



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., January 9, 2024

Northern Arena

- 614 attacks
- 154 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 19 other terrorist-organization operatives killed
- One Lebanese army soldier killed

Israeli Casualties

- Approximately 1,300 military and civilian dead (unofficial estimate)
- 132 hostages remain in the Gaza Strip

Rocket Fire

- About 11,000 rockets and mortar shells
- About 10% failed launches

Overview¹

► **The southern arena:** The IDF forces focused on fighting in the al-Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza Strip where they found a series of arms factories, including factories manufacturing long-range rockets. The sites were linked to a branching network of tunnels which were used to transport the weapons throughout the Gaza Strip. In the southern Gaza Strip, the IDF strengthened their hold on Khan Yunis and took control of additional neighborhoods in the south of the city. Senior Hamas figures criticized the Israeli defense minister's comments about the IDF's entry into the third phase of combat, claiming Israel had not achieved any of the goals it had set for itself in the combat. During the past day, terrorists launched two rocket barrages at Israel. The military wings arms of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) claimed responsibility for the attacks.

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,300 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 519 of them soldiers and officers; 132 civilian**

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

and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip; 121 hostages have been returned to Israel.

► **The northern arena:** Hezbollah continued attacking IDF posts and concentrations of forces on the northern border. On the morning of January 9, 2024, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for a UAV attack on a military headquarters in Safed. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq also claimed responsibility for the attack. In Syria, the IDF eliminated a senior Hamas terrorist operative who was responsible for attacking Israel with rockets launched from Syria. Iranian, Hamas and PIJ terrorists condemned the elimination of senior Hezbollah terrorist Wissam al-Tawil in south Lebanon.

► **Judea and Samaria:** A Palestinian terrorist carried out a stabbing attack near the settlement of Ateret (northwest of Ramallah). IDF forces continued their counterterrorism activities and the detention of Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorist activity.

► **The United States:** American Secretary of State Anthony Blinken continued his tour of the Middle East countries. He met with the heads of government in Saudi Arabia and the UAE and is expected to arrive in Israel.

The Southern Arena

► The Palestinian media reported IDF attacks in the west and south of the city of Khan Yunis, in the center of Deir al-Balah and in the al-Maghazi and al-Nuseirat refugee camps (Shehab X account, January 9, 2024). They reported 126 dead and 241 wounded in the past day of IDF attacks in the Gaza Strip (Ma'an, January 9, 2024).



IDF forces in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, January 9, 2024)

► **The central Gaza Strip:** Operating in the al-Bureij refugee camp, the IDF forces located the largest lathe for the manufacture of rockets which has been uncovered so far. They found components for long-range rockets that can reach as far as northern Israel, mortar shells, IEDs

and ammunition. The lathe was connected to a branching network of tunnels which used to transport weapons to the battalions of Hamas' military wing deployed throughout the Gaza Strip. Additional underground sites were located for the production of long-range rockets, explosives, precision rockets, mortar shells, IEDs, small arms and UAVs. The forces took over a headquarters of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades' al-Bureij Battalion and located a surveillance facility (IDF spokesperson, January 8, 2024).



Factories for the manufacture of weapons (IDF spokesperson, January 8, 2024)



A surveillance facility (IDF spokesperson, January 8, 2024)

► **Hashem Zaqout, a correspondent for al-Jazeera TV in Rafah**, reported heavy gunfire in the central Gaza Strip, especially in the **al-Maghazi and al-Masdar area**. He said there were many casualties and a considerable amount of damage had been done to buildings and infrastructure (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 9, 2024).



Right: Hashem Zaqout reports on the fighting in the central Gaza Strip (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 9, 2024). Left: An al-Jazeera TV presenter explains the IDF attacks in the central Gaza Strip (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 8, 2024)

► **The southern Gaza Strip:** The IDF forces expanded the integrated ground maneuver in the heart of Khan Yunis. During the operation, 40 terrorists were eliminated, and a wide variety of weapons and important tunnel shafts were located (IDF spokesperson, January 9, 2024).

