

ISRAEL WEEKLY WAR SUMMARY

Week #118 January 4 - January 10, 2026

This is a product of the IDSF Habithonistim Research Department, distributed by the David Institute for Security Policy in coordination with IDSF USA



Account of the main events in the Israel-Hamas war and hostilities by the Iranian Axis



Donald J. Trump



@realDonaldTrump

Iran is looking at FREEDOM, perhaps like never before. The USA stands ready to help!!! President DONALD J. TRUMP

Photo Cover: President Trump's statement supporting the protestors in Iran.

Source: Truth Social

President Trump issued a direct and unusually explicit warning to the Iranian regime, stating that the United States would "hit Iran very, very hard where it hurts" if the Islamic Republic kills protestors demonstrating against the regime. The message was framed as a red line based on Iran's past use of lethal force, and as deterrence rather than a desire for escalation.

SECURITY BRIEFING WEEK 118



0

Total Israeli
casualties This
Week

0

Total Civilians
killed this week

0

Total IDF
Casualties this
week



156

Iranian anti-regime protests surged to a new peak with 156 demonstrations reported across 28 provinces.



\$1B

Hamas is rebuilding its finances by holding up to 1 billion shekels in cash and taxing humanitarian aid trucks.



537

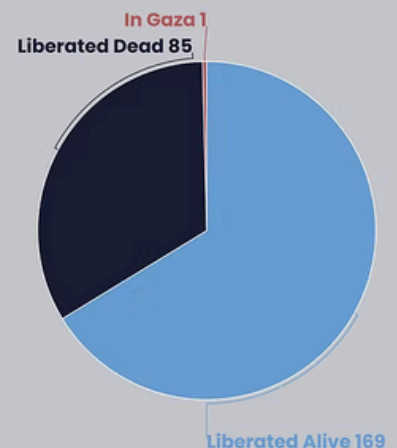
The IDF recorded a historic high of 537 ultra-Orthodox recruits joining combat and support units.



70%

Rafah reconstruction is progressing with 70% of debris cleared to establish the "Green Rafah" model zone.

HOSTAGES IN GAZA: 1



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- On January 8, the protests in Iran reached a new peak, with 156 demonstrations across 28 of the country's 31 provinces. The scope of unrest doubled compared to the previous day, indicating rapid momentum. Roughly 60 protests involved crowds of hundreds, a sharp increase from earlier days, when demonstrations were smaller and concentrated mainly in mid-sized cities. This time, Tehran and its surrounding province accounted for roughly one-quarter of all protests, with 38 demonstrations, 20 of which involved many hundreds and in some cases thousands of participants. The data strongly suggests a significant rise in protester confidence, reflected not only in the number of protests but also in crowd size. As confidence grows, participation is expanding in a pattern resembling a revolutionary mass movement, rather than isolated acts of dissent.
- Protesters have become markedly bolder, as evidenced by documented confrontations that include assaults on Basij members, localized exchanges of gunfire, Molotov cocktail attacks, arson against government buildings (including governors' residences), removal of Islamic Republic flags, destruction of Qassem Soleimani statues, and even the burning of regime-loyal broadcasting stations.
- In response to the flood of reports and footage, the regime imposed a near-total internet and communications blackout. Only individuals with access to satellite internet systems retained contact with the outside world. Elon Musk deployed Starlink to allow for internet connectivity in some regions which allow for videos to make their way out of Iran.

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- Under cover of the online blackout, Iranian security forces significantly intensified live fire against protesters. Reports indicated dozens of fatalities on both sides, with multiple incidents in which security units were forced to retreat due to the sheer size of protest crowds and claims of manpower shortages. In response, the regime was concentrating IRGC brigades in preparation for coordinated attacks on cities, with the main force buildup focused in western Iran against Kurdish-populated areas.
- Iran conducted a large-scale air-defense exercise, with emphasis on Tehran and Shiraz, while signaling readiness for a major confrontation with Israel, including references to possible pre-emptive strikes. Iranian planning assumes that a major regional war could precede internal regime collapse.
- The U.S. administration told the Israeli prime minister last week that Phase Two of the peace plan would commence even though Hamas has not been dismantled and the remains of the last deceased hostage has not been returned. This suggested that Washington might be prioritizing the appearance of progress over dismantling Hamas, which is a dangerous precedent demonstrating to terrorist organizations that they can survive by waiting out U.S. pressure.
- Reports stated that the President Trump is expected next week to announce the composition of a “Peace Council”, which will include representatives from Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, and France.
- The Palestinian Authority vice president met in Ramallah with the former UN Middle East envoy, Mladenov in preparation for his expected appointment as the director of the U.S.-backed Board of Peace in Gaza. The meeting took place one day after he held talks with the Israeli prime minister and met with the Israeli president, underscoring a central coordinating role.

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- After Israel's ultimatum not to reopen the Rafah Crossing until the return of the final deceased hostage, Hamas renewed searches in the Zeitoun neighborhood, indicating internal pressure.
- Hamas is estimated to be holding between 400 million and 1 billion shekels (\$125M-300M) in cash inside tunnel systems. The organization is using the ceasefire to rebuild financial reserves through "taxation", levying 15–25% on goods and traders entering Gaza via 600 daily aid trucks, and imposing a 40% tax on foreign donations.
- Israel recorded the largest ultra-Orthodox enlistment to date, with 537 recruits, including 307 in combat-support roles and 230 in combat units, described as a significant shift in manpower integration trends.
- At the initiative of the Shin Bet chief and with political approval, the Central Command head signed an unprecedented order imposing an electronic ankle monitor on a minor involved in Israeli civilian violence against Arabs, banning him from leaving his settlement. This was presented as part of a tougher policy against violent civilians attacking Palestinians.
- Lebanon was described as being in a holding pattern, allowing the Lebanese Army time to attempt Hezbollah disarmament. Israel was preparing for a major additional operation should this effort fail. Given that Hezbollah remained the strongest armed force in the country and had threatened civil war if disarmed, the assessment presented was that only the IDF could enforce disarmament by force.

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- Reports stated that following a January 5 meeting in Paris — described as the fifth overall meeting between Jerusalem and Damascus and the first in two months — the U.S. wanted to establish a demilitarized economic zone in southern Syria, which would include ski resorts, wind-energy facilities, and advanced agricultural farms, integrated with the Druze community.
- A hotline mechanism was reported as being established to prevent an escalation between Israel, Syria, and Jordan, with Jordan joining after recent Jordanian air strikes in southern Syria targeting Captagon smuggling. A humanitarian corridor from Israel to Druze areas was also described as being planned, likely transiting through Jordanian territory.
- Israel's foreign minister Gideon Saar visited Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland, to strengthen ties ahead of establishing an Israeli embassy and joint strategic working groups. Separate reports stated that Jerusalem and Hargeisa were discussing the possibility of an Israeli base in Somaliland, reflecting broader strategic interest in the Horn of Africa.