

# **Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update December 25, 2023 (Tevet 13, 5784)**

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## ***Israel-Hamas War, Day 81***

### ***Three Israeli Soldiers Killed in Gaza Ground Operation***

- *IDF names three soldiers killed in Gaza fighting*
- *Israeli army Chief of Staff says achieving war's goals 'will take months'*
- *Israeli minister Dermer to meet Secretary of State Blinken, NSA Sullivan*
- *IDF attacks Hezbollah after anti-tank missiles fired from Lebanon wounds 9 Israeli soldiers, a civilian*
- *At least 1,200 civilians and soldiers were killed in Israel on Oct. 7; at least 130 hostages held in Gaza*
  - *Hamas-run Health Ministry: 20,424 killed, 54,036 wounded in Gaza*

Shalom Mishpocha.

Please continue to pray for Israel and the IDF. To support Israel financially, please send in funds to Yachad Ministries and if you can designate them "Israel."

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***Hamas Kills Bid to Revive Ceasefire Deal, Hostage Release;*** Hamas has ruled out the possibility of talks to revive exchanges of Israeli hostages in Gaza for Palestinian security prisoners, senior Hamas leader Ghazi Hamad said in an address posted to the terror organization’s Telegram account on Thursday, December 21. “We will not hold any form of talks over [a] prisoners exchange under the continuation of the Israeli genocide war,” Hamad said. Ismail Haniyeh, head of the political wing of the terrorist organization, met with intelligence officials in Cairo on Wednesday to discuss Israel’s offer but allegedly said that he was there to obtain a full ceasefire and more humanitarian aid. Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) would have been included in talks for the first time; however, they also demanded a ceasefire before any negotiations begin – as well as the release of all Palestinian prisoners in exchange for 100 hostages. Meanwhile, one day before the negotiations took place, PIJ released a video of two hostages who were pleading to be released. The hostages, Elad Katzir, 47, and Gadi Mozes, 79, are both from Kibbutz Nir Oz. The video shows the men calling on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and National Unity Party leader Benny Gantz to act further for their release and warned of the dangers of them continuing to remain in captivity. In the Israeli ceasefire offer rejected by Hamas, Israel sought the release of 40 hostages, including all the remaining women and children abducted from Israel during the October 7 attack, and elderly male hostages who need urgent medical treatment, Egyptian officials said. In return, the IDF would have paused its ground and air operations in Gaza for a week and allow further humanitarian aid to enter Gaza, the officials added. (JPost / VFI News)

***Israeli Mom Whose Son Was Mistakenly Killed by IDF Sends Incredible Message of Support to Troops;*** An Israeli mother whose 28-year-old son, a hostage taken by Hamas, was mistakenly killed by the IDF, recorded an unforgettable message of support for the IDF. Iris Haim, whose son Yotam was seized by Hamas terrorists from Kibbutz Kfar Aza on October 7, was killed on December 15 along with two other hostages, Alon Shamriz and Samar Talalka. The three men were mistakenly taken as a threat by the IDF, which is conducting an investigation. But instead of condemning the troops, Iris Haim recorded this message of support: “Hello to the Bislach Brigade, battalion 17. This is Iris Haim. I am Yotam’s mother. I wanted to tell you that I love you very much, and I hug you here from afar. I know that everything that happened is absolutely not your fault, and nobody’s fault except that of Hamas, may their name be wiped out and their memory erased from the earth.” “I want you to look after yourselves and to think all the time that you are doing the best thing in the world, the best thing that could happen, that could help us. Because all the people of Israel and all of us need you healthy. And don’t hesitate for a second if you see a terrorist. Don’t think that you killed a hostage deliberately. You have to look after yourselves

because only that way can you look after us.” “At the first opportunity, you are invited to come to us, whoever wants to. And we want to see you with our own eyes and hug you and tell you that what you did — however hard it is to say this, and sad — it was apparently the right thing at that moment. And nobody’s going to judge you or be angry. Not me, and not my husband Raviv. Not my daughter Noya. And not Yotam, may his memory be blessed. And not Tuval, Yotam’s brother. We love you very much. And that is all.” (DW / VFI News)

