



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., February 13, 2024

Northern Arena	Israeli Casualties	Rocket Fire
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 825 attacks• 192 Hezbollah operatives killed• 33 operatives of other terrorist-organization killed• One non-affiliated operative• One Lebanese army soldier killed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately 1,500 military and civilian dead (unofficial estimate)• 130 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:** During the past day IDF forces continued fighting in west **Khan Yunis** to increase control over the area. In **the central Gaza Strip** the forces clashed with armed terrorist squads. The Palestinians cautioned against an IDF entrance into Rafah and said Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah had met with Ziyad al-Nakhalah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) secretary general, to coordinate positions should such an event occur. The Palestinians further warned that the expansion of the campaign to Rafah would endanger the Paris proposal and Hamas' response to it.

► **According to unofficial statistics, since October 7, 2023, approximately 1,500 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 569 of them soldiers and officers; 130 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip; 123 hostages have been returned to Israel.**

► **Negotiations for a hostage deal:** Hamas stated that Israel's response to their proposal differed from the original proposal as formulated in Paris and included conditions and raised

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

obstacles that did not help progress towards an agreement. Meanwhile, they reiterated that Hamas adhered to its position and claimed the movement was working to reach an agreement.

►**The situation in the Gaza Strip:** According to reports, in an attempt to find shelter, Gazans have been moving from the Rafah area to the Deir al-Balah area in the central Gaza Strip and to the Egypt-Gaza Strip border area.

►**The northern arena:** During the past day, Hezbollah carried out ten attacks. Two Israeli civilians were seriously injured when an anti-tank missile hit a building in Kiryat Shmona. The IDF responded by attacking Hezbollah targets and facilities in south Lebanon. Hezbollah announced five deaths in the attacks, the PIJ announced two deaths. According to reports, France submitted a proposal for an arrangement which included the withdrawal of Hezbollah forces from the border area and the deployment of Lebanese army forces in the area. Hassan Fadalallah, head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, refused to comment on the proposal and said Hezbollah would not discuss any matter related to south Lebanon before the cessation of the "aggression" in the Gaza Strip.

►**Judea and Samaria:** A vehicle ramming attack was attempted in the Gush Etzion area. The terrorist who carried it out was detained. The IDF forces continued their counterterrorism activities.

►**Iran:** The Iranian foreign minister continued his round of visits and arrived in Doha, the capital of Qatar. It was his fifth visit to Qatar since the outbreak of the war.

►**The international arena:** Given reports claiming Egypt might suspend its peace agreement with Israel if a military move is carried out in Rafah, Sameh Shoukry, the Egyptian foreign minister, said that Egypt has had a peace agreement with Israel for 40 years and that it will continue in the future.

The Southern Arena

►Palestinian media reported during the past day IDF attacks focused on the Nuseirat refugee camp in **the central Gaza Strip**, and on **Khan Yunis**, where IDF tanks fired at the east and west of the city. IDF forces continue to surround Nasser Hospital; according to reports there was a power outage at the hospital and supplies of food and water had run out. In **Rafah** the IDF attacked in the west of the city and in the Brazil neighborhood in its center (Wafa, February 13, 2024).



IDF forces in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, February 13, 2024)



An al-Jazeera TV presenter describes the IDF's fighting in the south and west of Khan Yunis (Aljazeera YouTube channel, February 12, 2024)

► **The southern Gaza Strip:** During the past day, the IDF continued fighting in western Khan Yunis to increase its control of the area. The forces raided terrorist facilities and attacked sniper ambushes and patrols. During the operation, two weapons warehouses located inside terrorists' houses were attacked from the air. The forces encountered ambushes and killed more than 30 armed terrorist operatives (IDF spokesman, February 13, 2024).

► Palestinian media reported heavy exchanges of fire between IDF forces and the "resistance" in east Rafah, and added that the Israeli Air Force had attacked in east Rafah (Shehab X account, February 13, 2024).



Israeli Air Force attack in east Rafah (Shehab X account, February 13, 2024)

► **Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas member**, held a press conference where he said the IDF continued besieging the Nasser Medical Center in Khan Yunis, surrounding it with snipers as part of an [alleged] "continuing war crime" against what was left of the medical sector, repeating its policy of attacking hospitals and medical centers as it had in the northern Gaza Strip. He again called on the international community, the UN and international organizations, especially the World Health Organization and the International Red Cross, to bear humanitarian, legal and moral responsibility, and to intervene immediately to protect the hospital and its facilities from being systematically attacked (al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, February 12, 2024).

