

ISRAEL WEEKLY WAR SUMMARY

Week #121 January 25 - January 31, 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



Photo Cover: Operation “Courageous Heart,” returning the deceased hostage Master Sergeant Ran Gvili.

Source: IDF Spokesperson

The body of the last hostage Ran Gvili was identified and returned to Israel for burial. His remains were retrieved by the IDF in a cemetery in the Daraj neighborhood, an area that initially lay beyond the Yellow Line, but following IDF operations that shifted the line westward, the site became inside the buffer zone, approximately 100 meters from Salah al-Din Road. While Hamas did not prevent the IDF from retrieving the last hostage, Hamas did not fulfill its obligation to return the final hostage that they had held for 843 days. For the first time since 2014, there are no Israeli hostages in the Gaza strip.



SECURITY BRIEFING WEEK 121



4 km

Of tunnels destroyed in Gaza this week

843

Days until the last hostage returned home

20

Airstrikes in Lebanon this week



600 Trucks a Day

The IDF reported a massive influx of humanitarian aid, reaching approximately 600 trucks per day. This is more than 4 times the amount required to feed the population.



4-6 Months to Disarm

A new draft proposal from the Trump administration outlines a staged disarmament model for Hamas. The proposed timeframe for this process ranges from 6 weeks to 4 months.



30,000 U.S Soldiers

The estimated number of American troops currently stationed in the Middle East, according to Secretary of State Marco Rubio.



0 Hostages in Gaza

The release of the final Israeli hostage leaves the Gaza Strip without any captives for the first time since 2014.

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- Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that no Turkish or Qatari troops will enter the Gaza Strip. The new governing authority and anyone participating in its mechanisms will be subject to external oversight, while security control will remain in Israeli hands. The Rafah Crossing will operate only for the movement of people, meaning all goods will enter Gaza exclusively through other crossings under 100% Israeli control. Israel will oversee both entry and exit at Rafah, while the Palestinian Authority will function merely as a rubber-stamp authority for passports, without real operational power.
- According to one report, Trump is expected in the coming days to present Israel and Hamas with a draft proposal for a demilitarization process. Under this framework, Hamas would first surrender its heavy weapons, followed by the relinquishing of their light weapons to either the ISF or the IDF, in a few weeks. Failure to comply would grant the IDF a green light to resume fighting. The proposed timeframe reportedly ranges from six weeks to four months, indicating a staged but coercive disarmament model.
- In an interview with Al-Jazeera, senior Hamas official Mousa Abu Marzouk declared that Hamas will not surrender its weapons, and asserted that any discussion regarding Gaza's future must include Hamas, directly rejecting disarmament-based postwar frameworks.
- The IDF Spokesperson released footage from airstrikes in which three out of eight militants who surfaced above ground in eastern Rafah (specifically the Jeninah pocket) were eliminated. One of the militants, identified as a company commander in Hamas's East Rafah Battalion, was captured by the Ghassan al-Dahini militia, which publicly humiliated and assaulted him on camera and threatened to hunt down Hamas operatives and torture them, signaling growing internal armed rivalries and vigilante dynamics within Gaza.

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- The Chief of Staff is preparing operational plans for three scenarios. The first is that Hamas genuinely agrees to disarm, a scenario assessed as extremely unlikely. The second involves partial American approval for Israeli action, combined with rehabilitation efforts in the Green Zone, and a series of targeted IDF operations rather than full military maneuvering. The third scenario entails a full-scale ground maneuver under “Gideon’s Chariots III.,” aimed at the decisive defeat of Gaza City.
- The IDF stated that with the influx of approximately 600 humanitarian aid trucks per day – more than four times the amount required to feed the population, Hamas has significantly strengthened itself. It was further reported that nearly half of all aid entering Gaza since October 2023 arrived during the three months of the ceasefire, enabling Hamas to accumulate capital through taxation, resale of goods, and smuggling of high-value items such as tobacco.
- According to the report, some Israeli citizens are allegedly involved in smuggling operations for financial gain, contributing indirectly to Hamas’s economic resilience. The IDF is therefore demanding a reduction in the number of aid trucks, a complete halt to truck entry via the Rafah Crossing, and that all aid be routed exclusively through Israeli-side crossings under 100% Israeli security inspection. The stated concern is that Hamas is amassing financial resources to be able to sustain itself on “the day after,” allowing it to pay operatives and function as a state within a state, eventually reclaiming power as it did in 2007, even under a technocratic interim government. This is the primary reason why Hamas is not objecting to the technocratic interim government.



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- According to Axios, Saudi Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman met senior U.S. officials in Washington and, contrary to prior public messaging, urged the United States to strike Iran, warning that failure to act would allow Iran to grow stronger. At the same time, several states continue working to block an attack, with Erdoğan attempting to mediate a meeting between Trump and Pezeshkian, while Azerbaijan joined countries refusing to allow their territory to be used for an attack to avoid Iranian retaliation.
- The European Union formally designated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization and imposed extensive sanctions on Iranian officials and institutions involved in the repression of protests, leaving Tehran more diplomatically isolated than ever vis-à-vis the West.
- U.S. forces warned the Iranian navy ahead of upcoming exercises not to fly drones over American vessels or approach them, stating that any provocation will be met with a response. At present, seven U.S. destroyers are deployed across the region alongside the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln, each equipped with Tomahawk strike capabilities and missile and drone defense systems. Three are positioned in the Arabian Sea, two in the Persian Gulf to protect Gulf states, one in the Gulf of Eilat, and one in the eastern Mediterranean, with the latter two explicitly tasked with defending Israel.
- The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson published an image from Hormuz Island, directly threatening to close the straits, a move that would disrupt between one-quarter and one-third of global oil supply, constituting a strategic threat to global energy markets.



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- A series of “mysterious explosions” were reported in Tehran, Tabriz, and Bandar Abbas, with the latter incident injuring a senior IRGC naval commander. While officially attributed to gas leaks, similar incidents occurred during May–June, involving fires and explosions at strategic facilities, including Bandar Abbas port. It is considered highly plausible that these incidents involve drones or covert activity, potentially linked to the Mossad or internal underground networks loyal to the Shah and regime-change efforts.
- According to a Wall Street Journal report, Iran possesses an additional 2,000 short- and medium-range ballistic missiles, some capable of striking Israel, and all capable of targeting U.S. bases in the Persian Gulf and paralyzing the Strait of Hormuz.
- While Qasem stated that they would not abandon neutrality without a clear provocation, the Houthis and Shiite militias in Iraq openly threatened intervention. A propaganda video released by the Kataib Hezbollah militia in Iraq showed members signing a document pledging martyrdom to defend Iran and Khamenei. If these threats are realized, it would result in simultaneous warfare on four fronts: Iran, Yemen, Iraq, and Lebanon.
- In the Druze Hauran region of Syria, local Druze communities held a protest displaying Israeli flags and the Druze flag, alongside images of al-Hijri, Tarif, and Netanyahu, while condemning Al-Julani’s regime, highlighting emerging sectarian and political resistance in southern Syria.