► **Ibrahim Qanan, correspondent for al-Ghad TV in Khan Yunis,** broadcasting from Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, reported heavy IDF and Israeli Air Force attacks in Batn al-Sameen, Qizan Abu Rashwan and adjacent areas (south of Khan Yunis), and in Jorat al-Lout and Qizan al-Najjar (southeast of Khan Yunis). He said the IDF forces were expanding their ground maneuver in the Khan Yunis area and were in areas where there was a heavy exchange of fire with the "resistance fighters" [Palestinian terrorist operatives] (al-Ghad TV, January 9, 2024).



Right: Air Force strikes on Khan Yunis (Shehab X account, January 8, 2024). Left: Al-Ghad TV correspondent Khan Yunis reports on the fighting situation (al-Ghad TV, January 9, 2024)



Attacking targets in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, January 9, 2024)

► **Naval activity:** During the past day, Israeli Navy forces attacked military posts, warehouses and vessels that were used by the naval force of Hamas' military wing (IDF spokesperson, January 9, 2024).



Israeli Navy attacks (IDF spokesperson, January 9, 2024)

Palestinian reactions to the fighting

► Hamas spokesmen related to statements made by Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in an interview with The Wall Street Journal about the IDF's transition to the third phase of the war:

- ◆ **Senior terrorist Muhammad Nizal, a member of Hamas' political bureau,** claimed that the talks about the third phase were the beginning of the end of the war, also because of the IDF's heavy losses, but it would take more time because Israel was looking for a picture of victory or a way out that would allow it to retire with grace. Regarding the IDF spokesperson's statements about dismembering Hamas' military wing in the northern Gaza Strip, he claimed it was one of the [alleged] lies told by Israel. He claimed Hamas' "military operatives" [terrorists] were moving very easily in the north of Gaza City and that rockets were being launched from the area, including at Tel Aviv (al-Jazeera Mubasher website, January 9, 2024).

◆ **Senior Hamas figure Yusuf Hamdan**² claimed the defense minister's statement was an attempt to market an illusion to Israeli society, and that [Israeli Defense Minister Yoav] Gallant spoke as if the second phase, or even the first, had achieved its goals. He claimed Gallant was expressing the disagreements within the Israeli government, because the war had not achieved any of its stated goals. He added that Gallant had gotten lost in Gaza, in the central district of the Gaza Strip, in Khan Yunis and along all the fighting axes. He falsely claimed that the pictures broadcast by the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] and the [so-called] "facts" on the ground "proved" that Israel was not achieving its goals. He added that the "resistance" [the Palestinian terrorist leaders hiding in the tunnels] had repeatedly emphasized it was prepared to confront Israel for long periods, it was proficient in waging urban warfare and could [allegedly] exhaust Israel (World Press News Agency (AWP), January 9, 2024).

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip targeting Israel

► On the afternoon of January 8, 2024, a barrage of between eight and ten rockets was launched towards central Israel and the Greater Tel Aviv area. No casualties or damage were reported. **Hamas' military wing** claimed the rockets had been launched in response to the "killing of civilians" (Telegram channel of Hamas in Judea and Samaria, January 8, 2024).



**Rockets fired from Gaza towards the Greater Tel Aviv area
(al-Arabi YouTube channel, January 8, 2024)**

► On January 8, 2024, at 9 p.m. six rockets were launched at Sderot. The **PIJ's military wing** announced that at 9 p.m. it had launched rocket barrages at Sderot, Nir Am and other towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip (Paltoday Telegram channel, January 8, 2024).

² Possibly a reference to Hamas' representative in Algeria.



The residents of Gaza rejoice and cheer as rockets are fired at Israel (Shehab X account, January 8, 2024)

Israeli casualties

►According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,300 Israeli people have been killed. According to the IDF spokesperson, 519 of them are soldiers and officers (184 since the start of the ground maneuver on 27 October, 2023); 132 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip; 121 hostages have been returned.

