



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., February 25, 2024

Northern Arena	Israeli Casualties	Rocket Fire
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 911 attacks• 211 Hezbollah operatives killed• 39 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:** After the IDF activity at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis the forces left the compound, however, military activity continued and expanded to the Abasan area, southeast of the city. In Gaza City, activity continued mainly in the Zeitoun neighborhood. IDF forces also clashed with armed terrorist squads in the northern and central Gaza Strip.

► **According to unofficial data, since October 7, 2023, approximately 1,500 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 579 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 released.**

► **Negotiations for a hostage deal:** The Hamas delegation concluded its talks in Cairo. According to some reports, during the talks Hamas showed a certain amount of flexibility regarding its conditions. Talks were held in Paris, attended by representatives from Israel, the United States, Qatar and Egypt, and were described as "good." Hamas members stated they had not received reports about the results of the talks and said they would adhere to their

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

previous conditions: there would be no hostage deal before the cessation of hostilities, and they demanded an end to the IDF presence inside the Strip, the introduction of aid and the beginning of reconstruction. There is also a stalemate regarding the number of hostages and prisoners who will be released in the deal.

► **The situation in the Gaza Strip:** According to reports, 60 trucks of humanitarian aid and four fuel tankers entered the northern Gaza Strip. However, UNRWA reported that deliveries to the northern Gaza Strip had to be stopped because the trucks were in danger of being attacked by civilians.

► **The "day after:"** In response to the disclosure of the Israeli prime minister's plan for the post-war future of the Gaza Strip, senior Hamas members claimed that all the plans were doomed to failure and Israel would not succeed in changing either the geography or demography of the Gaza Strip. However, they did not rule out the establishment of an "independent government of experts," with Palestinian consent, that would manage Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, and whose source of authority would be the PLO.

► **The northern arena:** Over the weekend, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 25 attacks. The IDF responded by attacking Hezbollah targets from the air and with artillery fire. Hezbollah reported six dead. Reportedly, one of the casualties was a senior commander in the Radwan Force. The French government submitted a formal written proposal to the Lebanese government for a political end to the tensions in south Lebanon, and is awaiting an official Lebanese response.

► **Judea and Samaria:** An IDF UAV attacked a vehicle carrying Yasser Hanoun, a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist operative from Jenin, who was on his way to carry out an attack. Recently, Hanoun carried out several shooting attacks against the security forces, settlements and crossings. The terrorist in the vehicle with him was also killed.

► **The pro-Iranian militias:** Over the weekend, American, British and other forces thwarted several attacks by the Houthis on ships in the Red Sea. They also attacked targets in Yemeni territory. The Houthis threatened to respond and reported attacking targets in Eilat. The Iranian foreign ministry criticized the American and British attacks, claiming they violated international law.

The Southern Arena

► Palestinian media reported on the activity in the IDF's combat centers: in **the northern Gaza Strip** there were heavy IDF attacks in several areas in Beit Lahia. In **Gaza City**, IDF activity continued in the Zeitoun neighborhood, and attacks were reported in the nearby Sabra neighborhood, the Shati refugee camp and in eastern Gaza City. In **the central Gaza Strip** there were attacks in the Nuseirat refugee camp and the al-Tawhid Mosque in Zuwayda. In **Khan Yunis**, IDF activity continued in the Khan Yunis refugee camp and the Japanese neighborhood in the west of the city. In **Rafah**, the IDF attacked in the center and east of the city and near the Rafah-Egypt border (Ma'an, Wafa, February 25, 2024).



An al-Jazeera TV presenter describes the IDF's activity in the Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza (right), and in Khan Yunis (left) (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, February 24, 2024)

► **The southern Gaza Strip:** Having completed their search of the Nasser Hospital complex in Khan Yunis, IDF forces withdrew and continued operating in the west of the city. They located a weapons warehouse containing dozens of rockets, IEDs and mortars. They also raided the house of a senior military intelligence operative in the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades' Khan Yunis Battalion, finding weapons inside the house and a tunnel shaft nearby. The weapons were confiscated and the shaft was destroyed. During the operation, the forces clashed with armed terrorists. Israeli Air Force aircraft destroyed a weapons warehouse, a war room and military structures (IDF spokesperson, February 23, 24, 2024).

► The IDF forces expanded their activities to the Greater and Lesser Abasan neighborhoods east of Khan Yunis, attacking Hamas terrorist facilities. They killed dozens of armed terrorist operatives and located weapons and rocket launchers. A building that was used as a medical laboratory was searched and a rocket launcher and a long-range rocket were found hidden in a refrigerator (IDF spokesperson, February 25, 2024).



The rocket launcher found in a refrigerator (IDF spokesperson, February 25, 2024)



Right: Attack on Hamas terrorist squads. Left: Attack on a Hamas tunnel shaft (IDF spokesperson, February 25, 2024)



Israeli Air Force strikes in Rafah (Wafa YouTube channel, February 24, 2024)

► **Gaza City:** IDF attacks on terrorist targets continued in the Zeitoun neighborhood in the northern Gaza Strip. The forces killed armed operatives with sniper fire, using remotely manned aircraft and combat helicopters, and located weapons, military equipment and tunnel shafts (IDF spokesperson, February 23, 2024). Using a drone, IDF soldiers identified a terrorist squad preparing to launch an anti-tank missile at them. They directed an aircraft to attack the squad (IDF spokesperson, February 24, 2024).

