



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., December 13, 2023

Northern Arena

- 441 attacks
- 101 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)
- 135 abducted remain in the Gaza Strip

Rocket Fire

- About 10,600 rockets and mortar shells
- About 10% failed launches

Overview¹

► **The combat arena:** IDF forces continued their integrated maneuvers in the northern and southern Gaza Strip, and during the past day, ground, air and sea forces attacked over 250 terrorist targets. Most of the activity now focuses on scanning shafts, uncovering weapons and revealing terrorists' hiding places while engaging in face-to-face combat with terrorists who remained in the area. Senior Hamas officials admit the enormous destruction in the Strip, but still claim that they have the upper hand and that Israel will not be able to subdue them. They also accuse the United States of cooperating with Israel.

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 444 of them soldiers and officers; 135 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, 16 of them women and children; 115 hostages have been returned to Israel.**

► **The issue of the hostages:** IDF forces recovered two kidnapped bodies (a civilian and a soldier) and bring them to Israel. Senior Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists reiterate that if Israel is interested in negotiations and a deal, it must stop fighting in the Strip.

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

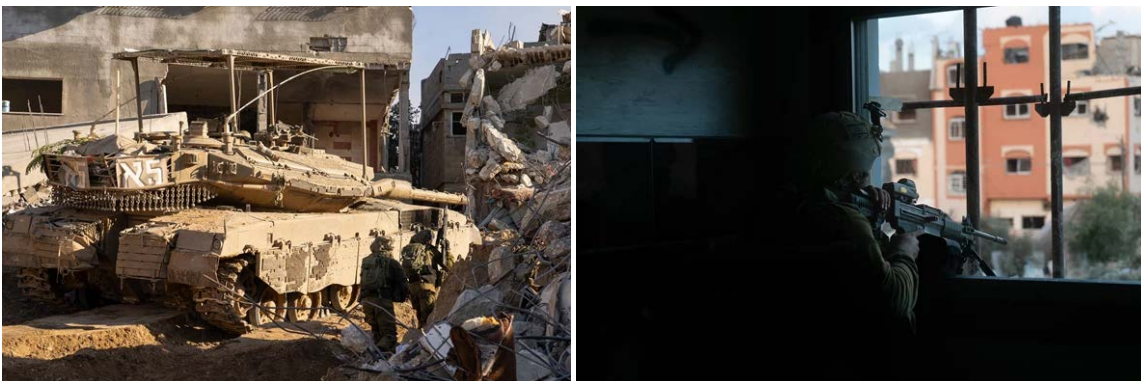
► **The Gaza Strip:** The situation in the Gaza Strip is deteriorating. Many evacuees are in the south of the Gaza Strip. They lack food, and are suffering from the flooding after the heavy rains. Referring to the situation after the war, a senior Hamas terrorist noted that there was no such thing as a post-Hamas day, as the movement would not cease to exist.

► **The northern arena:** Hezbollah continued attacking Israel, targeting military targets and launching rockets at the cities, towns and villages of the Western Galilee. The IDF responded with artillery fire and airstrikes. The United States and France are trying to reach a political settlement and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. Rockets were launched from Syrian territory; the IDF responded with artillery fire and airstrikes.

► **The United Nations:** The United Nations General Assembly held an emergency session and passed a resolution demanding an urgent humanitarian ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, along with the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages. The Palestinians welcomed the decision, which they viewed as international support for the Palestinian issue. In Geneva, foreign ministers of Arab and Islamic countries met at the World Refugee Forum to discuss the "situation of human rights in Palestine."

The Combat Arena

► **Ground activity:** IDF forces continued the integrated maneuvers in the northern and southern Gaza Strip. During the past day, the ground, air and sea forces attacked over 250 terrorist targets throughout the Gaza Strip. Most of the activity now focuses on scanning shafts, uncovering weapons and revealing terrorists' hiding places, while engaging in face-to-face combat with terrorists who remained in the area.



