



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., December 10, 2023

Northern Arena

- 420 attacks
- 98 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 16 other terrorist-organization operatives killed
- One Lebanese army soldier killed

Israeli Casualties

- Approximately 1,200 military and civilian dead (unofficial estimate)
- 138 abducted remain in the Gaza Strip

Rocket Fire

- About 10,500 rockets and mortar shells
- About 10% failed launches

Overview¹

► **The combat arena:** Fighting continues in the northern and southern Gaza Strip. Integrated IDF forces continued to expand their presence in the area, attacking hundreds of Hamas terrorist targets. The local media reported fierce fighting and the surrender of dozens of Gazans. Senior Hamas terrorists claimed they had the upper hand, were successfully combatting the IDF forces and could hold out for many months.

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 425 of them soldiers and officers; 138 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, 17 of them women and children; 113 hostages have been returned to Israel.**

► **The issue of the hostages:** An IDF attempt to free the hostages failed (no hostage was present at the site) and two soldiers were injured. Hamas' military-terrorist wing announced that it had prevented the rescue of a hostage. Senior Hamas terrorists emphasized the failure and claimed hostages would only be released through negotiations.

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

► **The Gaza Strip:** The situation in the Strip continues to deteriorate. The spokesman for the Hamas-controlled the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip reported the collapse of the public health system, stating hospital occupancy stood at 260%.

► **The northern Sector:** Hezbollah continued attacking IDF posts and forces. The IDF responded with artillery fire and airstrikes. Reportedly, there has been increasing criticism from senior Hezbollah terrorists of the Radwan forces along the border and its performance during the war. It was noted that Hezbollah was considering establishing an investigative committee to uncover the failures and their causes, and that the organization would settle accounts with the Radwan commander before the end of the war. Two rockets were launched from Syria. A squad of Hezbollah terrorist operatives was eliminated near Quneitra on the Israeli border.

► **Judea and Samaria:** Counterterrorism activities continue. Shots were fired at an IDF force near the village of Ya'bad, west of Jenin. Demonstrations in support of the Gaza Strip were held throughout Judea and Samaria and a general strike was declared. Mahmoud Abbas claimed he was prepared to introduce reforms in the Palestinian Authority (PA) and hold presidential and parliamentary elections which would include Hamas.

► **The pro-Iranian militias:** The American embassy in Baghdad was attacked. The Houthis declared they would absolutely prevent the passage of Israeli ships and ships sailing towards Israel.

► **The Arab arena:** The heads of the ministerial conference, which was established during the Arab-Islamic summit, toured the United States and Canada and met with senior government officials.

► **The UN Security Council:** The Security Council debated a proposed resolution calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. It was vetoed by the United States, on the grounds that it did not condemn Hamas' October 7 massacre, or the sexual violence perpetrated by its terrorist operatives, and there was no mention of calling on the Red Cross to provide the hostages with medical treatment. The Palestinians and their supporters condemned the United States' veto.

The Combat Arena

► The IDF continued to expand its activities in Hamas' strongholds in the southern and northern Gaza Strip, with more than three divisions fighting in the Gaza Strip. During the past

few days, over 700 terrorist targets were attacked from the air, sea and land (IDF spokesperson, December 7-10, 2023).

► **Activity on the ground:** Activity on the ground was carried out simultaneously in several epicenters in the northern and southern Gaza Strip. The fighters eliminated terrorists, located and exposed a large number of tunnel shafts, destroyed terrorist facilities and located stockpiles of weapons. Weapons were found in an UNRWA school which had been camouflaged inside classrooms, some of them hidden in UNRWA bags (IDF spokesperson, December 9, 2023).



Right: Weapons found inside a giant teddy bear. Left: Weapons found inside an UNRWA bag (IDF spokesperson, December 9, 2023)



IDF forces in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, December 8, 2023)

► The combat centers included:

- ◆ **Khan Yunis:** IDF forces continued to fight in Khan Yunis, considered Hamas' main stronghold. They eliminated dozens of terrorists, located and destroyed tunnel shafts, and directed precise strikes from the ground and from the air (IDF spokesperson, December 8, 2023).

◆ **The Jabalia refugee camp:** During an attack based on information about the presence of Hamas terrorist operatives and weapons in nearby buildings, the fighters arrived through an alley, surprised the terrorists and killed them.



IDF forces in Jabalia (IDF spokesperson, December 9, 2023)

◆ **Gaza City:** IDF forces destroyed buildings used by Hamas for terrorist activities at al-Azhar University in the Rimal section of Gaza City. Terrorist facilities were located in the university compound, including a tunnel from the university yard leading to a school about a kilometer (.6 miles) away. Weapons were found, including IEDs, parts of rockets, rocket launchers, detonating systems and various technological equipment (IDF website, December 8, 2023).

◆ **Shejaiya:** The forces encountered and eliminated a terrorist squad on the school grounds. Searching the school premises, the soldiers found Kalashnikov assault rifles, grenades and ammunition inside the classrooms. An armored force located and destroyed a shaft which was part of an extensive underground route, another shaft containing a large quantity of weapons and an elevator (IDF spokesperson, December 9, 2023).



Right: A tunnel shaft found Shejaiya. Left: The tunnel shaft located in a classroom (IDF spokesperson, December 8, 9, 2023)



Smoke rises from the IDF attacks in the Tufah and Shejaiya neighborhoods in eastern Gaza City (al-Ghad TV, December 10, 2023)



The weapons found in al-Azhar University (IDF spokesperson, December 8, 2023)

► **Aerial activity:** The Israeli Air Force, in cooperation with the ground forces, continued attacking terrorist targets throughout the Gaza Strip. On the night of December 7, 2023, airstrikes in the Khan Yunis area lasted for two consecutive hours (IDF spokesperson, December 8, 2023).



Israeli Air Force attacks in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, December 9, 2023)



IDF attack on Khan Yunis (YouTube channel, December 9, 2023)

► **Naval activity:** Israeli Navy forces attacked terrorist facilities used by Hamas' naval commandos in the central and southern Gaza Strip, including military sites and posts, observation posts, weapons warehouses, buildings and vessels used for terrorist purposes and terrorist squads (IDF spokesperson, December 8-9, 2023).



