threatening Israel with escalating their attacks and claim they are prepared for any eventuality. Three rockets were launched at Israel from Syria, falling in open areas. In response, the Israeli Air Force attacked targets near Daraa in southern Syria.

► **Judea and Samaria:** The IDF forces continued their counterterrorism activities. Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh met with European ambassadors and consuls. He stated they had not left the Strip since the establishment of the PA. The PA foreign ministry issued an announcement stating that all the details of any idea or initiative regarding the future of Gaza had to be shared with and approved by the PA.

► **The pro-Iranian militias:** The secretary general of the Hezbollah Brigades in Iraq announced the suspension of the militia's military and security operations against the American Army. The advisor to the Iraqi Prime Minister for foreign relations said that the decision of the Hezbollah brigades was the result of the Iraqi prime minister's efforts to stop the escalation. The Houthis in Yemen reported they had attacked an American destroyer.

The Southern Arena

► Palestinian media reported more than a hundred dead and 250 wounded in IDF attacks in the Gaza Strip over the past day. In the **northern Gaza Strip**, airstrikes and artillery fire attacks were reported against al-Awda Hospital. In **Gaza City**, an attack on a house in the **Daraj** neighborhood and the demolition of residential complexes in the **Tel al-Hawa** neighborhood were reported. In the **central Gaza Strip**, IDF attacks were reported in **Deir al-Balah and the al-Bureij and al-Nuseirat refugee camps**. In **Khan Yunis**, attacks were reported in the center and west of the city. It was also reported that IDF armored vehicles had withdrawn from the area of **al-Amal Hospital** after destroying its walls, and that shooting continued near the hospital. In **Rafah**, it was reported that an outpost was attacked near the Dhu al-Nourin Mosque and an attack on "agricultural land" in the border area with Egypt (Ma'an, January 31, 2024; Palinfo, January 31, 2024).

►The **southern Gaza Strip**: IDF forces continued their activity in the Khan Yunis area. In the west of the city, directed by the forces on the ground, an attack was carried out from the air on a military structure used by a Hamas terrorist squad to ambush IDF forces. During the operation in west Khan Yunis, the fighters raided a PIJ site for the manufacture of weapons. They located and destroyed a lathe for the manufacture of rockets and found long-range rockets, anti-tank missiles, and mines and IEDs hidden in UNRWA sacks (IDF spokesperson, January 31, 2023).



Some of the weapons found by IDF forces (IDF spokesperson, January 31, 2024)

►**Hasham Zaqout, a correspondent for al-Jazeera TV in Rafah**, reported the IDF was focusing its activities in Khan Yunis on the **al-Manara and al-Katiba** neighborhoods, the western areas and the **center of the city**. The IDF also attacked houses near al-Amal Hospital, and the area around Nasser Hospital is also subject to sporadic attacks (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 31, 2024).



IDF attack on the center of Khan Yunis center on the morning of January 31 (Shehab X account, January 31, 2024)

►The **northern Gaza Strip**: During the past day IDF forces fought with armed terrorist squads. In a raid carried out by the fighters on a terrorist facility located inside a school, about ten PIJ operatives who hid in the school were detained. The fighters located and destroyed five

rockets ready for launching. In an activity near the al-Shati refugee camp, the fighters searched military buildings and found large quantities of weapons, documents and military equipment belonging to Hamas (IDF spokesperson, January 31, 2024).



Right: Attack on a Hamas weapons warehouse. Left: An attack on Hamas terrorists
(IDF spokesperson, January 31, 2024)