► **The central Gaza Strip:** During the past day IDF forces focused their activity on squads of armed terrorist operatives, killing about ten of them, some of whom were preparing to fire anti-tank missiles at IDF forces (IDF spokesperson, February 13, 2024).

► **The northern Gaza Strip:** Palestinian media reported that the Israeli Air Force had attacked in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City several times (Shehab X account, February 13, 2024).



Israeli Air Force strikes in Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza (Shehab X account, February 13, 2024)

Palestinian perspective on the fighting

► Al-Jazeera TV reported that in the third phase of the integrated ground maneuver in the Gaza Strip, the IDF had begun to use new tactics, based on reducing the number of soldiers while focusing on specific operations, and that in response to the change, the "organizations" had also changed their defensive tactics and were relying more and more on snipers. According to al-Jazeera, Hamas snipers seemed to move more freely than previously. It was also reported that Hamas snipers used two main types of rifles: the locally produced al-Ghoul rifle, and the Chinese M99 rifle, which has a range of 1.5 kilometers (a little less than a mile) (al-Jazeera website, February 11, 2024).

Israeli casualties

►According to unofficial statistics, since October 7, 2023, approximately 1,500 Israeli people have been killed. According to the IDF spokesperson, 569 of them are soldiers and officers (232 since the start of the ground maneuver on 27 October, 2023); 130 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip; 123 hostages have been returned.

Reactions to the release of the two hostages

►According to **Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas member**, Israel claimed to have reached two Israeli hostages in the al-Shaboura camp in Rafah and freed them, and marketed it as an achievement. He claimed while they were waiting for the report of the "resistance" about the incident, since it was the "reliable source" [sic] of information, there were press reports according to which the two hostages had not been held Hamas or its military wing, but by a civilian family, which cast doubt on the credibility of the Israeli version and "proved" its efforts to exaggerate the event in search of a non-existent achievement against the "resistance." He claimed the last word [of the affair] would be what the "resistance" announced, adding that the [alleged] "exaggeration" of the description of the operation and its results were evidence of the Israeli government's "confusion," which was trying to score an achievement and inflate it for Israeli public opinion (al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, February 12, 2024).

►**Muhammad Nizal, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, claimed the version promoted by Israel regarding the release of the two Israeli hostages was false and intended to raise morale in Israel. He claimed the Israeli operation was "routine," as the two Israeli hostages were [allegedly] in a "civilian apartment" after being "captured" [kidnapped] by Palestinian "civilians" on October 7, 2023. He added that "eyewitnesses" said there were no clashes with the "fighters" of Hamas' military wing, as claimed by Israel, and that no special operation was conducted in the building where the two hostages were found, since the Israeli forces entered based on intelligence information and rescued the two hostages "without any confrontations taking place." He said IDF forces were unable to reach any of the hostages held by the organizations, especially by Hamas' military wing (al-Arabi TV website, February 12, 2024).

Extending the integrated ground maneuver to Rafah

► **Muhammad Nizal, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, said Hamas had been working politically with many parties in recent days, including the Qatari and Egyptian mediators, to prevent the IDF forces from entering Rafah, adding that the efforts were ongoing. He said that if the "invasion" was carried out, the Palestinian "resistance" would have no choice but to fight. Asked if they would continue negotiations [for a hostage deal] if the IDF entered Rafah, he said he did not want to put the cart before the horse, adding that if a decision was made to stop the indirect negotiations, Hamas would announce it (al-Arabi TV website, February 12, 2024). On another occasion, he said that Israel's threat to invade Rafah was an attempt to pressure Hamas into negotiations, adding that there was a need for Arab and international action to stop the expected "aggression." He said the "resistance" had no choice but to confront the IDF and "protect the Palestinian people in Rafah" (al-Jazeera Mubasher TV website, February 13, 2024).