IDF ground activity in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, December 13, 2023)



IDF attacks in Rafah (QudsN X account, December 12, 2023)

► In the northern Gaza Strip activity focused on the Jabalia area. Apparently most of the area has been cleared of terrorists, but several pockets of resistance remain. Islam Badr, a correspondent for al-Arabi TV in Jabaliya, reported air force attacks and tank fire in the Jabaliya area, and a number of superficially injured people who were evacuated to a local clinic (al-Arabi TV YouTube channel, December 13, 2023). In Shejaiya, the last stronghold of Hamas in the northern Gaza Strip, intense fighting has been taking place to rid the area of terrorist operatives. The fighting has mainly focused on the Kasbah, a densely-built area which is difficult to maneuver and where Hamas terrorists operate from civilian buildings, shafts and tunnels (IDF spokesperson, December 13, 2023). During the attack Golani Brigade team fighters encountered terrorists who threw explosives and shot at them from inside a residential building with tunnels. Ten commanders and fighters were killed and four were seriously wounded.



Islam Badr reports from Jabalia (al-Arabi TV YouTube channel, December 13, 2023)

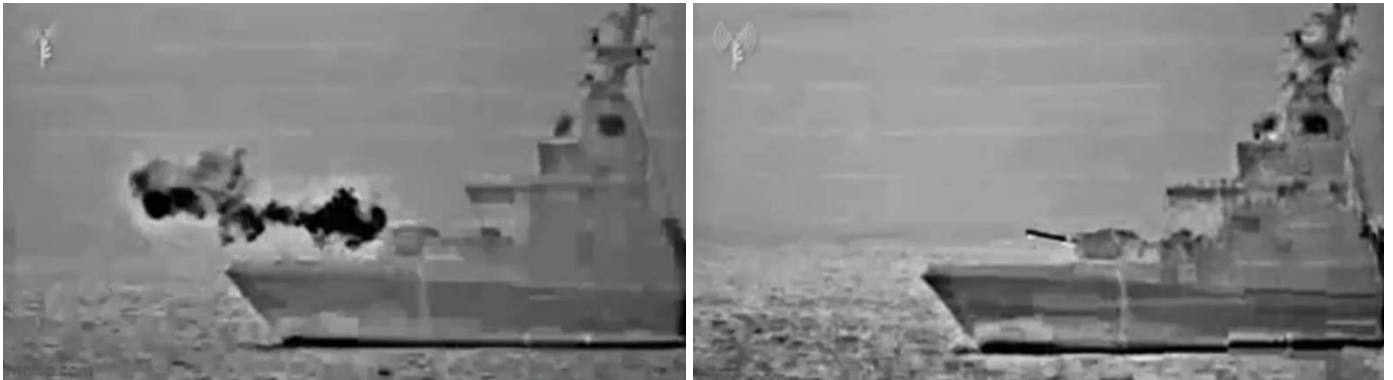
► In the southern Gaza Strip, IDF activity continued to focus on the Khan Yunis area and the Rafah area. Ibrahim Qana, a correspondent for al-Ghad TV, reported intense IDF attacks in eastern, central and northern Khan Yunis. He said IDF forces were trying to advance towards the center of the city, but so far without success, due to the resistance they encountered. He

said Nasser Hospital was full of injured people who lay on the floor because all the beds were occupied (al-Ghad TV, December 13, 2023). During the night, there were also reports of IDF attacks in the Deir al-Balah area and the al-Daraj and al-Tufah neighborhoods in eastern Gaza City (Ma'an, December 13, 2023).



Ibrahim Qanan, al-Ghad TV correspondent, reporting this morning from Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis (al-Ghad TV, December 13, 2023)

► **Naval activity:** Israeli Navy vessels and fighters attacked hundreds of targets to assist the forces in the field, eliminating terrorists, dozens of whom were Hamas naval operatives. In addition, the fighters eliminated most of the head commanders of Hamas' military-terrorist wing's naval force, which numbers hundreds of terrorist operatives and specializes in carrying out attacks from the sea (IDF spokesperson, December 13, 2023).



A Saar 6 Israeli Navy missile ship in action (IDF spokesperson, December 12, 2023)

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

► The terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip continue attacking Israel with rocket fire, for the most part targeting the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip. On December 13, 2023, IDF fighters in the Shejaiya area identified a terrorist squad en route to launch rockets at Israel. The fighters directed an Israeli Air Force aircraft that attacked and destroyed the cell (IDF spokesperson, December 13, 2023).