Palestinian perspective on the fighting

► **Ali Barakeh, head of Hamas' "external" national relations department**, claimed the reports about Hamas losses in the Gaza Strip were "empty talk" by the Israeli media in an attempt to raise Israeli morale. He claimed the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] was fighting with all its might and inflicting heavy losses on Israel in terms of lives and equipment, adding that the "resistance" [terrorist operatives] had destroyed more than 1,400 Israeli armored vehicles. In response to Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, quoted in the Jerusalem Post, who stated that about a quarter of Hamas' fighters had been killed, and to estimates in the newspaper stating that between 48%-60% of Hamas operatives had lost the ability to fight, he said that that would mean Hamas had surrendered and the statements did not deserve a response. He claimed that since the beginning of the ground campaign they had not been particularly worried because before that Israel used modern aircraft, such as F-15s and F-16s, and Hamas did not have an anti-aircraft system it could use against them, but when Israel began fighting on the ground they inflicted heavy losses and "perhaps more than 5,000" soldiers had been killed (Arab World Press, January 30, 2024). **Note:** Barakeh's numbers regarding the "destroyed" IDF armored vehicles and the extent of IDF casualties are far-fetched and baseless.

Israeli casualties

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7, 2023, approximately 1,300 Israeli people have been killed. According to the IDF spokesperson, 560 of them are soldiers and**

officers (223 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

►An unnamed "senior Hamas member" said that the ceasefire proposal drawn up at the Paris summit consisted of three phases, during which military operations would cease on both sides. He said that the first phase would be the release of women, children, the elderly and the sick, the second phase would be the release of all male and female soldiers, and the third phase would be the transfer of dead bodies (Reuters, January 30, 2024).

►The Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese al-Akhbar published an article detailing the general framework of the agreement document which was approved in Paris and sent to the Palestinian "organizations" (al-Akhbar, January 31, 2024). According to the newspaper:

- ◆ The parties agree to release all Israeli hostages, civilians, soldiers and bodies, and a large number of Palestinian prisoners and detainees will be released from Israeli prisons. In addition, the residents of the Gaza Strip will be allowed to move without restriction and international organizations will be allowed to enter the Gaza Strip.
- ◆ The deal will be carried out in three phases: in the first, about 40 adult hostages, women and children will be released and in return Israel will release the Palestinians it detained after October 7, 2023, sick women and children. Later there will be a discussion to determine a formula of 100 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for each Israeli hostage.
- ◆ A six-week truce will begin during which it will be possible for the Palestinian organizations to collect the hostages who are being held by several "organizations" and in different locations. During this period all military operations will cease, as well as intelligence gathering except in areas where IDF forces are stationed.
- ◆ In the second phase, female soldiers will be released, and Israel demands that this phase include the soldiers and in return it will release a large number of Palestinian prisoners.
- ◆ A second six-week truce will begin, during which it will be possible for the Palestinian organizations to collect the Israeli hostages who were killed and a phase of transferring bodies will begin, during which Israel will release most of the Palestinian detainees it holds.

►Al-Akhbar reported that accepting the document would not be easy and that the final position depended on consultations related to the fact that the "resistance" did not believe it would be forced to lose the hostages, who were its trump card, without receiving guarantees that the war would not be renewed. It was also reported that **Abbas Kamal, head of Egyptian General Intelligence**, had contacted the heads of the "organizations" and invited them to Egypt to discuss the issue (al-Akhbar, January 31, 2024).

►**Muhammad Nizal, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, said they had received the document. He said the framework of the agreement was based on phases and left the details and mechanisms to negotiations that were supposed to begin once the framework had been approved. He said a Hamas delegation would go to Egypt to discuss the document. He added that the document consisted of several phases, during which the military operations on both sides would cease and negotiations would be conducted regarding releases on both sides, which would include numbers, the release mechanism and all other details. Throughout, it would be possible to deliver aid to the Gaza Strip, and the movement of Palestinians from and to the Gaza Strip, especially the wounded and sick, would be possible. He said that the main point to be negotiated was the ceasefire, which had to be made permanent (al-Jazeera Mubasher, January 31, 2024).

►On another occasion, Nizal said that the proposal consisted of phases, each of which was conditioned on the implementation of the preceding one so that it would be possible to evaluate each one separately. Regarding the question of how many prisoners Israel offered to release in exchange for each hostage, he said it was still too early to talk about numbers, and that the talks were now about criteria and ideas. He stated they were determined to release thousands of Palestinian prisoners. He also stated that all negotiations would be conducted in agreement and coordination with the PIJ and the other [terrorist] organizations, and that Hamas represented the "Palestinian resistance" as a whole. He added that the "organizations" had met in Beirut at the end of December 2023, agreed on the concept of the negotiations and authorized Hamas to negotiate on their behalf (al-Arabi TV YouTube channel, January 30, 2024).

