



The Iron Swords – The war in the south of Israel Updated to 1 p.m., October 11, 2023

Overview

► **The southern sector:** IDF activity continued on land, at sea and in the air. In the Israeli villages surrounding Gaza and in the city of Ashkelon there were several clashes with terrorist squads that remained in the area. The Israeli Air Force continued massive air strikes. According to reports, two senior Hamas terrorists and the brother of Muhammed Deif, the commander of Hamas' military-terrorist wing, were killed. The Israeli Navy continued its activities to prevent terrorists from leaving the Gaza Strip by sea. Meanwhile, terrorist operatives continued firing rockets at Israel. In the afternoon, a massive barrage of rockets targeted the southern Israeli coastal city of Ashkelon. Two people were killed by a rocket hit in the Eshkol region of the western Negev. Hamas and other sources denied that residents of the Israeli villages near the Gaza Strip were massacred, claiming the accusations were fabricated to promote the Israeli narrative. The chairman of Hamas "abroad" called on the Arab countries, especially those surrounding Israel, to join the "holy war" [jihad] against Israel. Given the IDF activity and worsening humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, there were calls for the transfer of aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip. Egypt expressed concern about the movement of refugees from the Gaza Strip into its territory.

► **The northern sector:** Tensions continued in northern Israel. A number of rockets were fired at the western Galilee settlements. No casualties or damage were reported. The Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. An antitank missile was fired at an Israeli military vehicle. Hezbollah claimed responsibility, stating the attack was a response to an attack on its "observation posts." On the morning of October 11, 2023, additional antitank missiles were fired at an IDF post. A senior Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese political commentator claimed Hezbollah was on high alert and ready to intervene if the campaign in the Gaza Strip expanded. He claimed Hezbollah was not responsible for any "military activity" carried out by non-Lebanese entities against Israel. Several mortar shells were fired at Israel from southern Syria; the IDF responded with artillery fire. Reports were

received of the increased deployment of Hezbollah and Shi'ite militia operatives in southern Syria.

▶ **Judea and Samaria:** Israeli security forces continued counterterrorism activities. The forces were shot at twice by Palestinian terrorists; no casualties were reported. Palestinians continued clashing with Israeli security forces; four Palestinians were killed.

▶ **The international arena:** The President of the United States gave a speech expressing America's full support for Israel. Demonstrations of sympathy for Israel continue, mainly in Western countries, along with a discourse on the worsening humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. The President of Turkey accused Israel of "genocide." Terrorists and militias in Iraq and Yemen stated they were prepared to join the war.

The Combat Arena

IDF activity

▶ **Ground activity:** During the past day IDF soldiers continued cleansing Israeli territory of the presence of terrorists. There were several encounters where IDF forces killed squads still remaining in the area (IDF spokesman, October 10, 2023).

- ◆ **Kibbutz Mefalsim:** IDF fighters killed two terrorists near the kibbutz.
- ◆ **Kibbutz Reim:** IDF fighters killed two terrorists near the kibbutz.
- ◆ **The Zikim beach:** There were two clashes between IDF forces and terrorists on the Zikim beach. Eight terrorists were killed in the exchanges of fire.
- ◆ **The Ashkelon industrial zone:** IDF fighters, with aerial assistance from the Israeli Air Force, exchanged fire with several terrorists in the Ashkelon industrial zone, killing three of them.

▶ **Aerial activity:** The Israeli Air Force continued its waves of air strikes against the Gaza Strip, attacking the following (IDF spokesman, October 10 and 11, 2023):

- ◆ **The al-Furqan neighborhood in the northern Gaza Strip:** The IDF attacked over 450 targets in the neighborhood, used by Hamas as a center of terrorist activity.
- ◆ **The Daraj Tufah neighborhood in Gaza City:** more than 70 targets were attacked. On the morning of October 11, 2023, a third wave of air strikes began in **Beit Hanoun** in the northern Gaza Strip; over 80 targets were attacked.
- ◆ A military building used by Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operatives.

- ◆ Targets in the coastal area of the Gaza Strip.
- ◆ A terrorist tunnel in the Rafah area.
- ◆ Hamas military compounds used for training, and for manufacturing and storing weapons. In one compound the headquarters of the commander of the northern division of Hamas' military-terrorist wing was destroyed.
- ◆ A military facility in the house of an operative of Hama's naval force, where there was a weapons warehouse.
- ◆ An PIJ rocket-launching unit operational headquarters.
- ◆ The Islamic University complex in Gaza, known as a center of political and military power for Hamas and a training, development and production facility for weapons.
- ◆ Advanced Hamas system for detecting aircraft flying over the Gaza Strip.

