



# Spotlight on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

January 7 – 14, 2025

## Overview<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ **The southern arena:** IDF forces continued extensive operations in the northern, central and southern Gaza Strip. They eliminated dozens of terrorists from the air and on the ground and destroyed terror facilities. According to reports, Hamas operatives were using tunnels in northern Gaza and had restored communication systems. Twelve IDF soldiers were killed in the fighting in the northern Gaza Strip.
- ▶ **Negotiations for a ceasefire and the release of the hostages:** A breakthrough was reported in the indirect negotiations in Qatar, and final responses from Israel and Hamas regarding the first stage of the agreement are pending. Senior Hamas figures discussed the negotiations with the Emir of Qatar and the head of Turkish intelligence.
- ▶ **The "day after":** A senior Hamas figure said they had agreed to establish a support committee to administer the Gaza Strip based on technocrats, and claimed the movement did not seek to control the Strip. According to reports, the Palestinian Authority (PA) informed Egypt of its opposition to the idea of the support committee.
- ▶ **Hamas governance:** A new "popular" movement was announced in the Gaza Strip, accusing Hamas of not representing the public and intimidating local residents.
- ▶ **Hamas leadership:** According to reports, internal elections to choose the new head of the political bureau to replace Yahya Sinwar will take place in March 2025.
- ▶ **Israel, Judea and Samaria:** Israeli security forces continued counterterrorism operations in Judea and Samaria. Two terrorists en route to carry out an attack were detained.
- ▶ **The Palestinian Authority (PA):** The PA security forces continued their operations against armed terrorists in the Jenin refugee camp. Seventeen booby-trapped vehicles and more than 240 explosive devices were neutralized. Hamas condemned the PA's actions and called on the public to stop them.

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

## The Southern Arena

### **IDF operations in the Gaza Strip**

► IDF forces continued operating in the northern, central and southern Gaza Strip. They eliminated dozens of terrorists, including the Hamas chief of police, and destroyed terrorist tunnels and facilities. Terrorist operatives were attacked from the ground and the air, including those hiding near civilians and in civilian areas. The commander of a battalion in the Gaza City Brigade and other battalion operatives were eliminated. Twelve IDF soldiers were killed in the fighting in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, January 7-14, 2025).



**RPG launchers captured in Beit Hanoun (IDF spokesperson, January 12, 2025)**

► Palestinian media claimed IDF forces had destroyed all the buildings in Beit Hanoun and more than 95% of the residents had been displaced. Reportedly, more than 90% of the buildings and infrastructure in the Jebalya refugee camp were also destroyed and the residents were displaced (al-Ayam, January 9, 2025).

### **Hamas military activities**

► "Sources on the ground in the Gaza Strip" reported that "resistance fighters" in the northern part of the Strip had been waging guerrilla warfare since the beginning of the IDF activity in the Jebalya refugee camp in early October 2024. According to the "sources," the "resistance fighters" move between the Jebalya refugee camp, Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun, and engage in confrontations according to their military capabilities. They were said to use tunnels, some of which remained intact, to attack Israeli forces, reach areas where soldiers were concentrated and shoot at them at close range or fire anti-tank shells. It was also claimed that many explosive devices, including anti-tank land mines, were planted before Israeli forces entered northern Gaza, and some of the devices were made using unexploded Israeli missiles (al-Sharq al-Awsat, January 9, 2025).

▶ " Hamas sources " claimed the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades [ Hamas ' military wing ] had a structured hierarchy which ensured continuity of command. In the event of the elimination of a commander or pursuit of security personnel, a replacement was immediately appointed, ranging from brigade commanders to small field units. It was further claimed that engineers from the military wing quickly repaired damaged tunnels and communication systems, ensuring the continuation of " military " activities. The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades ' ground communication system is said to play a critical role in linking the " political " and military wings, as well as forces in the field, enabling real-time transmission of orders and battlefield reports ( al-Sharq al-Awsat, January 11, 2025 ).

▶ A " field commander " from one of the " resistance " factions said " fighters " from various factions were conducting joint operations to maximize the utility of their military equipment ( al-Jazeera.net, January 11, 2025 ).

## Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

▶ This past week two rockets were fired from the southern Gaza Strip at the western Negev and were intercepted ( IDF spokesperson, January 8 and 11, 2025 )

## The Hostages and a Ceasefire

▶ This past week, Israeli and Hamas delegations continued indirect negotiations in Doha for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the release of hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners; the negotiations were mediated by Qatar, Egypt and the United States. On January 13, 2025, according to reports the mediators presented the parties with the final draft of the agreement after a breakthrough had been achieved ( Reuters, January 13, 2025 ). The spokesman for Qatar ' s foreign ministry confirmed that the negotiations were in their final stage and close to reaching an agreement, and the parties were discussing the last details ( al-Jazeera, January 14, 2025 ):

- ◆ " Sources " reported that during the night of January 13, 2025, issues related to the IDF withdrawal from the Gaza Strip were resolved. According to the report, one thousand Gazan detainees who had not participated in Hamas ' attack and massacre on October 7, 2023, would be released in exchange for the release of women, children and elderly hostages. In addition, about 200 Palestinian prisoners serving life sentences would be released ( the daily al-Quds, January 14, 2025 ).

- ◆ Hamas said briefings and consultations had been held with Palestinian " faction " leaders regarding the progress of the negotiations. Hamas claimed that all senior faction

leaders had noted the need to remain in communication until the agreement, which was in its final stages, had been completed (Shehab Telegram channel, January 14, 2025).

◆ Earlier, Hamas announced that a delegation of its leadership led by Muhammad Darwish, head of the Shura Council, and including the negotiation team headed by Khalil al-Haya, had met with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, to discuss the final details of the negotiations and efforts to reach a deal and ceasefire (Hamas website, January 13, 2025). It was also reported that Darwish and al-Haya separately held phone calls with Ibrahim Kalin, head of Turkish intelligence, to review the latest developments. The two noted Hamas' desire to reach an agreement to end the war (Hamas website, January 13, 2025).

◆ A "senior Palestinian familiar with the details of the negotiations" said the talks had been "positive" and that "significant progress" had been made toward announcing the signing of an agreement. He said the discussions focused on the mechanism for implementing the agreement and the names of the Palestinian prisoners to be released. He added that the "resistance" had not yet provided its response to the final draft and consultations were ongoing (Filastin al-Yawm Telegram channel, January 14, 2025).

◆ "Sources familiar with the details of the negotiations" reported that the talks were "highly complex." Reportedly, the Hamas and Israeli teams were in separate rooms in the same building in Doha, and would exchange written documents through the mediators until an agreement on the final version was reached. The "sources" also noted that the discussions focused on several technical issues to ensure the agreement did not collapse, implying that the final formula for the agreement had already been agreed upon without requiring further response from either side. It was also reported that a week after the first stage of implementing the agreement, negotiations for the second stage would commence. That stage would include the release of the remaining hostages in exchange for an agreed-upon number of Palestinian prisoners and an additional ceasefire of a month and a half along with arrangements for ending the war and the withdrawal of IDF forces. If agreed, discussions on the third stage would begin, focusing on the reconstruction of Gaza and the establishment of governance (al-Sharq, January 13, 2025).

◆ Qadoura Fares, head of the PA Prisoners Affairs Commission, said the negotiations had reached the point of no return, which he described as "encouraging and reassuring." He

said the deal would go forward, and Prime Minister Netanyahu "would not be able to sabotage it this time." He claimed the Palestinian prisoners would be released in groups rather than on a single day. He added that the Prisoners Affairs Commission's teams had already prepared files on Palestinian prisoners ahead of their release (Sama News Agency Telegram channel, January 14, 2025).

## The Gaza Strip

### Palestinian casualties

► **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip** reported that since the beginning of the war, 46,645 Palestinians had been killed and 110,012 injured (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, January 14, 2025).

### The situation in the Gaza Strip

► The PA Ministry of Social Development accused certain humanitarian organizations operating in the Gaza Strip of exploiting the population's distress and behaving unethically. According to the Ministry, documented reports had been received indicating that an international organization, in collaboration with local merchants, was selling humanitarian aid, including frozen poultry (some of which was spoiled) at exorbitant prices, exceeding 100 shekels per kilogram (about \$15 a pound) (Wafa, January 7, 2025). In response, Muhammad Mustafa, PA prime minister, instructed the relevant authorities in the Ministries of Social Development and the Interior to take the necessary measures against those involved in the violations and to show no tolerance toward those proven to be exploiting the suffering of the Palestinian people (Wafa, January 8, 2025).