►In response to the United States government's initiatives to reach a hostage deal, **Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general**, claimed the organization would not be part of any agreement which did not include a comprehensive ceasefire, the withdrawal of IDF forces, and the guarantee of the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip and a clear political solution that

would guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people (PIJ media information bureau Telegram, January 30, 2024).

► **Muhammad al-Hindi, deputy PIJ secretary general**, claimed it was an agreement for a "framework," that is, general ideas, and so far, no specific issues had been formulated. He noted that the agreement allowed the mediators to begin taking action and they expected that to happen in the coming days, after which they would be informed of the details. He claimed that, in any case, the PIJ's position had been recorded in written form, was a joint position with Hamas and had been delivered to Egypt. He claimed that while they said that they were open to discussing any idea for ending the "aggression" and a hostage deal, the agreement had to include the principles agreed on by Hamas, the PIJ and the "resistance," that is, the cessation of "aggression," a total withdrawal of IDF forces and a guarantee for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. He stressed that those who would ultimately set the terms would be those holding the cards, i.e. the hostages, for control in the field, and the regional tension card, which the United States did not want, and Israel could not handle. He added that on issues related to the exchange deal, such as division into groups, they were flexible, but they were not flexible on the principle of ceasing aggression and reconstructing the Strip. Regarding the guarantees they demanded, he said they insisted on maintaining their strength and retaining their weapons, because that was the basic guarantee, and they also demanded guarantees that the agreement be an international agreement, that is, a guarantee from the United Nations, and other countries (al-Arabi TV YouTube channel, January 30, 2024).

► **Ali Abu Shahin, a member of the PIJ's political bureau**, said that unlike Hamas, they had not been informed about the document drawn up in Paris and had not received it, and he could not comment on something he had not officially received. He pointed out that they had already said that they were open and ready to hear any proposal that led to a total ceasefire, to the end of the war. He pointed out that regardless of the document, which was being talked about as if it contained a "miracle solution," all they heard from the media was that the document focused on the return of the Israeli hostages. He said that if that was the case, it did not bode well. He added that they had not heard a response to their demands, which were the demands of the "Palestinian people," and included a comprehensive ceasefire, the withdrawal of IDF forces from the Gaza Strip, and a regional and international commitment to the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. He claimed it was not just an exchange deal, but a comprehensive political solution to the ongoing campaign. He said the PIJ's participation in

any new understandings or initiatives was conditional on a clear guarantee of a comprehensive ceasefire (al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, January 30, 2024).

[Back To Top](#) 

The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

► **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip** reported that as of 11:42 a.m., January 31, 2024, the number of dead since the beginning of the war stood at 26,900 and the number of wounded at 65,949 (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, January 31, 2024).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

► According to reports, the movement of Palestinian residents towards the "humanitarian crossing" has decreased in recent days, and many residents preferred to stay in west Khan Yunis and find shelter in Nasser and al-Amal Hospitals (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 31, 2024).

UNRWA

► The Swedish government announced that it had suspended funding to UNRWA and noted that the money would be transferred to other humanitarian organizations. Sweden joined other countries which have suspending funding UNRWA, such as France, the United States, Germany and Canada (Reuters, January 30, 2024). In a meeting behind closed doors with 35 ambassadors from donor countries and the European Union, **UN Secretary-General António Guterres** appealed to them to resume funding the agency. He briefed the ambassadors on the actions he had taken following the accusations that UNRWA employees had been actively involved in the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack and massacre (The Washington Post, January 31, 2024).

► **Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov** said that if there were accusations that UNRWA employees had been involved in the war between Hamas and Israel, they had to be dealt with. However, he said, the collective punishment of UNRWA employees was the wrong decision (Sputnik, January 30, 2024).

