

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update November 17, 2025 (Cheshvan 26, 5786)



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Israel-Hamas Cease-fire

Israeli Official Says Hamas Didn't Transfer Hostage's Body After Reports of Handover in Gaza

- *In unusual move, IDF demolishing a West Bank outpost; Germany to lift arms ban on Israel*
 - *Five border police officers arrested over smuggling Palestinians into Israel for cash, Justice Ministry says*
- *Trump defends Tucker Carlson after interview with Nick Fuentes, known for his anti-Semitic views*
 - *IDF fires on UNIFIL forces in Lebanon; Government announces Oct. 7 probe, stops short of state commission of inquiry*
- *Likud MK says Attorney General must be interrogated as a suspect in Sde Teiman video leak case*
 - *IDF Chief says 'we must be prepared to occupy territory beyond the Yellow Line'*

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Israel Detains 50 Members of Hamas Network in Judea and Samaria Said to Be Planning Attacks; Israeli security officials said on Thursday, November 13, 2025, that some 50 operatives tied to a Hamas network around Bethlehem in Judea and Samaria were detained in a series of recent raids. Working with the IDF and Israel Police, the Shin Bet carried out roughly 15 arrest operations over recent weeks, seizing weapons and breaking up cells that investigators say were preparing imminent shooting attacks against Israeli troops and civilians. According to the initial case materials, the network’s organizers recruited members, procured arms, and moved them toward operational readiness. One cell was assessed to be at an “advanced stage” of preparation to strike in the immediate term. Officials added that the arrests and seizures disrupted plots that could have caused significant casualties. The files have been transferred to Military Prosecution for charges. The roundup comes amid a broader counterterrorism push since the Hamas onslaught of October 7, 2023, with thousands detained across Judea and Samaria. Security authorities say the latest arrests underscore the continuing effort to preempt attacks by intercepting recruiters, couriers, and weapons before they can be deployed. *(TOI/VFI News)*

Turkey, Israel Clash in Global Drone Trade, Risking a Conflict in Syria; Israel and Turkey have emerged as heavyweight competitors in the fast-growing drone industry, exporting unmanned systems and related technologies across multiple regions. Analysts warn that the rivalry is no longer confined to contracts and market share. As both countries’ platforms and partners operate in overlapping theaters, the competition could spill into direct friction—particularly in and around Syria—where crowded airspace and tangled alliances increase the risk of miscalculation and escalation. This contest reflects broader strategic shifts. Drones have reshaped modern battlefields by offering surveillance reach, precision strike options, and cheaper persistence than manned aircraft. Ankara’s and Jerusalem’s manufacturers each court clients in Europe, Africa, and Asia, using drone diplomacy to cement security ties and influence outcomes on the ground. The result is a complex environment where procurement decisions and proxy deployments can have outsized effects on local conflicts. Regional observers note that mitigating the danger requires clear deconfliction channels and restraint from states backing rival clients. Without careful guardrails, a collision between competing drone ecosystems could drag major players into confrontation—not by design but by the chain reactions common to contested skies. *(JPost/VFI News)*

US-Arab Weapon Deals Won’t Harm Israel’s Military Edge, But Turkey Shouldn’t Get F-35s, Leiter Says; In a candid interview published on Thursday, November 13, 2025, Israel’s ambassador to the United States, Yechiel Leiter, addressed Washington’s evolving relationships with Arab states and Turkey. He argued that recent US-Arab arms packages need not undermine Israel’s qualitative military edge, given built-in safeguards and Israel’s own capabilities. At the same time, he cautioned that Turkey should be excluded from the F-35 program, citing Ankara’s conduct and strategic posture as grounds for concern. Leiter’s comments situated the discussion within a broader debate about regional stability, future security arrangements for Gaza, and the role of American diplomacy. He indicated that preserving Israel’s edge requires prudent export decisions by Washington alongside Israel’s continued investment in its own advanced systems. The envoy placed particular emphasis on aligning policy with behavior—supporting

responsible partners while maintaining limits where trust has frayed. The remarks highlight how aircraft and airpower partnerships have become litmus tests for deeper strategic trust in the Middle East. Even as cooperation with some Arab states expands, questions around Turkey's trajectory continue to shape deliberations in Washington and Jerusalem. (*JPost/VFI News*)

Former Hostages Keith, Aviva Siegel Testify About Gaza Captivity Abuse at UN Torture Committee; Keith and Aviva Siegel shared harrowing testimony before a UN body examining torture allegations, describing the conditions they endured while held captive in Gaza. They recounted prolonged fear, physical mistreatment, deprivation, and the constant uncertainty faced by hostages and their families. Their appearance placed a human face on the ongoing trauma as governments debate negotiations and accountability for crimes committed against civilians. The couple's remarks highlighted the need for medical care, psychological support, and international pressure to ensure humane treatment of captives and the swift release of those still held. Their testimony also underscored the strain borne by relatives who wait for credible information, a burden that compounds the wounds of captivity long after release. Their words urged the international system to match statements with action: to investigate abuses, deter future atrocities, and press for the return of every hostage. The hearing served as a stark reminder that beyond geopolitics are families learning to live again after months of forced confinement and fear. (*JPost/VFI News*)