► According to reports, for the first time in several months, trucks loaded with frozen goods entered southern Gaza. Among the items were codfish and frozen meat, including chicken wings, whole chickens and chicken livers. A local resident, referred to as Umm al-Abed, protested the shipment, saying, "Why only cod? Where are other kinds of fish? Besides, cod has no flavor" (Taysir Qadih's Facebook page, January 8, 2025).

► The Gaza Coordination and Liaison Directorate, part of the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), supplied the al-Awda Medical Center in Gaza with 291 boxes of medical equipment and food. The Indonesian Hospital received 10,000 liters of water and boxes of food, and 6,750 liters of fuel were delivered to Nasser, al-Aqsa, and the European Hospitals in the southern Gaza Strip

to make it possible for them to operate essential hospital systems (Arabic Facebook page of COGAT, January 9, 2025).

► COGAT updated that during the week ending January 13, 2025, 1,073 aid trucks carrying food, water, medical supplies and shelter equipment had entered Gaza. Of them, 1,069 trucks were delivered to warehouses and humanitarian shelters in coordination with aid organizations and the international community (COGAT X account, January 13, 2025).

► Water Authority teams, in collaboration with UNICEF and humanitarian organizations, distributed more than 8,000 "hygiene packages" to 46,000 families in Gaza as part of an emergency project to improve water access, funded by the World Bank. The agreement also included the provision of 1.2 million liters of fuel, collapsible jerrycans and large water containers for shelters and displacement areas (Wafa, January 13, 2025).

## Hamas Governance

► On January 8, 2025, the establishment of the Bidna Karama ("We want dignity") movement was announced, expressing opposition to the Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip, with suggestions that it was connected to Fatah activists in the area. According to its first statement, the movement is a popular Gazan initiative whose objective is to give voice the "people's will," reject Hamas' methods, particularly its use of repression and intimidation, which include shooting legs and torture. The movement also declared that it regarded the PLO as the sole legitimate representative [of the Palestinian people] and opposed the division between Gaza and Judea and Samaria (Bidna Karama Facebook page, January 8, 2025).

► According to the movement's second statement, Hamas does not represent the public and lacks legitimacy to speak on behalf of Gaza's residents in ceasefire negotiations. It also called on the international community to protect the Strip's residents from Israel (Bidna Karama Facebook page, January 11, 2025).

► According to another statement, the movement condemns Hamas' leadership, accusing it of conducting negotiations at the expense of the people's blood and dignity. It emphasized its opposition to Hamas' continued rule in Gaza's future and accused it of advancing the "occupation's" goals. The movement urged residents to launch an indefinite protest and asserted it would not relent until the "destruction, oppression, and restoration of Palestinian dignity" were addressed, claiming that "the Palestinian flag would remain the central symbol of its struggle" (Bidna Karama Facebook page, January 13, 2025).



**The logo of the Bidna Karama movement (Bidna Karama Facebook page, January 8, 2025)**

- ▶ Operatives from the Sahem Unit of the Hamas Interior Ministry shot a local Gazan resident in the legs, alleging he had looted aid trucks and blocked the path of some of the trucks (Sahem Unit Telegram channel, January 12, 2025).
- ▶ Security mechanisms belonging to the "resistance" claimed to have uncovered a collaborator who admitted having been in contact with Israeli intelligence. They also claimed he confessed to stealing aid trucks and, during interrogation, provided important information which helped plan actions against gangs committing highway robbery (al-Hares Telegram channel, January 10, 2025).
- ▶ Hamas's Military Liaison Mechanism in the Gaza Strip launched the #163 hotline service for immediate reporting of any incidents, enabling its teams to deal with them quickly (al-Fajr Facebook page, January 14, 2025).