► **Hisham Zaqout, a correspondent for al-Jazeera TV in Rafah,** reported that the ground activity of the IDF forces continued in the Zeitoun neighborhood, with a heavy exchange of

fire with the members of the "resistance" [terrorist operatives]. Another correspondent reported that many casualties were lying under the rubble but the neighborhood was surrounded by IDF forces, who did not allow rescue teams to enter (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, February 25, 2024).



**Attack on an anti-tank squad in the Zeitoun neighborhood
(IDF spokesperson, February 24, 2024)**



Attacks in the Zeitoun neighborhood (Shehab X account, February 25, 2024)

► Hamas' ministry of the interior and national security published a response to the reports in Israeli media stating that the objective of the IDF's operation in the Zeitoun neighborhood was to transfer the management of the neighborhood to a local authority. Hamas claimed the reports were part of the psychological warfare Israel was waging against the Palestinian people. Hamas further claimed that Israel published the reports because it could not, even with the help of the international community, create an environment in the Gaza Strip which would be loyal to Israel. According to Hamas, Israel had tried to use the tactic more than once, but the clans and tribes in the Gaza Strip rejected the plan and declared their support for the option of "resistance" [terrorism] (Telegram channel of the ministry of interior's home front platform in Gaza, February 22, 2024).

► **The central Gaza Strip:** The forces clashed with armed operatives and located a terrorist squad in an observation post erected in a strategic site, which was meant to attack IDF forces. A combat helicopter attacked the post and killed the terrorists (IDF spokesperson, February 23, 2024).

► **The northern Gaza Strip: Hisham Zaqout, al-Jazeera channel correspondent in Rafah,** reported IDF attacks in the Beit Lahia area (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, February 25, 2024).



A building attacked by the IDF in Beit Lahia (Shehab X account, February 25, 2024)

The Palestinian perspective on the fighting

► The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, published an infographic summarizing its activities. The infographic claimed that since the beginning of the war, Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades operatives had carried out 57 successful sniping operations against IDF forces, 34 of them using Ghoul sniper rifles which they manufactured themselves (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, February 22, 2024).

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

► On February 22, 2024 at 6:17 p.m. the Israeli Home Front Command issued warnings of rocket fire targeting the communities of Nir Am and Mefalsim, near the Gaza Strip border. The Jerusalem Brigades, the military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), claimed responsibility for launching a barrage of rockets at Nir Am and Mefalsim (Paltoday Telegram channel, February 22, 2024).

► On February 22, 2024, the Arrow anti-ballistic missile defense system detected a long-range ballistic missile launched at Israel from the direction of Yemen. The systems followed the trajectory of the missile and intercepted it before it reached Israel's borders (IDF spokesperson, February 22, 2024).

► **Yahya Saria, spokesman for the Houthis' armed forces**, said that in response to American-British "aggression," ballistic missiles and UAVs had been launched at various targets in Eilat (Yahia Saria's Telegram channel, February 22, 2024).

Israeli casualties

► **According to unofficial data, since October 7, 2023, approximately 1,500 Israeli people have been killed. According to the IDF spokesperson, 579 of them are soldiers and officers (240 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 released.**

The issue of the hostages and a ceasefire agreement Hamas delegation in Cairo

► On February 23, 2024, **Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas political bureau**, said that after several days, the delegation of the Hamas leadership, which he had led, had concluded its visit to Egypt. He also reported that the members of the delegation had held a number of meetings with Abbas Kamel, the head of Egyptian General Intelligence and his aides, during which they discussed the situation in the Gaza Strip, the cessation of hostilities, the return of the displaced residents, the provision of assistance and shelter, especially to the northern Gaza Strip, and ways to accomplish all of the above. They also discussed the hostage deal and Israel's plans for al-Aqsa mosque, in light of the Israeli government's decision to prevent Palestinians in Judea and Samaria and Israeli Arabs from praying at the during Ramadan (Hamas Telegram channel, February 23, 2024).

► A "source in the Palestinian resistance leadership" said that the rumors about progress being made in the negotiations were untrue, and there had been no breakthrough on any issue. According to the source, Israel still insisted on its own terms and rejected those of Hamas. He claimed the Hamas delegation in Egypt had shown "great flexibility" towards achieving an agreement and had "provided solutions to sensitive issues" (al-Mayadeen TV website, February 22, 2024). An "official source" in Hamas stated that Hamas had not offered new proposals in the talks with the Egyptians and were now waiting for the mediators to return from the meeting in Paris (Reuters, February 23, 2024).

► "Informed sources in Hamas" claimed that Hamas had shown "flexibility" in Cairo regarding the duration of the ceasefire, the number of prisoners to be released in the first phase of a possible agreement and Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. The sources claimed the

number of prisoners was subject to negotiation, and they were not opposed to a six-week ceasefire. They also expressed a willingness to postpone Israel's withdrawal from the north and east of the Gaza Strip. Finally, they emphasized that they did not rule out a breakthrough in the negotiations for a ceasefire and a hostage deal (al-Sharq, February 23, 2024).

► **Muhammad Nazzal, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, said they had presented the mediators in Egypt with five basic demands: a total withdrawal from the Strip, a ceasefire, a hostage deal, the entry of aid and the reconstruction of the Strip, and an end to the [alleged] "attacks" on al-Aqsa Mosque. He stated that no one had exerted pressure on Hamas and they would not make concessions. Moreover, he said they would not give up their trump cards, especially the "captured" soldiers, before an agreement had been signed and implemented (Ultra Palestine news website, February 23, 2024).

► **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, said that the withdrawal of Israel and the return of the displaced persons to the northern Gaza Strip were two conditions which they had adhered to during the negotiations. He said they refused to release the Israeli hostages in exchange for the IDF's not entering Rafah, adding that the mediators continued working for a ceasefire. He claimed they would relate to the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, but their top priority was a ceasefire (al-Ghad, February 22, 2024).

