



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., January 11, 2024

Northern Arena

- 621 attacks
- 159 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 continued the integrated ground maneuver in the Gaza Strip, focusing on **the al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip and the Khan Yunis area in the south**. In the Khan Yunis area the forces uncovered an elaborate tunnel which, according to the IDF investigation, had apparently housed Israeli hostages. Senior Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) figures continue to reiterate that Israel has lost the battle and did not achieve its goals.

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7, 2023 approximately 1,300 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 520 of them soldiers and officers; 132 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip; 121 hostages have been returned to Israel.** Senior Hamas figures related to information published in Israel about the terms of a new deal and claimed that no such deal existed and Hamas would not accept any initiative unless it was based on a complete end to the "aggression" against the Gaza 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:** Senior Hamas figures report a difficult situation. Many Gazans have gone to the Egyptian border area and are living there in tents.

► **The northern arena:** Hezbollah claimed responsibility for three attacks. In the wake of the elimination of senior operatives, Hezbollah warned the residents of south Lebanon not to relay information about the location of operatives over the phone. Meanwhile, diplomatic contacts of the Lebanese government continue in an attempt to calm the arena.

► **Judea and Samaria:** IDF activity was focused on Jenin. The smuggling of weapons to Israel in the area in the Jordan Valley was prevented. Mahmoud Abbas met in Aqaba with the king of Jordan and the president of Egypt.

► **The pro-Iranian militias:** By a majority of 11 votes, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 2722, which strongly condemns the Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea. The Houthis again claimed they only took action against ships with connections to Israel and that international navigation in the Red and Arabian Seas was safe.

► The trial against Israel began at the International Court of Justice in The Hague; Iran, the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas expressed satisfaction with the measures taken against Israel.

The Southern Arena

► IDF forces continued their integrated ground maneuver throughout the Strip, focusing on **the al-Maghazi refugee camp** in the central Gaza Strip and the **Khan Yunis** area in the south. The Palestinian media reported 147 dead and 243 wounded during the last day in IDF attacks, and noted that the main centers of fighting were in **Gaza City, the central Gaza Strip and the Khan Yunis area** (Ma'an, January 10, 2024).



IDF forces in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, January 11, 2024)

► **The central Gaza Strip:** The forces continued their activity in the area of the **al-Maghazi refugee camp**, where they clashed with terrorist squads and uncovered large quantities of weapons (IDF spokesperson, January 11, 2024).



Weapons found in a terrorist's house in the al-Maghazi refugee camp area (IDF spokesperson, January 11, 2024)

► **The southern Gaza Strip:** The penetration IDF forces into **Khan Yunis** continued. They clashed with a large number of terrorist squads that tried to attack them. A UAV launch site, weapons and valuable intelligence materials were located in terrorists' houses. The fighters also located a tunnel shaft, a rocket launching position, and a combat compound which were situated near a school and a kindergarten (IDF spokesperson, January 10, 2024). During the operation in the **Khirbat Khiza'a** area, the fighters raided terrorist facilities, many of which were situated in schools, youth clubs and municipal buildings, locating a large number of tunnel shafts, tunnel routes and weapons (IDF spokesperson, January 10, 2024).



Right: The destruction of terrorist facilities in Khan Yunis. Left: The destruction of an anti-tank missile launch site (IDF spokesperson, January 10, 2024)

► **Ibrahim Qanan, a correspondent for the al-Ghad TV channel in Khan Yunis**, reported from Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis that heavy exchanges of fire were continuing in the south and east of the city, where the IDF used heavy mortar fire. Fighting also continued in the Bani

Suheila area of east of Khan Yunis, and in the neighborhoods in the north (al-Ghad TV, January 11, 2024).



Right: An al-Jazeera TV presenter describes the IDF's activities in the eastern region (the villages of Bani Suheila, al-Qarara, Greater and Lesser Abasan, and al-Khiza'a), and northern and central Khan Yunis (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 10, 2024). Left: The center of Khan Yunis (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, January 11, 2024)

► **Palestinian correspondent Suleiman Hajji**, reporting from al-Jalal Street in the center of Khan Yunis, a combat zone where heavy exchanges of fire are taking place, said the street was empty and that IDF forces had been trying to enter the city center for two weeks (Shehab X account, January 11, 2024).