***Israel's Military Eliminates 'Prominent Hamas Financier' Involved in Funneling Tens of Millions of Dollars;*** Israel’s military announced Tuesday, December 19, that it has taken out Subhi Ferwana, a “Hamas financier involved in transferring tens of millions of dollars to the Hamas terrorist organization’s military wing.” The IDF said Ferwana was “eliminated by an Israeli Air Force fighter jet” during a targeted operation in the middle of Rafah in the Gaza Strip. The jet conducted the strike using information from the IDF and Israel’s Shin Bet intelligence agency, it added. “Ferwana was a prominent financier who, together with his brother, was involved in the transfer of tens of millions of dollars to the Hamas terrorist organization and its military wing in the Gaza Strip through their money exchange company, ‘Hamsat,’ over the past few years,” the IDF said in a statement. “Ferwana transferred funds to Hamas’ military wing during the war and was aware that these funds would be vital for continuing the wing’s ability to fight. The funds were used -- among other things -- for intensification of military forces, the payment of terrorists’ salaries during the war, and to finance Hamas’ war activities.” Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu published a declaration on Wednesday evening which included a message for the Hamas terror organization. “We are continuing the war to the end. It will continue until the elimination of Hamas - until victory. Whoever thinks we will stop is not connected to reality.” “We will not stop the fighting until we reach the goals we set: the elimination of Hamas, the release of the hostages, and the removal of the threat from Gaza,” the Prime Minister declared. (FN / VFI News)

***IDF's Response to Multi-Front Threat: More Tanks, Artillery, and Soldiers – Analysis;*** Efforts are underway in the IDF and Defense Ministry to promote the approval of a multi-year plan for dividing the defense budget in the army, taking into account various threats from the North and the South. Among other things, the IDF aims to cancel the reduction in service length, establish an intelligence command for the Gaza Strip, and invest in an aerial and ground laser system. Alongside the ongoing Israel-Hamas War, the IDF General Staff and heads of the Defense Ministry held discussions in recent days to advance the approval of the multi-year “Ma’alot” plan by the government to allocate the defense budget in the IDF. IDF Chief-of-Staff Lt.-Gen. Herzl Halevi is leading the basic premise, according to which the IDF’s power building for the next five years is derived from the army’s attribution to the various threats on multiple fronts. At this stage, there is a disagreement within the security establishment on how to allocate the \$8.7 billion in US aid funds to military components - defense or offense. In the army’s view, preparedness must be parallel to warfare in Gaza despite the reduced threat after the war. Through the multi-year plan, the IDF aims to emphasize multi-layered defense against threats from Judea and Samaria, Lebanon, Iran, Houthi rebels in Yemen, pro-Iranian Shi’ite militias in Syria and Iraq, and the maritime arena. The IDF is also seeking to increase the number of various missile interceptors and the number of Iron Dome batteries, reinforce troop numbers along the borders, expand the personnel in regular, permanent, and reserve duty, establish a new intelligence command for the Gaza Strip to assist forces in carrying out operations after the war and invest in an aerial and ground laser system for defense against rockets and missiles. (JPost / VFI News)

**Former Arkansas Governor: 'What Happened to the Jewish People Was Evil.'** Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee took part in an international delegation led by Likud MK Danny Danon that came to see the aftermath of the October 7 massacre in Kfar Aza and southern Israel. In an interview with Israeli media- Arutz Sheva, Huckabee said that the sights in Kfar Aza were “worse than I could have

imagined, the unimaginable horror that these people have been through. No human being should ever be subjected to the level of atrocity and savagery that the people of Israel have experienced,” he said. “I want the whole world to understand what happened here and who did it.” Huckabee said that the world cannot “pretend that there are two sides, because there aren’t. There’s a side of good, and there’s a side of evil. What happened to the Jewish people here was evil, and there’s no other explanation for it.” He noted that there remain over 100 hostages in Gaza from 25 countries, including the US. “ Hamas didn’t take those hostages because they were trying to do some humanitarian effort. They took them as bargaining chips so they can try to buy themselves more time.” “I want every one of those hostages to be able to come home to their families, but I want Israel to have the full support of the world to fully prosecute this war [and] to eradicate these animals who did this to completely innocent people.” (INN / VFI News)

