



Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

December 16-23, 2025

Overview¹

- ▶ IDF forces continued operating in the areas of the Yellow Line in the Gaza Strip and eliminated militants who posed a threat. An IDF soldier was wounded by a stray bullet.
- ▶ An initiative of experts on hunger determined that no area in the Gaza Strip was "famine-stricken," but warned that 77% of the population was suffering from food insecurity. The Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories accused the report of being biased and based on partial data.
- ▶ Hamas security forces announced the closing of the window for "collaborators" to surrender and threatened to use force against networks of collaborators with Israel.
- ▶ The organizers of the Global Sumud Flotilla announced that they would launch a new and larger flotilla to the Gaza Strip in the spring of 2026.
- ▶ A Hamas delegation met with the head of Turkish intelligence to discuss the continuation of negotiations on the ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip. Representatives of the mediating countries called on all parties to meet their commitments and expressed support for the establishment of a Peace Council.
- ▶ The Palestinian terrorist organizations and the Fatah movement expressed anger with the Palestinian Authority over its suspension of the payments to the families of the shaheeds, the wounded and the prisoners.

The Ceasefire in the Gaza Strip

The IDF

- ▶ IDF forces continued operating in the areas of the Yellow Line (the area under IDF control) in the Gaza Strip, in accordance with the ceasefire agreement, and eliminated terrorists who infiltrated the area or posed a threat to IDF activity. A reserve soldier was wounded by a stray bullet (IDF spokesperson, December 16–23, 2025).

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

- On December 19, 2025, IDF forces reportedly fired artillery at a school used as a shelter for displaced persons in the al-Tuffah neighborhood in eastern Gaza City, resulting in the deaths of six civilians (Anadolu Agency, December 19, 2025). The IDF spokesperson reported that several suspected terrorists were identified in buildings located west of the Yellow Line which commanded the area, and the forces fired at the suspects (IDF spokesperson, December 19, 2025). However, according to reports, the incident is still under investigation (Israeli media, December 22, 2025).
- The Hamas government media information office accused Israel of more than 875 "violations" of the ceasefire agreement, including shooting at civilians, incursions by military vehicles into residential areas and the demolition of buildings. According to the claim, more than 400 people were killed and more than 1,100 were wounded (Telegram channel of the Hamas government media information office, December 22, 2025). Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem claimed that the escalation of Israeli "violations" increased the risk of the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Strip. Hamas called on the mediators to take "serious action" to stop the "violations" (Hamas Telegram channel, December 21, 2025).

The Gaza Strip

The Situation in the Gaza Strip

- The Hamas civil defense force called on people living in buildings classified as unfit for human habitation to evacuate immediately and comply with the instructions of the safety teams, especially ahead of winter, to prevent loss of life. The warning was issued after Gazans returned to live in houses that had previously been damaged and marked as dangerous by a committee of experts. Reportedly, since the onset of severe weather on December 10, 2025, 22 houses partially or completely collapsed, 18 people were killed, and four are still missing, presumably under the rubble (Telegram channel of journalist Hani al-Shaer, December 21, 2025).
- The Hamas deputy minister of health in the Gaza Strip, Dr. Youssef Abu al-Rish, claimed that the public health system in the Strip faced severe challenges, especially a sharp shortage of medicine and medical equipment, allegedly because supplies and delegations were prevented from entering the Strip (Telegram channel of the ministry of health in Gaza, December 18, 2025). The ministry claimed there was allegedly a shortage of 52% of 321 types of medicines, and 71% of medical equipment (Facebook page of the ministry of health in Gaza, December 21, 2025).

- ▶ According to a new report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification initiative (IPC), no area in the Gaza Strip was "famine-stricken," contrary to the August 2025 report, but despite the improvement, the food security situation remained critical. According to the initiative, as of November 2025, about 1.6 million people, 77% of the population, suffered from critical food insecurity, including more than one hundred thousand Gazans whose situation was "catastrophic" (IPC report, December 19, 2025). In response, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) accused the organization of presenting a distorted and biased picture, relying on gaps in data collection and on sources which did not reflect the full picture. The COGAT stated that between 600 and 800 aid trucks entered the Strip daily, about 70% of them carrying food, and since the beginning of the ceasefire about thirty thousand trucks had entered, bringing more than 500,000 tons of food, in addition to about one hundred thousand food trucks which entered during the war, exceeding needs according to accepted international methodologies. The COGAT called on the international community to rely on verified data, while committing to continue allowing the entry of aid and to prevent its exploitation by Hamas (COGAT, December 19, 2025).
- ▶ Gazans living in the Nuseirat refugee camp criticized the UN's World Food Programme (WFP), claiming it had reneged on the bread distribution agreement, according to which 70% was to be sold at specific points and the rest distributed free of charge. According to camp residents, the program halted the free distribution and only supplied shops, making it particularly difficult for needy families (Telegram channel of Hamas' Sahm Unit 103, December 16, 2025).