Israeli Navy attacks (IDF spokesperson, December 8, 2023)

Reports and reactions to the fighting

► **Ahmed al-Bata, a correspondent for the al-Arabi channel in Khan Yunis**, reported heavy exchanges of fire between IDF forces and "resistance fighters" [terrorist operatives] in northern, central and eastern Khan Yunis. He said IDF tanks were in the al-Katiba neighborhood and were shooting at "armed men." In the northern Gaza Strip, he said, the IDF continued its attacks on Beit Lahia, the Jabaliya refugee camp and the Tufah section of eastern Gaza City. He reported that many residents of the Jabaliya refugee camp had refused to evacuate to the south despite calls and warnings from the IDF, and therefore the IDF engaged in massive shooting to drive them away. In the Rafah area, over the weekend the IDF attacked several buildings in the refugee camp; five deaths were reported during the past day (al-Arabi YouTube channel, December 10, 2023).



Ahmed al-Bata, reporting from the entrance to Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis
(al-Arabi YouTube channel, December 10, 2023)

► **Ghazi al-Aloul, Sky News correspondent in Arabic**, reported that during the weekend, fierce fighting continued between IDF forces and the "resistance" [terrorists] in the Khan Yunis region. He said the fighting was more difficult than in Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip, and therefore, the Israeli Air Force attacked continuously (Sky News TV in Arabic, December 9, 2023). **Bassel Khalf, a correspondent for al-Arabi TV**, reporting from Shuhadaa al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah, said that during the night the Israeli Air Force had attacked several areas in refugee camps in the central Gaza Strip, killing 25 Gazans (al-Arabi YouTube channel, December 10, 2023).



**An al-Jazeera TV presenter reports on the activities of the IDF forces
(al-Jazeera TV, December 9, 2023)**

- ▶ A local source from Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed they had prevented IDF forces from breaching the center of the Jabaliya refugee camp and had "destroyed a large number of armored vehicles" on the outskirts of the camp. He claimed they had attacked an assembly area of the IDF forces in the south of Gaza City using a Rajum² short-range rocket system (al-Jazeera website, December 8, 2023).
- ▶ A source in Hamas' military-terrorist wing reported fierce fighting in Shejaiya, eastern Khan Yunis and the Jabalia refugee camp. He claimed they knew Israel wanted a victory but would not be able to achieve one. He claimed that the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] was not fighting with all its strength and that it had capabilities which would allow it to continue "repelling aggression" with its current force for an entire year. He claimed that they could kidnap more soldiers but preferred to inflict losses. However, he said, that would not prevent them from kidnapping more Israeli soldiers, depending on the conditions on the ground (Arab World News Agency (AWP), December 9, 2023).
- ▶ **Senior terrorist Ghazi Hamad, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed the Israelis were in crisis because they had not been able to convince the home front that they had succeeded in eliminating Hamas leadership or damaging its military-terrorist capabilities. They had failed to stop the rockets and attacks and had not released a single hostage except through political negotiations. He claimed the "resistance" on the ground was strong, had excellent capabilities and was prepared to continue the war for three or four more months. Their military development and production continued without a pause and their fighters had a lot of experience in weapons production. He added that the battalions in the northern Gaza

² According to al-Jazeera website on December 6, it is a multi-barreled launcher of short-range rockets with a diameter of 114 mm.

Strip in Jabalia, Beit Lahia, al-Zeitoun and Shati had done "a good job," but there were [allegedly] a significant number of the military battalions that had not yet begun operating, such as the battalions in southern Rafah, Khan Yunis, al-Bureij and eastern Khan Yunis, and they were fully prepared to fight (Lebanese website Unews, December 7, 2023).

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

►The terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip continued firing rockets at Israel, although their numbers were relatively low and for the most part attacked the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip. On December 8, 2023, three barrages were launched towards central Israel from the safe zone in the southern Gaza Strip to which the population had evacuated.



Rocket launches from the area to which the civilian population evacuated (IDF spokesperson in Arabic, December 8, 2023).

Israeli casualties

►According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 425 of them soldiers and officers; 138 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, 17 of them women and children; 113 hostages have been returned.

►**The issue of the hostages:** The IDF spokesperson stated that two IDF soldiers had been seriously injured on the night of December 7 during an operation to rescue hostages from Hamas. The forces raided a Hamas location and eliminated terrorists who took part in kidnapping and holding the hostages, but no hostages were found (IDF account X, December 8, 2023).

►Hamas' military-terrorist wing announced that before dawn on December 8, 2023, its operatives foiled an attempt by a special IDF force to rescue one of the hostages. The announcement alleged that the Hamas [terrorist] operatives had clashed with the IDF force,

and that Israeli aircraft had attacked the site to cover the force's retreat. It also claimed that the kidnapped soldier was killed in the firefight (alresala.net Telegram channel, December 8, 2023). Hamas also claimed that the IDF forces hid behind an ambulance belonging to a humanitarian institution to carry out the failed operation, thereby violating international law [sic]. Therefore, Hamas claimed, the international community had to condemn Israel and hold it responsible for its crimes [sic] (Hamas' Telegram channel, December 9, 2023).

► **Senior terrorist Muhammad Nizal, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed that it was possible the IDF would arrive at a place with a connection to one of the hostages held by the "resistance," but, he said, it was impossible that the soldiers would leave alive. He claimed that the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades had made it clear from the beginning that the hostages could not be freed by force, only by negotiations, because any hostages whose release was attempted by force would be killed. He also claimed they would not negotiate an exchange deal under fire (al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, December 10, 2023)

► Senior Hamas terrorists continue to relate to a possible truce and another hostage exchange deal. **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** said the Israeli hostages would not return to their families unless the "Israeli aggression" against the Gaza Strip stopped, adding that prolonging the war might mean they would not return at all. He noted that the failed Israeli operations to free the hostage showed Israel did not care about the safety of its soldiers and hostages. He claimed the Israeli prime minister was determined to postpone the negotiations and return the hostages by force of arms. Hamdan claimed Israel had subverted all mediations and contacts, and the Palestinian "resistance" [terrorist organizations] could not wait for Netanyahu "and his terrorist mentality," and therefore "confronted the aggression" and worked to end it by "all possible means." He claimed the "resistance" was prepared to respond to any effort to stop the aggression, but would not agree to negotiations under fire (al-Arabi TV website, December 9, 2023; al-Arabi TV X account, December 9, 2023).

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The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

► **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in Gaza** reported that as of 8:30 p.m., December 9, 2023, the number of dead since the beginning of the war stood at more than 17,700 and the number of wounded at more than 48,780 (QudsN X account, November 27, 2023).

► **Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip**, reported the public health system in the Gaza Strip had collapsed under the burden of the large number of casualties. He said the occupancy in the hospitals was 260% and the rescue teams were unable to reach many areas because the IDF [allegedly] shot at them. He called on "the world" to send medical teams to the hospitals in Gaza and also to send field hospitals (al-Ghad TV, December 10, 2023).