▶ The Hamas military-terrorist wing reported launching a Mitvar1 antiaircraft missile at Israeli Air Force planes attacking the Khan Yunis area (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, October 11, 2023).

▶ **Naval activity:** Israeli Navy boats continued preventing terrorist squads from entering Israel by sea.

▶ In a combined operation of sea, air and land forces, Hamas naval targets were attacked, including the Khan Yunis and Gaza anchorages, which were used by Hamas as bases from which to attack in Israeli maritime space. The anchorages were attacked by artillery fire from Israeli missile boats, helicopter gunships and artillery batteries from land (IDF spokesman, October 11, 2023).

▶ The media in Gaza continue to headline the force of the IDF attacks and the destruction caused to buildings, publishing pictures and videos documenting the destruction (Shehab Twitter account, QudsN, October 10, 11, 2023).



Right: Israeli Air Force attack on a Hamas site for launching high-precision rockets. Left: The destruction of an aircraft detection system (IDF spokesman's website, October 11, 2023)



Right: Attacks on Khan Yunis (Shehab Twitter account, October 11, 2023). Left: The attack on the al-Doha building in Rafah where a National Bank branch, a Hamas post office and other communications offices were located (Shehab Twitter account, October 11, 2023)



Neighborhoods in Gaza after the air strikes (QudsN Twitter account, October 10, 2023)



Right: The attack on the Islamic University, a center of Hamas terrorist activity (IDF spokesman's website, October 11, 2023). Left: The ruins of the Islamic University (QudsN Twitter account, October 10, 2023)



The Israeli Navy attacks fishing boats in the Gaza port (Wafa, October 10, 11, 2023)

Rocket fire

▶ In the meantime, rocket attacks against Israel continued, albeit of a relatively lesser scope. Most of the launches targeted the Israeli villages near the Gaza Strip border. Several barrages were launched at Tel Aviv and the coastal plain region. Rockets also targeted the Ben-Gurion International Airport area. In the afternoon, a barrage was launched that reached Wadi Ara, about 90 miles north of the Gaza Strip. Large rocket barrages attacked Ashqelon throughout the afternoon and evening. Two people were killed by a rocket hit in the Eshkol Regional Council and several people were injured. Property damage was reported.

▶ At 3:00 p.m. on October 10, 2023, **Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' military-terrorist wing**, said that in response to the attacks on the Gaza Strip forcing Palestinians to leave their homes, the residents of Ashqelon had two hours in which to leave (Abu Obeida's Telegram channel, October 10, 2023). At 5:00 p.m. Hamas' military-terrorist wing announced the firing of hundreds of rockets at Ashqelon (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, October 10, 2023). Hamas' military-terrorist wing threatened that if Israel did not stop forcing

civilians to leave [their homes] they would crush Ashqelon until its residents had nowhere to live and then move on to another Israeli city and do the same (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, October 10, 2023).

▶ Meanwhile, the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades claimed responsibility for a large number of rocket barrages targeting Tel Aviv, Ben Gurion Airport, Beersheba and Herzliya in response to attacks on civilians in the Gaza Strip (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, October 10, 2023).



Right: An Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades poster. The Arabic reads, "Expulsion in return for expulsion." The Hebrew reads, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, October 10, 2023). Left: From a video of rockets fired at Ashqelon (Monitoring News Twitter account, October 10, 2023)



Right: Rocket hit in Rishon LeZion (QudsN Twitter account, October 10, 2023). Left: Damage from a rocket hit in a southern Israeli city (QudsN website, October 10, 2023)



Right: Fires in Ashqelon caused by a rocket hit (Shehab Twitter account, October 11, 2023). Left: The results of rocket fire targeting Ashqelon (QudsN Twitter account, October 10, 2023)



Buildings in Kibbutz Be'eri hit by rockets from Gaza (Shehab Twitter account, October 11, 2023)

Israeli casualties

► So far, more than 1,200 civilian and soldier deaths have been reported and 3,007 Israelis wounded with varying degrees of injury have been evacuated to hospitals throughout Israel. The Israeli ministry of health reported that as of the morning of October 11, 2023, 471 wounded were hospitalized, 109 of them in serious condition, 199 moderately injured and 183 superficially injured. According to estimates, about two hundred civilian and military abductees are being held by the various terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.

► According to reports, on the afternoon of October 10, 2023, Israeli security forces rescued thirty civilians who had been found by means of a sound-ranging system used to locate their coordinates (IDF website, October 10, 2023).