The talks in Paris

► A meeting was held in Paris attended by delegations from Israel, the United States, Egypt and Qatar. At the meeting, Israel received the outline of a proposal for a hostage deal. Sources involved in the talks defined them as "good," claiming that "real progress" had been made in the negotiations and the meeting would allow the parties to present an up-to-date outline to Hamas (Haaretz, February 25, 2024). A "senior Egyptians source" said the Paris meeting was over and efforts would continue the following week (al-Youm al-Sabaa, February 23, 2024).

► Prior to the meeting in Paris, Egyptian officials said Hamas had announced it was prepared to reduce its demands regarding the number of Palestinian prisoners it wanted released as part of the deal to 3,000. However, Hamas still demanded the release of prisoners serving long prison terms in terrorism-related cases. A major obstacle was the duration of the ceasefire. Hamas demanded that the talks for a permanent ceasefire begin along with the start of the six-week ceasefire. The Egyptian officials reported that Hamas asked for a program in which the further release of hostages during the ceasefire would depend on progress in talks to end the war. According to Hamas' current proposal, it will keep the male Israeli soldiers "captive"

[hostage] until an agreement is reached for a permanent ceasefire and Israel's full withdrawal from Gaza is completed (The Wall Street Journal, February 22, 2024).

►After the meeting in Paris ended, "sources in Hamas" claimed they had no information about the meeting or any indications of Israel's positions. The sources claimed that Israel had withdrawn from the positions it presented at the previous meeting in Paris (al-Arabi TV website, February 24, 2024). The Hamas ministry of the interior and national security called on the residents of the Gaza Strip to refrain from discussing the results of the Paris meeting in Israeli publications, and noted that their "sources" said the negotiations were still ongoing, and it was too early to talk about results (X account of the home front platform of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, February 24, 2024).

►**Reactions from senior Hamas members:**

◆ "A senior member of the Hamas movement in Beirut" said the mediators had not given the details of the new Paris proposal to Hamas. He said many of the statements and leaks regarding the meeting were meant to use the media to exert pressure on Hamas. He claimed Hamas had shown "flexibility" in the details regarding the duration of the truce in exchange for the completion of the first phase of negotiations. He claimed Hamas had agreed that during the first phase, all Israeli hostages who were not military personnel, whose number, he claimed, did not exceed 40 and were not being held only by Hamas, would be released. Moreover, for every Israeli hostage, 15 Palestinian prisoners serving long prison terms and suffering from chronic diseases would be released and there would be another "truce day." Before the implementation of the agreement, there would be a one-week hiatus during which the names and details of those to be released would be agreed upon (al-Sharq al-Awsat, February 24, 2024).

◆ **Mahmoud Mardawi, a senior Hamas member**, said Hamas had not received a new proposal following the talks in Paris. He added that they hoped the reported optimism was genuine and they could build on it. At the same time, he said that raising expectations could make it difficult to reach an agreement. He claimed that when they received a proposal they judged it based on the interests, needs and demands of the Palestinian people [sic]. He added that as long as the Palestinians were "starving and displaced," and were not allowed "to return" and their lives were threatened, all talk of progress was meaningless (QudsN , February 24, 2024).

◆ **Abd al-Rahman Shadeed, a senior Hamas member**, claimed Hamas had not been informed about the progress, which was reported only in the Israeli media outlets and based on the Israeli side. He said Hamas had received no response to its demands and the talks in Paris were nothing more than negotiations Israel conducted with itself, because Hamas did not participate in them (al-Arabi TV YouTube channel, February 24, 2024).

◆ **Taher al-Nunu, Isma'il Haniyeh's media advisor**, claimed it was clear that Netanyahu's fundamental goal was to continue the war to serve personal and coalition interests. Regarding reports of progress in the negotiations and Hamas' waiving some of its demands, he said they were Israeli propaganda, and that Israel, and more accurately Netanyahu, had sabotaged all attempts at progress. He pointed out that they were specifically talking about three basic issues: the need to immediately and permanently stop the "aggression" against the Palestinian people and end the war, ending all Israeli military presence in the Strip, and bringing everything the Palestinian people needed into the Gaza Strip, the end of the blockade, and the immediate start of reconstruction. Those three issues were key and they would not abandon them. He claimed that so far they had not received any official information about the talks in Paris, but the publications in Israeli media about the refusals and the positions that Netanyahu instructed the Israeli delegation to take did not herald a serious Israeli government intention to reach an agreement. He said they had not yet reached the stage of discussing a hostage deal because they had an order of priorities and their three basic demands were the key to any agreement (al-Jazeera Mubasher TV YouTube channel from Basher, February 24, 2024).

◆ **Ghazi Hamad, a member of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip**, said he did not understand what had caused optimism, because so far they were only discussing leaked information and no official Israeli announcement had been issued. He claimed that so far the Israeli position had shown itself to be uncompromising and inflexible, and no serious Israeli position had been presented which related to the basic issues. Israel still insisted on not definitively ending the war, on not withdrawing its forces from the Gaza Strip, and on preventing the displaced Gazans from returning to the north of the Strip. He said the official Israeli position was uncompromising and inflexible, and was inconsistent with the ideas put forward by the mediators, even by

the United States. In response to Israel's saying that the ball was now in Hamas' court, he claimed that was not true because Hamas had explicitly presented its views in a written document given to the mediators (al-Ghad TV YouTube channel, February 24, 2024).