► According to reports, Hamdi Ahmed al-Ghandour was killed. He was the third son of Ahmed al-Ghandour, commander of Hamas' military-terrorist wing in the northern Gaza Strip and who was also killed. Reportedly, after his two brothers were killed in the attack on October 7, Hamdi al-Ghandour was killed fighting in the al-Fallujah axis (Younes Abu Jarad X account, December 8, 2023).

► The death of Dr. Rifat al-Areer, 44 years old, was reported in an attack on Gaza City. He held a doctorate in English literature from a university in Malaysia and taught English at the Islamic University in Gaza. He was one of the pillars of the English-language department of Palinfo, the Hamas-affiliated media outlet, and the founder and supervisor of its social media department. He often gave interviews to the foreign media about the situation in Gaza and the Palestinian issue. Interviewed by the BBC after the October 7 attack, he described it as "legitimate and moral and compared it to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising" [sic] (BBC website in Arabic, December 8, 2023; Palinfo, December 8, 2023).



Rifat al-Areer (his X account)

► An Israeli Air Force attack on Hamas' central intelligence headquarters killed two Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades intelligence operatives responsible for surveillance. They were Abd al-Aziz Rantisi, responsible for all Hamas surveillance, and who participated in planning the October 7 massacre, and Ahmed Ayoush, an operative in the Carrara Battalion in the southern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, December 7, 2023).



Abd al-Azia Rantisi and Ahmed Ayoush (IDF Account X, December 7, 2023)

The situation in the Gaza Strip

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** reported that the number of displaced Gazans exceeded 1.3 million and they were living in shelter centers, schools and hospitals. He said their suffering was worsening by the day and they lacked most of the basic relief and medical services as well as basic goods like flour, bread and gas, which had become scarce. He said hunger, thirst and infectious diseases were widespread, adding that the Gaza Municipality claimed thirst was sweeping the northern Gaza Strip and anyone who was not killed directly, died of dehydration or starvation, or the lack of medical treatment and medicine. He added that only four hospitals in the Gaza Strip were operating, after approximately 55 hospitals and medical facilities had been put out of commission (al-Anadolu News, December 7, 2023).

► Despite the IDF's activity in Jabaliya in the northern Gaza Strip, Palestinian media outlets report a lively movement of residents in the heart of the Jabaliya refugee camp. They also reported that many residents were waiting in line for food distribution at the UNRWA center (Shehab's X account, December 9, 2023).



Right: Gazans in the Jabalia refugee camp. Left: Waiting in line at the UNRWA center to receive food (Shehab X account, December 9, 2023)

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Ghazi Hamad** claimed "genocide" was being carried out in the Gaza Strip as a result of Israel's failure to achieve its three goals; eliminating Hamas, releasing the

hostages and changing the fundamental situation in the Gaza Strip. He claimed the Israelis destroyed everything until there was no trace of life left. He said that at the beginning of the war they counted the dead but that was now impossible. However, he claimed, despite the situation, not a single person in Gaza had said "we are against the resistance" [Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations] (Lebanese website Unews, December 7, 2023).

Aid to the Gaza Strip

►The Palestinian Red Crescent reported that on December 9, 2023, 100 trucks carrying humanitarian aid from the Egyptian Red Crescent entered the Strip through the Rafah Crossing (al-Quds, December 9, 2023).



**The Red Cross delivers medical aid to Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis
(Wafa YouTube channel, December 9, 2023)**

UNRWA

►In the wake of the meeting held by the UN Security Council, **Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA's commissioner general**, sent a communiqué to the president of the UN General Assembly stating that the agency was experiencing its greatest difficulties since its establishment. He said UNRWA had been operating in complex emergency situations for 35 years, but he never thought that he would write such a letter (Phillipe Lazzarini's X account, December 8, 2023).

Statements from Senior Hamas terrorist Ghazi Hamad

►**Senior terrorist Ghazi Hamad, a member of Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip**, spoke at the meeting of the supreme council of the Islamic Radio and Television Union, held in Beirut, where he presented the preparations and execution of Operation al-Aqsa Storm, which he claimed had a "success rate" [sic] of almost 100%, regarding taking over IDF bases, destroying the IDF Gaza Division and capturing soldiers. He also noted that the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] was "firm and strong, thanks to the support of Iran and Hezbollah, and security, intelligence and military cooperation with them has always been at its peak" (Lebanese website Unews, December 7, 2023).

►He said the following:

◆ **Planning:** Operation al-Aqsa Storm had been planned and prepared for a long time, during which they developed their military capabilities, especially rockets and production of weapons and ammunition. They had about 35,000 trained fighters. The [alleged] objectives of the operation had been to destroy the Gaza Division and kidnap soldiers and exchange them for Palestinian prisoners in Israel jails, thereby closing the prisoner file.

◆ **Execution:** On the eve of Operation al-Aqsa Storm Hamas had about a thousand fighters. It did not tell anyone about the operation and only a small number of military and political leaders knew about it. They had good security information, maps and data about the location of the officers, soldiers, computer servers and military computers, and they seized them as they had planned. The IDF soldiers were surprised by the large number of fighters, the cars and motorcycles that entered within two hours while they were sleeping, so they managed to kidnap about a hundred soldiers and encircle the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip and infiltrated 20 kilometers into Israeli territory.

◆ **Kidnapping civilians:** Muhammad Deif [allegedly] ordered not to harm children, women and the elderly. Hamas [allegedly] had no intention of kidnapping civilians, but with the breach of the fence, Gazan "civilians" from Beit Hanoun, Jabaliya and Beit Lahia, which are adjacent to the fence, entered the Israeli settlements and "some" of them took Israeli civilians in order "use them to release" their imprisoned relatives. Hamas [allegedly] did not want civilians or plan to kidnap them, and was prepared to release "them at no cost because the mission was purely military."

◆ **Hamas brutality:** He falsely claimed that everything published by the Israeli media and the Israelis about them killing babies was based on fake videos and was untrue, and "later videos were published that prove the claims were false" [sic] and they "showed Hamas' good treatment of the Israeli civilians [sic]." He added that they put the hostages in the tunnels and "provided them with the protection," because their religion "instructs them to treat the hostages well."