The issue of the hostages

►The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, reported it had hindered an IDF attempt to free one of the hostages in the al-Bureij refugee camp after a special force infiltrated the site where Israel believed a hostage was being held. According to the military wing, they confronted the force, kept it from completing its mission and left dead and wounded. They also claimed that some of the special force's equipment was in their hands (Telegram channel of Hamas in Judea and Samaria, January 8, 2024).

►**Muhammad Nizal, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, claimed that when Saleh al-'Arouri was killed, the indirect negotiations had been at their peak, and Hamas had [allegedly] given its response to the Egyptian initiative to Egypt and Qatar, then al-'Arouri was killed and the negotiations stopped. He said that they would return to negotiations, but he did not know when. Asked if they were pinning their hopes on American Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Nizal said that the United States government was still part of the Israeli "war machine," and that an administration which sided completely with Israel could not be trusted. He said that so far, they had not received any message about a change in the American position. Regarding "the day after," he said that no one had spoken to Hamas, directly or indirectly, about Hamas'

not being part of the government. He claimed that Hamas would be an integral part of the administration in the Gaza Strip after the war (al-Jazeera Mubasher website, January 9, 2024).

[Back To Top](#) 

The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

► **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip** reported that as 11:40 a.m., January 9, 2024, the number of dead since the beginning of the war stood at 23,210 and the number of wounded at 59,167 (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, January 9, 2023).

Statements from senior Hamas terrorists

► **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, gave a speech at a gathering of the International Union of Muslim Scholars in Doha, Qatar. He claimed there had been three "developments" which preceded Operation al-Aqsa Flood [the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack and massacre]: the marginalization of the Palestinian issue at the local and international level, the rise of an extremist Israeli government, and Israel's normalization of relations with Arab countries. He claimed the Palestinian people and the "resistance" [Palestinian terrorist organizations] decided that it was impossible to deal with the "developments" with traditional means, and they therefore waged Operation al-Aqsa Flood. He said that Hamas existed in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, Jerusalem and the Palestinian dispersal and claimed it could not be eliminated. Regarding the hostages, he said that the only way for them to leave the Gaza Strip alive was the release of all their [terrorist] prisoners in Israel's prisons. Haniyeh also noted that the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip was dire and that Qatar's statement regarding the establishment of a coalition for humanitarian issues was exceptional and a promising start (Hamas Telegram channel, January 9, 2024).

► **Taher al-Nunu, advisor to Ismail Haniyeh**, said in an interview that the response to the killing of Saleh al-'Arouri and other "activists" [senior terrorist operatives] was to escalate the "resistance" [anti-Israel terrorism], adding that Israel had to "understand" that it would pay a price for all its [alleged] crimes and that the killings would not bring it peace. He claimed that the leadership's decision was to escalate the "resistance" and to deliver "high-quality strikes" [mass killings] in the Gaza Strip, Judea, Samaria, and inside Israel so that Israel would pay the price for its [alleged] "crimes." He also noted that following the killing in the Gaza Strip and

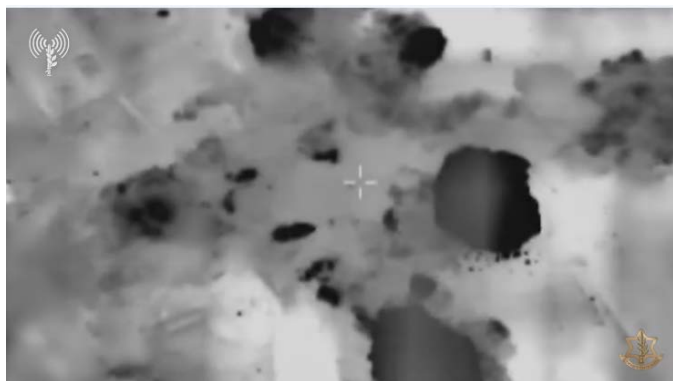
the eliminations of members of the political leadership, Israel was saying that it had no red lines and nothing was prohibited, and therefore the "resistance" would have no red lines and "nothing would be forbidden to them in attacking Israel." He confirmed that **Zaher Jabarin had replaced al-'Arouri as responsible for Judea and Samaria** (al-Jadid TV YouTube channel, January 7, 2024).