► A "source" in the PIJ said that the organization had not received any new proposal, adding that the PIJ, Hamas and the other "organizations" continued to discuss what had recently been proposed in Cairo. The source said that no agreement could be made without PIJ approval, and noted the "unity of the PIJ and Hamas positions" regarding all the details (al-Sharq al-Awsat, February 24, 2024).

Back To Top 

The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

► **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip** reported at 11:00 a.m., February 25, 2024, that during the past day 186 Gazans had been killed and 131 wounded, bringing the number of dead since the beginning of the war to 29,692 and the number of wounded to 69,879 (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, February 25, 2024).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

► **Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas member**, claimed "the declared war of starvation" continued, especially in the northern Gaza Strip. He claimed it began with the unequivocal, documented decision made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on October 9, 2023, to prevent the delivery of water, food and fuel to the residents of the Gaza Strip. He claimed it was a blatant "war crime," which the world did nothing to end, even after, he falsely claimed, the International Court of Justice determined that the decision indicated the IDF was [allegedly] "committing genocide" in the Gaza Strip.² He also said they were surprised by the World Food Programme's decision to suspend the delivery of aid to the districts of Gaza and the northern Gaza Strip, after trying for only three days to bring in very small amounts of food, which worsened the humanitarian crisis. He called on the World Food Programme and all UN agencies, including UNRWA, not to surrender to Israel, to announce an immediate return to work in the northern Gaza Strip, and to take effective, serious steps to provide aid to the Palestinians and deal with the expanding threat

² <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240216-pre-01-00-en.pdf>

of famine, in accordance with their legal and humanitarian responsibilities (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, February 23, 2024).

Aid for the Gaza Strip

►Palestinian media reported that on February 24, 2024, 60 trucks carrying humanitarian aid and four fuel trucks entered the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing (Hamza al-Masri's Telegram channel, February 24, 2024). **Journalist Iyad Dahman** reported the entry of four trucks of humanitarian aid into the northern Gaza Strip after about two months during which no trucks entered (Iyad Dahman's Instagram account, February 24, 2024).



**Four trucks bringing humanitarian aid enter the northern Gaza Strip
(Iyad Dahman's Instagram account, February 24, 2024)**

►The UNRWA director of foreign relations said they had been forced to stop aid shipments to the northern Gaza Strip because it was impossible to carry out appropriate humanitarian operations. She claimed their convoys were in danger and they could not send aid. She also claimed that the desperate behavior of hungry and despairing people prevented the safe, normal passage of the trucks (The Guardian, February 24, 2024).

►"Sources" said Egypt has begun erecting another military camp for displaced residents in Khan Yunis which could accommodate about 4,000 people. The camp will be equipped with electricity and toilets. The erection of the camp is part of Egypt's efforts to ease the lot of the Palestinians and will be completed by the end of the week (al-Qahera, February 24, 2024).



**A church in Gaza that serves as a shelter and treatment center for wounded Palestinians
(Wafa YouTube channel, February 23, 2024)**

The issue of "the day after"

► On the night of February 22, 2024, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu formally revealed his plan for the future of the Gaza Strip after the war. The document, which was submitted for government deliberation, immediate, intermediate and long term proposals. They include that responsibility for civil administration be given to "local officials" in the Gaza Strip who have administrative experience and are not related to the groups that support terrorism (Israeli media, February 23, 2024). A "high-ranking Israeli official," who asked to remain anonymous, said that Israel was looking for Palestinians not affiliated with Hamas, who would manage civilian affairs in experimental management areas after the war. According to the official, the program will not include anyone who receives a salary from the Palestinian Authority (PA). He added that the planned "humanitarian enclaves" will be in areas of the Gaza Strip from which Hamas operatives have been expelled, but their ultimate success will depend on Israel's achieving its goal of destroying Hamas.

► In response to the Israeli prime minister's plan, **Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas**, said that the Gaza Strip was part of the independent Palestinian State and all other plans were doomed to failure. He claimed that Israel would not succeed in changing either the Gaza Strip's geography or its demography, and the objective of the Israeli prime minister's plan was to continue the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state. **The PA foreign ministry** also condemned the plan and claimed that it was an attempt to thwart American and international efforts to end the war (Wafa, February 23, 2024). **Wassil Abu Yusuf, a member of the PLO Executive Committee**, also opposed the plan. He claimed that all of Israel's attempts to change the Gaza Strip's geography and demography would fail, and that talk about local government was a

desperate attempt leading nowhere, since the Palestinian people would only agree to an independent Palestinian state (Reuters, February 22, 2024).

► **Sami Abu Zuhri, a senior Hamas member**, said that such a plan would amount to Israel's reoccupying the Gaza Strip. He claimed they had no doubt but that the plan was pointless and a sign of confusion, and it would not succeed (Reuters, February 22, 2024).

► **Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas member**, said Netanyahu was presenting ideas he knew would fail. He claimed that from the beginning, Netanyahu had announced that he wanted to establish a civil administration in the Gaza Strip that would be subordinate to Israel, and had failed. He tried to contact clans and tribes to establish local authorities and they all refused to cooperate with him. The American administration tried to support his efforts by calling a meeting of important Palestinian figures to discuss the "day after" in the Gaza Strip but they did not respond (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, February 23, 2024). In another statement, Hamdan rejected the plan and said they would prevent it from succeeding (CNN in Arabic, February 24, 2024).