Besieged civilians who were rescued (IDF website, October 10, 2023)

The Gaza Strip

The situation on the ground

► **Zafer Melhem, chairman of the Palestinian Energy Authority in Ramallah,** reported that the operation of the power plant in Gaza would stop functioning completely on Thursday, October 12, 2023. He claimed the power plant had reserves of 400,000 liters of fuel, enough for only one day. Melhem stated that they appealed to all the countries and UNRWA to pressure Israel to keep the issue of electricity outside the scope of the fighting (Wafa, October 11, 2023).

► The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)¹ reported that over 263,000 Gazans had left their homes since the beginning of the war. About 175,000 of them are in 88 UNRWA shelter centers in the Gaza Strip, about 14,000 are in 12 government schools and about 75,000 are staying with relatives or in churches or other facilities. According to the ministry, 560 housing units were completely destroyed (Wafa, October 11, 2023).

► According to reports, UNRWA and The World Food Program (WFP) have begun coordinating the distribution of food to approximately 100,000 Palestinians in UNRWA shelters. The UN is offering emergency health services through a free hotline throughout the Gaza Strip and supplies emergency drugs and medical supplies to the health system in Gaza. One hundred and twenty-five health teams are working in shifts at UNRWA health centers, and 15 of 22 clinics provide primary health services. The World Health Organization (WHO), other

¹ The agency was established in 1991 by the UN General Assembly. It was designed to strengthen and coordinate the UN's response to emergencies and natural disasters. It has offices all over the world. The Palestinian branch was established in 2002, its center is in Jerusalem and it has offices in Gaza, Ramallah, Hebron and Nablus.

UN agencies and UN partners are working to establish a corridor to transfer essential supplies to Gaza (UN website, October 10, 2023).

▶ Given the situation in the Gaza Strip, **Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shukri** met in Cairo with **Tor Wennesland, special UN envoy to the Middle East peace process** and **Philippe Lazzarini, the UNRWA commissioner general**, to discuss ways to provide protection for the citizens of the Gaza Strip and guarantee the regular arrival of aid and services (Twitter account spokesman for the Egyptian foreign ministry, October 11, 2023). **Senior Hamas figure Musa Abu Marzouk** said he expected Egypt to take advantage of its position as a central Arab country to stop the aggression. He also asked Egypt to open humanitarian corridors to allow the entry of humanitarian aid and diplomatic missions into the Strip (al-Araby al-Jadeed, October 10, 2023).

▶ **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, sent a communiqué to the leaders of the Arab countries and **Ahmed Abu al-Ghait, the secretary general of the Arab League**, calling on them to provide protection for the "right of the Palestinians to resist [attack and terrorize] Israel." He also called for the allocation of budgets for aid for the Gaza Strip (Hamas Telegram channel, October 10, 2023).

▶ Egypt raised fears of a mass influx of Gazans into the Sinai Peninsula following an attack on the Rafah crossing by the Israeli Air Force. The American MSNBC network reported that the United States was working to create a humanitarian corridor that would allow civilians to leave the Gaza Strip for Egypt, in preparation for the continuation of the fighting and in light of the possibility that Israel would conduct a ground operation in the Gaza Strip (MSNBC network, October 10, 2023). General (retired) Samir Faraj, Egyptian military expert strategist, said that the Egyptian government rejected any Israeli plan to displace the residents of the Gaza Strip to the Sinai Peninsula (Sky News in Arabic, October 10, 2023).

Palestinian casualties

▶ The ministry of health in Gaza reported that as of 12:30 p.m. the number of casualties in the Gaza Strip had reached 1,055 dead and 5,184 wounded (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, October 11, 2023). It is also estimated that Israel is holding the bodies of approximately one thousand terrorist operatives (IDF spokesman, October 11, 2023). In all probability the numbers are higher since many bodies have not been recovered from the ruins of houses.

▶ The ministry of health in Gaza reported that the hospitals in the Gaza Strip were at full capacity and the stock of medicines was about to run out. The ministry called on residents to donate blood (QudsN Twitter account, October 11, 2023). **Mai al-Kayla, Palestinian Authority (PA) minister of health**, reported that the fuel reserves in the hospitals would run out on Thursday, October 12, 2023 (al-Quds, October 11, 2023).

▶ Israeli airstrikes killed **Jawad Abu Shamala** and **Zakaria Abu Muamam**, two senior Hamas terrorist operatives, both members of the political bureau. Hamas issued a mourning notice for them (Hamas Telegram channel, October 10, 2023). A source in Hamas said they were killed in an attack in Khan Yunis. According to the source, Abu Muamam was head of Hamas' national relations department and Abu Shamala was head of Hamas' economic department (Al-Arabi Al-Jadid, October 10, 2023).



