

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update January 15, 2026 (Tevet 25, 5786)



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Israel-Hamas Cease-fire

DF Strikes Hezbollah Targets Across Lebanon Following 'Repeated Cease-fire Violations'

- *Hamas official welcomes announcement of Palestinian technocratic committee, ready to hand over Gaza governance*
- *U.S. tensions with Iran remain high before emergency UN Security Council meeting*
- *4.2 magnitude earthquake in the Dead Sea area; Iran reopens airspace following temporary closure*
 - *IDF demolishes home of Palestinian who killed two Israelis last month; Iran-U.S. communication halted*
- *U.S. withdrawing troops from key Middle East bases as precaution, American official says*
 - *Hezbollah warns Lebanese state against expanding disarmament push*
 - *Ex-IDF chief Halevi summoned for questioning over classified document leak to Bild*

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If you are interested in having Yachad Ministries to come your church and share about what is going on in Israel and the Middle East, and how the Bible is unfolding right in front of our eyes.

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Khamenei Raises Iran's Alert Level to Highest Ever; Iran's leadership has elevated the country's security posture to its highest level as anti-regime protests intensify nationwide. Reports indicate Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has ordered the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to remain on maximum readiness, with indications he is staying in Tehran amid escalating unrest. Exiled opposition figure Reza Pahlavi publicly encouraged demonstrators, framing the moment as a decisive test of courage against tyranny. Regional tensions are threaded through this internal crisis. Iranian officials have warned that any outside military intervention particularly by the United States would trigger retaliation against Israel and American assets. The posture underscores how quickly domestic upheaval could spill across borders, especially with Tehran's network of regional proxies and its history of asymmetric responses when threatened. For Israel, the possibility of miscalculation looms large. Even absent an overt strike, heightened alert can embolden hardliners and accelerate proxy activity, compelling Jerusalem to calibrate deterrence against a volatile backdrop. With public anger expanding beyond economic grievances into open calls for change, the duration and scale of the crackdown will likely shape both Iran's internal trajectory and the wider Middle East security balance. (*INN/VFI News*)

IDF Preparing for Defense Against Iran; Following weekend situation assessments led by IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Eyal Zamir, the IDF emphasized that it is closely monitoring developments in Iran while maintaining high operational readiness. The army's message was clear: while the protests are an internal Iranian matter, Israel is prepared to defend itself and respond with strength if necessary to protect its citizens. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu voiced solidarity with the Iranian people, expressing hope for a future of freedom and better relations between the nations. Israel's defense posture blends vigilance with restraint—keeping forces ready, refining air-defense and intelligence coordination, and ensuring rapid response capabilities if the conflict space widens. Policymakers understand that Iranian domestic turmoil can generate unpredictable external friction, whether via direct action or through proxy fronts. While Jerusalem does not seek escalation, it is intent on signaling deterrence. The coming days will test whether Tehran's warnings translate into regional provocations and whether Israel's layered defenses—from detection to interception—discourage escalation. In such fluid conditions, unity of command and clear communication with allies remain vital pillars of national security planning. (*INN/VFI News*)

UN Chief 'Shocked' by Iran Crackdown, Urges Restraint; UN Secretary-General António Guterres expressed shock over the scale of force used against demonstrators in Iran and called on authorities to exercise restraint. Human rights groups and monitoring organizations report mounting casualties, sweeping arrests, and communications blackouts that obscure the full scope of the violence. The appeals add to a growing chorus urging Tehran to halt lethal tactics and open space for dialogue. In practical terms, the UN's leverage is limited, but its statements can galvanize diplomatic pressure, amplify documentation efforts, and support future accountability mechanisms. With conflicting casualty figures and limited verification due to internet restrictions, credible monitoring has become both more difficult and more important. For communities worldwide, including in Israel and the diaspora, the distressing images out of Iran resonate as a reminder of the universal longing for liberty and dignity. Advocacy networks are

coordinating relief channels, technology support for connectivity, and calls for targeted sanctions on abusers. (*INN/VFI News*)

WJC's Lauder: Arson at Mississippi Synagogue Shows Hate Never Disappears; World Jewish Congress President Ronald Lauder condemned the arson that damaged Beth Israel Congregation in Jackson, Mississippi, calling it a chilling reminder that hatred resurfaces when left unchallenged. The pre-dawn blaze on Saturday, January 10, caused significant damage; authorities have arrested a suspect and are investigating alongside federal partners. Community leaders vowed resilience and pledged to rebuild. Beth Israel, the city's only synagogue and the largest in the state, has a history of being targeted, including a 1967 Ku Klux Klan bombing during the civil rights era. The latest attack has stirred interfaith solidarity, with civic and religious leaders denouncing antisemitism and promising practical support as the congregation makes temporary arrangements for services. Investigators continue assessing damage to sacred items and facilities while considering potential hate-crime charges. The incident has reignited discussion about security at houses of worship and the importance of confronting extremist rhetoric before it turns violent. (*INN/VFI News*)

Samoa Plans to Open Embassy in Jerusalem, Drawing Praise and Criticism; Samoa announced plans to open an embassy in Jerusalem in 2026, deepening ties with Israel and joining other Pacific nations that have recently established missions in the capital. Israeli officials welcomed the decision as a sign of growing international recognition. The move sparked debate among Samoans abroad, reflecting broader global discussions about diplomacy and the city's status. In recent years, a handful of countries have opened embassies in Jerusalem, citing historic friendship and strategic cooperation. Samoa's step fits this pattern and could expand bilateral engagement in areas such as innovation, agriculture, and tourism fields where Israel has actively partnered with Pacific Island states. As details and timelines are finalized, attention will turn to practical arrangements and ceremonial milestones marking the mission's opening. The Foreign Ministry indicated continued outreach and invitations to Samoan leaders to visit Israel in preparation for the new embassy. (*YNN/VFI News*)

New Town Breaks Ground in Samaria; Israel inaugurated the new community of Rehavam near Migdalim as part of a broader government plan to establish 22 new towns in Judea and Samaria and to increase the region's population. Ten pioneering families attended the ceremony alongside regional and national leaders, who framed the project as both a demographic goal and a statement of long-term commitment to the area. Organizers credited coordination among the Samaria Regional Council, the Settlement Administration, and planning bodies for turning policy into action. Supporters emphasized that building communities strengthens security and creates conditions for thriving civilian life even amid national challenges. The community's name honors Rehavam Ze'evi, reflecting continuity with earlier post-Six Day War settlement plans while signaling momentum for additional projects. New residents expressed hope that Rehavam will grow into a close-knit town with services, schools, and industry. (*INN/VFI News*)

Huckabee's Grandchildren Discover Ancient Coins in Samaria; A family hike in the Benjamin region turned extraordinary when the grandchildren of U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee discovered five ancient coins in a cave near Na'ale. Under the guidance of archaeologist Dr. Dvir Raviv, the children were shown how to scan the area; the finds are thought to date to the Bar Kokhba Revolt, the Great Revolt, or the late Roman period. The visit also included a stop at ancient Shiloh, where the family reflected on biblical history and offered prayers overlooking the site of the Tabernacle. Regional officials hailed the moment as a vivid connection between modern visitors and the land's deep heritage. Educators and tour organizers noted that hands-on encounters with archaeology can awaken curiosity and respect for preservation especially among young people encountering these places for the first time. The episode

became a light-hearted highlight during a season of heavy headlines, reminding many that amid tension, there are still opportunities to discover shared stories in the hills and caves of Judea and Samaria. (*ISH/VFI News*)

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