►Regarding the future of the Gaza Strip, Hamad claimed that the movement was not opposed to the establishment of a national government and that its position was clear, it was not referring to the situation in Gaza, but to the entire Palestinian situation. He said they insisted

that after the war, the issue of the Gaza Strip would be first and foremost a national issue and it would depend on the results of the campaign. Hamas claimed it would not be possible for Hamas to hand over its weapons unless there was a political solution that ended the occupation of "Palestine."³ He added that their basic principles were that the change had to be a national change, and they had red lines that could not be crossed, including disarming them, harming the capabilities of the "resistance," establishing buffer zones in the Gaza Strip, and granting Israel freedom of action as was the case in Judea and Samaria (Lebanese website Unews, December 7 2023).

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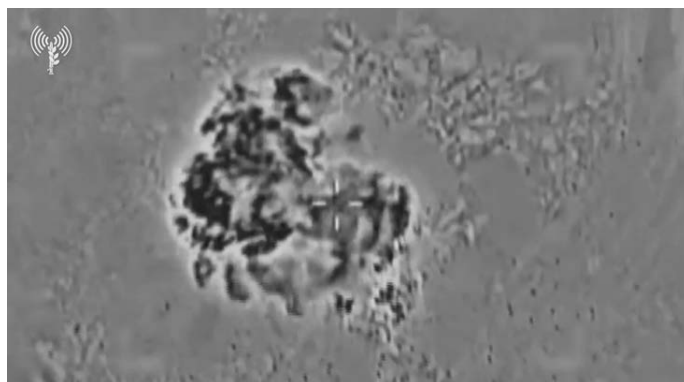
The Northern Arena

Hezbollah attacks

►Hezbollah continued attacking IDF posts, concentrations of forces on the northern border and civilian targets. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for carrying out 35 attacks between the afternoon of December 7 and the morning of December 10. Hezbollah reported it had launched anti-tank missiles and rockets, artillery fire and even Burkan rockets (Hezbollah combat information wing Telegram channel, December 7-9, 2023). An anti-tank missile killed an Israeli civilian and several IDF soldiers were injured (IDF spokesperson, December 7-10, 2023).

►In response, the IDF attacked with tank and artillery and artillery fire. Fighter jets and helicopter gunships attacked Hezbollah terrorist targets in Lebanese territory, including a military headquarters, positions from which the rockets and artillery were launched, observation posts and military sites (IDF spokesperson, December 7-10, 2023). IDF forces also attacked launch squads. On the night of December 7, 2023, a UAV attacked an armed terrorist squad in the Mount Dov area (IDF spokesperson, December 8, 2023).

³ I.e., the elimination of the State of Israel.



IDF attack in the Mount Dov area (IDF spokesperson, December 8, 2023)

► Hezbollah published a short video summarizing its activities called "The word... of the ground" showing its operatives launching guided anti-tank missiles, 107 mm rockets and Burkan rockets with heavy warheads at IDF positions, infantry fighters and buildings in towns and villages near the border where they claimed there were IDF forces. The video shows the launch of a dual-cannon anti-tank missile launch system called Tha'r Allah ("Allah's revenge"), apparently based on an improved Iranian imitation called Dehlavine of a Russian-made Kornet missile. It should be noted that the system was revealed by Hezbollah on August 11, 2023⁴ (Hezbollah combat information wing Telegram channel, December 9, 2023).



Right: Launching an Tha'r Allah system anti-tank missile (Hezbollah combat information wing Telegram channel, December 9, 2023). Left: An anti-tank missile hits a Merkava tank near the Biranit post (Hezbollah combat information wing Telegram channel, November 17, 2023)

► Lebanese politicians who commented on the December 7 attack on the Lebanese army position in the vicinity of the south Lebanon village of al-Adeisa claimed Israel was ramping

⁴ The system allows the almost simultaneous, launch of two anti-tank missiles (with a gap of less than a second between firings) during the day or night, and is very easy to transport and maneuver. Hezbollah issued a video showing many launches of two anti-tank missiles in less than a second, one after the other, mostly during the day, but also at night (al-Manar, August 11, 2023). The system may have been used in the attack on an IDF Merkava targeted killing near the Biranit post on November 16, 2023, at 4:45 p.m.

up its "aggression" and using attacks to send the Lebanese army and government the message that if they did not take action to implement Resolution 1701, Israel would. Sources "close to Hezbollah" claimed that the organization did not attach importance to the messages and threats and that talk of withdrawing from south of the Litani River was "ridiculous" (Nidaa al-Watan, December 7, 2023).

►According to reports, senior Hezbollah terrorists have been increasingly critical of the Radwan force, the organization's elite combat unit, because of its high number of casualties and failure to launch anti-tank missiles at IDF targets. Hezbollah is allegedly considering establishing an investigative committee to discover the failures and their causes, and that the organization would settle accounts with unit commander even before the end of the war (al-Hadath YouTube channel, December 8, 2023).

Hezbollah fatalities

►Hezbollah reported the deaths of eight operatives, three on December 7, four on December 8 and one on December 9, 2023 (Hezbollah combat information wing Telegram channel, December 7-9, 2023):

- ◆ Hassan Kamal Srour, aka Muhammad Musa, from Aita al-Sha'ab in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Imad Muhammad al-Rashaini, aka Abu al-Fadel, from al-Hermel in the Lebanon Valley.
- ◆ Hatem Ali Jaafar, aka Khazem, from al-Hermel in the Lebanon Valley.
- ◆ Mustafa Ali Darwish, aka Mujtaba, from south Lebanon.
- ◆ Ahmed Hossein Ali Ahmed, aka Abu Abbas, from the Lebanon Valley.
- ◆ Hassan Ali Dakdouk, aka Jawad, from Aita al-Sha'ab in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Ali Idris Salman, aka Abbas, from Armata in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Hossein Assam Tahe, aka Abu Tarab, from Meiss al-Jabal in south Lebanon.





Hezbollah casualties
(Hezbollah combat information wing Telegram channel, December 7-9, 2023)

► The military-terrorist wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) announced the deaths of two of its operatives, Muhammad Ahmed Saleh, aka Abu Saleh, 31 years old, and Malek Ahmed Amr, aka Abu Hussein, 27 years old, operatives of the Commander Ali al-Assoud, Syrian Arena Battalion, who were killed in south Lebanon during Operation al-Aqsa Storm (al-Nashra website, December 7, 2023). According to reports, the two were from the Khan Danoun refugee camp on the outskirts of Damascus (Refugeesp Telegram channel, December 7, 2023).



Muhammad Saleh (right) and Malek Amr (Safa website X Account, December 7, 2023)

► It was reported that Masoud Abdullah, a Lebanese civilian from the town of Rachaya al-Foukhar, was injured in Israeli artillery attack at the entrance to the town (Lebanese News Agency, December 8, 2023).

