

# **Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update January 16, 2025 (Tevet 16, 5785)**



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## ***Israel-Hamas War, Day 468***

### ***Israel, Hamas Trade Accusations on Finalization of Cease-fire, Hostage Release Deal***

- **HOSTAGE TALKS:** *Israel, Hamas agreed to hostage/cease-fire deal, officials from Israel, Egypt and the U.S. say; Senior U.S. official: Five female Israeli soldiers expected to be freed on Sunday*
- **GAZA:** *Hamas-run Health Ministry says 81 people were killed and 188 wounded over the last 24 hours*
  - **WEST BANK:** *IDF, Shin Bet say they carried out strike in West Bank's Jenin*
- **ICC:** *Italy won't enforce ICC warrants against Netanyahu if he visits the country, Italian ministers say*
  - **HOSTAGE TALKS:** *Hamas reportedly yet to respond to mediators because Israel has not provided maps of its troop withdrawal from Gaza yet, Hamas official says; Ben-Gvir urges minister Smotrich to join in quitting gov't if hostage deal approved*
  - **LEBANON:** *Nawaf Salam, ICJ President, set to become Lebanese PM in blow to Hezbollah*
    - **GAZA:** *Medical sources say 20 Palestinians killed in Gaza Strip following IDF strikes*
    - **YEMEN:** *Missile fired by Houthis intercepted, IDF says*

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***'Due to the Zionist Aggression,' Most Israeli Hostages in North Gaza Missing, Hamas Says;*** Hamas has lost track of the majority of the hostages held in captivity in northern Gaza due to Israel's military activities in the area, a source in the Izzadin al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's armed wing, told Qatari state-run media on Friday, January 10. "Most of the enemy's prisoners in the northern Gaza Brigade are now missing due to the Zionist aggression," the source told the Qatari media. Hamas has previously repeatedly stated that to compile a list of hostages it has been holding, it would need several days to at least a week, to locate them. The Hamas official said that the Izzadin al-Qassam Brigades had warned several times of the potentiality of hostages going missing in areas where the IDF was operating. Also on Friday, the terror organization Palestinian Islamic Jihad published a propaganda video directed at the hostages' families. "To the families of the enemy prisoners," PIJ captioned the video in Hebrew and Arabic. The video featured clips of Netanyahu speaking to the hostages' families. "Your leadership is killing your children with persistence and insistence," PIJ wrote in Hebrew and Arabic at the end of the video. (*JPost / VFI News*)

***Mother of Hostage: 'Hamas's List Intends to Cause Pain and Strife';*** Merav Leshem Gonen, the mother of hostage Romi Gonen, discussed in an interview about the list of hostages published by Hamas and the possibility of a partial deal to recover the hostages. "I want to remind everyone that we are dealing with what Hamas has published, and they have an aim to incite, hurt, and cause pain, and we need to understand how much this impacts families," she began. She added, "I believe the decision-makers are constantly working on a single deal. I have no doubt that the negotiation team and Prime Minister have a list of all one hundred in mind, with a clear understanding of the consequences if anyone else is harmed," Merav concluded. The list of 34 hostages that the Palestinian group says it is willing to release in the first stage of a potential ceasefire agreement with Israel was shared by a senior Hamas official with British media. It is unclear how many of those named remain alive. All but two were captured during Hamas's attack on Israel on 7 October 2023. The ages of those on the list range from one year old to 86. The list also includes children who Hamas previously said had been killed in an Israeli air strike. Several hostages who Hamas says are sick are also on the list. (*INN / VFI News*)

***'There is What to Talk About': Senior Delegation to Qatar to Stay on as Talks Continue;*** After the first day of talks on the Gaza hostage and ceasefire deal in Doha, the Israeli delegation is staying on. A source familiar with the matter told Israeli media this means "there is what to talk about," as US officials race to reach a deal before President Joe Biden leaves office on January 20. A senior delegation led by Mossad head David Barnea, Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) head Ronen Bar, and IDF Maj.-Gen. (res.) Nitzan Alon arrived on Sunday, January 12, in Qatar for talks. In Doha, they were met by two senior US officials: White House Middle East Coordinator Brett McGurk, and Steve Witkoff, the incoming Middle

East envoy for President-elect Donald Trump. An Israeli official said, “There are good conversations, but [there are] gaps [that] remain.” Meanwhile, a source from Hamas told a Saudi news outlet on Saturday that Hamas’s unexpected flexibility during negotiations for a hostage deal and ceasefire in Gaza surprised Israeli delegates. However, the source also claimed that “This process depends on the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the crossing area and the Philadelphi Corridor,” adding that discussions remain ongoing regarding the mechanism for managing the crossing. (*JPost / VFI News*)