The issue of "the day after"

► According to an article in the Hezbollah-affiliated daily al-Akhbar, Egypt has begun extensive consultations with regional elements, headed by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Jordan, regarding

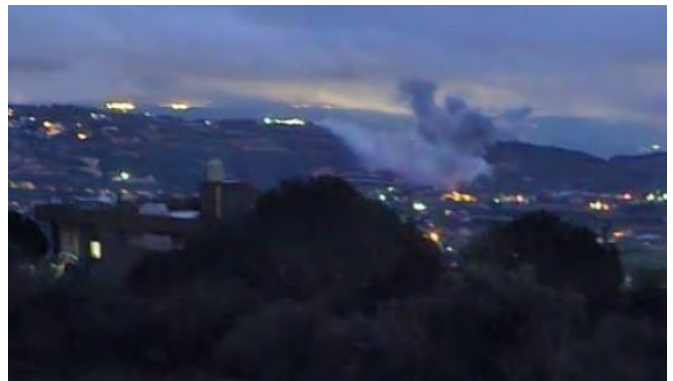
the post-ceasefire phase. It was also reported that although Egypt did not yet have a comprehensive vision, it had begun formulating a proposal regarding a comprehensive Palestinian government that would be responsible for negotiations with the international community (al-Akhbar, January 31, 2024).

[Back To Top](#) ↑

The Northern Arena

Hezbollah attacks

- ▶ During the past day, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for **five attacks**, launching anti-tank missiles and rockets, as well as Burkan rockets (with a warhead weighing 300-500 kg) (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, January 30-31, 2024).
- ▶ In response, IDF fighter jets attacked Hezbollah targets, including an operational headquarters and a surveillance post in the al-Khayyam area, a surveillance post and a military building in the Ayta al-Sha'ab and Muhaibeb area (IDF spokesperson, January 30, 2024).



Israeli Air Force airstrikes in al-Khayyam (Ali Shoeib's X account, January 30, 2024)

Statements by senior Hezbollah leaders

- ▶ During a memorial ceremony for one of Hezbollah's operatives, **Hashem Safi al-Din, chairman of Hezbollah's Executive Council**, said they were fully prepared and that threats did not frighten them. He noted that the “resistance” in the south had new weapons, and that the Israelis should understand that it was only part of what they had. He appealed to Israel and said that if it made a mistake, their response would be faster and stronger than anyone could imagine, and that Israel would not achieve its goals (Radio al-Nur, January 30, 2024).

► **Nabil Qaouq, a member of Hezbollah's Central Council**, said the “resistance” had escalated its “high-quality activities” in response to the Israeli “escalation” and Israel had to know that they had prepared for all the possibilities of war and escalation in quantity and quality. He added that the “resistance” in Lebanon would continue its activity as long as the “aggression” against the Gaza Strip continued, and that despite all the pressure, their position was firm and would not change (al-Ahed, January 31, 2024).

The Lebanese government

► **Najib Mikati, prime minister of Lebanon's interim government**, met in his office with **UNIFIL Commander Aroldo Lázaro** to discuss the security situation on the border with Israel. They discussed ways to implement Resolution 1701 and the coordination between UNIFIL and the Lebanese army (Lebanese government X account, January 30, 2024).

► **Nabih Berri, Lebanese parliament speaker**, met with the ambassadors of the United States, France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Egypt. At the end of the meeting, he said their position was united and that the meeting was useful and promising (NBN Network, January 30, 2024).

Syria

► On the evening of January 30, 2024, three rockets were fired at Israel from Syrian territory. The rockets fell in open areas near Ein Gev and Kfar Haruv. The IDF responded with artillery fire at the sources of fire. Later, fighter jets attacked military infrastructure in the area of the city of Daraa in southern Syria (IDF spokesperson, January 31, 2024).

► The Israeli airstrikes were reportedly carried out against two military targets: Tall al-Jumou’, about 25 kilometers northeast of the Syria-Jordan-Israel tri-border area, and another target near the village of Nafa'ah, about 14 kilometers northeast of the tri-border area, in the rural area of Daraa. No casualties were reported (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, January 30, 2024).