The Lebanese army

► Three Lebanese army soldiers were admitted to a hospital in Tyre after having been injured in an Israeli attack in Rosh Hanikra (al-Akhbar, December 8, 2023).

UNIFIL

► According to the Hezbollah-affiliated al-Akhbar, UNIFIL spokesman Andrea Tenenti reported that the force's control tower had been attacked and damaged. He did not confirm that the

tower had been hit by Israel's attack because the incident is currently under investigation, but did say that according to eyewitnesses an Israeli tank had attacked the tower (al-Akhbar, December 9, 2023).

The Lebanese government

► **Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament**, stated that no diplomatic entity had approached him regarding the implementation of Resolution 1701 based on Israel's wishes. Regarding the upcoming visit of the American envoy Amos Hochstein to Beirut, Berri said he had no news on the matter. Regarding the possibility of war breaking out in Lebanon, Berri made it clear that they were "at the heart of the war" and praised Hezbollah's actions, which he claimed did not deviate from the "rules of conflict." As for the involvement in the fighting of the Amal movement, which Berri heads, he emphasized that they were prepared to defend Lebanon and the Lebanese people, and if Israeli forces entered Lebanon, they would be the first to resist them (al-Liwaa, December 8, 2023).

► "Sources" reported that American Envoy Amos Hochstein met in Dubai with **Elias Bou Saab, the deputy speaker of the Lebanese Parliament**. According to reports, the Americans did not want an Israeli-Hezbollah escalation, and any discussion regarding the Resolution [1701] or the continental borders would only begin after the ceasefire. Bou Saab asked Hochstein about the proposal to establish a buffer zone on the border in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal from Sheba Farm and the hills of Kafr Shuba. Hochstein denied such a proposal existed (MTV network, December 7, 2023).

► An article published in the Hezbollah-affiliated al-Akhbar, entitled "The United States and France threaten Lebanon: the withdrawal of the resistance from the south or war," noted a Western claim that the global pressure on Israel not to extend the war to Lebanese territory would not last forever, and therefore, Lebanon had to respond to the demand to remove Hezbollah from the area south of the Litani River. It was also reported that Western elements in Lebanon were working in cooperation with Arab countries to restore order to Lebanon, and to force Hezbollah to agree to concessions on internal issues, and especially on the issue of the presidency (al-Akhbar, December 7, 2023).

Syria

► On the evening of December 7, 2022, two rockets were fired at the Golan Heights from Syrian territory. The rockets fell in an open area, and no casualties or damage were reported. In

response the IDF attacked several targets in Syrian territory (IDF spokesperson, December 8, 2023).



IDF attack on targets in Syria (IDF spokesperson, December 8, 2023)

►A Syrian man and three Lebanese members of Hezbollah working for the monitoring and launching missiles unit in al-Quneitra were killed by an Israeli drone which targeted a taxi near al-Moror roundabout in al-Baath city in the Quneitra province (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, December 8, 2023). It was reported that one of the dead was Muhammad al-Tamar, aka Abu Julan, a key terrorist operative in the Golan File unit (Unit 142), whose commander is Abu Hossein Sajid (Ein al-Sham Research Center, December 8, 2023).



Muhammad al-Tamar, aka Abu Julan (Ein al-Sham Research Center, December 8, 2023)

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Judea and Samaria

Shooting at IDF forces

►Shots were fired at an IDF force operating at a military post near the village of Ya'bad (west of Jenin). The soldiers responded with gunfire, and an IDF soldier was wounded. The forces

chased the perpetrators and set up roadblocks in the area (IDF spokesperson, December 8, 2023).

Preventive and counterterrorism activities

► In a joint operation of the Israeli security forces, wanted Palestinians were detained throughout Judea and Samaria, including a terrorist who shot at a military post near the village of Hursa on December 7, 2023. When the soldiers attempted to detain him, he attacked the force with a knife. The soldiers shot and killed him. An IDF soldier was moderately wounded. During the operation, the forces seized tens of thousands of shekels intended to finance terrorist activity. A will was also found in the terrorist's home (IDF spokesperson, December 9, 2023).

► In the early morning hours of December 10, 2023, IDF forces operated in Tubas. A total of 14 wanted Palestinians were detained. Four hunting rifles, a Carlo rifle, an airsoft pistol and ammunition were found, and three IEDs were destroyed by the fighters (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, December 10, 2023). Following the activity of the security forces in the al-Far'a refugee camp in Tubas, the PIJ issued an announcement stressing that the crimes committed by Israel would only increase the Palestinians' devotion to their land and their right to resistance. The announcement condemned the silence of the world over the crimes committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and warned of a plot to uproot the Palestinians from their land, which Israel was carrying out with American and Western support, and which would have severe consequences for Arab national security and the entire Arab system (PIJ's information office Telegram account, December 8, 2023).

► Since the beginning of the war, about 2,200 wanted Palestinians have been detained in Judea and Samaria, about 1,180 of them suspected of affiliation with Hamas (IDF spokesperson, December 10, 2023).

Support for the Gaza Strip

► Hamas issued a statement saying that in light of the continuation of the "genocide and terrible massacres perpetrated by the Zionist occupation," they called on the masses of the Palestinian people and the Arab and Islamic nation to go out on December 8, and in the coming days in all cities and capitals and participate in marches and demonstrations in support of Gaza, for humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip and a halt to the aggression. Hamas also called for an escalation of the global public resistance (Hamas Telegram channel, December 7, 2023).

► Marches were held throughout Judea and Samaria in support of the Gaza Strip after the Friday prayers (Hurriya News, December 8, 2023).



Right: March in Hebron (Filastin al-Yawm TV X account, December 8, 2023). Left: March in Tulkarm (QudsN X account, December 8, 2023)

► The national and Islamic forces in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem declared a general strike on December 11, as part of a global strike declared to protest the American bias in favor of Israel and the continuation of the war in the Gaza Strip (Hurriya News, December 10, 2023; Wafa, December 9, 2023).

Palestinian Authority (PA)

► In an interview, **Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority**, called for an international peace conference to end the war in the Gaza Strip and formulate a political solution that would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. He added that based on a binding future international agreement, he was prepared to pass reforms in the Palestinian Authority and hold presidential and parliamentary elections. Asked whether he would risk holding elections considering the chances Hamas would win them, he said they would be democratic elections, and whoever won would prevail. He also said the United States was the only superpower capable of ordering Israel to stop the war, but unfortunately, it did not do so and fully supported Israel and therefore bore responsibility for what was happening in the Gaza Strip (Reuters, December 8, 2023).