Right: A rocket in the Shejaiya area. Left: The Israeli Air Force attacks terrorist squad in the Shejaiya area at a rocket launch facility (IDF spokesperson, December 13, 2023)

A senior Hamas terrorist reacts to the fighting

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** held a press conference in Beirut where he claimed the "Nazi occupation" and the "fascist army," with the support of the United States and Great Britain, continued their "barbaric war and blatant aggression" against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and against the way of life there." He claimed the IDF left nothing undestroyed: hospitals, water wells, gas stations, solar energy installations, bakeries, schools, universities, mosques, churches, infrastructure and service institutions, and even children's toy stores, noting that children were the "IDF's main of targets." He said that as of December 12, more than 18,000 Palestinians had been killed and there were about 50,000 wounded. He claimed that in the past two days, the IDF forces had carried out 25 "massacres," targeting civilian homes and schools where displaced persons found shelter. He added that since the beginning of the war, the IDF had destroyed 74 schools and caused heavy damage to 277. Hamdan praised the bravery of Hamas military[-terrorist] wing of Hamas and the "young revolutionaries and "resistance activists" [terrorist operatives] in Judea and Samaria who were clashing with IDF soldiers. He claimed Israel had not had any political or military achievements or on the ground, and that Israel's repeated claims of eliminating the "resistance" had made it a laughingstock in the eyes of the Palestinians and the entire world. He said Israel's claims were "ridiculous and brazen" and intended to justify Israel's failure to confront the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] on the ground (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, December 12, 2023).

Israeli casualties

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli people have been killed. According to the IDF spokesperson, 444 of them are soldiers and officers (of which 116 have been killed since the start of the ground maneuver on 27 October, 2023.) 135 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist**

organizations in the Gaza Strip, 16 of them women and children; 115 hostages have been returned.

The issue of the hostages

- ▶ The IDF extracted the bodies of two murdered hostages, an IDF fighter and civilian woman, and brought them to Israel.
- ▶ **Osama Hamdan** claimed the failure of the IDF 's attempt to reach the location of one of the Israeli hostages was another failure of the IDF and the Israel government to release any hostage alive. He reiterated that there would be no negotiations regarding an exchange deal until after the cessation of the "aggression" against the Gaza Strip (Al Jazeera YouTube channel, December 12, 2023).
- ▶ **Senior Hamas terrorist Sami Abu Zuhri**, said that while the top priority of the American and Israeli governments was the return of kidnapped IDF soldiers, Hamas' top priority was stopping the "war of extermination and starvation" being waged against the Palestinians. He emphasized that first of all, the [so-called] "holocaust" had to be stopped and there would be no negotiations about the hostages before then (Sami Abu Zuhri's X account, December 12, 2023).
- ▶ **Senior terrorist Abu Hamza, spokesman for the PIJ's military-terrorist wing**, said in a recorded message said they "had no choice" but to be determined to win, and no matter how long the campaign took, they would not surrender. He claimed the hostages would die in Israeli attacks unless they were returned through indirect negotiations with a complete ceasefire (Abu Hamza's Telegram channel, December 12, 2023).

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The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

- ▶ **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in Gaza** reported that as of 5:15 p.m., December 13, 2027, the number of dead since the beginning of the war stood at more than 18,608 and the number of wounded at more than 50,594 (Shehab X account, November 27, 2023).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

- ▶ An international estimate of the damages caused in the Strip so far was, infrastructure, \$20 billion, electricity, \$120 million; transportation, \$500 million; and trade, \$1.1 billion (al-Arabi YouTube channel, December 12, 2023).

► Wafa TV broadcast a video of evacuees in Rafah waiting for the distribution of flour at the city's UNRWA facility. Evacuees who were interviewed said that the amount they received did not meet their family's needs and was only enough for a few days (Wafa YouTube channel, December 13, 2023).



**Flour distributed to evacuees at the UNRWA facility in Rafah
(Wafa YouTube channel, December 13, 2023)**



**The Palestinian Red Crescent distributes aid to evacuees in Khan Yunis
(Wafa YouTube channel, December 12, 2023)**

► Palestinian media reported on the difficult living conditions and hardships in the tent camps set up in the central Gaza Strip, which were flooded by the recent heavy rain (QUDSN X account, December 13, 2023).



**Rainwater flooding in the tent camps of evacuees in the central Gaza Strip
(QudsN X account, December 13, 2023)**

Hamas

► **Senior terrorist Muhammad Nizal, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed there would be no "day after Hamas" and the movement would not cease to exist. He claimed that Hamas would continue to run the Strip, with the agreement of all the Palestinian political forces, and they would not accept the administration of the Palestinian Authority in the Strip "if it comes on the back of an Israeli tank." He claimed that after the war they could hold elections for the administration of the Strip or take part in a joint mechanism with all Palestinian political forces (al-Jazeera, December 13, 2023).