Suleiman Hajji reports from the combat zone in the center of Khan Yunis, with the sounds of explosions and heavy exchanges of fire could be heard in the background (Shehab X account, January 11, 2024)

Palestinian reactions to the fighting

► **Senior Hamas figure Osama Hamdan**, speaking at a press conference in Beirut, claimed that for more than three months Israel had not achieved any of its objectives and was trying to present a [so-called] "false image of victory" by means of escalating the fighting. He claimed Israel had not and would not achieve its objectives thanks to the firm stance of the

Palestinians and the heroism of the [so-called] "resistance" [terrorist operatives]. He added that the situation in the Gaza Strip was complex, but better than Israel thought, and the talks, in collaboration with the United States government, about moving to the third stage were [allegedly] "false propaganda," a "desperate attempt" to present "some kind of achievement." He added that the idea of disarming the resistance was "stupid" and did not take the "facts" into consideration, and that the talk about the "resistance operatives" leaving the Gaza Strip was an illusion (Palinfo, January 10, 2024; al-Jazeera TV website, January 10, 2024).

► **Nasser Abu Sharif, the PIJ representative in Iran**, said at a press conference that in the fourth month of the war the Palestinian "resistance" was still fighting aggressively against the IDF. He claimed that Israel, which at the beginning of the ground maneuver said it would soon eliminate Hamas, admitted that the resistance was still strong in the fourth month of the campaign. He said that according to statements from senior Israeli officials, they were in the third stage of the war and Israel had not yet achieved any of its stated objectives. He also claimed that Israeli losses increased daily, and the withdrawal and reduction of the number of Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip were not tactics, but the result of Israel's [alleged] "weakness" He also claimed that Israel's strategy of prolonging the war for an achievement would surely cause damage to Israel, and would have both external and internal consequences for the country. He claimed that the longer the war lasted, the more the people of the world would "be angry and hate Israel," which would lead to pressure being exerted on it (Iranian Qods News Agency, January 10, 2024).



Nasser Abu Sharif at the press conference (Iranian Qods News Agency, January 10, 2024)

Israeli casualties

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,300 Israeli people have been killed. According to the IDF spokesperson, 520 of them are soldiers and officers (185 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.

►A tunnel was located during IDF operations in the Khan Yunis area of the southern Gaza Strip, whose construction, according to estimates, cost millions of dollars. The IDF investigation revealed that a number of Israeli hostages had been held in the tunnel (IDF website, January 11, 2024).



The tunnel where the hostages had been held (IDF spokesperson, January 11, 2024)

The issue of the hostages

►In response to the report in the Israeli media about a new proposal for a hostage deal, which included the removal of the Hamas leadership from Gaza, **senior Hamas figure Osama Hamadan** claimed that in principle there was no such initiative, the talk of the leadership's leaving was "an illusion," and the idea of disarming the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] was naive and did not reflect an understanding of the facts. He claimed the reports in the Israeli media were "fraudulent and disinformation" designed to calm the angry Israeli public, especially the families of the hostages. He reiterated that Hamas would not accept any prisoner exchange initiative unless it was based on a complete end to the "aggression" in the Gaza Strip. He added that there was currently no talk of any initiative and they adhered to their position, which they had presented to the mediators as the basis for any idea or initiative regarding an exchange deal (al-Anadolu News, January 10, 2024).

►**Taher Al-Nunu, advisor to Isma'il Haniyeh, chairman of the Hamas political bureau**, said Hamas was talking about two completely separate issues: the end of "aggression" and the subject of the hostage deal, talks about which it would begin immediately after the "aggression" ended. He claimed that binding the two issues with each other would not lead to progress: first Israel had to end the "aggression" and withdraw its forces from the Gaza Strip, and only then would it be possible to discuss some kind of deal. He claimed that mixing

the two issues was unacceptable as far as Hamas was concerned, and it had made its position clear to everyone who discussed the subject with it (al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, January 10, 2024).