[Back To Top](#) 

The Northern Arena

Hezbollah attacks

- ▶ Hezbollah continued attacking IDF posts and troop concentrations on the northern border, claiming responsibility for seven attacks using anti-tank missiles, rockets and UAVs (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 8 and 9, 2024). On January 8, 2023, an anti-tank missile was launched from Lebanese territory towards the Mount Dov area, superficially wounding an IDF soldier (IDF spokesperson, January 8, 2024).
- ▶ On the morning of January 9, 2024, a rocket hit a base in northern Israel. No casualties or damage were reported. IDF forces responded by attacking the source of the rocket fire with artillery (IDF spokesperson, January 9, 2024). Hezbollah claimed responsibility for attacking the IDF Northern Command base in Safed with UAVs, another "response" to the killing of Saleh al-'Arouri and senior Hezbollah terrorist Wissam Tawil (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 9, 2024). The Islamic Resistance in Iraq also claimed responsibility for the attack.
- ▶ In response, IDF forces attacked a terrorist squad in Lebanese territory which was about to launch anti-tank missiles at Israel, a Hezbollah terrorist facility and other areas in Lebanese territory. An Israeli Air Force fighter jet destroyed a Hezbollah military-terrorist structure (IDF spokesperson, January 8, 2024). On the morning of January 9, 2024, fighter jets attacked terrorist facilities in Kafr Kila in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, January 9, 2024).



Attacking targets in south Lebanon (IDF website, January 9, 2024)

► **Ali Shoeib, a correspondent for the al-Manar network**, published a photo of Israeli airstrikes in Kafr Kila, about a kilometer west of Metula, and noted that machine guns were fired at several neighborhoods in the town (Ali Shoeib's X account, January 9, 2024). Another report revealed that a three-story building was destroyed in an airstrike in Kafr Kila, but no casualties were reported (Fouad Khreiss' X account, January 9, 2024).



Airstrikes on targets in Kafr Kila (Ali Shoeib's X account, January 9, 2024)

Hezbollah fatalities

► On the morning of January 9, 2023, an Israeli UAV reportedly attacked a vehicle in al-Ghanduriyah, in south Lebanon, approximately 13 km west of Metula. Three Hezbollah members were reportedly killed in the attack (Sawt Beirut International X account, January 9, 2023).

The killing of Wissam Hassan Tawil

► According to the Hezbollah-affiliated al-Mayadeen TV channel, the method by which **Wissam Tawil** had been killed had not yet been definitively determined. Al-Mayadeen also claimed that the reports in Israel stating that he has been appointed commander of Hezbollah's Radwan Force were not true. However, he did play an important role in transferring military

knowledge and experience to the Palestinian [terrorist] organizations, and participated in liberating Iraq from ISIS (al-Mayadeen, January 8, 2024).

► **Wissam Hassan Tawil, aka al-Hajj Jawad, was a senior terrorist in Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force.** According to some sources, he commanded the Radwan Force, but had not officially been appointed for fear of becoming a target for Israel. He was born on September 20, 1975 in Kherbet Selem in south Lebanon, was married and had four children. He joined Hezbollah in 1989, when he was only 14 years old. He was active in the construction and development of Hezbollah's training system and participated in many terrorist attacks. In April 1996 he was put in charge of patrolling the Tufah area. In 1999 he was seriously injured while participating in a terrorist attack in Sajd. After 2000, he participated in terrorist attacks on IDF posts on Mount Dov, and in 2006 he took part in the kidnapping of Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev [which led to the outbreak of the Second Lebanon War]. When the Syrian Civil War broke out in 2011, he was one of the first to join the fight against the rebel organizations and commanded many operations. Tawil participated in many military training courses. After the start of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, he commanded many terrorist attacks on IDF forces along the Israel-Lebanon border. Reportedly, Hassan Nasrallah had praised him many times (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 8, 2024).