Jawad Abu Shamala (right) and Zakariah Abu Muamam (Palinfo, October 10, 2023)

▶ Before dawn on October 11, 2023, the Israeli Air Force carried out an air strike targeting a three-story house in the Qizan al-Najjar area of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. The attack killed four family members, among them, Abdel Fattah Deif, 60 years old, brother of Muhammed Deif, the commander of Hamas' military-terrorist wing (Paltoday, October 11, 2023). According to Hezbollah, the house belonged to Muhammad Deif's father (al-Manar, October 11, 2023).

▶ On October 11, 2023, the PIJ announced the death of Hadil Adli Barake al-Breem, the wife of Musab al-Breem, aka Abu Abdullah, the PIJ spokesman (the Telegram channel of the PIJ's media information bureau, October 11, 2023).

Hamas

▶ Khaled Mashaal, Hamas' spokesman "abroad," gave a speech calling on the armies of the Arab countries to take part in history as it was being written. He said Gaza was "crying out for help," and waging jihad with money was "the equivalent of martyrdom." He claimed

Netanyahu was implementing a policy of scorched earth and had received a green light from the United States and tacit Arab agreement. He claimed it was the moment of truth, when the Arab nation had to enter the battle and fight with them. He asked where the religious scholars were who would issue a fatwa obliging them to fight for the land of "Palestine." He directed his words first and foremost to the countries bordering Israel, claiming their duty was greater because they were closest to "Palestine." He also sent a message to the tribes in Jordan, again claiming it was the moment of truth, the borders were close and everyone knew what his responsibility was. He claimed that when the world saw that the Arab nation had come to the aid of al-Aqsa, and convoys of jihad fighters [had come to] fight for Palestine, the situation would change (Palinfo, October 10, 2023).



Khaled Mashaal's speech (Quds Press, October 10, 2023)

▶ Hamas issued a press release strongly denying the "fabricated accusations" of the Western media adopting the Israeli narrative, the latest of which was the claim that Hamas kills children by beheading them.² According to Hamas, adopting the narrative was an attempt to cover up the "crimes of the occupation and its massacres in the Gaza Strip," which constituted war crimes against civilians, including cutting off the supply of electricity, water, food and medical equipment to the Strip. He claimed that the "Palestinian resistance" [terrorist organizations] and Hamas' military wing were working within the framework of Operation al-Aqsa Storm to attack "legitimate targets without harming civilians [sic]," which had [allegedly] been documented by many photographs. He also claimed that the same biased Western media did not mention the extent of the crimes being committed against the residents of the Gaza Strip, including the bombing of entire neighborhoods and residential buildings that had led to the deaths of 950 Palestinian civilians, including 260 children and 230 women, and without prior warning. Hamas called on the Western media to act objectively

² Fully documented by photographs.

and professionally in its coverage of the fighting and to avoid blatantly adopting the Zionist narrative (Hamas Telegram channel, October 11, 2023).

▶ Similar statements were made by **Mustafa al-Barghouti, a Palestinian leftist**, who was interviewed from Ramallah by CNN in English. After claiming he was not identified with the PA or Hamas, he went on to claim that Hamas did not attack civilians, only soldiers and military facilities and that most events in the south were a "natural reaction" to the "crimes of the occupation and settlers" (QudsN Twitter account, October 10, 2023).



Mustafa al-Barghouti interviewed by CNN in English (QudsN Twitter account, October 10, 2023)

The Northern Arena

Lebanon

▶ On the afternoon of October 10, 2023, rockets were fired at the western Galilee from the al-Qleileh area in south Lebanon. A total of about 15 launches were identified and air defense fighters intercepted four rockets. Ten rockets fell in open areas and no casualties were reported. In response to the rocket fire, IDF tanks attacked two Hezbollah observation posts (IDF spokesman, October 10, 2023). Several hours after the rockets were fired, Hamas' military-terrorist wing issued a statement claiming responsibility. According to the announcement, as part of Operation al-Aqsa Storm, it had carried out concentrated rocket fire from south Lebanon at the Israeli communities in the western Galilee (al-Nahar, October 10, 2023; Palinfo, October 10, 2023).