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The Northern Arena

Hezbollah attacks

► During the past day, Hezbollah continued attacking IDF positions and concentrations of forces along the northern border, as well as civilian targets. Hezbollah also attacked the Western Galilee with rockets (IDF spokesperson, December 12, 2023). Hezbollah claimed responsibility for carrying out seven attacks, which, according to the organization, were carried out using "suitable weapons" (mainly artillery fire) (Hezbollah combat information wing Telegram channel, December 12, 2023).

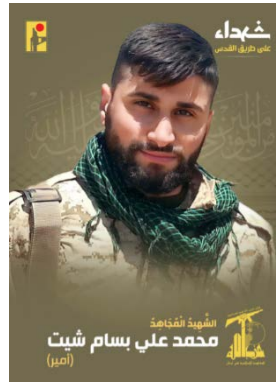
► IDF ground forces responded with artillery fire, and the Israeli Air Force attacked Hezbollah terrorist targets of Hezbollah in Lebanese territory (IDF spokesperson December 13, 2023).



Right: Attack on Hezbollah infrastructure in Lebanon. Left: Attack on a Hezbollah rocket launcher in Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, December 13, 2023)

Hezbollah fatality

► Hezbollah reported the death of Muhammad Ali Bassam Shayit, aka Amir, from Kafr Kala in south Lebanon (Hezbollah combat information wing Telegram channel , December 13, 2023).



The Hezbollah fatality
(Hezbollah combat information wing Telegram channel, December 13, 2023)

Attempts to reach an arrangement

► The Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese daily *al-Akhbar*, reported that **Amos Hochstein, the American envoy**, proposed an arrangement for implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1701, based on a number of principles, including, confirmation of Lebanon's ownership of point B1 as a starting point for the continental demarcation; resolving the 13 disputed points; Israel's withdrawal from the Lebanese part of Ghajar; and Israeli withdrawal from the Sheba Farms and their transfer to international forces. According to the report, Hochstein believes that completing the maritime demarcation with a land demarcation is a realistic solution that meets all the requirements for ending the conflict with Lebanon, and by doing so "all Hezbollah's cards will be removed" (*al-Akhbar*, December 13, 2023).

► **Senior terrorist Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general**, delivered a speech at the memorial erected for the three Hezbollah terrorist operatives who were killed in Syria on December 8, 2023. He claimed that any threat or attempt to link the situation on the Israel-Lebanon border with internal issues in Lebanon was worthless, and they would not discuss the situation in south Lebanon with anyone as long as the aggression in the Gaza Strip continued. When it ended, they would assess what they would or would not discuss. He added they did not currently know if the pace of the fighting would increase or decrease, and that it depended on what Israel decided. In any case, he claimed Hezbollah was on "very high alert" and the front in Lebanon would remain open as long as the "aggression" against the Strip continued (Na'im Qassem's X account, December 12, 2023).

Syria

► On December 12, 2023, three rocket launches were identified from Syrian territory towards Israel, two of which fell in Syrian territory, and one fell in an open area in Israel. In an

immediate response, the IDF attacked the sources of fire with artillery. Later, on the night of December 12, 2023, IDF aircraft and tanks attacked several military facilities and a Syrian army position (IDF spokesperson, December 12 and 13, 2023).



Right: Attack on a Syrian army facility. Left: Attack on a Syrian army position (IDF spokesperson, December 13, 2023)

► **Faisal al-Miqdad, Syrian foreign minister**, spoke today at a press conference with his Abkhaz counterpart about the recent airstrikes in Syria, claiming that it was impossible to separate the Israeli airstrikes in Syria from what was happening in the Palestinian territories because Israel knew that the battlefield of the campaign was one. He claimed the Israeli target was not only the Gaza Strip or Judea and Samaria, but all the Arab countries. Al-Miqdad accused the Western countries, claiming they were "accomplices and partners in [an alleged] genocide" (al-Watan, December 12, 2023).

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Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism activities

► The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities throughout Judea and Samaria. It was reported that 17 wanted Palestinians were detained, seven of them Hamas operatives (IDF spokesperson Telegram channel, December 13, 2023). For the second consecutive day, Israeli security forces continued their extensive activity in Jenin and the Jenin refugee camp. During 30 hours of operation, the forces searched 400 buildings, detained hundreds of suspects, and seized 30 weapons and a large quantity of ammunition. The forces also destroyed six laboratories for manufacturing IEDs, and located underground shafts and

four operations rooms intended for observation (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, December 13, 2023).