Security Governance

- ▶ "Sources" reported that Hamas' revolutionary courts in the Gaza Strip had completed investigations of several defendants involved in cases of collaboration with Israel and treason after they were arrested by the "resistance" security forces.² According to reports, the courts handed down death sentences for some of the defendants (al-Sayyad Telegram channel, December 17, 2025).

² Operatives of Hamas and the other terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip.



"Resistance" security notice preparing the public for the execution of "collaborators"
(al-Sayyad Telegram channel, December 16, 2025)

- Hamas' "resistance" security forces announced the end of Operation Opening the Gates of Repentance, the name given to the window of time opened after the killing of Yasser Abu Shabab, the leader of the Popular Forces militia, for "collaborators" to surrender.³ According to the announcement, some of those involved turned themselves in and their files were being dealt with. As for the others, the security apparatuses would continue to dismantle networks of "collaborators" supported by Israel (Izz al-Din Brigades combat information Telegram channel, December 19, 2025).
- The al-Majd al-Amni channel, dedicated to raising "security awareness," warned the Gazans not to expose themselves to Israeli media outlets issuing statements intended to create internal confusion, particularly regarding the continued presence of IDF forces within the Yellow Line. The channel claimed Israel was waging psychological warfare, and therefore the public was required to remain steadfast and not spread frightening information (Telegram channel of al-Majd al-Amni, December 19, 2025).
- The American Gaza Soup Kitchen charity organization complained that its team in the Gaza Strip had experienced "repeated disruptions and interference in its activity" from "activists"⁴ in the Hamas security forces. According to the organization, demands were made for data and information it could not provide because of moral and legal obligations. As a result, the organization decided to reconsider continuing its activity in the Strip and said that if the issue had not been addressed by December 26, 2025, it would be forced to cease its work immediately. It also said it did not intend to establish contact with the Hamas administration in the Strip, also its policy in other places, adding that its activity was "humanitarian and

³ For further information, see the December 2025 ITIC report, [The Gaza Strip Following the Killing of Yasser Abu Shabab](#)

⁴ Terrorist operatives.

public, and its team is known to all and is not clandestine" (Facebook page of the Gaza Soup Kitchen, December 22, 2025). Social media activist Hamza al-Masri noted that Hamas frequently arrested businessmen and entrepreneurs, and harassed institutions, demanding large sums of money (Telegram channel of Hamza al-Masri, December 22, 2025).

► The counterterrorism forces commanded by Ghassan al-Dahini, the new commander of the Popular Forces militia, announced a tactical exercise called Ensuring the Commander 1 (*Ahd al-Qa'ed 1*), involving the main arms of the Forces and with the participation of all its operatives. Reportedly, the exercise would last three days and its objective was to test maximum readiness in emergency situations and assess coordination among units (Facebook page of the counterterrorism forces, December 20, 2025). Al-Dahini revealed the existence of another militia operating in western Rafah, called the Popular Defense Forces – the Khalil al-Wazir Battalion⁵ (Facebook page of Ghassan al-Dahini, December 19, 2025).



Colonel Khaled Abu Sanida, chief of staff of the Popular Forces counterterrorism unit during the military exercise (Facebook page of the counterterrorism unit, December 20, 2025)

► The Popular Army in the Northern Gaza Strip District, an anti-Hamas militia commanded by Ashraf al-Mansi, announced the addition of a new unit. The operatives of the new force are undergoing training focused on military discipline, preparedness and the protection of civilians, and its mission is to defend civilians in areas under its control (Facebook page of the Popular Army in the Northern Strip District, December 18, 2025).