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The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

► **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip** reported that as of 1:15 p.m., January 10, 2024, the number of dead since the beginning of the war stood at 23,357 and the number of wounded at 59,410 (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, January 10, 2023).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

► At a press conference held by in Beirut, **Senior Hamas figure Osama Hamdan**, claimed that for the 96th day Israel was engaging in what he claimed was [so-called] "Nazi aggression," waging a "cruel and sadistic [sic] war to kill Palestinians" [allegedly] using "all types of weapons and bombs" prohibited by international law, which he claimed had been sent from the United States. He claimed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip face the danger of death every day because of the high number of displaced persons, the lack of suitable places of refuge and the small amount of humanitarian aid that reached the Gaza Strip. Due to the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, a significant increase in the number of dead, wounded, sick and displaced persons could be expected, and anyone who was not killed in an attack or shot would die of hunger, thirst or disease. He said they expected Sigrid Kaag, who was appointed UN humanitarian representative and began her mission on January 8, as chief coordinator for humanitarian affairs and rehabilitation in Gaza, to act urgently and seriously to end their suffering of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and to overcome all Israel's pressure and conditions. He said that they urgently required a flow of adequate aid, especially in the northern region where the situation had reached the point of real hunger. It was also necessary to bring fuel to the hospitals, bakeries, water-pumping stations and sewage facilities, and to operate the civil services facilities destroyed by Israel (Palinfo, January 10, 2024; al-Jazeera TV website, January 10, 2024).

► **Saleh al-Nator, a correspondent for al-Arabi TV in Rafah**, reporting from the border area between Rafah and Egypt said that in recent days, many families of displaced persons families

from combat zones in the Gaza Strip had arrived in the border area and erected tents in the hope of finding a place safe from IDF attacks (al-Arabi YouTube channel, January 11, 2024).



Displaced persons erect a tent camp near the Rafah-Egypt border
(al-Arabi's YouTube channel, January 11, 2024)

Statements from senior Palestinian figures

► **Senior Hamas figure Osama Hamdan** said he welcomed and appreciated all the countries that supported South Africa's [so-called] "brave and honorable" position in filing the lawsuit against Israel. He called on the International Court not to capitulate to the dictates and pressures of the United States government, which was a partner and bore responsibility for the continuation of what he referred to as the "war to kill all the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip" (Palinfo, January 10, 2024; al-Jazeera TV website, January 10, 2024).

► **PIJ spokesman Musab al-Breem**, commenting on Blinken's visit, said that anyone who thought the United States could be a mediator or a "dove of peace," or could be on the side of the Palestinians and their cause was delusional. He pointed out that they continued to exercise their natural right to "resist" Israel and "protect" the Palestinians and their cause, and would not give up the "resistance" [anti-Israeli terrorism] or their weapons. Regarding the reports about the Qatari initiative, he said there was no change in the "resistance's" position that the [so-called] "aggression" had to be stopped immediately, and only then would it be possible to talk about all the other "details" (al-Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, January 10, 2024).



Cartoons condemning the visit of American Secretary of State Anthony Blinken Right: Lincoln repeats the mantra "Israel's right to defend itself" (Muhammad Sabaana's Facebook page, January 10, 2024) Left: Blinken drives next to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu with the attacks against the Strip in the background (al-Quds, January 10, 2024)

► **Ahmed Abdel Hadi, the Hamas representative of Hamas**, was interviewed in Beirut by the Egyptian al-Masir website. Before the interview began he asked his interviewers not to record the interview, but to write down his answers. Regarding the October 7, 2023, attack and massacre, he said that a strategic plan to deceive Israel had been prepared:

- ◆ Hamas did not participate in Operation Breaking Dawn. This made everyone criticize Hamas, and made Israel think Hamas did not want a war with Israel and there would be no "resistance" in Gaza.
- ◆ Hamas raised the level of economic demands for the Gaza Strip, which reinforced the impression in Israel that all that mattered to Hamas and the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip was aid.
- ◆ As part of the plan to deceive Israel, four exercises were conducted,² three of which were defensive, and the fourth was the one in which the attack took place, meaning they trained for Operation al-Aqsa Flood three times, and did not use any technological equipment so that Israel would not receive any signals. He said that during the fourth exercise, the operatives received instructions to launch a real attack.