▶ A short time later an antitank missile was fired at an IDF military vehicle near the northern moshav of Avivim. No casualties or damage were reported. In response, a Israeli Air Force combat helicopter attacked a Hezbollah observation post (IDF spokesman, October 10, 2023). Hezbollah issued an announcement claiming responsibility for firing two antitank

missiles at an Israeli APC near the Avivim post in response to attacks on several Hezbollah observation posts (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 10, 2023).

▶ On the morning of October 11, 2023, additional antitank fire was identified from Lebanese territory at a military post near the village of Arab al-Aramsheh on the Lebanese border (IDF spokesman, October 11, 2023). Hezbollah media reported that three Hezbollah antitank missiles had been fired at the IDF post of Jabana al-Dahira, near the Israeli-Lebanese border. According to Hezbollah, several IDF soldiers were wounded (al-Mayadeen Telegram channel; al-Manar, October 11, 2023). In response, the IDF fired artillery at targets along the border; several wounded were reported (al-Mayadeen Telegram channel, October 11, 2023).

▶ In light of the events, UNIFIL forces announced increased patrols coordinated with the Lebanese army to prevent rocket fire (UNIFIL Twitter account, October 10, 2023).

▶ **Gebran Bassil, chairman of the Hezbollah-affiliated Free National Movement in Lebanon**, demanded the Lebanese security forces prevent Palestinians from shooting at Israel from Lebanese territory lest Lebanon be dragged into the conflict. He said they supported the right of the “Palestinian resistance” to fight but did not want to return to the Fatahland era³ (Gebran Bassil’s Twitter account, October 10, 2023).

▶ **Ibrahim al-Amin**, a journalist close to Hassan Nasrallah, reported that according to “sources” Hezbollah had put all its military forces on high alert, noting that at any moment they could be required to intervene “in order to directly support the resistance in Palestine.” According to the “sources,” if Israel decided to increase uprooting Gazan residents from their homes or carry out a “crazy” act in the Gaza Strip, “things will change significantly.” The “sources” also noted that a message had been sent to several relevant parties claiming that Hezbollah was not a border guard and that any attempt by Israel to blame Lebanon for military activity conducted by non-Lebanese elements was unacceptable. Therefore, any attack by the enemy against a Lebanese element would be met with “a symmetrical response” (the Lebanese Hezbollah-affiliated al-Akhbar, October 11, 2023).

Statement by a Hezbollah faction member

▶ During the funeral of Ali Hassan Hadraj, a Hezbollah operative killed in the Israeli response attack in Hanawiya, **Hassan Izz al-Din, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the**

³ The period before the First Lebanon War when many Palestinian forces were stationed in south Lebanon and operated against Israel.

Lebanese parliament, said that Israel was facing a disaster on a scale of existential challenge. He also promised that Hezbollah would not remain neutral (al-Nashra, October 10, 2023).

Syria

▶ At around 10:30 p.m. on October 10, 2023, several mortar shells were fired at Israel from Syrian territory; some falling in open areas in Israel. In response, IDF forces fired artillery and mortar shells at the sources of fire (IDF spokesman, October 10, 2023).

▶ Since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip, deployments by organizations and militias in southern Syria have been reported:

◆ On October 7, 2023, as the war began, Palestinian organizations, Hezbollah forces and militias affiliated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) began to redeploy in the rural area west of Damascus and southern Syria and changed the locations of headquarters and warehouses (Sawt al-Asima, October 9, 2023).

◆ Squads from Hezbollah's elite al-Radwan unit arrived at one of the military compounds in the area of the village of al-Sahiliya, about 18 miles north of Daraa and about 18 miles east of the Syrian-Israeli border. They reportedly possessed weapons, including anti-tank missiles and Iranian-made Ababil UAVs. The squads are headed by two Hezbollah commanders, Hajj Nur al-Din Sha'itu and Hajj Abbas Salem, considered a key operative responsible for operating drones in the al-Radwan unit (Sawt al-Asima, October 9, 2023).

▶ It was also reported that during the two weeks preceding the operation, Hezbollah had begun to build a runway for combat UAVs inside the headquarters of the Syrian army's 82nd Aerial Defense Brigade near al-Sheikh Maskin, about 12 miles north of Daraa and about 18 miles east of the Syrian-Israeli border. Meanwhile, fortification work, military preparations, and the redeployment of forces along the Syrian-Israeli border were carried out. While the runway was being built, Hezbollah transferred aircraft from military headquarters in the town of al-Ghazlaniyah, to the headquarters of the 82nd Brigade, about six miles southeast of Damascus. It was also reported that operatives of the al-Radwan unit trained officers from the 82nd Brigade in the operation of UAVs for airstrikes and intelligence missions (Sawt al-Asima, October 9, 2023).