► **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau and the chairman of the bureau of international relations**, rejected the idea of senior Hamas members' leaving the Gaza Strip in exchange for an end to the war, even "in exchange for all the guarantees in the world," and said that they would continue to fight until victory or martyrdom. Regarding "the day after," he claimed that at no stage had government been a Hamas objective and it had tried more than once to hand the keys of government to the PA. He claimed they were in favor of an independent government of experts, with Palestinian consent, which would manage the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and with the PLO as its source of its authority, but only after it had admitted all the organizations, including Hamas and the PIJ. He also said that Hamas' entry into the PLO should not be accompanied by conditions (al-Ghad TV YouTube channel, February 22, 2024).

[Back To Top](#) 

The Northern Arena

Hezbollah attacks

► During the weekend of February 22-25, 2024, Hezbollah took responsibility for **25 attacks** using anti-tank missiles, rockets, Katyushas, Falaq 1 rockets and Burkan rockets whose warheads weigh between 300 and 500 kilograms (between 660 and 1,100 pounds) (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, February 22-25, 2024). Hezbollah also claimed

responsibility for attacking the municipality headquarters in Kiryat Shmona with two UAVs, claiming it was in response to Israeli attacks on "villages and civilian homes" in south Lebanon, the latest of which targeted the civil defense center in Balida (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, February 23, 2024).

IDF response

► In response, over the weekend IDF forces carried out a series of attacks on Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon from the air and with artillery fire. Among the areas that were attacked were Rab al-Thalathine, Aita al-Sha'ab, Jabal Blat and Balida (IDF spokesperson, February 22-25, 2024).

► Notable attacks were the following (IDF spokesperson):

- ◆ On the evening February 22, 2024, IDF surveillance detected terrorists entering a Hezbollah military structure in the Balida area. Fighter jets were sent to attack the structure.
- ◆ On February 24, 2024, a drone spotted a terrorist squad entering a Hezbollah military structure in the Balida area. A fighter jet attacked the building.
- ◆ IDF forces using an aircraft detected a terrorist squad entering a Hezbollah weapons warehouse in the al-Matmoura area. Fighter jets attacked the warehouse, after which secondary explosions were detected, indicating the presence of weapons in the building.



Right: Identifying a terrorist entering the weapons warehouse in al-Matmoura. Left: Attack on the warehouse (IDF spokesperson, February 24, 2024)

- ◆ Fighter jets attacked the operational headquarters of the Radwan Force in the area of Bar'asheet and launching positions and terrorist infrastructures in the Jabal Blat area (IDF spokesperson, February 24, 2024).



Right: Attack on the operational headquarters of the Radwan Force in Bar'asheet. Left: Attack on launching positions and terrorist infrastructure in Jabal Blat (IDF spokesperson, February 24, 2024)

- ▶The al-Mayadeen network reported an aerial attack Jabal Blat and in the town of Zebqin in south Lebanon (al-Mayadeen, February 23, 2024). An airstrike was also reported on the civil defense center of the Islamic health administration in Balida (Fouad Khreiss' X account, February 23, 2024).
- ▶A source in Lebanese civil defense claimed that Israel attacked a building in Kafr Roumanne, near Nabatieh (al-Arabi, February 22, 2024). Sky News in Arabic reported four dead and two wounded in the attack (Sky News in Arabic, February 22, 2024).



Right: Attack in Balida. On the left, an attack in Kafr Roumanne (Fouad Khreiss' X account, February 22, 2024)



Right: Attacks in Bar'asheet. (Fouad Khreiss' X account, February 24, 2024). On the left: Attacks in Rab al-Thalathine (Ali Shoeib's X account, February 24, 2024).

Hezbollah casualties

► Hezbollah reported the death of six operatives (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, February 22-23, 2024).

- ◆ Hassan Mahmoud Saleh, aka Jaafar, born in 1973 in 'Adsheet, south Lebanon. According to the Sky News network in Arabic, he was considered one of the Hezbollah's most prominent missile experts (Sky News in Arabic, February 22, 2024).
- ◆ Hisham Hussein Abdallah, aka Abu Zaynab, was born in 1987 in al-Khiyam in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Muhammad Hassan Taraf, aka Ahmed, was born in 1986 in Balida in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Muhammad Abd al-Rasoul Alawiya, aka Abu Ali, was born in 1967 in Maroun al-Ras in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Ahmed Muhammad al-Afi, aka Mahmoud, born in 1980 in Brital in the Lebanon Valley.
- ◆ Hussein Ali al-Dirani, aka Abu Ali, born in 1986 in Qasernaba in the Lebanon Valley.



Hezbollah casualties (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, February 22-23, 2024)



Hezbollah casualties (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, February 22-23, 2024)

► Hezbollah's combat information also announced the death of two civil defense paramedics, who were killed as "martyrs on the way to Jerusalem." That is similar to the way Hezbollah had referred to the casualties in its ranks in recent months (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, February 23, 2024).

- ◆ Paramedic Hussein Muhammad Khalil, aka Hussein, born in 1997 in Bar'asheet.
- ◆ Paramedic Muhammad Yaqoub Isma'il, aka Abu Yaqoub, born in 1994 in Balida.



**Civil defense casualties in Lebanon
(Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, February 23, 2024)**

Statements by senior Hezbollah figures

► **Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah's deputy secretary-general**, said that when they spoke about the "unity of the arenas," some people made the mistake of thinking that unity meant the same activity of all the arenas. However, he said, unity meant an identical position and vision, along with a willingness to deal with common challenges, but each arena operated independently for its own reasons and related to its capability, preparedness and influence vis-à-vis Israel (Na'im Qassem's X account, February 22, 2024).