► In an interview, **Muhammad Shtayyeh, prime minister of the Palestinian Authority**, said Israel's objective of defeating Hamas was completely unrealistic. Instead, he said, Hamas should join a new government structure. When asked why Israel could not eliminate Hamas, he replied that Hamas was present in Lebanon, Qatar, Judea and Samaria. He explained that his preferred outcome was for Hamas to become a junior partner under the PLO and help

establish an independent Palestinian state that would include Judea and Samaria, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem. If Hamas agreed to reach an agreement and accept the PLO's political platform, then they would be able to talk. Shtayyeh refused to condemn Hamas' actions on October 7, claiming that the conflict did not begin on that date. According to him, Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip were revenge that was not going to advance it. Shtayyeh noted that Palestinian and Israeli youth were becoming more militant, and therefore the chances of a peace agreement between the sides were rapidly waning (Bloomberg, December 8, 2023).

► In another statement during the Doha forum, **Muhammad Shtayyeh** called for sanctions against Israel and to not allow it to violate international law and UN Security Council resolutions. He stressed that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict required a political solution, not a military one. He called for an urgent investigation into Israel's actions in the Palestinian territories, stressing that the United States had to bear responsibility for the attacks in the Gaza Strip and the killing of civilians because it gave Israel the green light following its veto in the UN Security Council. As for Israel's intention to eliminate Hamas, Shtayyeh said it would not happen and was unacceptable to them (Wafa; al-Jazeera, December 10, 2023).

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Iran

► **Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Iranian foreign minister**, spoke with **PIJ Secretary-General Ziyad al-Nakhalah** and discussed the latest developments in the Palestinian arena. Abdollahian updated al-Nakhalah on Iran's recent diplomatic moves, including President Ebrahim Raisi's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. He stressed the need for immediate and effective action by the international community to stop the "war crimes of the Zionist regime." Al-Nakhalah thanked the Arab-Islamic efforts and gave the Iranian foreign minister a report on the recent developments in the fighting in the Gaza Strip. He said the resistance factions would continue fighting against the "Zionist enemy" (Tasnim, December 8, 2023).

► **Abdollahian** also spoke with **Ismail Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, and updated him on Iran's political initiatives to stop the fighting in the Gaza Strip. Haniyeh thanked Iran for supporting the Palestinians and updated Abdollahian on the situation in the

Gaza Strip. He said the "resistance" would continue until the "crimes of the Zionists" stopped and the "occupation of Palestine" ended (IRNA, December 8, 2023).

► As part of his diplomatic efforts, **Abdollahian** also spoke with **Annalena Baerbock, Germany's foreign minister**, and **António Guterres, the UN secretary-general**. In his conversation with Guterres, Abdollahian warned that as long as the United States supported the "crimes of the Zionist regime" and the continuation of the war, not only could the war spread, but there was a possibility of an uncontrollable explosion in the region (ISNA, December 8, 2023).

► **Mohammad Mokhber, vice president of Iran**, met in Tehran with **Syrian Prime Minister Hossein Arnous**. Mokhber said Israel was committing "crimes against humanity" in Gaza, but unfortunately, the international community was not responding appropriately to these crimes. He noted that just as ISIS failed in achieving its goals thanks to the opposition of the Syrian government and people, so too the "Zionist regime" would not be able to take over the region thanks to the resistance of the residents of the Gaza Strip. He said Israel and the United States had not succeeded in realizing their goals in Gaza, and the "axis of resistance" had become a strong tree, against which the enemies were helpless. The Syrian prime minister said Israel's attacks in the Gaza Strip were beyond human imagination. He expressed hope that the "axis of resistance" would succeed in thwarting all the plots (ISNA, December 9, 2023).

► Speaking at a military ceremony in Tehran, **Mohammad Bagheri, chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces**, said there was no doubt about the victory of the Palestinian fighters and that it would be better if Israel stopped its "crimes" and let the Palestinians decide their own fate (Tasnim, December 9, 2023).

► On December 10, 2023, speaking on behalf of the Mossad, the Israeli Prime Minister's Office announced that, in partnership with the Mossad, the security and enforcement agencies in Cyprus had foiled an Iranian terrorist infrastructure planning to carry out attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets in Cyprus. According to the announcement, thanks to the counterterrorism activity and the arrest of the squad by the Cypriot security services, a great deal of information was received, which led to the exposure of the terrorists, the methods of operation, the targets of the attack and the planning. The announcement further stated that since October 7, 2023, the Iranian regime had expanded its efforts to promote terrorist activities around the world (Israeli prime minister's office website, December 10, 2023). Before that, the Cypriot daily Kathimerini Cyprus reported that two Iranians had been detained in

Cyprus on suspicion of planning to attack Israeli citizens. According to the report, the suspects were in contact with an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) official and were in advanced stages of intelligence gathering.

Pro-Iranian militias

Iraq and Syria

► The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for carrying out 11 attacks against American bases in Iraq and Syria on December 8, 2023. According to its statement, “the operations were carried out using dozens of missiles and drones” (Islamic Resistance in Iraq Telegram channel, December 9, 2023).

► **Abu Ali al-Askari, spokesman for the Kata'ib Hezbollah (Hezbollah Brigades) militia**, said the Islamic Resistance activity in Iraq was only the beginning of a new modus operandi of fighting whose level would be determined in the coming days. He noted that any foolish act on the part of Israel would be met with a double response and expansion of operations. In addition, he said their operations against the United States would continue until the last soldier left Iraqi soil (Abu Ali al-Askari's Telegram channel, December 9, 2023).

Attack on the American embassy

► On the morning of December 8, 2023, it was reported that the Green Zone (the area of the foreign embassies) in Baghdad was attacked by rocket fire (Reuters, December 8, 2023). The al-Arabiya network noted that the rockets were directed at the American embassy (al-Arabiya X account, December 8, 2023). The American embassy in Baghdad reported that the embassy was attacked with two rockets and that there were no casualties. The United States called on the Iraqi government to protect diplomatic missions in the country, noting that it reserved the right to protect its employees. According to the Americans, based on indications they had, the attack was carried out by the pro-Iranian militias in the country (al-Jazeera, December 8, 2023).