Judea, Samaria, and the Palestinian Authority

Events

▶ Concurrently with the events in the Gaza Strip, Israeli security forces continue counterterrorism activities throughout Judea and Samaria, where several attempts were made to carry out terrorist attacks:

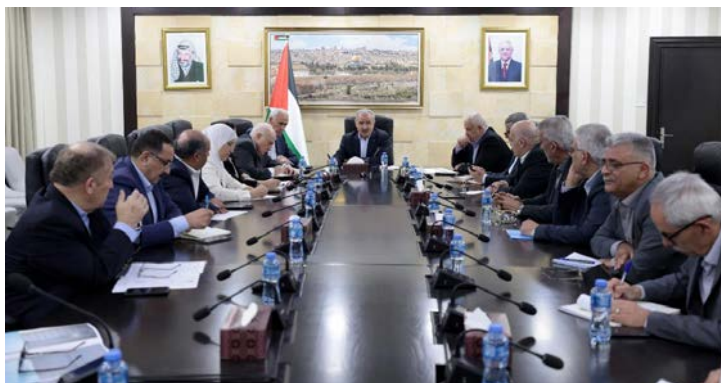
◆ On the evening of October 10, 2023, two Palestinians shot at IDF forces at the Jalameh crossing (north of Jenin). The forces returned fire and killed them. No casualties were reported (Israeli media, October 11, 2023). According to the Palestinians, the two were killed following clashes near the Jalameh Crossing (Ma'an, October 11, 2023).

◆ On the evening of October 10, 2023, shots were fired near Kiryat Arba from the Jabal Johar neighborhood of Hebron. No casualties or damage were reported (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, October 10, 2023).

◆ On the evening of October 10, 2023, violent clashes erupted in the Silwan neighborhood of east Jerusalem in response to the war in Gaza. The rioters threw stones and shot fireworks at the police, injuring a policeman. The forces returned fire (Israeli media, October 10, 2023). The Palestinians reported two fatalities from the Silwan neighborhood of east Jerusalem (Ma'an, October 10, 2023).

Palestinian Authority

▶ **Muhammad Shtayyeh, PA prime minister**, convened the PA government's monitoring "cell" (established by the cabinet meeting of October 9, 2023) and received updates from government ministers on the situation in the Gaza Strip. Shtayyeh called on the countries of the world to increase their efforts to stop the fighting in the Gaza Strip and arrange safe passage for the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip (Wafa, October 10, 2023).



Meeting of the PA government's monitoring cell (Wafa, October 10, 2023)

► **Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, said the PA had demanded the urgent entry of food and medical equipment into the Gaza Strip, but Israel refused. He said they called on humanitarian and international organizations and the international community to intervene urgently to stop the Israeli “aggression” and allow food and medical supplies into the Gaza Strip, as well as the resumption of electricity and water supplies, because the Gaza Strip was facing a “major humanitarian catastrophe” (Hussein al-Sheikh’s Twitter account, October 10, 2023).

► **Hani al-Masri, director general of the Palestinian Center for Political and Strategic Studies – Masarat**, published an op-ed in major media outlets supporting both Hamas and the PA. He claimed **that without a doubt Operation al-Aqsa Storm would change the rules of the struggle between Israel and the Palestinians and have far-reaching regional and international consequences**. He listed four reasons for the timing of the operation: an extremist Israeli government, whose goal was to achieve a decisive victory over the Palestinians, the continuation of the “siege” of the Gaza Strip, a sharp increase in the number of Palestinian detainees and prisoners, and reports of continued progress in the talks between Saudi Arabia and Israel, while ignoring the Palestinian issue.

► Al-Masri proposed three possible scenarios: one was a destructive Israeli response that would eradicate the “armed resistance,” which would accelerate Hezbollah’s joining the campaign. The second was an Israeli response that would not change the rules of the struggle, when there would be many special operations and assassinations. He noted that the fact that there are a large number of Israeli prisoners in Gaza strengthened the scenario's feasibility. The third was an intermediate state, i.e., a strong Israeli response which almost changed the rules of the struggle but did not in practice. Regarding the possibility of a peace agreement, he said that there was currently no Israeli partner for any arrangement, even if a unity government was formed in Israel (Arab48, October 10, 2023).

Iran

▶ **Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian** called his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shoukry, to discuss developments in the Gaza Strip and the Israeli-Palestinian escalation. Shoukry stressed the need to invest efforts to stop the escalation in order to protect the lives of civilians and maintain regional stability (Twitter account of the Egyptian foreign ministry spokesman, October 10, 2023).