ISIS, Al-Qaeda Have Evolved in Last Decade, Still Pose Global Threat, Say Analysts; A decade after the coordinated massacres in Paris on November 13, 2015, analysts say ISIS and al-Qaeda have morphed from centrally directed networks into looser franchises and inspiration-based cells. Leadership decapitations and the loss of territorial sanctuaries in Syria and Iraq have reduced their capacity for large, externally directed strikes in Europe. Yet the threat has shifted rather than vanished, with homegrown attackers more common in the West even as the groups' affiliates expand elsewhere. Experts point to Africa—especially the Sahel and parts of West Africa—as today's epicenter of jihadist activity, with active branches also operating in the Middle East and parts of Asia. The evolution has produced diffuse, persistent risk: localized insurgencies that destabilize fragile states, plus online propaganda aimed at spurring lone-wolf or small-cell violence abroad. While diminished from their peak, these movements continue to adapt to security pressure and political vacuums. The assessment underscores a dual challenge: supporting partners battling entrenched insurgencies while protecting open societies from inspired attacks. Counterterrorism today is less about dismantling a single headquarters and more about blunting metastasized networks spread across multiple continents. (*TOI/VFI News*)

Iran Employing 'Calibrated Concessions' as It Deepens Political Crackdown on Dissent; From the streets of Tehran—where unveiled women have become a more visible sight—to curated videos touting a welcoming image of Iran, the regime appears to be loosening some social strictures. But rights advocates and analysts say these gestures mask a harsher reality: an accelerating campaign of arrests, intimidation, and executions targeting political activists, journalists, minorities, and other critics. The approach is described as “calibrated concessions,” easing public pressure while tightening the state's grip. Economic distress, energy shortages, and the fallout from regional conflict have widened public frustration, and authorities are determined to deter another wave of nationwide protests. Reports indicate a surge in executions in 2025 alongside expanded legal tools to prosecute dissent, even as officials court foreign influencers and promote cultural events at home. Observers warn that the dual-track strategy seeks to buy time without addressing core grievances. The trend leaves Iran's society navigating a controlled opening that stops at the system's political red lines. While diplomats weigh nuclear and regional files, activists inside the country describe rising fear—paired with quiet defiance—as citizens test the limits of promised change. (*TOI/VFI News*)

Tehran Taps Run Dry as Water Crisis Deepens Across Iran; Iran's capital is facing severe water shortages as a multi-year drought and infrastructure strain converge, leaving many neighborhoods with little to no flow from the tap. Officials have warned of emergency measures—up to and including temporary evacuations of parts of Tehran if rains fail—while rationing plans and repairs race against a worsening forecast. The shortages are also driving public frustration as families and businesses struggle with daily disruptions. The crisis lays bare years of environmental stress compounded by mismanagement and population growth. Reservoirs and aquifers are depleted, leakages persist in aging networks, and demand outpaces supply in rapidly expanding urban areas. Beyond the capital, rural communities face even harsher conditions, with some residents relying on tanker deliveries and unsafe sources when pipes run dry. As authorities pivot to conservation campaigns and emergency drilling, relief hinges on both weather and will: rainfall to replenish sources, and long-term policy to rebalance consumption, agriculture, and industry. Without sustained change, the water emergency could deepen existing social and economic strains across the country. (*JPost/VFI News*)

Archaeologists Reveal Unusual Ritual Objects from Ancient Biblical Cult at Armageddon Site;

Archaeologists with the Israel Antiquities Authority recently announced the discovery of ritual artifacts and a 5,000-year-old rock-hewn winepress near Tel Megiddo, in Israel's Jezreel Valley. The finds—unearthed during work adjacent to Highway 66—span from the Early Bronze Age to the Late Bronze Age, illuminating daily life and worship practices associated with the Canaanite city remembered in Scripture as Armageddon (Har Megiddo). Researchers described intact and intentionally buried objects from about 3,300 years ago, including a miniature shrine model, storage jars, imported juglets, and animal-shaped vessels likely used for libations. The placement and preservation suggest a popular folk cult operating outside the main sacred precinct—perhaps a way for farmers living beyond city walls to bring offerings of wine, oil, or other produce. Taken together with the ancient winepress—the oldest such facility yet identified in Israel—the assemblage points to an early local wine industry and to long-standing ritual life in the Megiddo hinterland. Officials say the discoveries add another layer to the complex history of a site that has yielded evidence of armies, empires, and worship over millennia. (*FOX/VFI News*)

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