Back To Top 

Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism activities

► Israeli security forces operated in Judea and Samaria during the night, detaining 14 wanted Palestinians and seizing large quantities of weapons. In the Qalandia refugee camp, north of Jerusalem, the fighters located and seized weapons. Another weapon was found in the village

of 'Anata. During the forces' activity in Nablus, an improvised Carlo machine gun was found and seized (IDF spokesperson, January 31, 2024).

► Since the beginning of the war, some 2,990 wanted Palestinians have been detained throughout Judea and Samaria, over 1,350 of them affiliated with Hamas (IDF spokesperson, January 31, 2024).

Palestinian Authority (PA)

► **Muhammad Shtayyeh, PA prime minister**, met in Ramallah with ambassadors and consuls of European countries. Also present at the meeting was **Riyadh al-Maliki, PA foreign minister**. Shtayyeh called for an end to the “aggression” in the Gaza Strip and asked them to exert pressure on Israel to open all the crossings for the delivery of humanitarian aid. He expressed opposition to taking over territories in the Gaza Strip to establish buffer zones. He also called on countries that had suspended their funding to UNRWA to reverse their decision, and updated the participants on the new government reform plan (Wafa, January 30, 2024).




Shtayyeh meets with the diplomats (Wafa, January 30, 2024)

► **Muhammad Shtayyeh** commented on the IDF's activity at Ibn Sina Hospital in Jenin and the activity at al-Shifaa Hospital in Gaza City, saying that Israel's feeling that it could escape punishment encouraged it to continue committing its "crimes." He called on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to intervene urgently and decide to stop “the crimes of genocide” after Israel had refused to implement the urgent steps it was obliged to take a few days ago (Wafa, January 30, 2024).

► **Mahmoud Abbas' office** issued a statement expressing its appreciation for the positions of countries around the world, including Germany, Britain, France and the United States, which rejected Israeli attempts to renew settlement in the Gaza Strip. The statement stressed that holding the conference to renew settlement in the Gaza Strip was a “blatant challenge” to the decision of the ICJ (Wafa, January 30, 2024).

► **The PA foreign ministry** issued a statement saying that any idea or initiative regarding the future of the Gaza Strip had to be approved by the PA and all the details of the initiative shared. According to the statement, it was an internal Palestinian matter and therefore the PA had the right to determine the future of the Gaza Strip, not Israel. The ministry also warned about the Israeli government's plans for the future of the Gaza Strip, noting they were ongoing attempts to eliminate the Palestinians and their rights (PA foreign ministry X account, January 31, 2024).

[Back To Top](#) 

Iran

► The British Guardian reported (January 30, 2024) that Iran had warned the United States through intermediaries that if the United States attacked it directly in response to the attack on the Syria-Jordan border, in which three American soldiers were killed, Iran would attack American assets in the Middle East. Meanwhile, **Iranian Ambassador to the UN Amir Saeed Iravani** declared that any attack on Iranian soil, against Iranian interests or on Iranian citizens outside the country's borders would be met with a "decisive response." He denied reports of messages exchanged between the United States and Iran over the past two days (IRNA, January 31, 2024).

Pro-Iranian militias

Iraq

► **The secretary-general of Kataib Hezbollah (Hezbollah Brigades)** issued a statement announcing the suspension of military and security operations against the United States Army to "avoid embarrassment to the Iraqi government." It was reported that they would continue to defend their people in the Gaza Strip in other ways, and that they had instructed Kataib Hezbollah fighters to take passive defense temporarily if there was an American act of aggression against them. According to the statement, they had decided to support their people in the Gaza Strip without any interference from others (Kataib Hezbollah Telegram channel, January 30, 2024).

► **Farhad Alaa al-Din, Iraqi prime minister's advisor on foreign relations**, said Kataib Hezbollah's decision to suspend their attacks against American forces had come after many days of efforts by **Iraqi Prime Minister Muhammad Shia' al-Sudani** to stop the escalation.

He said all sides had to support the Iraqi prime minister's efforts to prevent any escalation (Reuters, January 31, 2024).