▶ **Mojtaba Amani, Iranian ambassador to Lebanon**, met with a Hamas delegation headed by **Ahmed Abdel Hadi**, the movement's representative in Lebanon. The ambassador praised "the historic activity of the Palestinian resistance, which inflicted a great defeat on the occupation army." He stressed Iran's support for the Palestinian people "and its heroic resistance," noting that Iran stood by it in this war (al-Nashra, October 10, 2023).

Iranian hacker group claims to have carried out an attack against Mekorot

▶ Iran's Tasnim News Agency, which is affiliated with the IRGC, reported that a group called Cyber Avengers had attacked Mekorot, Israel's national water company. According to the report, the attack was in response to Israel's turning off the water it supplied to the Gaza Strip. The video attached to the report allegedly showed security footage of Mekorot and an alarm could be heard (Tasnim News Agency Telegram channel, October 10, 2023).

Arab World

Jordan

▶ **King Abdullah II of Jordan** instructed the transfer of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing "as quickly as possible and in full coordination with Egypt" (Twitter channel of the Jordanian royal family, October 10, 2023). For the time being, the Rafah crossing has been closed. According to reports, on October 11, 2023, Jordan had sent humanitarian aid to Gaza to be transferred to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing in coordination with the Egyptian authorities (alsaa.net, October 11, 2023).

▶ A Jordanian military source denied the "false claims" circulated that Jordanian army bases were being used to transport supplies from the United States to Israel. The source confirmed that an American plane had indeed crossed Jordanian airspace after being given a

transit permit in accordance with international aviation procedures, because it was carrying passengers rather than supplies. The source also noted that Jordan was investing ongoing efforts to serve the Palestinian cause (Jordanian TV, October 10, 2023).

▶ On October 10, 2023, a mass rally was held in Amman in support of Gaza. The rally included calls for support for Gaza and Hamas, including “Continue, Hamas,” “In spirit and fire we will redeem you, al-Aqsa,” and calls for the "liberation of Palestine" through jihad. Hamas and Palestinian flags were waved (Jordan’s official TV channel, October 10, 2023).



**The mass rally in Amman: Palestinian flags next to Hamas flags
(Jordan’s official TV channel, October 10, 2023)**

Egypt

▶ **Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** said Egypt’s security was his first responsibility and he would not neglect it no matter what the circumstances. However, he noted that Egypt did not renounce its commitment to Arab issues, first and foremost the Palestinian issue, and it was increasing its efforts to stop the clashes, halt the spilling of Palestinian blood, and protect Israeli and Palestinian civilians alike (RT in Arabic, October 10, 2023).

United Arab Emirates

▶ **UAE President Muhammad bin Zayed** announced the transfer of \$20 million in humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip through UNRWA in support of the Palestinian people (UAE News Agency, October 10, 2023).

Turkey

▶ **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** said Turkey would do its utmost to stop the clashes, reduce tension and provide humanitarian aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip. He also called on all parties active in the region to take responsibility and work for peace. He

stressed that an independent Palestinian state had to be established within the 1967 borders and that any further delay distanced the region's exit from the cycle of conflict (Erdoğan's Twitter account, October 10, 2023).

▶ In a speech to members of the Turkish parliament, Erdoğan said Israel had to remember that if it behaved like an organization and not as a state, "it will be treated as an organization." He added that Israel's attacks were disproportionate and therefore world public opinion might take a negative view of Israel. He also claimed that genocide was taking place in the Gaza Strip (al-Andalou News, October 11, 2023).

Iraq

▶ **Muqtada al-Sadr, chairman of the Sadr faction in Iraq**, which opposes Iran's presence in the country, gave a speech criticizing Arab rulers for not expressing support for the Palestinian cause, especially Mahmoud Abbas, who, he claimed, wanted to establish peace with "the Zionist entity." He also expressed support for Hamas and PIJ operatives for "humiliating the tyranny of the Zionist entity, crushing its pride and proving its weakness." He called on the Arab countries, mainly Saudi Arabia and Iran, to supply water to the Gaza Strip and even expressed Iraq's willingness to transfer water to the Gaza Strip via Syria, Egypt or any other country. He also said he hoped Egypt would open a passageway to supply water and food to the residents of the Gaza Strip (Shafaq News, October 10, 2023).