Wissam Hassan Tawil (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 8, 2024)



Right: Wissam Tawil with Hassan Nasrallah. Left: With the late Qassem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Qods Force (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 8, 2024)



Wissam Tawil (center) with the late Imad Mughniyeh, Hezbollah's second in command (right) (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 8, 2024)

► **Nasser Kanaani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry**, claimed that the [alleged] "terrorist actions of the Zionist regime" were the result of its "military weakness and helplessness and the blows it suffered on the battlefield, including in the Gaza Strip." He added that the "continuation of the Zionist regime's [alleged] war crimes" against the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, the violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon and Syria and its use of [alleged] "organized terrorism" constituted an immediate danger to regional and global peace and security. According to him, Israel and its supporters bore responsibility for the consequences of their terrorist acts (IRNA, January 8, 2024).

► **Hamas** issued a statement offering condolences to the Lebanese people, the "brothers in the Islamic Resistance" and the leadership of Hezbollah on the death of commander Wassam Tawil, who died in a "cowardly killing" carried out by the IDF in south Lebanon while fulfilling his jihad duty in support of the Gaza Strip. Hamas claimed the [alleged] escalation of Israel's "aggression" and its attacks on "resistance" [terrorist] commanders in the various arenas would not deter the forces, which would continue to attack and make it pay the price for its

[alleged] "crimes and violations" (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, January 8, 2024).

► **Mohammad Reza Gharaei Ashtiani, the Iranian defense minister**, also claimed the killing of Tawil indicated Israel's failures (Fars, January 9, 2024).

► **Senior terrorist Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general**, sent his condolences to Hassan Nasrallah, the "activists" [terrorist operatives] of the Islamic "resistance" in Lebanon and the Lebanese people, claiming Tawil had had a great and honorable presence on the path of the "resistance," and especially in the "heroic confrontations" of Hezbollah "fighters" [terrorist operatives] on the south Lebanon front in defending the country, "Palestine" and its people. He claimed Wissam Tawil and his "Islamic resistance brothers" in Hezbollah proved "the unity of the resistance in all the arenas on the way to Jerusalem" (PIJ media information Telegram channel, January 8, 2024).

► **Hezbollah-affiliated Imad Marmal, a correspondent for the Lebanese daily al-Joumhouria**, published an article in which he claimed that by attacking a senior operative of the Radwan Force, Israel had raised the level of turmoil in the area and was pushing more and more in the direction of a military escalation that could develop into a full-scale war. He said that after the killing [of Tawil] Hezbollah had two possibilities. It could regard it as part of the war and respond accordingly, or regard it as a violation of the "rules of engagement" that required a different response. He also claimed that the killing of Tawil, after he had been linked to the attack on the IDF base in Mount Meron, "proved" how "painful" the attack had been for Israel. He said that while the recent killings should not be underestimated, people who knew the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon understood that the killing made no change in the balance of forces on the ground and the "equations" of the conflict which has continued since October 7 (al-Joumhouria, January 9, 2024).

The residents of south Lebanon

► Sources close to the Lebanese government said that the number of displaced persons from south Lebanon since October 8 had reached more than 69,000 people. They also said that more than 28,000 of them were staying in the South Governorate in areas not subject to Israeli attacks (al-Araby al-Jadeed, January 8, 2024).

The Lebanese government

► **Najib Mikati, prime minister of Lebanon's interim government**, said in an interview that they had informed all parties of their willingness to enter negotiations to achieve long-term

stability in south Lebanon and along Israel's northern border, and to adhere to international resolutions and Resolution 1701. However, he said, they were receiving warnings of destruction and war against Lebanon through international messengers and threats that Hezbollah had to withdraw to the region north of the Litani river. He said it had to include a complete withdrawal of Israel from the territories it occupied and an end to its attacks on Lebanon and the violation of its sovereignty. According to Mikati, the situation on the border had to be restored to what it was before 1967 and the Shebaa Farms, which were under Lebanese sovereignty before they were gradually taken over, had to be returned (al-Hurra, January 8, 2024).

