

# **Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update December 19, 2024 (Kislev 18, 5785)**

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## **Israel-Hamas War, Day 440**

### **IDF Says Drone, Likely Launched From Yemen, Intercepted Off Tel Aviv Coast**

- **ISRAEL:** School, cars hit by interceptor shrapnel after IDF shoots down missile from Yemen
- **GAZA:** IDF calls for residents of central Gaza town of Al-Bureij to evacuate to the humanitarian 'safe zone'
- **SYRIA:** German FM says Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights is a violation of international law
  - **LEBANON:** Israelis entered Lebanon without security clearance, IDF confirms
- **ISRAEL:** Israel demands the release of 34 hostages during Gaza cease-fire deal's first phase, Al-Mayadeen reports
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***Lindsey Graham Warns About 50,000 ISIS Prisoners Possibly Breaking out of Jail;*** According to Sen. Lindsey Graham, there are old threats, new threats, and growing threats to America that must be addressed as soon as possible. “We are playing Russian roulette with our national security if we delay securing our broken border.” “Now with the turmoil in Syria, the jihadist groups threatening America are growing in capability and numbers. While the recent collapse of the Assad regime in Syria was a big loss for Russia and Iran, the chaos it brings to the region can present a direct threat to the United States.” “First, the radical group that toppled the Assad regime has been associated with Al Qaeda in the past and its leader is a former detainee who was captured on the battlefield in Iraq and was also associated with Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the founder of ISIS.” “Second, Turkey views the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, a primarily Kurdish force that is guarding more than 50,000 ISIS prisoners, as a terrorist entity. These Kurdish forces helped the United States destroy the ISIS Caliphate and if they are compromised, there could be an ISIS prisoner jailbreak.” “That would be a nightmare for America and the rest of the world. In case anyone forgot, ISIS is responsible for and inspired some of the worst terrorist attacks the world has ever seen.” “On November 13, 2015, Paris, France was attacked in multiple locations, including the Bataclan Theater, resulting in the death of 130 people. In 2016, 49 Americans were killed at a nightclub in Florida in an ISIS-inspired shooting. The next year, 22 people were killed in Manchester, UK, at a concert arena.” (FN/VFI News)

***Israeli Strikes Caused Colossal Explosion ‘So Big It Registered on the Richter Scale’ in Syria;*** “Colossal” explosions have filled the skies in Syria as Israeli strikes are said to have targeted military sites in “the heaviest strikes” in the area for more than a decade - with blasts registered on earthquake sensors. A war monitor group said that Israeli strikes had targeted military sites in Syria’s coastal Tartus region. “Israeli warplanes launched strikes” targeting a series of sites including air defense units and “surface-to-surface missile depots,” said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, in what it said were “the heaviest strikes in Syria's coastal region since the start of strikes in 2012.” It has been claimed that the explosion was so large, it measured as a magnitude 3.0 on seismic sensors. Tartus has been the location of one of Russia’s two military bases in Syria and was used as a naval base, as well as an ammunition depot. The huge explosion and the secondary explosions may indicate the presence of a large volume of stored armaments. (DM/VFI News)

***Report: Trump to Focus on Iranian Threat, Israeli Sovereignty Not on Agenda;*** Israeli media correspondent Amichai Stein reported on Sunday evening, December 15, that U.S. President-elect Donald Trump conveyed a message to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he will focus on the Iranian issue and that the application of Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria is not on his agenda. According to Stein, Trump and his team conveyed that they see multiple issues as more important and pressing than the question of Israeli sovereignty. In addition, Republican officials have told Israeli officials that despite

assertions by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich that next year will be the “year of sovereignty,” attempting to do so would be harmful to Israel in the current international climate. Meanwhile, there have also been requests by the Biden administration that asked Israel to approve U.S. military aid to the Palestinian Authority for a wide-ranging operation by its security forces in Judea and Samaria, Israeli media reported citing PA, US, and Israeli officials. According to the report, the ongoing operation is aimed at a local armed group in Jenin that includes terrorists affiliated with both Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas. It was launched due to a fear that the terrorists may attempt to overthrow the PA inspired by the toppling of the Assad regime in Syria. (INN /VFI News)