► Hadi said the zero hour was known only to the commander of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing. He also claimed that 1,200 operatives participated in the attack, of whom 800 [allegedly] returned unharmed, with 400 remaining in Israeli territory, "some of whom" were killed (Arab Gornal website, January 9, 2024).

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² Apparently a reference to the four Firm Support exercises carried out by the Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, the last of which was in September 2023.

The Northern Arena

Hezbollah attacks

- ▶ Hezbollah continued attacking IDF posts and troop concentrations on the northern border, and claimed responsibility for **three anti-tank missile and rocket attacks** (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 10-11, 2024).
- ▶ In response to Hezbollah's attacks, Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked Hezbollah's operational headquarters and launch site in south Lebanon, and fired artillery at sources of the rocket launches (IDF spokesperson, January 10, 2024).

Hezbollah fatalities

- ▶ An article was published in the Lebanese Hezbollah-affiliated al-Akhbar which reported that Wissam al-Tawil had been killed by an IED and not a UAV, as initially reported. According to the report, the IED was placed in his vehicle when it was parked close to his home. It has not yet been determined whether the IED was detonated by a signal transmitted from a UAV or by some other means. In a possibly related event, according to reports, two weeks ago a man was caught near the home of Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament and head of the Amal Movement, who identified himself as a worker for an American communications company and was found to be in possession of advanced [technological] equipment (al-Akhbar , January 11, 2024).

The residents of South Lebanon

- ▶ Given the targeted attacks on senior Hezbollah operatives in south Lebanon, Hezbollah published a message addressed to the residents of south Lebanon claiming that since Israel had lost a large part of its surveillance equipment in south Lebanon through Hezbollah attacks, it was currently looking for alternatives to gather information about Hezbollah's activities and the places where its operatives were located in the south Lebanon village area. [The IDF] called Lebanese civilians from phone numbers which appeared local and tried to extract information for future attacks. Callers impersonated Lebanese internal security forces and sometimes even representatives of humanitarian organizations. They spoke the Lebanese dialect, tried to obtain information about the family members of the person they called or various data concerning the environment under the guise of showing concern and a desire to provide assistance. Hezbollah called on residents not to answer any calls asking for

information related to the area or the movement of "people" [operatives] and to report it to the relevant authorities (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 10, 2024).

Statements by senior Hezbollah figures

► **Ali Damoush, the deputy chairman of Hezbollah's executive council**, gave a speech in the Dahiyeh in Beirut, where he claimed the "resistance" [Hezbollah] did not want to be dragged into war, but if forced to, it would not be afraid. He claimed the "resistance" was fully prepared to face a scenario of war with all its "strength and courage," and that now, because the campaign was limited, it used only a small part of its weapons and missiles. He added that the "resistance in Lebanon" was not and had never been deterred or afraid of war, and Israel was wrong in thinking it could impose a new "equation" on them with threats and escalation (al-Nashra, January 11, 2024).

Hamas

► **Ahmed Abdel Hadi, Hamas representative of Hamas**, related to Hezbollah's involvement in an interview, saying that Hezbollah intervened at the borders, easing the pressure on the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip by causing some of the IDF forces to be diverted from Gaza to the north. He claimed that every day mediators arrived from countries around the world and called on Hezbollah not to broaden the scope of the war, but Hezbollah did not give them an explicit answer, which acted as a deterrent. The ambiguity of Hezbollah's responses acted as a constant strategic threat to Israel (Arab Gornal website, January 9, 2024).