Civilian Governance

► Reportedly, Hamas is embroiled in an ongoing economic crisis, with difficulties in transferring funds to the Gaza Strip and paying salaries. According to the report, Hamas renewed partial payments to operatives after delays, with senior leadership figures and

⁵ Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) was one of the founders of the Fatah movement and the PLO, headed the organization's military wing, and was responsible for numerous terrorist attacks. He was eliminated in an IDF operation in Tunis in April 1988.

operatives of the military wing receiving the highest amount, sometimes up to about 80% of their salaries, while *da'wah* [Islamist religious instruction] and welfare workers received less, and government employees and security operatives received only around 60%, at times dropping to 35%. Meanwhile Hamas continues to pay the families of the shaheeds, the prisoners and the wounded, and assists some families for whom the Palestinian Authority has stopped payments, alongside budgets for aid projects such as food, water and soup kitchens (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 18, 2025).

► Hamas police in the central Gaza Strip District secured a mass wedding ceremony for 203 couples in the town of al-Zawayda. It was organized by the Turkish al-Ribat Association (Anadolu Agency, December 18, 2025; Facebook page of the Hamas police in, December 18, 2025).



Police securing the ceremony (Facebook page of the Hamas police, December 18, 2025)

► Reconstruction work continues throughout the Strip: the Gaza City Municipality began reconstruction on Jamal Abdel Nasser Street, usually called al-Thalathini, opposite al-Azhar University in western Gaza City, after the street was destroyed during the war (Facebook page of the Gaza City Municipality, December 20, 2025).



Repaving al-Thalathini Street (Facebook page of the Gaza City Municipality, December 20, 2025)

The Flotilla to the Gaza Strip

► The organizers of the Global Sumud Flotilla, whose arrival in the Gaza Strip was prevented by the Israeli navy in early October 2025, announced their intention to launch another, larger flotilla in the spring of 2026. According to the announcement, there will be about 3,000 activists aboard more than one hundred vessels, more than double the size of the previous flotilla. The organizers claimed it would be an "unarmed civilian" activity to assist efforts to break the "siege" on the Gaza Strip (Telegram channel of the Global Sumud Flotilla, December 22, 2025).



Announcement of the new flotilla to the Gaza Strip
(Telegram channel of the Global Sumud Flotilla, December 22, 2025)

The Ceasefire Agreement and "The Day After"

► A Hamas delegation led by the head of the political bureau in the Gaza Strip, Khalil al-Hayya, met in Istanbul with the head of Turkish intelligence, Ibrahim Kalin, to discuss the implementation of the ceasefire agreement in Gaza. According to reports, Hamas demanded that Israel meet its commitments to the first stage and expressed commitment to continuing the ceasefire and to moving to the second stage. Hamas representatives also thanked Turkey for supporting the Palestinians, and noted the need to strengthen Palestinian unity and safeguard national principles to establish a Palestinian state (Hamas Telegram channel, December 20, 2025).

► On December 16, 2025, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) hosted a meeting in Doha, Qatar, in preparation for establishing the international stabilization force which is supposed to arrive in the Gaza Strip for the second stage of the ceasefire agreement. The meeting addressed areas of deployment and financing, but no official statement was issued. Bishara Bahbah, the Palestinian-American mediator close to the American administration, claimed that most countries had rejected the deployment model sought by Israel and preferred a force which would engage in monitoring and create a buffer between IDF forces and civilian-populated areas, without engaging in disarmament. He said Washington

particularly supported Turkey's participation because of its ability to influence Hamas on the issue of weapons, and the American administration was expected to pressure Israel for acceptance (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 17, 2025). "Western sources" reported that United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio asked Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to consider sending troops to participate in the international force (*al-Akhbar*, December 21, 2025).

- Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty said the Peace Council was supposed to concentrate on enlisting resources and oversee the Gaza Strip reconstruction funds, while the international stabilization force would focus on monitoring the ceasefire and assisting at crossings and in enforcing order, with control inside the Strip remaining under the authority of a Palestinian police force. Regarding the issue of weapons, Abdelatty claimed that the plan was to restrict weapons and gradually regulate them as part of an internal Palestinian agreement (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 18, 2025). On another occasion, he claimed that understandings had been reached among the "factions"⁶ regarding restricting weapons under a "Palestinian organizational framework" (RT channel, December 21, 2025).
- Representatives of the mediating countries met in Miami to discuss implementing the first stage of the ceasefire agreement and the transition to the second stage. Reportedly, the participants reviewed the next steps for the full implementation of the peace plan, while emphasizing their commitment to all of its clauses, and called on all parties to meet their commitments, exercise restraint and cooperate with oversight arrangements. They also expressed their support for the establishment of the Peace Council and said it was necessary to make it possible for a governing body in the Strip, operating under a unified Gazan authority, to protect Gazans and maintain public order (X account of Steven Witkoff, December 21, 2025).
- It was later reported that the Palestinian terrorist organizations had begun discussions to formulate a unified position in response to the American proposals relating to the second stage of the ceasefire agreement, which were conveyed to Hamas after the meeting of the mediating countries' representatives. A "Palestinian source" said that details of the discussions held between the mediators and the American administration had been presented to the Hamas leadership, including how the second stage would be carried out and the implications of deploying the international force. According to the "source," the organizations were examining all the proposals and discussing two issues: the scope of deployment and the authority the