► **Hassan Fadlallah, a member of Hezbollah's parliamentary faction**, said during the funeral of a Hezbollah operative that there was still "resistance" from the south, the north of

the Litani River and "everywhere." He said they would negotiate with Israel only with weapons and war. He claimed the "resistance" was winning and would remain along all the borders today, tomorrow and always (al-Mayadeen, February 24, 2024).

► **Hussein al-Mousawi, political advisor to Hezbollah's secretary-general**, said during an event in the town of Budai (in the Beqa'a Valley near Baalbek) that despite the claims of some Lebanese, Hezbollah [allegedly] fought for "the defense of the entire Lebanese people," and also on other fronts in defense of the Islamic nation in Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Yemen (lebanondebate.com, February 24, 2024).

► **Ziad al-Makari, Lebanese information minister**, claimed that more than five million square meters of agricultural land and hundreds of homes had been destroyed by Israel, and there were more than 100,000 displaced Lebanese people. He also said implementing Resolution 1701 would be discussed after the war. He added that the Lebanese government had decided to send military units to south Lebanon to strengthen defenses in the region. Regarding the expansion of the confrontation with Israel, he said that if Israel carried out its threats to attack Beirut, he was certain that it would lead to war in the entire region and would have devastating effects on Lebanon, but also on Israel (al-Jazeera Mubasher, February 25, 2024).

UNIFIL

► **Najib Mikati, Lebanon's interim prime minister**, met with **Aroldo Lázaro, UNIFIL commander**. They discussed the situation in south Lebanon and the cooperation between the Lebanese army and UNIFIL forces (the Lebanese prime minister's office X account, February 22, 2024).

The Lebanese government

► According to a source at the French embassy in Beirut, the French ambassador to Lebanon conveyed to **Najib Mikati, Lebanon's interim prime minister**, the official French proposal for a political solution to end the tension in south Lebanon. The source said it was the first official written document that Lebanon received from France. Reportedly several amendments were made to the written version of the French proposal after it had been transmitted to Lebanon orally, and the French side was waiting for an official response. The French proposal reportedly calls on fighters, including Hezbollah's elite [Radwan] unit, to withdraw 10 kilometers from the border. It also includes the deployment of up to 15,000

Lebanese army soldiers in the border area in south Lebanon. One of the proposals is that Lebanese armed groups destroy all buildings and facilities near the border and withdraw combat forces, including Radwan Force fighters, and military capabilities such as anti-tank weapons, to a distance of at least 10 kilometers north of the border (al-Araby al-Jadeed, February 23, 2024)

►According to Hezbollah-affiliated al-Akhbar, there is no evidence of amendments made to the previous proposal. It was emphasized that the official version was discussed by Najib Mikati, Nabih Berri, speaker of parliament, and Abdallah Bou Habib, the foreign minister, ahead of Lebanon's official response to the proposal, while Hezbollah's position on the discussion of the political agreement was still unknown (al-Akhbar, February 24, 2024).

►"Government sources" reported that **Amos Hochstein, the American mediator**, froze mediation until a ceasefire agreement was reached in the Gaza Strip. No explanation has been found for the cessation of dialogue between Hochstein and the government. It was also reported that the government was eagerly expecting that the negotiations regarding the Gaza Strip would lead to a lull in the fighting, which was presumed to apply to south Lebanon as well, and would open the door to the American mediator to resume mediation (al-Sharq al-Awsat, February 24, 2024).

Syria

►An airstrike was reported on a Lebanese truck on the Jousiyah-al-Qusayr route, about 20 kilometers (about 12 miles) southwest of Homs and about 10 kilometers (about 6 miles) northeast of the Syrian-Lebanese border (Fouad Khreiss' X account, February 25, 2024). It was also reported that two Hezbollah operatives were killed in the attack (al-Jazeera, February 25, 2024). The Syrians reported the deaths of three civilians (al-Watan X account, February 25, 2024).



The Lebanese truck attacked in Syria (Fouad Khreiss' X account, February 25, 2024)

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism activities

- ▶The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria. Since the beginning of the war, more than 3,200 wanted Palestinians have been detained, including more than 1,350 Hamas operatives (IDF spokesperson's X account, February 25, 2024).
- ▶The security forces operated in several locations: in Nablus and al-Aroub (north of Hebron), they detained several wanted Palestinians, who were taken for interrogation by security officials. In Abu Dis (east of Jerusalem), work was carried out to improve the security fence to prevent terrorist activity from the area (IDF spokesperson's X account, February 25, 2024). On the night of February 23, 2024, the forces operating in the village of Za'tara (east of Bethlehem) mapped the houses of the terrorists who carried out the shooting attack near the al-Za'eem checkpoint (February 22, 2024).



Right: Mapping a terrorist's house. Left: Documentation of the activity of the IDF forces (IDF spokesperson, February 24, 2024)

- ▶ In the early morning hours of February 23, 2024 in Jenin, an Israeli Air Force UAV attacked and killed Yasser Hanoun, a PIJ operative who was en route to carry out an attack and had recently carried out several shooting attacks targeting Israeli security forces in the communities of Merav, Mevo Dotan, the Salem crossing and the Jalameh crossing. Hanoun was previously imprisoned in Israel (IDF spokesperson's X account, February 23, 2024). According to Palestinian media reports, the aircraft attacked the vehicle carrying Yasser Hanoun, 27 years old, in the Jenin refugee camp. Sa'id Jaradat, 17 years old, from the Jenin refugee camp, was killed along with him (Wafa, February 23, 2024). According to a Palestinian

media website, the two were "resistance" [terrorist] operatives (Watan X account, February 23, 2024).