► **Najib Mikati** met in his office with **Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib** to discuss the situation in the south. After the meeting, Bou Habib said they would discuss the situation with **German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock** and **American mediator Amos Hochstein**. He added that they were prepared to implement Resolution 1701 in its entirety, but to do so, Israel had to withdraw from all Lebanese territory and cease all its activity in the south (the Lebanese government X account, January 8, 2024).

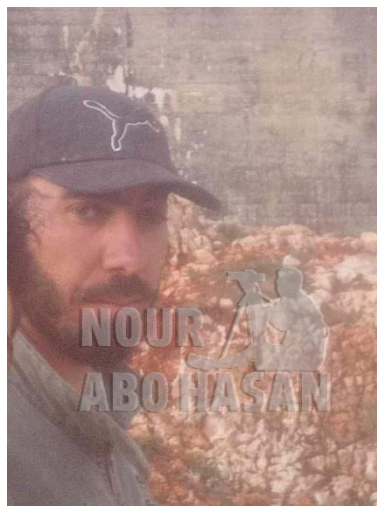
► It was reported that, according to "sources," Amos Hochstein had informed the mediators that he would deal only with the issue of the Blue Line and would not deal with the issue of the Shebaa Farms (al-Akhbar, January 9, 2024).

► **Samy Gemayel, chairman of the Lebanese Kataeb Party**, said in an interview on the French news channel BFM that he appealed to the French government and the French public not to support an agreement that would give Israel security, but in return, Lebanon would become an Iranian protégé. He referred to reports of a deal in which Hezbollah would agree to implement Resolution 1701 in exchange for the election of its presidential candidate (Samy Gemayel's X account, January 8, 2024).

Syria

► The IDF spokesperson announced the elimination of Hamas terrorist operative **Hassan Akasha** in a targeted killing in Beit Jan, Syria. Since the beginning of the war, Akasha had directed Hamas terrorist squads firing rockets from Syria into Israeli territory (IDF spokesperson, January 8, 2024).

► Social media confirmed his killing. Hassan Akasha, aka "Dushka," was reportedly the brother of Abu Jarrah Akasha, who was killed by Israel several months ago.³ Hassan Akasha was an operative in the terrorist squad that fired rockets at Israel in 2015 (apparently referring to the launch of four rockets on August 20, 2015) (Syrian journalist Nur Abu Hassan's X account January 8, 2024).



Hassan Akasha (Syrian journalist Nur Abu Hassan's X account, January 8, 2024)

[Back To Top](#) ↑

Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attacks

► On the afternoon of January 9, 2024, a Palestinian armed with a knife arrived at the Umm Safa Junction, near the community of Ateret (northwest of Ramallah), and tried to stab soldiers at the military post located there. He was shot and killed; no IDF casualties were reported (Israeli media, January 9, 2024).

Counterterrorism activities

► The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities throughout Judea and Samaria, detaining 13 wanted Palestinians. Since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip, more than 2,600 wanted Palestinians have been detained, about 1,300 of them Hamas operatives (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, January 9, 2024).

³ Ali Akasha, aka Abu Jarrah, was killed on September 21, 2023, along with Zaher al-Saadi, in an attack on a motorcycle in Beit Jan. The attack was attributed to Israel. The two were reportedly PIJ terrorist operatives.

► Before dawn on January 9, 2024, Israeli security forces operated in the Nur al-Shams and Tulkarm refugee camps. They destroyed IEDs which were ready for detonation. During the activity, IDF aircraft attacked a group of armed terrorist operatives who shot at the forces (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, January 9, 2024). According to a report by the spokesman for the Tulkarm Battalion of the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military wing, their operatives exchanged fire with the Israeli security forces and damaged their vehicles (QudsN X account, January 9, 2024). A correspondent for al-Ghad TV in the Tulkarm refugee camp reported heavy damage to infrastructure caused by IDF activity (al-Ghad TV, January 9, 2024).