► Asked about the meeting of **Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of Hezbollah**, and **Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general**, **Ihsan Ataya, a member of the PIJ political bureau**, said a meeting of leaders of the "resistance axis"² was important because of the Israeli threat to attack Rafah. He stated that the objective of the Israeli threat was to pressure the "resistance," adding that the issue had been discussed in depth at the meeting. He claimed that both Nasrallah and al-Nakhalah were "calm" regarding's the "resistance's" ability to inflict heavy losses on the IDF, should it carry out a ground operation in Rafah. He claimed the meeting had sent Israel the message that the "resistance axis" was united and that joint operations rooms existed at the highest levels (al-Mayadeen Programs YouTube channel, February 12, 2024).

► **Yusuf Hamdan, Hamas representative in Algeria**, claimed that the Israeli "aggression" against civilians in Rafah was a "crime against humanity" and the fulfillment of threats made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He claimed Israel sought to force the Palestinian people out of the Gaza Strip and commit more [alleged] "massacres." He claimed an Israeli attack in Rafah would harm the essence of the Paris proposal, adding that Netanyahu intended to push them to negotiate under fire, raising the bar and exerting pressure by harming "civilians," while at the same time he ignored the rulings of the

² Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.

International Court of Justice, which clearly demanded guarantees there would be no more [alleged] civilian "massacres." Hamdan reiterated the "resistance's" refusal to negotiate under military pressure. He said that the attack on Rafah endangered the Paris proposal and Hamas' response to it. He also said they maintained ongoing contact with Egypt because Rafah was located on the Gazan-Egyptian border, which had various implications for Egyptian national security. He also emphasized that from a military point of view they were prepared, and claimed an entire "resistance" brigade as located in the area, ready to confront IDF forces (al-Hayat al-Arabiya website, Algeria, February 12, 2024).

The issue of the hostages and a ceasefire agreement

► **Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas member**, held a press conference where he said Hamas' response to the Paris proposal had been discussed at a meeting of the Hamas delegation in Cairo with the mediators, and in Egyptian-Qatari assessment the response was positive and opened the door to reaching an agreement. The Hamas delegation had been informed of Israel's response to the proposal and was of the opinion that Israel's response was inconsistent with the wording of the Paris proposal, imposing conditions and raising obstacles which would not help in reaching an agreement that would lead to an end of the "aggression" against the Palestinians. Hamdan said Israel's response did not guarantee the Gazans freedom of movement, the displaced persons' return to their former places of residence, or the withdrawal of the IDF from the entire territory of the Gaza Strip. He claimed it revealed Israel's lack of responsiveness to the need to open the crossings. He claimed that the "equations" for a hostage deal presented by Israel "proved" it was not serious about reaching a deal. He added that the prime minister of Israel continued evading and procrastinating, was not interested in reaching an agreement, and was trying to prolong the war and gain time out of personal considerations for to his political future. Hamdan reiterated yet again that the Hamas movement adhered to its position, and "diligently" sought an agreement (al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, February 12, 2024).

► A "source" in the "resistance axis" stated that Israel was trying to strip the Paris proposal of content and sought to reap achievements only on the subject of the hostages. He claimed that despite the desire of the "resistance" for the efforts of the mediators to succeed, it would not waive up its demands (al-Mayadeen, February 13, 2024).

The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

►The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip reported at 10:30 a.m., February 13, 2024, that during the past day 133 Gazans had been killed and 162 wounded, bringing the number of dead since the beginning of the war to 28,473 and the number of wounded to 68,146 (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, February 13, 2024).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

►Following concern about the expansion of the campaign to the Rafah area, dozens of families fled from Rafah towards Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip, and heavy traffic was reported on Gaza's coastal road (Wafa YouTube channel, February 12, 2024). Meanwhile, Rafah residents erected tents near the border fence with Egypt because the area is considered safe from IDF attacks. Gazans who were interviewed said it was their last stop in the Gaza Strip, adding that even if Egypt allowed them to leave and enter the Sinai Peninsula, they intended to remain (al-Arabiya YouTube channel, February 12, 2024).



Residents of Rafah leave the city (Wafa YouTube channel, February 13, 2024)



Right: Residents evacuate from Rafah to the Deir al-Balah area (Wafa, February 12, 2024).