Right: PIJ operative Yasser Hanoun (Watan X account, February 23, 2024). Left: Sa'id Jaradat armed with a rifle (Sanad News Agency X account, February 23, 2024)

►A meeting of several Palestinian organizations held at the headquarters of the PA prisoners and released prisoners commission declared Tuesday, February 27, 2024, a "day of rage" in response to "Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and in support of detainees in occupation prisons." The participants said that the "rage" had to be directed only at Israel, and that the event would take place simultaneously throughout the country (Ma'an, February 22, 2024).

►**Senior Hamas member Osama Hamdan** called on the Palestinian people in all the "occupied territories" to escalate the confrontation with Israel in response to its decision to restrict Muslims from entering al-Aqsa Mosque during the month of Ramadan. He called on the Palestinian masses to continue condemning Israel, exert pressure to stop its "aggression" and support Palestinian rights (Hamas Telegram channel, February 23, 2024).

Friday prayers

►The Palestinian department of religious endowments (waqf) in Jerusalem reported that a small number of worshippers arrived at al-Aqsa Mosque for the Friday prayers, due to restrictions imposed by Israel and the checkpoints placed around the Old City of Jerusalem and its environs. It was noted that it was not possible to count the number of worshippers (Wafa, February 23, 2024).

Solidarity with the Gaza Strip

► In Ramallah and al-Bireh, after Friday prayers, a march was held in support of Gaza and the “resistance.” The march left the Grand Mosque in al-Bireh and ended at al-Manara Square in Ramallah, where a representative from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) gave a speech marking its anniversary. Participants in the march waved Palestinian flags, flags of Palestinian organizations and pictures of Palestinian prisoners (al-Araby al-Jadeed, February 23, 2024). Marches were held in several other cities, including Nablus, Tulkarm, Jericho, Qalqilya, Jenin, Hebron, Tubas and Salfit (al-Araby al-Jadeed, February 23, 2024; Hurriya News, February 23, 2024).



Right: The march in Ramallah (al-Araby al-Jadeed, February 23, 2024). Left: A march in Tulkarm (@1kuwait_kw X account, February 23, 2024)

Palestinian Authority (PA)

► **Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, and Majed Faraj, head of General Intelligence**, left for Amman on a Jordanian plane in preparation for a meeting between Mahmoud Abbas, PA chairman, and King Abdullah II of Jordan (Alam24, February 24, 2024).

► **Nabil Abu Rudeina, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas' office**, said they would not cooperate with the United States until the “aggression” in the Gaza Strip was stopped. He added that the American administration had to understand that it harmed Arab national security and that the Palestinians and Arabs had red lines. He noted that their priority was Jerusalem, the cessation of the “aggression” against the Gaza Strip and the unity of the Palestinian people, and that was the basis of what they were striving for. They wanted the world to stand by them and for the Arab world to act seriously to defend Jerusalem (al-Mayadeen, February 24, 2024).

Iran

► **Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader**, told a meeting in Tehran that the West's conduct regarding the war in the Gaza Strip showed its hypocrisy regarding human rights. The West, which is stirring up an uproar over the execution of one criminal, turns a blind eye to the killing of 30,000 innocent people in Gaza, and the United States has repeatedly vetoed resolutions calling for an end to the attacks on the Gaza Strip. Khamenei noted that it revealed the true face of Western liberal-democratic culture and civilization (Fars, February 24, 2024).

► **Hossein Salami, IRGC commander**, declared that only "removing Israel from the political map of the world" could ensure the security of Muslims and Palestinians. At a conference at the Jamkaran Mosque near the city of Qom, Salami said the enemies thought they could achieve victory in Palestine by killing children, women and innocent people, and that the residents of the Gaza Strip had shown the world through their unity and "resistance" that coexistence with the "Zionist regime" was impossible (Tasnim, February 24, 2024).

► The Iranian parliamentary delegation to the deliberations of the Council of Asian Parliaments in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, discussed developments in the Gaza Strip with representatives of parliaments from Arab and Muslim countries. Rahimi Jahan-Abadi, a member of the Iranian delegation, called for an immediate cessation of the war in the Gaza Strip and discussed with representatives of the foreign parliaments the imposition of an economic boycott on Israel (ISNA, February 24, 2024).

Pro-Iranian militias

Iraq

► **Akram al-Kaabi, leader of the Iraqi pro-Iranian militia Nujaba Movement**, noted that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq was independent, only they bore the consequences, and they had prepared themselves for it. He said they believed in the unity of the arenas and were an essential part of the struggle against the "aggression" against the Gaza Strip and the support of the United States, and that the Iraqi "resistance" continued to liberate Iraq and attack sites in Israel, adding that "they will not abandon Palestine" (al-Mayadeen, February 25, 2024).

Yemen

► Over the weekend, American, British and coalition military forces thwarted several Houthi attempts to attack vessels. The forces also carried out airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen. "American officials" reported that the Houthis had fortified their arsenals, that the response

from American forces alone was not working and the Houthis continued to surprise them (CNN, February 23, 2024).

- ◆ On February 22, 2024, the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) reported the downing of six Houthi UAVs in the Red Sea that were apparently directed against American and coalition warships (CENTCOM X account, February 22, 2024). France announced that its forces had destroyed two UAVs launched from Yemen in the Red Sea (Agence France-Presse, February 22, 2024).