Nur al-Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm after Israeli security forces operated there (Wafa, January 9, 2024)

► On the morning of January 9, 2024, Israeli security forces operated in the Balata and Askar refugee camps in east Nablus. They detained a wanted Palestinian and destroyed IEDs found in his home (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, January 9, 2024). Medical sources in Nablus reported six wounded (al-Ghad TV, January 9, 2024).



Right: Israeli security forces' activity in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus. Left: The detonation of an IED in the refugee camp during the activity of the forces (QudsN X account, January 9, 2024)

► On the evening of January 8, 2024, Israeli security forces operated in the village of Aktaba (east of Tulkarm) to detain a wanted Palestinian. When they arrived at his house, armed Palestinians shot at them. Three armed terrorists were killed in the exchange of fire. The wanted Palestinian was detained and taken for questioning by security officials (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, January 8, 2024). The PA's ministry of health announced the deaths of three people who, it claimed, had been killed by an Israeli special force. A general strike was declared (Wafa, January 8, 2024).

► The Tulkarm Battalion of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades announced that the three fatalities had been operatives in their ranks and said they had been killed in Tulkarm in a "cowardly attack carried out by the Zionist enemy." They announced the start of an extensive operation of all battalions which would continue until further notice. Later, the Tulkarm Battalion of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility for shooting at two cars near the community of Einav, claiming that "the incident took place and there are wounded." They also said the attack was an initial response to the killing of Saleh al-'Arouri and [terrorist] operatives killed in Tulkarm. The battalion also warned that Israel had to stop attacking the leadership and they promised to respond deep inside Israeli territory as well (the Tulkarm Battalion of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades Telegram channel, January 8, 2024).



Palestinian mob gathers at the scene of the incident in Aktaba, where three armed Palestinians were killed (QudsN X account, January 8, 2024)

Palestinian Authority (PA)

► **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** said that after Israel deducted 517 million NIS (about \$138.5 million) from the tax revenues last month, the PA refused to receive what was left. According to Shtayyeh, despite the intervention of the United States and several world leaders and attempts to reach a solution, they were still not receiving the funds. He noted that the PA's economic crisis, which had been going on for more than two months, delayed the

salary payments of employees in the government sector. He added that during the past two months, the PA had approached the banking sector with the aim of raising loans to cover part of the employees' salaries (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, January 8, 2024).

► **Riyadh al-Maliki, PA foreign minister**, met in Ramallah with **Annalena Baerbock, Germany's foreign minister**. Al-Maliki said that Germany had to pressure Israel to reach a ceasefire and allow humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. He also said they rejected all suggestions made by Israeli officials about "the day after" and that they should concentrate on achieving an immediate ceasefire. Baerbock said the PA had a basic and central role as a legitimate authority in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria (PA foreign ministry Telegram channel, January 8, 2024).

[Back To Top](#) ↑

Iran

► **Ali Khamenei, Iranian Supreme Leader**, speaking at a meeting in Tehran with residents of the city of Qom about the war in the Gaza Strip, said that "two million people living in a small strip of land have thrown the United States, with all its show of greatness, into despair, as well as the Zionist regime, which is hanging on to the United States" (Tasnim, January 9, 2024).

Pro-Iranian militias

Iraq

► The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for a drone attack on the Ramilan base in Syria (Islamic Resistance Telegram channel, January 8, 2024).

► The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for a drone attack on the headquarters of the IDF's Northern Command in the city of Safed. According to the announcement, the attack was carried out in response to the crime of killing the senior commander, Shaheed Sheikh Saleh al-'Arouri, in the southern suburb of Beirut, and the crime of killing the shaheed commander Wissam al-Tawil (al-Hajj Jawad) (Islamic Resistance's combat information Telegram channel, January 9, 2024).