Evacuation of Palestinian casualties during Israeli security force activity in Jenin (QudsN X account, December 13, 2023)

► During the past day, Israeli security forces also operated in Hebron, Turmus Ayya (northeast of Ramallah) and the village of Beit Iba (northwest of Nablus) (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, December 13, 2023). The Palestinians also reported extensive detentions in Hizma (northeast of Jerusalem). Sixteen detainees were reported (Wafa, December 13, 2023).

Iran

► During his visit to Geneva, **Iranian Foreign Minister Hassan Amir Abdollahian** met with **Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib** to discuss developments in the region and the Gaza Strip. Abdollahian said Iran wanted only the good of Lebanon and the "resistance" in the country and noted that the United States had to set an end point for its unlimited support for "the Zionist regime and its war crimes against the Palestinian people." He said Lebanon had always been one of the most important pillars of anti-Zionist "resistance" in the region, and that continued Israeli attacks could lead to a regional explosion.

► Abdollahian also met in Geneva with Tunisian Foreign Minister Nabil Ammar (Iranian foreign ministry website, December 12, 2023) and Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, with whom he discussed regional and international developments, especially the situation in the Gaza Strip (Fars, December 13, 2023).

Pro-Iranian militias

Iraq

- ▶ The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for attacking two American bases in Syria: the al-Omar oil field with a drone, and the Kuniko oil field with rockets (Islamic Resistance Telegram channel, December 12, 2023).
- ▶ Against the backdrop of the attacks on American facilities in Iraq and Syria, **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken** spoke with **Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia' al-Sudani** and praised him for his strong condemnation of the recent acts of terrorism carried out against the American embassy in Baghdad and American forces in Iraq and Syria. Blinken called for accountability for the perpetrators and protection for Americans in Iraq (Department of State spokesperson's X account, December 13, 2023).

Yemen

- ▶ The French ministry of defense said in a statement that on December 11, 2023, the warship FREMM Languedoc had intercepted, a UAV that threatened the Norwegian oil tanker Strinda. It was noted that the aircraft originated in Yemen and that the attack caused a fire on board the tanker. The ministry clarified that the warship was sailing in the area to protect vessels from an attempted hijacking (Agence France-Presse, December 12, 2023).
- ▶ A "senior American official" reported that two missiles had been launched from Yemen's Houthi region at the Ardmor Encounter, which was flying the flag of the Marshall Islands, in Bab el-Mandeb and that they had missed their target. According to the senior official, during the incident, an American destroyer in the area intercepted a Houthi drone flying in its direction. He added that there were no casualties (AP, December 13, 2023).
- ▶ The United States has warned the Houthis that if the attacks against ships in the Red Sea continue, the peace plan with Saudi Arabia will fail. American diplomats said there was pressure in Congress to designate the Houthis as a terrorist organization, and if that step was implemented, the first phase of the peace plan would be halted. At the same time, the United States is trying to create an international defense force based in Bahrain to protect the trade route. It was also reported that in a conversation between **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken** and his **Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi**, Blinken tried to persuade him to join the naval defense force. Blinken believes that in light of China's interest in maintaining its trade routes in the Red Sea, it must provide personnel or equipment for the newly formed defense force (The Guardian, December 12, 2023).

► **Sami Abu Zuhri, a senior Hamas terrorist**, praised the Houthis for attacking Israeli ships or ships bound for Israel. He stressed that this was great support for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and that it was an important message to the Western coalition, according to which it had to stop the "war of annihilation" or else, expect the expansion of the circle of fighting outside the Gaza Strip (Sami Abu Zuhri's X account, December 13, 2023).

► Following the IDF spokesperson's announcement that the missile boats of the IDF's naval arm continue to operate in the Red Sea in accordance with the assessment of the situation and as part of the reinforcement of the defense effort (IDF spokesperson, December 12, 2023), the Houthis dismissed the announcement. **Muhammad al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' political bureau**, said the objective of launching the Israeli warship was purely for media impact. He said the interception of Israeli ships did not mean expanding the conflict between Israel and Hamas. He also said they had "bargaining chips" against the countries that would take part in the international defense force in the Red Sea (al-Jazeera Mubasher Telegram channel, December 12, 2023).