⁶ Palestinian terrorist organizations.

international stabilization force would have, and the issue of the weapons of the "resistance"⁷ (*al-Quds al-Arabi*, December 21, 2025).

- Fatah spokesperson Abdel Fattah Doula criticized the remarks of the "external" Hamas leader, Khaled Mashal, in an interview with the American investigative site Drop Site. He warned that any attempt to impose disarmament would lead to confrontation, proposed holding a long-term ceasefire with Israel, and expressed a desire for direct ties with the American administration. According to Doula, any political initiative which did not rest on national unity, on the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, and on "ending the occupation" as its goal served the "occupation project" and would lead to the dismantling of the Palestinian issue. He added that if the results of October 7, 2023 were the destruction of the Gaza Strip, many dead, and the achievement of limited political understandings, it was "a national disaster and not an achievement" (Facebook page of Ouda TV channel, December 17, 2025).
- According to reports, the mediation efforts of Egypt and Qatar failed to advance reconciliation between Fatah and the Palestinian Authority (PA) on the one hand and Hamas on the other. Reportedly, Fatah and the PA did not respond to the proposal to establish a "national committee," despite Hamas' declaring that it did not oppose a committee headed by a minister from the PA government in Ramallah. In addition, it was claimed that the PA had reneged on previous understandings and renewed its demand for the full handover of the Strip, while at the same time conducting contacts to establish an alternative body for the Supreme Follow-Up Committee in the Gaza Strip without Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), which was opposed by the Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Strip (*al-Akhbar*, December 23, 2025).

Plans for Rebuilding the Strip

- "Sources" reported that preparations were underway for a Qatari project to build a residential city at an estimated cost of \$250 million, including 500 five-story buildings with five apartments on each floor, in the al-Khashashin area between Rafah and Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. The buildings would be made of prefabricated concrete imported from China. The project is supposed to get underway during the second stage of the ceasefire agreement. An UNRWA project is planned at a cost of about \$15 million to establish a caravan camp with medical centers, schools, services and open spaces in western Rafah. The projects

⁷ The terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip.

would be carried out by Egyptian companies with operational services from local Palestinian companies (al-Iqtisadiya website, December 16, 2025).

► An American presentation entitled Project Sunrise: Building a New and United Gaza, which was leaked to the media, presented a phased reconstruction plan for the Gaza Strip. According to the plan, it would begin in Rafah and Khan Yunis and then progress in stages to the central camps and finally to Gaza City. At each stage clearing rubble, dealing with unexploded ordnance, and the scanning and handling of "underground infrastructure" and tunnels had to be carried out first, and only afterward would permanent housing and infrastructure be rebuilt. In addition, four "cities" or main rehabilitation hubs would be established (*Wall Street Journal*, December 19, 2025). United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned that no one would be willing to invest in the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip as long as there was concern that everything built could be destroyed again in a future war, and therefore the disarmament of Hamas was a central condition for rehabilitation (X account of the White House, December 19, 2025).

Hamas' International Activity

► Hamas figures Osama Hamdan and Taher al-Nunu met in Iraq with Abu Alaa al-Wala'i, secretary general of the pro-Iranian Shi'ite militia Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhadaa, to discuss the activity of the "resistance" factions, the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, and the ceasefire agreement negotiations. Hamdan and al-Nunu praised the role of the "Iraqi resistance" as a supporting front, while al-Wala'i emphasized the importance of "the unity of the arenas as a steadfast approach to confronting the Zionist project," and noted the support of Baghdad and the militias for the Palestinian cause (Telegram channel of Abu Alaa al-Wala'i, December 21, 2025).