The Arab Arena

Jordan

► **Ayman al-Safadi, Jordanian foreign minister**, spoke with **Catherine Colonna, France's foreign minister**, and warned that the chances of expanding the conflict were increasing every day, alongside Israel's ongoing killings in the Gaza Strip. According to al-Safadi, the international community was incapable of taking moral responsibility and taking a firm stand. He also warned that Israeli "aggression" was pushing the conflict toward an "explosion." The two stressed that humanitarian aid and basic needs had to be provided to all residents of the Gaza Strip, and that cooperation had to continue as far as humanitarian assistance was concerned. They also noted that both countries rejected the displacing of Palestinians (al-Mamlaka, January 8, 2024).

The International Arena

United States

► As part of a tour of Middle Eastern countries, **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken** met with **Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman**. Bin Salman stressed that all military operations had to be stopped and all measures had to be taken to help improve the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. He also said stability and security in the region had to be restored to ensure that the Palestinians would achieve their legitimate rights (Saudi News Agency, January 8, 2024). While in Saudi Arabia, Blinken also met with **Josep Borrell, EU foreign minister**, and the two discussed efforts to de-escalate the Gaza Strip and stop the humanitarian disaster taking place there, as well as the possibility of strengthening the UN's role in the matter (Reuters, January 8, 2024).

► In a speech at the end of his visit to Saudi Arabia, Antony Blinken said Middle Eastern leaders were determined to prevent the conflict from escalating and that everyone he spoke to was aware of the challenges. At the same time, no one believed something would happen overnight. He said the leaders he spoke with were prepared to make difficult decisions for the region. He noted that it was not in anyone's interest, including Lebanon, Hezbollah and Israel, to enter into a broad conflict. Regarding the "day after," he said Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip had to be united under Palestinian leadership and an independent Palestinian state had

to be created. He also stressed that the Houthi attacks had to stop, saying it would be better if the Houthis understood the message and stopped the attacks, because otherwise there would be consequences. He also said he would inform Israel that more efforts had to be made to protect civilians (Sky News, January 8, 2024).

► In Abu Dhabi, Blinken met with **Mohammed bin Zayed, president of the UAE**. Blinken stressed the ongoing commitment of the United States to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. They also discussed efforts to prevent the conflict from spreading in the region (UAE News Agency, January 8, 2024).

► A senior American administration official accompanying Blinken said the United States expected the fighting in Gaza to end within weeks. He noted that Blinken was expected to demand that Israel wind down the campaign as soon as possible and hone its attacks to harm as few residents of the Gaza Strip as possible. Two senior administration officials stressed that although Arab leaders publicly demanded an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, they told Blinken privately that they were willing to help rebuild and establish an administration in the Gaza Strip the day after the war (NBC, January 8, 2024).

India

► Sources" said that on January 4, 2024, two Israeli-owned ships were attacked in the Indian Ocean. The first, the CHEM CILICON, flying the Liberian flag and owned by Ace, was attacked northwest of the Maldives. The second, Pacific Gold, owned by the Eastern Company, was attacked near the port of Cochin, India. It was also reported that the ships were carrying "huge amounts" of oil (al-Mayadeen, January 9, 2024).

Global Jihad

► Following the recording of **ISIS spokesman Abu Hudhaifa al-Ansari** on January 4, 2024, in which ISIS operatives were called upon to help their "brothers" in the Gaza Strip and carry out attacks around the world, ISIS' A'maq News Agency released a video on January 8, 2024, showing rockets before being fired, labeled "Revenge for our Muslim brothers in Gaza." The rockets, according to A'maq, were fired at Malian army concentrations and Russian Wagner forces in northeastern Mali (Telegram, January 8, 2024).



**One of the rockets before being fired, labeled "Revenge for our Muslim brothers in Gaza"
(Telegram, January 8, 2024)**