Left: Residents erecting tents near the border fence with Egypt (al-Arabiya YouTube channel, February 12, 2024)

The Northern Arena

Hezbollah attacks

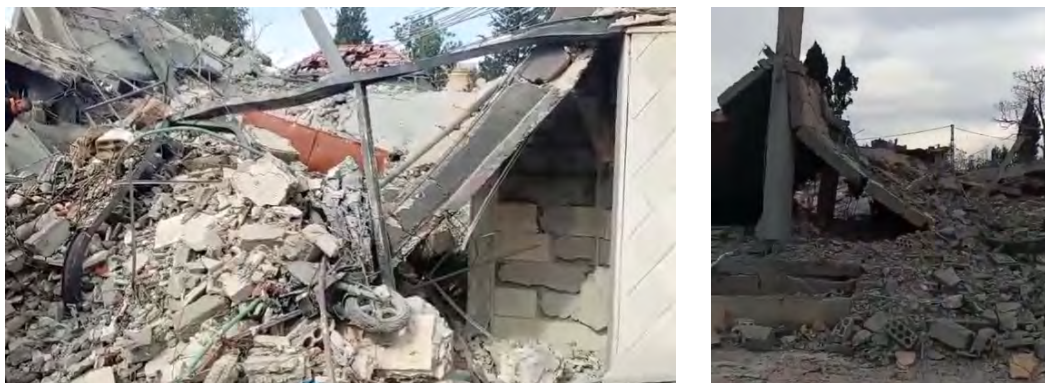
- ▶ During the past day, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for **ten attacks** using anti-tank missiles, rockets, a Burkan rocket (whose warheads weigh between 660 and 1100 pounds) and a Falaq-1 rocket (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, February 12-13, 2024).
- ▶ Hezbollah reported that on February 13, 2024 at 11:15 a.m. it attacked an Israel Police building in Kiryat Shmona (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, February 13, 2024). In Israel it was reported that two civilians were seriously injured when an anti-tank missile hit a building in Kiryat Shmona, (Israeli media, February 13, 2024).
- ▶ In response to the attacks, Israeli Air Force warplanes attacked a terrorist infrastructure of Hezbollah in the Tallouseh area, a military building in the Blida area, and mortar shells were at a surveillance post in the al-Khiyam (IDF spokesperson, February 12, 2024).



Right: Attack on a Hezbollah terrorist facility in the Tallouseh area. Left: Attack on a Hezbollah military structure in the Blida area (IDF spokesperson, February 12, 2024)



Attack on a surveillance post in the al-Khiyam area (IDF spokesperson, February 12, 2024)



Right: Attack in Maroun al-Ras (Fouad Khreiss' X account, February 12, 2024). Left: Attack in Blida (Fouad Khreiss' X account, February 12, 2024)

►Ali Shoeib, a correspondent for the al-Manar network, published photos of three UAVs and an Israeli Air Force F-15 aircraft, and noted that such aircraft carried out hundreds of sorties in south Lebanon's airspace (Ali Shoeib's X account, February 12, 2024).



Israeli aircraft circle in the skies of south Lebanon (Ali Shoeib's X account, February 12, 2024)

Hezbollah and PIJ casualties

►Hezbollah reported the death of five operatives, all from south Lebanon, three of them from Tallouseh, about seven kilometers west of Kiryat Shmona (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, February 12-13, 2024).

- ◆ Muhammad Bakr Hassan Bassam, aka Khomeini, born in 1989 in Aynata.
- ◆ Ali Ahmed Muhanna, aka Malik, born in 1988 in Maroun al-Ras.
- ◆ Hussein Jamil Harisi, aka Sajed, born in 1994 in Tallouseh.
- ◆ Hassan Ahmed Termes, aka Karar, born in 1988 in Tallouseh.
- ◆ Ahmed Hussein Termes, aka Halal, born in 1991 in Tallouseh.



Hezbollah casualties (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, February 12-13, 2024)

►The Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military wing, announced the death of two operatives of the Shaheed Ali al-Assoud Battalion – the Syrian Arena, who participated in the south Lebanon front of Operation al-Aqsa Flood. They were Muhammad Musa Fares, aka Abu Jihad and Suleiman Shehada Suleiman, aka Abu Talib (Filastin al-Yawm, February 12, 2024). The notice was also published on the Jerusalem Brigades' Telegram channel, but was deleted and then reposted.