The Lebanese army/UNIFIL

► **Analena Baerbock, the German foreign minister**, met with **Joseph Aoun, commander of the Lebanese army**, to discuss the general situation in Lebanon and the latest developments on the southern border (Lebanese army X account, January 10, 2024).

► Baerbock also visited UNIFIL soldiers from Germany in the port of Beirut. She called for de-escalation in south Lebanon and on Hezbollah to withdraw from the border line, emphasizing that they were doing everything in their power to implement Resolution 1701, which would allow the people of south Lebanon and Israel to live in peace and security. She said the war against Hamas should not be used as an excuse to open another front and trigger a regional war (Reuters, January 10, 2024).

The Lebanese government

► **Najib Mikati, prime minister of the transitional government in Lebanon**, met in Cairo with **Analena Baerbock, the German foreign minister**. They discussed bilateral relations and the situation in the Gaza Strip and south Lebanon. Mikati said that Lebanon respected international resolutions to achieve permanent stability in south Lebanon, and called for support for the Lebanese army to enable it to carry out its duties. He also noted that the time had come to find a permanent, just solution to the Palestinian issue and initiate a ceasefire. Baerbock emphasized the importance of implementing Resolution 1701 (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, January 10, 2024).

► **Nabil Avi Saad, a correspondent for the al-Arabi network**, reported that Lebanon had sent a letter to the UN Security Council reconfirming its firm position that it had to defend itself and return what belongs to it by legitimate means. It claimed Lebanon was committed to implementing Resolution 1701, but Israel had to withdraw to agreed international borders and renounce the Shebaa and Kafr Shuba farms, adding that they sought UN support to strengthen their armed forces through the UNIFIL force (Nabil Abu Saad's X account, January 11, 2024).

US concern over a Hezbollah attack

► The news site Politico reported from "four officials familiar details" that senior United States officials are concerned that Hezbollah might strike American forces in the Middle East or even hit inside the United States. According to the "officials," intelligence indicated that Hezbollah was considering attacking American troops or diplomatic personnel (Politico, January 11, 2024).

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Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism activities

► The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities throughout Judea and Samaria, detaining 24 wanted Palestinians. Since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip, more than 2,650 wanted Palestinians have been detained, about 1,300 of them Hamas operatives (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, January 11, 2024).

► In the early morning of January 11, 2024, Israeli security forces operated in Jenin. The Palestinian media reported heavy exchanges of fire between armed Palestinians and the Israeli security forces there, including the detonation of IEDs (al-Ghad TV, January 11, 2024).



Exchange of fire in Jenin (Shehab X account, January 11, 2024)

Preventing an ISIS-inspired attack

► Following an investigation conducted in recent weeks, two suspects aged 21-23, residents of Jabal Mukaber in east Jerusalem, were detained. Their questioning revealed that they supported ISIS ideology and were exposed to a great deal of ISIS content on social media. Influenced by ISIS content, the two planned to attack Israeli policemen and Border Police fighters in east Jerusalem with pipe bombs connected to drones. They began preparing for the attacks and learned how to manufacture IEDs. Because of their "anger over events" in the Gaza Strip, they decided to promote the drone attack. They were detained about two months later (State Attorney's Office, January 11, 2024).

Preventing weapons smuggling

► On the evening of January 10, 2024, IDF surveillance identified two suspects in the Jordan Valley. They were detained and found to be in possession of 49 pistols and an M-16 rifle, which were seized by the IDF (IDF website, January 11, 2024).



The weapons seized (IDF spokesperson, January 11, 2024)

Solidarity with the Gaza Strip

► As it does every week, Hamas called on the public in Judea, Samaria, Jerusalem and on Israeli Arabs to go to al-Aqsa Mosque on Friday, January 12, 2024, and clash with the Israeli security forces at roadblocks set up by Israel in an attempt to prevent prayer (Hamas Telegram channel, January 11, 2024).

Palestinian Authority (PA)

► **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** met with Hady Amr, American deputy assistant secretary of state for Israel-Palestine affairs, and discussed the need for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, along with the opening of all crossings for medical aid (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, January 10, 2024).