► A senior American Treasury Department official said the United States expected the Iraqi government to share any information about the actions of pro-Iranian militias after the attack in Jordan that killed American soldiers. It was also noted that the militias were using Iraqi funds to carry out attacks and military operations, and they had to deal with that issue immediately (Reuters, January 31, 2024).

Yemen

► The United States Army Central Command (CENTCOM) reported that on January 30, 2024, at around 23:30 (Sana'a time), the Houthis had launched an anti-ship cruise missile from areas under their control in Yemen towards the Red Sea. It was intercepted by the destroyer USS Gravelly, and no damage or casualties were reported (CENTCOM X account, January 31, 2024).

► **Yahya Saria, spokesman for the Houthi armed forces**, said they had fired several naval missiles at the American destroyer USS Gravelly in the Red Sea. He stressed that all American and British warships in the Red and Arab Seas participating in the "aggression" against them were in their forces' target bank (Yahya Saria's X account, January 30, 2024).

► **Mohammad Ali al-Houthi, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, said they had received a message from the United States via Oman, threatening to open campaigns and use fronts against them. He noted that any adventure or stupid act that included the implementation of the American threat was doomed to failure (Mohammad Ali al-Houthi's X account, January 30, 2024).

► **Mohammad al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, addressed Britain and the United States, saying that their war was moral, and therefore they should not waste their time because the decision whether to stop military operations was not in Tehran, Moscow or Beijing but in the Gaza Strip (Mohammed al-Bukhaiti's X account, January 31, 2024).

The Arab Arena

Jordan

► **Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman al-Safadi** spoke with **Iraqi Foreign Minister Fouad Hussein** and discussed the attack on the American base in Jordanian territory on January 27, 2024. They stressed that both countries and the region had to be distanced from military threats (Iraqi News Agency, January 30, 2024).

► **Ayman al-Safadi** also spoke by phone with **David Cameron, the British foreign secretary**, to discuss the situation in the Gaza Strip. He said the continued “aggression” against the Gaza Strip and the worsening humanitarian situation were dangerous. He also said UNRWA should continue to be supported (Jordanian foreign ministry X account, January 30, 2024).

Qatar

► **Tamim bin Hamad, Emir of Qatar**, spoke with **Mahmoud Abbas, PA chairman**, and discussed regional and international efforts towards an immediate ceasefire and de-escalation. The two stressed that humanitarian aid had to continue to enter the Gaza Strip to achieve peace and stability in the region. Abbas updated bin Hamad on the latest developments in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria and thanked Qatar for its support of the Palestinian cause (Qatar News Agency, January 30, 2024).

► **Mohammed bin Abdulrahman, Qatar's prime minister and foreign minister**, met in Washington with **Jake Sullivan, the American national security advisor**, and in a separate meeting with senior Congressmen. During the meetings, the parties discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the need to find a solution to the Palestinian issue and continue to bring humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. During the meeting with Sullivan, the latter called for all efforts to pressure Hamas to immediately release all the hostages (Qatari foreign ministry X account, January 31, 2024).

► **Mohammed al-Khulaifi, minister of state in the Qatari foreign ministry**, met in Doha with the German envoy for hostage affairs and discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip. Al-Khulaifi stressed that humanitarian aid had to continue to enter the Gaza Strip on an ongoing basis and that regional and international efforts to reach an immediate ceasefire had to be strengthened. The German envoy said Germany appreciated Qatar for its efforts regarding the Palestinians (Qatari foreign ministry X account, January 30, 2024).

Iraq

► During a visit to Baghdad, Qods Force commander Esmail Qaani reportedly met with the militia leaders and later with Iraqi Prime Minister Muhammad Shia' al-Sudani. It was also reported that the meeting with al-Sudani had lasted four hours and that Qaani had conveyed a message to the Americans that the Iranians were not aware of the militias' activity and that if Iranian soil was attacked, they would respond by attacking American bases in Iraq (Iraq Press X account, January 31, 2024). So far, the report has not been confirmed by any other sources.