► **American Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin** spoke by phone with **Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia' al-Sudani** and discussed the Iraqi government's commitment to protecting diplomatic personnel and international coalition advisers, as well as protecting facilities. Austin stressed to al-Sudani that the United States reserves the right to self-defense and that most of the attacks against members of the international coalition were carried out by the Iranian-backed Iraqi militias Kata'ib Hezbollah and the Nujaba movement (Secretary of Defense X account, December 9, 2023). American Department of State Spokesperson Matthew Miller said they strongly condemned the rocket attack on the American embassy in

Baghdad, and Prime Minister al-Sudani and the Iraqi government had to do everything in their power to protect diplomatic missions and American military personnel and stop the attacks (the spokesperson's X account, December 9, 2023).

► **Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia' al-Sudani** instructed the Iraqi security forces to pursue the perpetrators of the attack on the American embassy in Iraq and prosecute them (Iraqi News Agency, December 8, 2023). The prime minister ordered the establishment of a joint working group to investigate security officials in the area where the attack on the American embassy took place and at the headquarters of the National Security Service. The security forces have reportedly been granted broad powers to immediately confront any action compromising the security of diplomatic missions and sites where international advisors were staying (Iraqi News Agency, December 9, 2023).

Yemen

► **Yahya Saria, spokesman for the Houthi armed forces**, issued an official statement saying that from now on, the Yemeni army would prevent the passage of ships bound for Israel of any nationality unless they were destined for the Gaza Strip to provide humanitarian aid. He added that any ship sailing towards Israel would become a legitimate target for the forces. He warned all ships against cooperating with Israeli ports and stressed that international trade traffic for all ships would continue as usual, except for Israeli ships or those carrying goods to Israel (Yahya Saria's X account, December 9, 2023).



**Poster issued by the Houthis
(on the Houthi movement's Ansar Allah Telegram channel, December 9, 2023)**

► Hamas issued an announcement saying it appreciated the decision of the Yemeni “brothers” to prevent the passage of Israeli ships and ships sailing towards Israel of any nationality, and that they considered it a courageous decision that supported the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (Hamas Telegram channel, December 9, 2023). The PIJ issued an announcement praising Yemen's "historic" position (PIJ's information office Telegram channel, December 9, 2023).

► **Muhammad al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, said the forces of the axis of resistance had to unite as soon as possible, noting that he believed there was a need for escalation. He noted that the Americans understood that their threats were worthless, and if they escalated, the scope of the conflict had to be expanded (al-Mayadeen, December 8, 2023).

► The American Treasury Department imposed sanctions on 13 individuals and entities who had transferred tens of millions of dollars to the Houthis in Yemen, proceeds from the IRGC-backed sale and shipment of Iranian goods. It was also reported that the Houthis continued to receive funding and support from Iran, resulting in attacks on civilian and commercial infrastructure, disruption of maritime security, and threat to international trade (Department of the Treasury website, December 7, 2023).

► The French General Staff announced that on December 9, 2023, the French Navy had intercepted two UAVs that arrived from the Yemeni coast and were directed at a Navy ship in the Red Sea (French General Staff X account, December 10, 2023).

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The Arab Arena

Meeting of the Conference of Ministers

► The heads of the Conference of Ministers headed by **Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan**, which was established during the Arab-Islamic summit and includes foreign ministers and senior officials from Turkey, Jordan, Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Nigeria, the Palestinian Authority and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, held meetings in Washington (Anadolu News, December 9, 2023).

► On December 7, 2023, they met with members of the United States House Foreign Affairs Committee. The parties discussed developments in the Gaza Strip and efforts to achieve an

immediate ceasefire to ensure the implementation of international law. They also called on the international community to take responsibility and defend the Palestinian people from the "crimes" Israel was committing in the Gaza Strip, Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem (Petra, December 8, 2023).

► In a meeting with **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken**, the delegation members called on the United States to take responsibility and pressure Israel to reach an immediate ceasefire. They also noted their dissatisfaction with the American veto in the Security Council. The ministers said they strongly opposed any displacement operation Israel was trying to implement, stressing that the two-state solution had to be implemented (PA foreign ministry website, December 9, 2023).

► At a press conference held by the foreign ministers, **Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman** said their position had been clear since October 7, that all the hostages had to be released as soon as possible. He added that continued Israeli attacks endangered the release efforts (al-Jazeera, December 8, 2023). **Sameh Shoukry, Egyptian foreign minister**, said forcing Palestinians in the Gaza Strip to emigrate was a "war crime" (Masrawy, December 8, 2023).

► A concluding statement issued by **the PA foreign ministry** noted that the delegation members stressed that the top priority of the Muslim and Arab countries now was to bring about a ceasefire and that it should be a top priority for the international community, especially the permanent members of the UN Security Council (PA foreign ministry Telegram channel, December 8, 2023).

► **Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan** claimed at a press conference with his counterparts in Washington that the American administration had imposed restrictions on **Riyadh al-Maliki, PA foreign minister**, so that he could not be interviewed by the media and was warned that if he did, there would be legal consequences. **American Department of State Spokesperson Matthew Miller** denied the allegations (al-Arabiya, December 8, 2023).

► Members of the Conference of Ministers met in Canada with **Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau**. Conference members expressed their dissatisfaction with the disruption of Security Council and UN resolutions demanding a ceasefire and taking steps to ensure the delivery of urgent aid to the Gaza Strip (PA foreign ministry Telegram channel, December 10, 2023).

Egypt

► **Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** spoke by phone with his Russian counterpart, **Vladimir Putin**. They stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire and to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. They also reviewed Egypt's efforts to provide aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip and stressed that they would continue to work for a ceasefire. They noted the importance of international efforts to reach a solution to the Palestinian issue, based on the two-state solution (al-Qahera, December 9, 2023).

► **Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry** said Israel was a neighboring country with which they had solid foundations in relations based on the peace agreement, which proved its ability to stand firm and overcome challenges (al-Jazeera TV X account, December 8, 2023). The statement received many responses, almost all of them negative.

Saudi Arabia

► Saudi Arabia and Russia issued a joint statement at the end of **Russian President Vladimir Putin's** visit to Riyadh, saying that the parties had agreed to increase their security cooperation and that they had discussed international issues, including the war in the Gaza Strip. They expressed concern over the humanitarian disaster in the Gaza Strip and stressed that military operations had to be stopped and humanitarian aid had to be allowed to reach the Strip, including UNRWA assistance. They also said conditions had to be created for peaceful coexistence and allowing the Palestinian people to achieve their rights and establish a Palestinian state (Saudi News Agency, December 7, 2023).