***PA Can't Rule Post-War Gaza — Senior Israeli Official;*** A senior Israeli official sought Thursday, December 21, to water down remarks made earlier in the day by National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi, which were taken to mean that the government may allow a reformed Palestinian Authority a role in governing Gaza after the ongoing war with Hamas. Speaking in an off-record briefing to the press, the official said Hanegbi’s comments in an op-ed in a Saudi-owned news site had been “misunderstood,” insisting that there can be no role for the Palestinian Authority in Gaza after the war because it cannot be trusted to fulfill Israel’s requirements, including demilitarizing the territory. Addressing what has become a highly political issue of the future governance of Gaza, he said Israel had three goals for the coastal enclave after the war: that it be demilitarized, de-radicalized, and that a functioning civil administration be established. He said the PA was not capable of delivering on any of these goals. The official added that Israel wants moderate Arab nations such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to be involved in de-radicalizing Gaza, alongside Western assistance, and wants civilian life in Gaza to be run by a “local administration of Palestinians” that is “able to work for the future horizon of the Palestinian people with help of moderate Arab countries.” (TOI / VFI News)

***Herzog: Three Times More Aid Could Be Entering Gaza if Not for UN's 'Utter Failure';*** President Isaac Herzog averred Thursday, December 21, that the United Nations has been failing to keep up with the amount of aid Israel is inspecting, and that the world body is to blame for the little amount of aid entering the Strip, even after Israel has opened up its Kerem Shalom crossing to ease the bottleneck. “Unfortunately, due to the utter failure of the UN in its work with other partners in the region, they have been unable to bring in more than 125 trucks [of aid] a day,” Herzog said in a meeting with visiting French Senate President Gérard Larcher. “Today it is possible to provide three times the amount of humanitarian aid to Gaza if the UN — instead of complaining all day — would do its job,” Herzog said. Israel has said that it has been inspecting hundreds of trucks per day at its Kerem Shalom and Nitzana Crossings and that many of the trucks subsequently remain outside Gaza. The UN and Egypt have argued that Israel’s military campaign has made it too dangerous to regularly deliver aid inside and through Gaza. In recent weeks, multiple videos have circulated on social media of Gazans discovering stockpiles of aid in UNRWA facilities, and expressing anger at the organization for not distributing desperately needed supplies to citizens. (TOI / VFI News)

***Nikki Haley: Pro-Hamas Countries Should Take in Gazans;*** US Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley told American media on Thursday, December 21, that Egypt, as well as “pro-Hamas countries” such as Qatar, Iran, and Turkey, should take in Palestinian Arabs who flee the war. Asked where Gazans who flee the fighting should go, Haley responded, “They should be going to the Rafah gate and [have] Egypt take them. But I’ve always said that what you should have is that they should go to pro-Hamas countries — Qatar, Iran, Turkey... send them there... Those are pro-Hamas countries.” “Why won’t Egypt take them? Because they don’t trust which ones are terrorists and which ones aren’t. It’s a sad state of affairs, but the reality of that evil is very clear in Arab countries too. Arab countries have very

much always been cautious and know the threats that Iran can place,” continued Haley. “They don’t want those terrorist proxies coming after them. Saudi Arabia felt the Houthis in that fight for Yemen. Egypt knows exactly what they can do. Instead of the world hitting on Israel, who was brought to her knees in the worst invasion since the Holocaust, why isn’t everybody talking to Egypt?” “Why aren’t they talking to Turkey? Why aren’t they talking to Qatar? Why aren’t they talking to Iran? Why aren’t they doing something to help the Palestinians? Why is it that you come back to Israel and the US? It’s always the case,” Haley said, noting that everyone loves to help Israel when it is hit, but also loves to criticize Israel when it hits back. (INN / VFI News)



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