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism

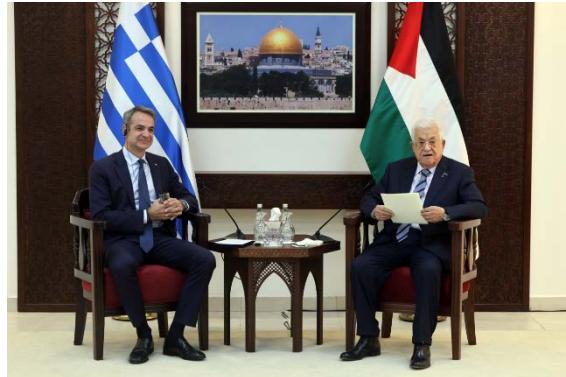
► This past week, Israeli security forces continued routine counterterrorism activity in Judea and Samaria, during which suspects and wanted individuals involved in terrorist activity were detained, weapons were seized and tens of thousands of shekels used to finance terrorist activity were confiscated. As part of the activity, 35 drones of various sizes were taken from a shop in Hebron on suspicion of future use for terrorist purposes. The forces eliminated a terrorist who threw a brick at them in Qabatiya and a terrorist who threw an explosive device in al-Silat al-Harithiya (IDF spokesperson and police spokesperson, December 16–23, 2025).

► Hamas' military wing reported that one of its operatives was killed in Qabatiya (Hamas Telegram channel, December 20, 2025), and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Judea and Samaria (PIJ) announced that the operative killed in al-Silat al-Harithiya belonged to its military wing (Telegram channel of the Jerusalem Brigades, December 21, 2025). In the Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm, residents evacuated their homes ahead of demolition by the IDF (Telegram channel of the Nur Shams refugee camp, December 17, 2025).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

► The Palestinian terrorist organizations strongly criticized the PA, accusing it of stopping payments to the families of the shaheeds, the wounded and the prisoners after the Economic Empowerment Institution announced that payments to families would now be made only according to socio-economic needs, regardless of political or security background. The organizations claimed that the decision showed "moral deterioration and [was] an unforgivable sin" and called for "urgent popular actions" to protect the struggling families (*al-Risalah*, December 22, 2025). The PIJ also condemned the decision and called it a "political and moral crime" (PIJ Telegram channel, December 22, 2025). Criticism also came from within the Fatah movement. The head of the authority for prisoners and released prisoners' affairs, Raed Abu al-Hamess, personally attacked the head of the fund and PLO Executive Committee member Ahmed Majdalani, asking, "Where does the audacity come from to allow you speak in this manner? What have you sacrificed compared to what the shaheeds, the prisoners, the wounded and their families have sacrificed? Enough of your arrogance!" (Facebook page of the authority for prisoners and released prisoners' affairs, December 21, 2025). Branch secretaries in the districts of Judea and Samaria warned that "our shaheeds, prisoners and wounded are a red line." They called for convening an emergency meeting of the Central Committee, the Revolutionary Council, and Fatah branch secretaries to formulate a unified position on the issue (X account of fateh_pal65, December 21, 2025).

► PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas met in Ramallah with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to discuss recent developments in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest. At the joint press conference, Abbas called for pressure to be exerted on Israel to stop "damaging [the chances for] the two-state solution through settlement expansion and settler terrorism," while the Greek prime minister noted his country's support for the two-state solution and said Greece was prepared to assist in strengthening the PA's institutional and operational capacities (Wafa, December 22, 2025).



Mahmoud Abbas and the Greek prime minister (Wafa, December 22, 2025)

- ▶ Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas, claimed that Israel continuously "violated" international law and legitimacy, citing as an example the Israeli government decision to establish 19 new settlements in Judea and Samaria, in violation of UN resolutions. At the same time, he called on the international community, especially the United States, to exert pressure on Israel to allow and expedite the entry of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. He also complained of the continuation of military operations in Judea alongside violence by Israeli settlers (Wafa, December 16, 2025). Hamas claimed that the intention to build 19 settlements was "a dangerous escalation in settlement and annexation policy" and a "violation" of international law (Hamas Telegram channel, December 19, 2025).
- ▶ Shortly after Mahmoud Abbas' visit to Italy in early December 2025, the speaker of the Italian parliament, Lorenzo Fontana, announced his support for recognizing a Palestinian state. He said recognition should be carried out within an appropriate framework of international guarantees, adding that his statement reflected Italy's commitment to supporting international efforts to achieve regional peace and stability (Amman News Facebook page, December 18, 2025).