## "The Day After"

- ▶ Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau, claimed the movement did not seek to govern the Gaza Strip and noted that attempts to achieve national unity had failed. Referring to the Egyptian initiative to establish a committee composed of technocrats to manage Gaza, he said the idea had been supported by all the Palestinian "factions" except Fatah. He said Hamas would support the initiative provided that the committee was composed of "honest national figures, not corrupt ones." He also claimed Hamas had already agreed that PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas would serve as the political authority over the assistance committee, while administrative and financial management would be entrusted to the Palestinian government, which would maintain unity between Gaza, Judea and Samaria (Quds News Agency Telegram channel, January 9, 2025).
- ▶ "Well-informed Palestinian sources" reported that the PA had told Egyptian officials it rejected the initiative for a support committee to manage Gaza and it rejected any

arrangement which would restore Hamas to power. The "sources" added that the PLO delegation in Cairo argued to senior Egyptian officials that such a committee constituted the approval of a Palestinian division and the separation of Gaza from the rest of the Palestinian territories. The delegation presented a document outlining the Palestinian government's vision for managing Gaza "the day after" (al-Araby al-Jadeed, January 13, 2025).

► "Sources" stated that Egypt and Qatar were committed to preventing Hamas from regaining control of Gaza, proposing a different mechanism for managing the Strip for the near future as an alternative to Israeli efforts to "reoccupy" it. It was also claimed that Egypt sought to accelerate an agreement between Hamas and Fatah on "the day after" and that both Egypt and Qatar noted it was necessary to end internal Palestinian division (al-Akhbar, January 13, 2025).

## The Hamas Leadership

► Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan related the issue of selecting a new political bureau head following the killing of Yahya Sinwar in October 2024. He claimed Hamas had internal procedures which would soon lead to the announcement of the new political bureau head. He added that the organizational situation within the movement was functioning naturally through its institutions, but certain organizational steps necessitated a delay in the announcement (al-Shorouk, January 8, 2025).

► Reportedly, Hamas was preparing for a new internal election campaign in March 2025, which was expected to shape the balance of power between the Hamas leadership "abroad" and its leadership in Gaza. Also addressed would be the appointment of the new political bureau head (Ra'i al-Youm, January 12, 2025).

► "Hamas sources" stated that amid concerns over potential Israeli attempts to carry out targeted killings ahead of a ceasefire agreement, the movement's leadership had instructed operatives who could be considered Israeli targets to avoid appearing in public and to limit their movements unless a "security necessity" required otherwise (al-Sharq al-Awsat, January 13, 2025).

## Israel, Judea and Samaria

### Terrorist attacks

► This past week there were no terrorist attacks.



## Counterterrorism activities

- ▶ The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, eliminating terrorist operatives from the air and in exchanges of fire, detaining dozens of wanted Palestinians and those suspected of terrorist activities. The forces destroyed explosive devices and confiscated weapons and funds for financing terrorist activities. They detained two terrorists en route to carrying out an attack. The house of a terrorist involved in an attack in which an IDF soldier was killed in November 2023 was demolished (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, January 7-14, 2025).
- ▶ Israeli security forces detained an Arab-Israeli citizen from the village of Kabul in northern Israel on suspicion of planning an attack in Israel. According to reports, the suspect, Mahmoud Hussein Muhammad Boushkar, 37 years old, whose father was originally from Judea and Samaria, admitted to conducting experiments in producing explosives and planning to prepare an explosive belt (Israel Police Force and Israeli Security Agency spokespersons' units, January 9, 2025).

## The Palestinian Authority (PA)

### Activities of the Palestinian security forces

- ▶ The Palestinian Authority's security forces continued their operations against armed terrorists in the Jenin refugee camp for the fifth consecutive week, following instructions from PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas:
  - ◆ Anwar Rajab, spokesman for the PA security forces, reported that 247 "felons" had been arrested, 41 while resisting arrest. Additionally, eight people involved in funding the "felons" were detained and external sources of funding were uncovered. Rajab also stated that 17 booby-trapped vehicles had been neutralized, including one placed under a residential building, along with 245 explosive devices planted in streets, roads and hospitals. He condemned operatives in the camp for using rescue vehicles, women and children for reconnaissance missions and to transfer ammunition. He urged parents not to let their children fall prey to the extremist ideology of ISIS (Wafa, January 9, 2025). He further claimed that "gunmen" were responsible for the death of Sa'ada Muhammad Yassin Abu Bakr, 50 years old, after they opened fire on the civilian court building in Jenin (Wafa, January 9, 2025).