***Distorted Data from Gaza Influences Global Understanding of Israel’s Actions – Editorial;*** The Gaza Health Ministry’s widely cited casualty figures, which claim over 44,000 deaths since the start of Israel’s military response to Hamas’s October 7 attacks, have come under scrutiny for being significantly inflated and misleading. Research by the Henry Jackson Society (HJS) and the Fifty Research Group, published on Saturday, December 14, reveals systematic manipulation of these numbers, contributing to a distorted conflict narrative. The HJS report accuses the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry of inflating its figures by including natural deaths, combatant deaths, and even fatalities predating the war. In addition, in its study, the Fifty Research Group analyzed 1,378 articles from major global media outlets and found that 98% relied on casualty figures provided by the Gaza Health Ministry, while only 5% cited data from Israeli or U.S. intelligence sources. The research notes, “This overwhelming reliance on Hamas-controlled data has created a narrative that disproportionately portrays Israel as targeting civilians.” The findings also challenge claims that most of the casualties in Gaza are civilians. Israeli and U.S. intelligence data, corroborated by the Henry Jackson Society, estimate that nearly 17,000 of the reported deaths are Hamas fighters. (JPost / VFI News)

***Israel to Close Its Embassy in Dublin Due to Ireland’s ‘Extreme anti-Israel Policy’;*** Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar announced on Sunday, December 15, that Israel will be shutting its embassy in Ireland, citing the “extreme anti-Israel policy of the Irish government.” “The anti-Semitic actions and rhetoric that Ireland is taking against Israel are based on delegitimization and demonization of the Jewish state and on double standards,” said Sa’ar in a statement. Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris called the decision “deeply regrettable.” “I utterly reject the assertion that Ireland is anti-Israel,” Harris wrote on X following Sa’ar’s announcement. “Ireland is pro-peace, pro-human rights and pro-international law.” Irish Foreign Minister Micheal Martin said the two countries would maintain diplomatic relations and that there were no plans to close Ireland’s embassy in Israel. Israel recalled its ambassador in May after Ireland became one of three EU countries that said they would unilaterally recognize a Palestinian state. Ireland has not recalled its envoy to Israel. In November, the Irish parliament passed a nonbinding motion declaring that “genocide is being perpetrated before our eyes by Israel in Gaza.” (TOI/VFI News)

***Amid Anti-Semitism: Switzerland Preparing to Ban Public Displays of Nazi Symbols;*** Switzerland’s government is preparing to ban public displays of the swastika and the Hitler salute as it moves to align with other countries in restricting the use of Nazi symbols, American media reported. According to a government report, incidents classified as “severe” increased by 68% in some regions of the country after October 7. “Every single one of these occurrences contributes to shaking the sense of security, especially among the Jewish population in Switzerland,” the report stated. To deter such actions, the government has proposed a fine of 200 francs for publicly displaying Nazi symbols. Additionally, officials plan to take further action by extending the ban to include other extremist and racist emblems. Currently, Switzerland only punishes the use of Nazi symbols if it is accompanied by active promotion of the associated ideology. Merely displaying the symbols without that intent is not penalized. By targeting this legal gap, Switzerland seeks to match the stricter regulations that have been in place in many European countries for decades. (INN/ VFI News)

***Israeli Wave Energy Project Draws Interest from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Even Iran;*** An Israeli company, Eco Wave Power, whose pioneering ocean wave energy technology has attracted interest from countries with which Israel currently has no diplomatic relations, including Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, has formally opened its demonstration project at the Jaffa Port with its significant strategic partner, EDF Renewables Israel. The technology, designed to use existing infrastructure such as breakwaters, piers, and jetties, is mainly onshore or near shore. The only parts in contact with the water are large floaters, which move with the waves, setting in motion pistons and motors that turn electric generators. This, according to founder and CEO Inna Braverman, sets the company apart from the vast majority of wave energy projects, which have been built out at sea, at a high cost, and with stationary infrastructure exposed to the punishing might of the waves. “They have struggled to deploy because of the price and survivability,” she said. President Isaac Herzog attended the Jaffa Port project’s launch, which was delayed for over a year because Braverman and her partners thought a ceremony inappropriate at the height of a war. With 100 kilowatts of installed capacity, capable of powering 100 homes, this is Israel’s first wave energy project to be connected to the grid. (TOI / VFI News)



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