***IAF Strikes Hezbollah Targets Throughout Lebanon;*** Israel Air Force jets struck and demolished multiple Hezbollah terror targets throughout Lebanon, the military confirmed in the early hours of Monday, January 13. The military noted it had struck a rocket launcher site, a military site, and routes on the Syrian-Lebanese border, which were utilized to transfer weapons to the Lebanese-based, Iranian-backed terror group. Before the attacks, “the threat posed by the targets to the Israeli home front and IDF troops was presented to the monitoring mechanism of the ceasefire understandings between Israel and Lebanon,” the IDF statement read. However, the military emphasized that “the threats were not addressed.” On Sunday night, Hezbollah-affiliated media claimed the IDF had carried out strikes, targeting the areas of Deir El-Zahrani and Houmine El Faouqa in the Nabatiya region of southern Lebanon. Additional strikes were reportedly carried out in the area of the Bekaa Valley, near the Syrian border, one of the two outlets also claimed. (*JPost / VFI News*)

***Deputy Knesset Speaker: 'Everyone Must Serve, It's Not About Haredim';*** Deputy Speaker of the Knesset, MK Evgeny Sova (Yisrael Beiteinu) explains why he and his colleagues are fighting for the enactment of a broad conscription law that will also include the haredi public. “The current law is a draft evasion law,” Sova asserted firmly. “It is a law that dishonors the Knesset, the government, and especially the soldiers who have returned from the front.” He dismissed claims that it is a move intended to harm haredim: “It has nothing to do with the haredim. It is a law irrelevant to the reality after October 7.” He also described the sights he witnessed in the evacuated northern settlements during a visit by the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee: “For almost eight years, shelters were hardly built in the north, despite a five billion shekel protection plan being presented in 2018 by Lieberman. Today we are paying the price for it.” Regarding the security situation in the area, he said: “On January 26, the ceasefire phase ends, and the IDF is supposed to leave southern Lebanon according to the agreement. The question is how to prevent a situation where Hezbollah does not withdraw, and we find ourselves facing complications.” (*INN/VFI News*)

***How Trump 'Speaks Like A Middle Easterner' — and Why that Bodes Well for Confronting Iran;*** President-elect Donald Trump’s repeated warning that “all hell will break out” should Hamas not release all remaining hostages before he takes office is an example of how he “speaks like a Middle Easterner,” Israeli and Palestinian officials and experts told American media - adding that they believe Trump’s leadership style will be effective in countering Iran. Such brazen language is exactly what Iran and its proxies need to hear, Middle Eastern leaders and scholars say. “When he said ‘all hell will break loose’ — he speaks like a Middle Easterner,” an Israeli government source told the American news outlet. “He speaks in the way that the terrorists understand.” Tel Aviv University Institute for National Security Studies senior researcher Kobi Michael told media that Trump’s re-election “might be a great opportunity” to bring about peace in the region following the widely acknowledged success of the Abraham Accords from the 45th president’s first term. “We see what is going there with Hamas when President Trump said that they will see ‘hell’ if they will not release the hostages — and see what is going there with the Iranians,” said Michael, former head of the Israeli National Security Council’s Palestinian division. “They are in a huge confusion now, OK? In the worst strategic position in the last four decades. And I think that the vision of President Trump is the vision of weakening Iran.” (*NYP/VFI News*)

***\$50 Billion to Syria Vanished into Thin Air: Unrest in Iran Grows over Economic Turmoil – Interview;*** Iran’s public discontent surged in recent weeks as economic hardships, including widespread power outages and rising inflation, fueled calls for change, Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) researcher Benny Sabti told a Hebrew news outlet on Friday, January 10. Sabti began by describing the growing frustration among the Iranian population. “People are very angry with the regime for squandering funds, oil revenues, and resources on Syria, which fell alongside Hezbollah,” he said. “The regime has poured \$50 billion into Syria from 2000 until now, all of which vanished into thin air, along with funds sent to Lebanon and other places.” According to Sabti, the Iranian public views this as “a regime failure.” Sabti believes recent events have given Iranians hope. He pointed to key incidents, such as the reported elimination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, which exposed the Iranian regime’s vulnerabilities, and “the fall of Gaza.” He emphasized: “All of this gives the Iranian public—80% of whom oppose the regime—hope.” Sabti cited a parliamentary member’s report attributing the opposition level to the low voter turnout in the last presidential elections. (*JPost/VFI News*)

***'Behead' and 'Bury' Jews: Texas Man Arrested After Threatening Email to Jewish Funeral Home;*** Saif Tajiran, 33, was arrested and charged with making terrorist threats after he emailed the owner of Houston Jewish Funerals in Bellaire, claiming he wanted to “behead” and “bury” Jews, the Bellaire Police Department reported on Thursday, January 9. While Tajiran was arrested on charges of having made a terroristic threat, the charges have been upgraded, and he now faces a hate crime charge, according to police. “I would like to help bury Jews so speed the process to bury more Jews. Could I get a job? If you hire me I can work fast and I will save you Jews money,” Tajiran allegedly wrote, according to local media. “Think of how great this could be! I will save us more time to bury more [Jews!] If you want I can behead more [Jews] and we can become rich together. You know us [Jews] have no morals, values and that we only care about ourselves! Yeshua Yahweh it will be perfect!” The email was sent on October 29, according to court documents filed on December 23. Tajiran’s phone number was included in the email. When police dialed the number, he allegedly continued to claim “he could help to bury Jews and so on,” before hanging up. (*JPost/VFI News*)



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