The PIJ casualties (Jerusalem Brigades Telegram channel, February 12, 2024)



The PIJ casualties (al-Mayadeen, February 12, 2024)

►Ali Murtada, a correspondent for the Hezbollah-affiliated al-Mayadeen network, published a list of the names of 201 operatives of Hezbollah, the Amal Movement, the PIJ's

military wing, the Lebanese army, the Syrian National Party and Hezbollah's health organization who had been killed since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip (Ali Murtada's X account, February 13, 2024).

UNIFIL

► **Andrea Tenenti, spokesman for UNIFIL**, claimed that according to reports he had seen in the media, the city of Nabataea was included in Israel's reservoir of targets. He noted that he was not aware the Lebanese army and UNIFIL had discussed the issue and claimed they were investing efforts to calm tensions and prevent dangerous misunderstandings between the parties (RT, February 13, 2024).

Proposal for an arrangement

► Reuters published the details of a French proposal for an arrangement between Israel and Lebanon. It is a three-stage proposal which will be implemented "when the conditions are ripe." According to the proposal, Hezbollah's forces, including its Radwan forces, will withdraw from south Lebanon to a distance of ten kilometers from the border with Israel, Lebanese army forces of up to 15,000 soldiers will be deployed in south Lebanon, and talks between Israel and Lebanon regarding the border demarcation issue will be resumed (Reuters, February 13, 2024).

► Hassan Fadalallah, head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, refused to comment on the proposal and said in response that Hezbollah would not discuss any matter related to south Lebanon before the end of the "aggression" in the Gaza Strip, adding that Israel was in no position to impose conditions (Reuters, February 13, 2024).

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Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attacks

► On the morning of February 13, 2024, a Palestinian tried to run over civilians at the Gush Etzion junction. He fled and after a chase was shot and detained by an IDF force. A knife was found in his possession (IDF spokesperson, February 13, 2024).



Right: The scene of the attack (Shehab X account, February 13, 2024). Left: A knife found in the Palestinian's possession (IDF spokesperson, February 13, 2024).

Counterterrorism activities

- ▶ During the past day, Israeli security forces detained 18 wanted Palestinians. Since the beginning of the war, about 3,100 wanted Palestinians have been detained, of whom more than 1,350 were Hamas operatives (IDF spokesperson's X account, February 13, 2024).
- ▶ On the night of February 12, 2024, Israeli security forces operating in Jenin and its refugee camp uncovered IEDs, detained three wanted Palestinians and seized weapons (IDF spokesperson's X account, February 13, 2024). The Palestinian media reported exchanges of fire during the forces' activity in Jenin with armed Palestinians and the detonation of an IED against the forces (Shehab X account, February 13, 2024). The Palestinian media also reported activity in the village of Sir, south of Jenin, during which five Palestinians were detained after barricading themselves in a house in the village. The five detainees included four brothers and a relative from the Arshid family. The forces allegedly fired several shells at the house, and a fire broke out which caused extensive damage (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, February 13, 2024).



The house in the village where the five wanted Palestinians barricaded themselves (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, February 13, 2024)

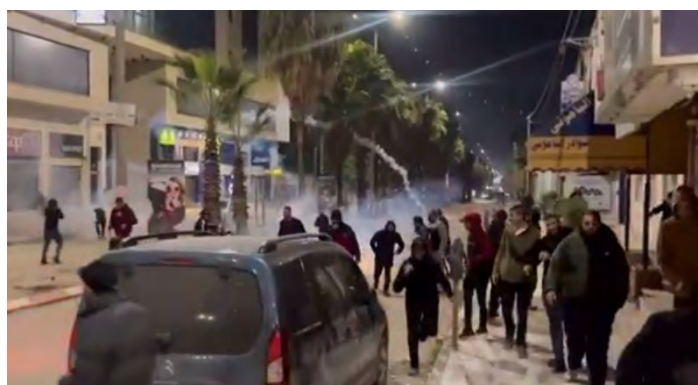
►The Israeli security forces also operated in Silwad (northeast of Ramallah), Hawwara, Hebron and Kafr a-Ram (southwest of Ramallah), detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity and seizing weapons and funds intended to finance terrorist activity (IDF spokesperson's X account, February 13, 2024).