- ◆ On February 23, 2024, CENTCOM reported that it had attacked four UAVs and two anti-ship cruise missiles prepared for launch from Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen, as well as the downing of three suicide UAVs near several merchant ships in the Red Sea (CENTCOM X account, February 23, 2024). The Houthis reported that American and British forces were carrying out two airstrikes in the al-Hudaydah area in western Yemen and three airstrikes against the Ras Issa area in al-Hudaydah (al-Masirah, February 23, 2024).

- ◆ On February 24, 2024, the forces reported an attack on seven mobile anti-ship cruise missiles (CENTCOM X account, February 24, 2024). **American Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin** said in a statement that the American and British armies had attacked military targets in Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen, with the support of Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands and New Zealand. He said eight sites had been attacked, including underground weapons storage facilities, missile storage facilities, unmanned aerial systems, air defense systems, radars and a helicopter (Pentagon website, February 25, 2024). The American and British airstrikes reportedly hit 18 Houthi targets at eight sites in Yemen (Reuters, February 25, 2024). **Mohammad al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, reported that San'aa was subject to attacks by the United States and Britain (Mohammad al-Bukhaiti's X account, February 25, 2024).

►The Houthis reported carrying out several attacks, most of them in response to the attacks carried out against them:

- ◆ On February 22, 2024, **Yahya Saria, spokesman for the Houthi armed forces**, said that in response to the American-British “aggression,” they had carried out three attacks: launching ballistic missiles and UAVs at various targets in Eilat, an attack on the

British ship *Islander* in the Gulf of Aden and a UAV attack on an American destroyer in the Red Sea (Yahya Saria's Telegram channel, February 22, 2024).

◆ On February 25, 2024, Saria reported that in response to the American-British "aggression," they had carried out a "quality military operation" in which they attacked the American oil tanker *Torm Thor* in the Gulf of Aden with missiles while attacking several American warships in the Red Sea with UAVs. He noted that they would deal with the American-British escalation through additional quality military actions (Yahya Saria's Telegram channel, February 25, 2024).

► **Nasser Kanani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry**, condemned the continued attacks by the United States and Britain in Yemen. He claimed the attacks violated international law, violated Yemen's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and were intended to ensure Israel's security. He added that the United States and Britain had proven once again that they fully supported "the [alleged] war crimes and genocide of the Zionist regime in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank" and that the objective of their attacks in Yemen was to increase regional tension, expand the scope of the war and instability and divert public opinion from Israel's [alleged] "war crimes" (Mehr, February 25, 2024).

► **Abd al-Malik al-Houthi, leader of the Houthis in Yemen**, said in a speech that since the beginning of the war they had launched 183 missiles and UAVs at Israeli targets and that they had attacked 48 ships in the Red Sea linked to Israel. He stressed that despite the American-British "aggression" and their support for Israel, the Yemeni front would continue to operate. He called on Islamic countries to support the Palestinian people until "the suffering in the Gaza Strip ended" (Houthi movement Telegram channel, February 22, 2024).

► **Muhammad Ali al-Houthi, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, said that the sinking British ship could be towed in exchange for bringing aid trucks into the Gaza Strip and that it was a proposal worth considering (Ali al-Houthi's X account, February 24, 2024). The British ship in question was hit on February 19, 2024.

[Back To Top](#) 

The Arab Arena

► **Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi** spoke with **King Abdullah II of Jordan** about the latest developments in the Gaza Strip. They discussed efforts to reach a ceasefire and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. They said they were opposed to the escalation of military operations and stressed that a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian cause had to be found (Egyptian presidency Facebook page, February 23, 2024).

The International Arena

United Nations Security Council

► In a speech given by **Tor Wennesland, the UN envoy to the Middle East**, at a Security Council meeting, he said he was concerned that if the violence in the Gaza Strip did not stop, Ramadan would become another date for violence, accompanied by high tension and restrictions in Judea, Samaria and the holy sites. He said they were facing a very unusual emergency that could quickly spiral out of control. He called for a coordinated and comprehensive international response to deal with the crisis and restore the political horizon (Thor Wennesland's X account, February 22, 2024).

UNRWA

► Lebanon's UNRWA administration said the agency had no alternative plan for March 2024 if the countries that suspended their funding following Israeli accusations did not back down. It was also noted that although UNRWA had known crises in the past, the collective suspension of aid had led to an unprecedented crisis, and it would be a mistake to believe that other agencies could fill the gap (al-Nashra, February 22, 2024).

International Court of Justice

► **Ayman al-Safadi, Jordanian foreign minister**, told the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Jordanian opinion that the residents of the Gaza Strip were dying as a result of Israeli "aggression" or from a lack of food and medicine that Israel continued to withhold from them. He added that "Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip is rampant and ignores international law" and that Israel was imposing a demographic change in the Palestinian territories. He also stressed that there would be no peace as long as there was occupation. He urged the court to rule to end "Israeli cruelty" (Jordanian foreign ministry X account, February 22, 2024).

United States

► The United States deputy representative to the UN Security Council told al-Jazeera that they had a draft resolution to assist ongoing efforts to free the hostages. He said that by the resolution they drafted, they wanted to exert pressure on Hamas to reach an agreement. He also said they were working on the text of the resolution together with their counterparts (al-Jazeera, February 23, 2024).

Turkey

► **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** accused Israel of "war crimes" in the Gaza Strip, noting that after 140 days, senior members of the international community appeared to have done nothing about Israel's [alleged] "crimes against humanity." He said it had reached a point where the Security Council did not and could not call on Israel to declare an immediate ceasefire. He said neither the Western powers nor the Security Council had proven any effort to stop "Israeli cruelty" and that the Western powers that criticized Israel in front of the cameras continued to supply it with all the weapons (TRT, February 24, 2024).