**Weapons and other equipment seized during the operation in the Jenin refugee camp  
(Beit Fajjar Telegram channel, January 14, 2025)**

- ◆ Hamas accused the PA security forces of "spilling Palestinian blood in oppression operations" in the Jenin refugee camp, which had reportedly led to the deaths of 19 Palestinians since the beginning of the campaign. Hamas also warned of the severe consequences for Palestinian society of such activities and called for immediate intervention by the Palestinian public in Judea and Samaria to stop the bloodshed and lift the prolonged siege of the Jenin refugee camp (Hamas Telegram channel, January 10, 2025).
- ◆ Abdul Rahman Shadid, a senior Hamas figure, said the PA's increased attempts to target "resistance fighters"<sup>2</sup> in Judea and Samaria revealed dangerous intentions, which he claimed coordinated with the goals of the "occupation." According to him, the PA leadership and its security forces were downplaying the spilling of Palestinian blood (Hamas Telegram channel, January 11, 2025).
- ◆ Fatah accused Hamas of fomenting chaos in Judea and Samaria and supporting criminal groups, claiming that Hamas' policies led to disasters and abused the rights of the Palestinian people. Fatah noted the historical role of the Palestinian security forces in defending the "national project" and preserving Palestinian independence while opposing regional influence, particularly from Iran (Fatah Telegram channel, January 11, 2025).
- ◆ According to reports, the PA security forces gave the IDF an RPG and its launcher, which were seized during their operation in Jenin. The transfer reportedly followed recent discussions between Israeli security officials and their counterparts in the PA (Israeli media, January 9, 2025). The communication committee of the Jenin refugee camp

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<sup>2</sup> Terrorist operatives.

accused security operatives of continuing to fire RPGs at civilian homes in the camp (Quds News Agency, January 13, 2025).

► According to reports, security mechanisms destroyed explosive devices planted by "resistance" operatives to confront IDF forces in the western area of Nablus (Palinfo X account, January 10, 2025).

► A meeting was held in December 2024 in Ramallah, where PA representatives expressed to American security officials their frustration at the lack of American commitment to supporting PA security. They requested approval for a four-year aid plan of \$680 million to improve the capabilities of their security forces, including the supply of ammunition and armored vehicles, in view of the security challenges, particularly operations in the Jenin refugee camp (Middle East Eye, January 6, 2025).

## International activity

► PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas met in Ramallah with British Foreign Secretary David Lammy. They discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria. According to reports, Abbas reiterated the need for a ceasefire in Gaza, the delivery of humanitarian aid, the withdrawal of the IDF from the Strip and granting the PA full responsibility for Gaza. He also noted the importance of strengthening bilateral relations and the need for Britain to play a central role in achieving peace and security. Additionally, he warned of the dangers of "Israeli attacks" in Judea and Samaria and noted the need for the continued support of UNRWA (Wafa, January 13, 2025).



**Mahmoud Abbas and David Lammy (Wafa, January 13, 2025)**

► On January 13, 2025, Muhammad Mustafa, PA prime minister, visited Jordan. He held meetings with Jordanian Prime Minister Jaafar Hassan and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi to discuss the latest developments in Gaza, Judea and Samaria, and efforts to stop "Israeli aggression." They discussed their historical relations and Jordan's support for the Palestinian cause (Wafa, January 13, 2025).

- ▶ Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO Executive Committee, met with Danish Foreign Minister Lars Rasmussen to discuss recent developments on the Palestinian front. He thanked Rasmussen for his visit "at this sensitive time" and reiterated the importance of Denmark's recognizing a Palestinian state. Rasmussen reaffirmed his country's commitment to the two-state solution and its continued support for a political process which promoted regional stability and security and led to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state (Hussein al-Sheikh's X account, January 13, 2025).
- ▶ Dr. Badr Abdel Atty, the Egyptian foreign minister, met with a PLO delegation which included Rawhi Fattouh, chairman of the Palestinian National Council, and Ahmad Majdalani and Azzam al-Ahmad, members of the PLO Executive Committee. Abdel Atty reiterated Egypt's support for the PA and its opposition to any plan involving the displacement of Palestinians from their lands. He reviewed Egypt's efforts to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza, ensure humanitarian aid and mobilize international support for the recognition of a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders with east Jerusalem as its capital. He also noted the need for Palestinian unity and for strengthening the PA (Egyptian foreign ministry Facebook page, January 9, 2025).