Solidarity with the Gaza Strip

►On the evening of February 12, 2024, marches were held in Ramallah and Jenin in support of the Gaza Strip and the "resistance" (Hurriya News, February 12, 2024). The participants in the Jenin march were reporting as chanting, "The people want to topple the Rais [i.e., the PA chairman]," and demanded the release of six PIJ Jenin Battalion operatives recently detained by the PA's security services. The PA's security services suppressed the march as it passed through Haifa Street near the Muqata'a in Jenin. They fired tear gas canisters and stun grenades at the march participants to disperse them and shot live bullets in the air. As a result, there were exchanges of fire between Jenin Battalion operatives and the security services (al-Shahed website, February 13, 2024; QudsN, February 12, 2024; al-Araby al-Jadeed, February 13, 2024).



**Right: The march in Ramallah (X account of the Palestinian al-Ersal Network, February 12, 2024).
Left: The march in Jenin (QudsN X account, February 12, 2024)**



**Suppression of the march in Jenin (Right: al-Araby al-Jadeed, February 13, 2024;
left: QudsN Telegram channel, February 12, 2024)**

Palestinian Authority (PA)

► **Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh** met with **Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte**. Shtayyeh briefed him on the consequences of the war in the Gaza Strip and stressed that their top priority now was stopping the war and increasing the humanitarian aid entering the Gaza Strip. He asked Rutte to exert pressure to stop the Israeli plan to expand the fighting to the Rafah area (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, February 12, 2024).



**Shtayyeh meets with the Dutch prime minister
(Mohammed Shtayyeh's Facebook page, February 12, 2024)**

► According to reports "from informed Palestinian sources," Mahmoud Abbas thanked the emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad, for Qatar's role in mediating between Fatah and Hamas so that Hamas would enter the PLO and a Palestinian technocratic government could be formed. The sources also reported that Abbas had expressed Fatah's willingness to renew the reconciliation process with Hamas to end the internal Palestinian schism. A member of Hamas' political bureau said that during the meeting in Beirut about two months ago, Hamas had agreed with all the Palestinian "organizations" to take a series of steps, including the establishment of a reconciliation government (al-Sharq, February 12, 2024).

► **Riyadh Mansour, PA representative to the UN**, sent three communiqués to the UN secretary-general, the president of the Security Council and the president of the General Assembly calling for an end to the war in the Gaza Strip and warning of an Israeli military operation in Rafah, where more than 1.4 million Gazans currently lived (Wafa, February 12, 2024).

► **Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov** invited **Mahmoud Abbas, PA chairman**, to visit Russia (RIA, February 13, 2024).

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Iran

► **Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Iranian foreign minister**, visited Doha, the capital of Qatar. He met with **Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani** to discuss regional and Palestinian developments and efforts for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip (Fars, February 12, 2024). It was Abdollahian's fifth visit to Qatar since the outbreak of the war in the Gaza Strip. During his visit, he also met with **the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani**, to discuss bilateral relations and regional and international developments, mainly developments in the Palestinian arena (IRNA, February 13, 2024). He also met with **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, to discuss the war in the Gaza Strip and the need to end the "crimes of the occupation" (IRNA, February 13, 2024).

► **Nasser Kanani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry**, condemned the IDF attacks in Rafah. He warned that Israel's actions in Rafah and its threats to launch a ground operation in the city could lead to "a humanitarian disaster and another war crime" against the Palestinian people (Fars, February 13, 2024).

Pro-Iranian militias

Iraq

► Explosions were reported from the direction of the al-Omar oil field in eastern Deir ez-Zor, Syria, as a result of a rocket attack (Radio Sham Telegram channel, February 12, 2024).

► **Abd al-Aziz al-Mohammedawi** (Abu Fadak), chief of staff of the **Popular Mobilization**, the umbrella organization of the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq, said that the revenge for Abu Baqir al-Saadi's death would be the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Iraq, and that they were prepared for more casualties until sovereignty was restored to Iraq. He said they had begun

formulating positions together with the Iraqi government and relevant officials to respond forcefully to the activity of the American forces, noting that the response would not be hasty but with the broad agreement of the militias, the government and the “resistance” operatives (al-Ittihad, February 12, 2024). Al-Saadi, a Kataib Hezbollah (Hezbollah Battalions) commander, was killed in an American Army airstrike in Iraq on February 7, 2024.