Muhammad Shtayyeh meets with Hady Amr in Ramallah (Wafa, January 10, 2024)

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Iran

► On January 10, 2024, the Palestine Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) met in Tehran with the participation of **Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, speaker of the Iranian Majlis**, and representatives of parliaments from the Muslim world. At the beginning of the conference, Qalibaf said that the "Zionist regime" was the enemy of Islam and the Muslim nation, and that the Palestinian people had the right to self-defense and resistance against the "occupation and aggression" (ISNA, January 10, 2024).

► On January 10, 2024, the British daily The Telegraph reported that 200 Houthi operatives had undergone training at the Iranian naval academy on the shores of the Caspian Sea. According to the report, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei personally took part in the decision to impose a siege on Israel in the Red Sea through the Houthis and supported the delivery of weapons and equipment to them.

Pro-Iranian militias

Iraq

► The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for several attacks on American bases in Syria and Iraq, including the first report of an attack on the American Himu base, located near the al-Qamishli airbase in Syria, which is used as an intelligence base (Resistance Telegram channel; Saber News Telegram channel, January 10, 2024). They also attacked a base near Erbil Airport in Iraq's Kurdish region and a base in the Koniko oil field in Syria (Resistance Telegram channel, January 10, 2024).

Yemen

► **Houthi spokesman Yahya Saria** said that their forces had carried out a military operation, which included a large number of drones and ballistic and naval missiles, against an American ship "supporting the Israeli occupation." He said the operation was an "initial response" to the American attack in the Red Sea on December 31, 2023, in which ten Houthi operatives were killed. He stressed that they would not hesitate to deal with the threats against them and would continue to prevent Israeli or Israeli-linked ships from sailing in the Red Sea until Israel's "aggression" ceased (Yahya Saria's Telegram channel, January 10, 2024).

► **John Kirby, spokesman for the American National Security Council**, said the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea were an escalation and that the United States would consult with its partners on the next steps to take on the issue. He noted that despite what the Houthis said,

they were threatening and attacking vessels linked to countries around the world, and not necessarily to Israel (Reuters, January 10, 2024). **Grant Shapps, British Defense Secretary**, warned the Houthis against continuing their attacks, noting that there was no doubt that Iran was involved in the issue and was supplying weapons and intelligence to the Houthis (Sky News, January 10, 2024).

► After the large-scale attack thwarted by the United States, and on the eve of the UN Security Council debate on the issue, the Houthis reiterate that international shipping lanes are safe for foreign ships.

◆ **Muhammad al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' political bureau**, said their objective was not to sink or seize ships linked to Israel, but only to force them to circumnavigate Africa to exert economic pressure on Israel. He claimed that in the state of war in which they found themselves, this was a "moral and legitimate" step. He said the British and American threats did not frighten them and would not prevent them from continuing to support the helpless (Muhammad al-Bukhaiti's X account, January 10, 2025).

◆ **Houthi spokesman Muhammad Abdeslam** said international navigation in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea was safe, and that the Americans had to stop misleading the world about the dangers threatening it. He called on the international community not to fall into the American trap, which sought to escalate the conflict in the Red Sea to serve Israel. He said they would continue to attack Israeli ships or those bound for Israel until the aggression on the Gaza Strip ceased, and they would take action against anyone who stood in their way (Muhammad Abdeslam's Telegram channel, January 10, 2024).

► United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said it had received a report of an incident about 50 nautical miles east of Sohar, Oman, and that authorities were investigating the case. Subsequently, the organization announced that it had received a report regarding a vessel boarded by unauthorized parties, and that contact with the vessel had been cut off, and that authorities were investigating the incident. The organization advised ships in the area to sail cautiously and report any suspicious activity (UKMTO X account, January 11, 2024).