► **Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan** spoke by phone with **Josep Borrell, his EU counterpart**, to discuss developments in the situation in the Gaza Strip and its environs. They discussed efforts to reach an immediate ceasefire and the implications of the current crisis, especially at the humanitarian level (Saudi foreign ministry X account, December 8, 2023).

Algeria

► According to a report on a party conference held in Algiers on December 8, 2023, attended by **Yusuf Hamdan, Hamas' representative in Algeria**, and **Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine's (DFLP) representative Mohammed al-Hamami**, it was noted that despite the official and popular political positions supporting the Palestinian resistance, the Algerian authorities still prevented popular demonstrations in support of the Palestinian resistance (arabi21 website, December 8, 2023).

The International Arena

United Nations Security Council

► The UN Security Council convened on December 8, 2023, to vote on the draft resolution proposed by the United Arab Emirates demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Thirteen of the 15 member states of the Security Council voted in favor of the resolution, the United States used its veto power, and Britain abstained (Agence France-Presse, December 9, 2023).

► In a speech given at the beginning of the conference, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said Hamas' cruelty could never justify the collective punishment of Palestinians. He called for the immediate and unconditional release of the approximately 130 hostages being held in the Gaza Strip and asked to treat them humanely and allow Red Cross officials to visit them until their release. He urged the Security Council to act to reach an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and protect civilians (Agence France-Presse, December 8, 2023).

► **Robert Wood, the alternate representative of the United States for special political affairs to the United Nations**, said at the Security Council meeting that they did not understand why the drafters of the resolution refused to include a condemnation of the Hamas terrorist attack on October 7, and a condemnation of Hamas' sexual violence. Equally disappointing, he said, was that the drafters refused to include a clause calling for the Red Cross to be allowed to provide medical treatment to the hostages. He also noted that the content of the draft resolution did not recognize Israel's right to defend itself against terrorism in accordance with international law (United States mission to the UN website, December 9, 2023).

► **Barbara Woodward, Britain's permanent representative to the United Nations**, said Britain had abstained from voting on the draft resolution because they could not vote for a resolution that did not condemn the atrocities Hamas had committed against innocent Israeli civilians on October 7. She added that calling for a ceasefire ignored the fact that Hamas had carried out terrorist acts and was still holding civilians hostage. She said Israel had to be able to deal with the threat posed by Hamas and it should do so in a manner that complied with international humanitarian law so that such an attack could not ever be carried out again. She also noted that they were concerned about the desperate situation in the Gaza Strip and that the number of dead and residents evacuated in the Gaza Strip could not continue (British government website, December 9, 2023).

► The United States veto drew many condemnations:

◆ **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** said that since October 7, the Security Council had become the "defender of Israel." He said the Israeli government, which enjoyed the support of Western countries, was carrying out terrible massacres in the Gaza Strip, and a more just world could be established, but not with the United States because it stood by Israel (Anadolu News, December 9, 2023).

◆ **Nasser Kanani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry**, condemned the American decision, saying that the American administration had once again proven that it was the main player in the killing of innocent Palestinian civilians, especially women and children, and in destroying vital infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. He said the administration was complicit in Israel's crimes and that the United States and Israel would bear responsibility for the wide-ranging consequences of the war in the region (ISNA, December 9, 2023).

◆ **The Syrian foreign ministry** declared that Syria condemned the American veto and that this action proved once again that the United States was not only a partner in the massacre but was also waging the war in the Gaza Strip to destroy the Palestinian people in full partnership with Israel. Western and American support for Israel and the claim that it used self-defense were hypocritical and allowed Israel to continue killing Palestinians (SANA, December 9, 2023).

◆ **Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority**, said that the American position was aggressive and violated all humanitarian principles, and that the act proved that the United States was responsible for the deaths of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. According to him, this policy constituted a danger, threatening the security of the entire world. Abbas also thanked the member states of the Security Council for their support for justice and peace and noted his support for a resolution calling for an end to Israeli aggression (Wafa, December 9, 2023).

◆ **Hamas** condemned the American administration for thwarting the approval of the draft resolution in the Security Council, saying it regarded the United States as a partner in killing the Palestinian people by providing Israel with political and military support to continue the genocide in the Gaza Strip. Hamas thanked the countries that voted in favor of the resolution, especially Russia and China, and called on the international community to take steps to end the massacre. **Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas'**

political bureau, said that Hamas regarded the decision as immoral and inhumane and that the American veto was tantamount to taking direct part in the murder of the Palestinians and more massacres (Hamas Telegram channel, December 9, 2023).

◆ **Ali Abu Shahin, a member of the PIJ's political bureau**, said the American veto had proved that it was waging the war in the Gaza Strip. He said they would not respond to attempts at negotiations until a full ceasefire was reached and the aggression against the Palestinian people was stopped (PIJ's information bureau Telegram channel, December 9, 2023).



Palestinian cartoons criticizing American support for Israel (Mohammad Sabaaneh's Facebook page, December 9, 2023)



Palestinian cartoon condemning the American veto (al-Quds, December 10, 2023)

European Union

► The European Union announced that it had added Muhammad al-Deif, commander of Hamas' military-terrorist wing, and his deputy, Marwan Issa, to its list of terrorists. According to the announcement, the significance of the declaration is that their funds and assets in EU countries have been frozen (Agence France-Presse, December 8, 2023).

United States

► **American President Joe Biden** spoke with **Jordan's King Abdullah II**, who called for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the protection of the lives of its residents while taking intensive action and maintaining coordination between the countries. King Abdullah also said the dangerous developments in Judea and Samaria that could expand the conflict and create more chaos had to be addressed (the Jordanian royal family X account, December 8, 2023).

► **American Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin** spoke by phone with his Saudi counterpart, **Khaled bin Salman**, and reviewed the defense relations between the two countries. The two also discussed the latest regional and international developments (al-Ekhbariya, December 8, 2023). Austin noted that they had discussed then Houthi threats to freedom of movement in the Red Sea and the desire of the United States to work with partners to ensure safe passage to global sailing (Lloyd Austin's X account, December 8, 2023).

► **Secretary of State Antony Blinken** met with his Saudi counterpart, **Faisal bin Farhan**, to discuss the humanitarian needs in the Gaza Strip. The two also discussed efforts to strengthen regional stability and security and the need to end the destructive conflicts in Yemen and Sudan (Blinken's X account, December 9, 2023).

► **Antony Blinken** spoke with **Red Cross President Mirjana Spoljaric**, stressing the urgency of expanding both sides' access to humanitarian assistance and the need to strengthen the protection of civilians (Blinken's X account, December 9, 2023).