Abd al-Aziz al-Mohammedawi (al-Ittihad, February 12, 2024)

Yemen

►The United States Central Command (CENTCOM) reported that on February 12, 2024, from 2:30 to 3:45 a.m., the Houthis fired two missiles in the Bab al-Mandeb area at the Greek-owned MV Star Iris cargo ship, flying the Marshall Islands flag. Superficial damage was reported. According to CENTCOM’s statement, the ship's destination was the city of Bandar Imam Khomeini in Iran (CENTCOM X account, February 13, 2024).

The Arab Arena

Egypt

► **Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry** said during his visit to Slovenia that Egypt had had a peace agreement with Israel for 40 years and that it would continue in the future. He also said they opposed any uprooting of Gazans by military operations. He stressed that Egypt would continue to invest efforts for a ceasefire and a hostage agreement (al-Qahera 24, February 12, 2024). Shoukry’s remarks came after reports that Egypt might suspend its peace agreement with Israel if Israel carried out a military operation in Rafah.

The International Arena

UNRWA

► **Josep Borrell, EU foreign policy chief**, said it was no secret that for years the Israeli government had wanted to get rid of UNRWA, thinking that if it got rid of the agency, it would also get rid of the Palestinian refugee problem (EU website, February 12, 2024). **Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA's commissioner-general**, said at a joint press conference with Josep Borrell that he had no intention of resigning following accusations that several UNRWA employees had participated in the October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorist attack and massacre. He noted that 12 employees had already been fired and that they had decided an audit would be conducted by an external institution. He also noted the difficulties they had operating in Rafah (Sky News X account, February 12, 2024).

► Hamas issued a statement saying it was "proof" that Israel's accusations against UNRWA were fabricated and that it was trying to eliminate the agency and what it represented. Hamas stressed UNRWA's importance for the Palestinians and called on the UN and the countries supporting it not to surrender to the "lie machine of the Zionist entity" because, according to UNRWA's commissioner general, Israel had [allegedly] not provided any proof of its allegations (Hamas Telegram channel, February 12, 2024).

International Criminal Court (ICC)

► **Karim Khan, chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC)** in The Hague, said they were investigating every crime allegedly committed in the Gaza Strip and that anyone who violated the law would be held accountable. He said they were investigating the situation in the [so-called] "State of Palestine" and were concerned about Israeli attacks and the possible entry of IDF forces into Rafah. At the same time, he noted that he continued to call for the immediate release of all the hostages, since that issue was also an important part of the investigations they were conducting (Reuters, February 12, 2024).

United States

► During a joint press conference held by **King Abdullah II of Jordan** with **President Joe Biden**, Biden noted that the United States was working on the issue of a hostage deal that would lead to a lull of at least six weeks. He also said that no military operation in Rafah could be launched without an agreed plan regarding the civilians there, and that many of the civilians killed in the Gaza Strip were innocent civilians and children (Reuters, February 13,

2024). King Abdullah referred to an Israeli attack on Rafah, stressing that it would lead to another humanitarian disaster and that they could not stand by and let the situation continue as it was. Regarding UNRWA, he said that no UN agency could do UNRWA's work and that its work was also essential in Jordan (al-Mamlaka, February 13, 2024).

Britain

► Britain imposed sanctions on four Israelis for "threatening and committing acts of violence against Palestinians in the West Bank" (Reuters, February 12, 2024). In doing so, Britain joins the United States and Canada, which have imposed sanctions on Jewish settlers involved in violence against Palestinians.

Turkey

► **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** said in a speech given at a cabinet meeting that he would go to Egypt on February 14, 2024, at the invitation of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, to discuss "Israeli massacres of the residents of the Gaza Strip." He said Turkey would not allow any terrorist organization to carry out operations and that the Israeli government crossed a red line every day with its "massacres" (Anadolu News, February 12, 2024).

► **The Turkish foreign ministry** said it was very concerned about the escalation of Israel's attacks on Rafah and considered them part of a plan to uproot Gaza Strip residents from their land. According to the statement, the attacks aggravated the humanitarian disaster, and they called on the international community to take steps to stop Israel (Turkish foreign ministry X account, February 12, 2024).