The Arab arena

United Arab Emirates

► **Lana Nusseibeh, UAE permanent ambassador to the UN**, noted in an interview that the current war in the Gaza Strip was a turning point. According to her, the UAE will provide financial and political support for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip only if there is an orderly plan with the support of the United States. She stressed that "the message is going to be very clear." There had to be a clear and serious plan in cooperation with Israel, the Palestinian Authority and other countries that had ties with Israel. She stressed that without such a plan, the UAE would be left out (*The Wall Street Journal*, December 12, 2023).

The International Arena

UN institutions

The General Assembly

► After the failure to pass the draft resolution in the Security Council, the discussion on the demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the Gaza Strip moved to an emergency session of the General Assembly. A majority of 153 countries, 10 against, and 23 abstentions,

not taken to stop Israel's attacks in the Gaza Strip, the war in the region would spread even further. He accused Israel of "war crimes and genocide" and called for action by the international community to stop the attacks in the Gaza Strip and to transfer humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. He also said that Israel and the United States could never wipe Hamas out (IRNA, December 12, 2023).

► **Riyadh al-Maliki, PA foreign minister**, accused Israel of using starvation as a weapon in the war against the residents of the Gaza Strip and condemned the "international failure" to respect the rights of the Palestinians (Reuters, December 12, 2023).

► Members of the conference of ministers in charge of the joint Arab-Islamic summit, including **Faisal bin Farhan, Saudi foreign minister, and Riyadh al-Maliki, PA foreign minister**, met in Geneva with the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (PA foreign ministry Telegram channel, December 12, 2023).

► **Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**, said it was difficult to describe in words the humanitarian situation in the war-torn Gaza Strip, which was far beyond collapse. According to him, all parties concerned had to take the situation very seriously, and international law and the Human Rights Council should be involved in every decision (Agence France-Presse, December 12, 2023).

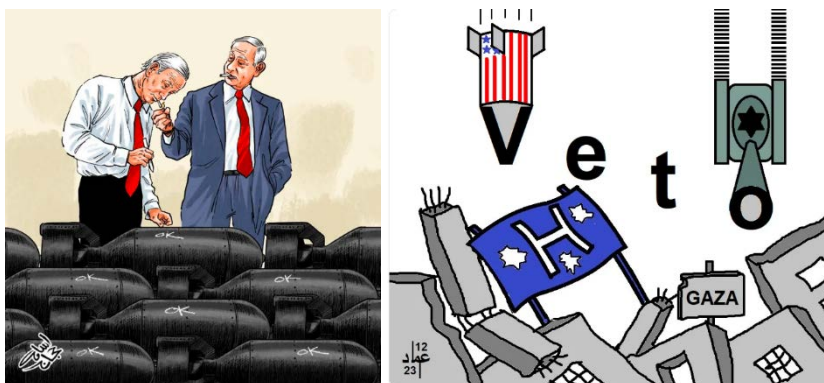
United States

► **American President Joe Biden** condemned Hamas and stressed that Israel had every right to act against it. He expressed his full commitment to continue supporting Israel and its objectives and assisting it militarily, and his commitment to restoring security to Israel, returning all hostages, and eliminating Hamas. He also discussed the role of the United States in increasing humanitarian aid entering the Gaza Strip and the importance of protecting human life there. Biden also expressed concern that, according to him, Israel was beginning to lose international support due to its "indiscriminate attacks in the Gaza Strip that have led to the killing of thousands of Palestinians" (Reuters, December 12, 2023).

► **Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, said Biden's words had to be turned into actions: calling for an immediate ceasefire and presenting a political plan based on international legitimacy, ending the occupation, and establishing a Palestinian state (Hussein al-Sheikh's X account, December 13, 2023).

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** said in response that the Israelis had begun to lose the support of the international community. He claimed that the Palestinians and the

resistance had pushed Biden to understand the madness of Israel's military operation in the Gaza Strip that would have disastrous consequences for Israel and Biden's upcoming election campaign, in which he could lose his job. He noted that there was a clear contradiction between Biden's statement from December 11, in which he stressed his absolute support for Israel and said, "I am a Zionist," and the statement on December 12, in which he noted that Israel had begun to lose international support (Anadolu News, December 12, 2023).



Cartoons attacking the United States for its support of Israel (right) and the weapons it supplies (left) (Sawaleif website, December 13, 2023)