▶ **Ahmed al-Hamidawi, secretary general of the Iraqi Kata'ib Hezbollah (Hezbollah Brigades) militia**, issued an announcement congratulating the Palestinian people for its "courageous resistance" and for its "great and unprecedented achievements in the shadow of the cruelty of the Zionist entity and its supporters." He noted that the "resistance" had proved its superiority over Israel's technology and capabilities and destroyed its hope of achieving security and normalization in cooperation with the United States. According to al-Hamidawi, their missiles, drones and special forces were ready to direct their attacks on American bases in Iraq if the United States intervened and, if necessary, against Israeli targets and people (Kata'ib Hezbollah's Telegram channel, October 10, 2023).

▶ **Qais al-Khazali, secretary general of the Iraqi Asa'ib Ahl al-Haqq militia**, spoke by phone with Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, and stressed that Iraq, the Iraqi people, government and "resistance" supported the Palestinian cause. He said the Iraqi

"resistance" organizations were prepared for any action required of them to "liberate" Jerusalem and support the Palestinian people (al-Ghadir, October 10, 2023).

Yemen

▶ **Abd al-Malik al-Houthi, leader of the Houthis in Yemen**, said in a speech that the Yemeni people were prepared to do everything in their power to fulfill their duty to stand with the Palestinian people. He said hundreds of thousands of his operatives were ready to join the Palestinian people confronting Israel. Al-Houthi noted that they were coordinated with the "resistance axis" [Iran, Hezbollah, Syria, the Palestinian terrorist organizations and the Houthis] and threatened that if the United States intervened directly in the fighting, they were prepared to launch missiles and drones (Ansar Allah movement's Telegram channel, October 10, 2023).

▶ In another statement, al-Houthi accused the Western countries, especially the United States, France and Britain, of allowing Israel to kill Palestinians "by all means." He claimed the West has given Israel a free hand to commit "crimes," and UN Security Council directives and resolutions had not provided protection for the Palestinians. He called for aid to be given to the Palestinians and for no inaction (Ansar Allah movement's Telegram channel, October 10, 2023).

Western Countries

United States

▶ American President Joe Biden gave a special speech expressing the US full support for Israel. According to Biden, **Hamas' attack on Israel was "pure unadulterated evil...an atrocity at an unprecedented scale, ... [bringing] to mind the worst rampages of ISIS..."** He emphasized America's support for Israel and promised to provide everything necessary for Israel to protect its citizens, defend itself and respond to the attack. He called on Congress to approve the allocation of additional funding for Israel, and declared his country would not allow Israel's arsenals to run out and would also replenish the arsenals of the Iron Dome aerial defense system. He warned anyone who thought of taking advantage of the situation (i.e., Iran and Hezbollah), "Don't!" (CNBC, October 10, 2023). The United States State Department announced that Secretary of State Antony Blinken was expected to arrive in Israel (Reuters, October 11, 2023).

▶ Hamas strongly condemned Joe Biden’s speech, which they claimed was blatantly biased towards Israel and was broadcast at the same time as the continued escalation and aggression in the Gaza Strip and the other “occupied territories.” According to Hamas, the president’s statements were an attempt to hide the "crimes and terrorism' of the Israeli government, including massacres OF Palestinians. Hamas called on the American administration to examine its “unjust” position and withdraw from its double-standard policy towards Israel (Hamas Telegram channel, October 10, 2023).

Russia

▶ **Russian President Vladimir Putin** addressed the war in the south for the first time during a meeting with **Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia’ al-Sudani**. According to Putin, it was a clear example of the failure of United States foreign policy in the Middle East, which strove to monopolize any settlement between Israel and the Palestinians and did not seek a compromise that would be accepted by both sides. Putin called for a solution to the Palestinian issue by establishing a sovereign Palestinian state (CNN, October 11, 2023). Putin has so far neither addressed nor condemned the massacre of Israeli civilians by Hamas terrorist operatives.

Germany

▶ **German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock** said in a speech given ahead of a meeting of EU foreign ministers regarding the continuation of aid payments to the Palestinians that it would be completely wrong to stop humanitarian aid to the civilian population now (Reuters, October 10, 2023).

United Nations

▶ **The UN emergency relief coordinator, Martin Griffiths**, described the extent of the crisis and the speed at which it was unfolding as “chilling”. He stressed that all sides had to uphold the laws of war, treat those held in captivity humanely, and release the hostages without delay. He stressed the need to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, allow civilians to go to safer areas, and not prevent essential humanitarian aid, services, and supplies necessary from reaching the Gaza Strip. The World Food Program (WFP) has begun a food relief operation for more than 800,000 people in the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria. The organization called for the establishment of humanitarian corridors to facilitate the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip.