

Israel News, Friday, 16.02.2024

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An East Jerusalem resident killed two and wounded four in a terror attack in Israel's south. U.S. President Joe Biden reiterated U.S. opposition to an Israeli operation in Rafah unless civilians can be protected. The IDF said it arrested dozens of terror suspects in Khan Yunis' Nasser Hospital, where the Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry said four patients died due to a power outage that caused a cut in oxygen supply.

Here's what you need to know 133 days into the war

What happened today



■ ISRAEL: [Two people were killed and four were wounded](#) in a terror attack in southern Israel. The assailant, East Jerusalem Shoafat refugee camp resident Fadi Jamjoum, was shot dead by an armed civilian who was driving by, according to Central District Commander Avi Bitton. Following the attack, Israeli

police closed the checkpoint at the entrance to the camp.

- The U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Jack Lew, said he was "appalled by today's terror attack," and that he offers his "sincere condolences to the families affected by this tragedy."
- PM Netanyahu responded to what he called "recent talk about forcing a Palestinian state on Israel," adding that "Israel rejects out of hand international diktats about a final-status solution with the Palestinians."
- Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz told the Munich Security Conference that Israel has no plans to deport Palestinians from Gaza. Katz said that Israel will coordinate with Egypt on Palestinian refugees and will find a way to not harm Egypt's interests.
- Israeli President Isaac Herzog met Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, where they discussed the release of hostages held by Hamas.
- Defense chief Yoav Gallant said Israel possesses intel indicating over 30 UNRWA employees actively participated in Hamas' October 7 attack. He disclosed the identities of 12 such workers, including those involved in abductions of civilians and soldiers.
- Hundreds of protesters rallied in front of the houses of Israeli coalition members, calling for the overthrow of the government.
- Kibbutz Nir Oz announced that 59-year-old resident Yair Yaakov, previously thought to be held captive by Hamas, was murdered on October 7 and his body is being held in Gaza.

"It's hard to accept the claims by Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant that the series of [operational] achievements will bring about Hamas' defeat, perhaps quite

■ **GAZA:** The Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry says **four patients died** Friday morning due to a power outage that cut the oxygen supply in Khan Yunis' Nasser Hospital, where the IDF continues to operate.

- The IDF initially said it entered the hospital complex following intelligence regarding the possibility of Israeli hostages being held there, and later said it found medicine there labeled with the **names of Israeli hostages**. The IDF said it arrested dozens of suspects, including over 20 terrorists who took part in the October 7 massacre.
- The World Health Organization said it was **trying to get access to Nasser Hospital**, warning that "There are still critically injured and sick patients inside."
- The Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry said at least **28,775 Palestinians** have been killed and 68,552 wounded since the war began.
- The IDF said **nine soldiers were wounded** in fighting in the Gaza Strip over the last 24 hours, four in serious condition.
- The IDF announced that 20-year-old [Staff Sergeant Noam Haba](#) from Jerusalem, a member of the 202nd Battalion of the Paratroopers Brigade, was killed in fighting in the Gaza Strip on Thursday.

■ **RAFAH OFFENSIVE:** White House spokesperson John Kirby said on Thursday that the U.S. believes that under the current circumstances, without a credible plan to account for Palestinian civilians that are sheltering in Rafah, "a **major operation would be a disaster.**"

- PM Netanyahu held a 40-minute phone call with U.S. President Joe Biden, during which Biden "raised the situation in Rafah, and reiterated his view that a military

operation should not proceed without a **credible and executable plan** for ensuring the safety of and support for the civilians" there, the White House said.

- War cabinet minister Benny Gantz said the fighting in Gaza will continue until the **hostages are returned**: "Even in the approaching month of Ramadan, the firing can continue. Either our hostages will be returned, or we will expand the fighting to Rafah."
- **Egypt is setting up a huge walled enclosure in the Sinai Desert bordering Gaza as part of a contingency plan** if there is a mass migration of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, according to a report in the Wall Street Journal.
- Displaced Gazans broke through to the Palestinian side of **Rafah crossing**, burning tires outside the entrance. Gaza border authority sources said they are displaced people who were sheltering near the crossing, and that they stormed aid trucks entering Rafah. Hamas police officers arrived at the scene to repel the crowds.
- Israel has asked the International Court of Justice in The Hague to **dismiss a request by South Africa [to issue additional emergency measures](#)** over Israel's plan to extend its offensive in Gaza into the city of Rafah.

■ **UNITED STATES:** Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Herzog sharply criticized Rep. Rashida Tlaib for not voting for a House resolution condemning Hamas' usage of gender-based and sexual violence on October 7, instead **[being the sole "present" vote](#)**.

- Three U.S. officials cited in an NBC News report said the U.S. conducted a **cyberattack recently against an Iranian military ship in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden** that had been collecting intelligence on cargo vessels.

■ **LEBANON:** In a televised speech on Friday, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah accused Israel of deliberately targeting civilians in this week's attacks on Lebanon. He added that "our

women and children were killed, and the enemy will pay a very heavy price in blood for them."

- On the conflict in Israel's north, Israeli Foreign Minister Katz told the Munich Security Conference: "if a diplomatic solution is not found, Israel will be forced to remove Hezbollah from the border."
- The IDF Spokesperson's unit reported that the Israeli Air Force attacked several Hezbollah targets in Qantara in south Lebanon overnight into Friday, and said several terrorists were killed in the assault.
- The Israeli military said at least 25 missiles were fired from Lebanon at the northern city of Kiryat Shmona on Thursday evening. Buildings, homes and vehicles were damaged in the barrage.

■ HOSTAGES/CEASE-FIRE: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday that a deal on the release of hostages held by Hamas remains possible, but "very hard" issues remain to be resolved.

- PM Netanyahu met CIA director William Burns in Israel, and told him that Israel will not agree to more humanitarian gestures for Gaza "until we receive concrete proof that the hostages received the medicine that was sent to them," a diplomatic source said.
- Families of the American hostages welcomed the CIA director's visit, calling it "imperative" for the U.S. "to pressure Israeli leadership ... to urgently create favorable conditions for a deal that returns the hostages safely and swiftly."
- The families of the hostages still held in Gaza protested alongside their supporters in front of Israel's army HQ on Thursday, calling for a deal to secure their release.
- Former hostage Moran Stela Yanai and Ruby Chen, the

father of hostage Itay Chen, called on Israel's government to reach a deal in Cairo for the release of hostages after PM Netanyahu ordered Israel's delegation [not to return for continuing talks](#).

■ WEST BANK: In an interview with the London-based Al-Sharq Al-Awasat newspaper, [Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas](#) said he's met with U.S. government officials who made promises regarding a two-state solution on several occasions, but in practice "nothing happened on the ground."

■ UNITED KINGDOM: Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak spoke to Netanyahu and urged Israel to fully open the Kerem Shalom crossing to allow for the delivery of international aid to Gaza through Ashdod port.

Context



Israel declared war after Hamas killed at least [1,200 Israelis](#) and wounded more than 3,300 in a merciless assault. In Gaza, the Hamas-controlled health ministry reports that at least 28,775 Palestinians have been killed. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad hold hostage more than 129 [soldiers and civilians](#), dead and alive, including foreign nationals.