The Arab Arena

Summit meeting in Aqaba

►A summit meeting was held in Aqaba, attended by **King Abdullah II of Jordan, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, and PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas**. A joint statement issued at the end of the meeting said that the three stressed their opposition to any Israeli plan to expel Palestinians from Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, and that the international community also had to condemn and oppose it. They also noted their rejection of any attempt to eliminate the Palestinian cause and separate Judea and Samaria from the Gaza Strip. They reaffirmed that pressure had to continue to stop Israeli aggression in Gaza, protect civilians, and ensure the regular delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza. They also warned of the "hostile actions taking place in Judea and Samaria" carried out by the settlers against the Palestinian people and of violations of the status quo of the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, which could lead to an explosion. They agreed to continue working jointly in coordination with the Arab countries and with the countries working to implement the two-state solution (Wafa, January 10, 2024).



Right: Mahmoud Abbas being received by King Abdullah of Jordan in Aqaba. Left: The tripartite summit in Aqaba (Wafa, January 10, 2024)

The International Arena

UN institutions

►At its meeting, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 2722, which strongly condemns Houthi attacks against ships in the Red Sea. The resolution demands that the Houthis immediately cease the attacks and release the Galaxy Leader and its crew. Eleven countries

voted in favor of the resolution, and four countries, including Russia and China, abstained (UN website, January 11, 2024).

► In response to the Security Council resolution, **Houthi spokesman Muhammad Abdeslam** called it a "political game," claiming the United States was violating international law (Reuters, January 11, 2024). **Muhammad Ali al-Houthi, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, called on the Security Council to release all residents of the Gaza Strip from the Israeli-American siege, noting that the Yemeni army's operations were carried out under legal defense (Muhammad Ali al-Houthi's Telegram channel, January 11, 2024).

► **The PIJ** issued a statement strongly condemning the "unjust" Security Council resolution demanding that the "brothers in Yemen" put an end to attacks against ships in the Red Sea on the pretext that they threatened international peace and security. The PIJ said the resolution did not include a demand that Israel stop its massacres, withdraw from the Gaza Strip, lift the siege and allow the entry of basic goods without hindrance, which was why the "brothers" in the Ansar Allah (Houthis) movement were operating (PIJ's information office Telegram channel, January 11, 2024).

► According to **the spokesman for the UN secretary-general**, Pramila Patten, the UN special envoy on sexual violence, said she would arrive in Israel and the PA at the end of January to gather information on sexual violence committed in the October 7, 2023, attacks. She stressed that her mission was not an investigation, adding that she would review the findings upon her return and that she did not intend to speak to the media during her mission (UN website, January 10, 2024).

► **Senior Hamas figure Bassem Na'im** said in response to the statement that Hamas welcomed in principle any neutral, fair, transparent and professional investigation, as long as the process involved investigating both sides and basing the decision on real evidence. He stressed that evidence of sexual assault should come from biological samples obtained through forensic tests (The New York Times, January 10, 2024).

► At the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, the trial began following South Africa's prosecution of Israel "on charges of [alleged] genocide." **Senior Hamas figure Bassem Na'im** welcomed the trial and said they expected the court to decide on an immediate halt to the aggression against the Gaza Strip and prosecute the "war criminals" (Hamas Telegram channel, January 11, 2024). The PA foreign ministry called for Israel to be

punished for the killing of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (PA foreign ministry Telegram channel, January 11, 2024).

► The Iranian foreign ministry issued a statement in support of South Africa's lawsuit against Israel at the International Court of Justice in The Hague following the war in Gaza. According to the statement, Iran stressed the need for immediate action by the international community, including the UN Security Council, to stop Israel's attacks in the Gaza Strip and take legal action against Israel (ISNA, January 10, 2024).

United States

► **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken** said after he visited Bahrain, that Bahrain was a crucial partner for the United States. He noted that he had spoken with the Bahraini crown prince and that they had decided to continue trying to make sure that the conflict did not spread. As for the meeting with Mahmoud Abbas, he said they discussed the importance of reforming the Palestinian Authority so that it could take responsibility for the Gaza Strip and unite it with Judea and Samaria under one leadership. He said Mahmoud Abbas was committed to "moving forward and engaging in these efforts" (Reuters, January 10, 2024).