

# **Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update January 26, 2026 (Shvat 7, 5786)**



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## ***Israel-Hamas Cease-fire; 'First to Go Out, Last to Return. Our Hero': Mother of Last Hostage Reacts to Her Son's Return***

- *Remains of Ran Gvili, Israel's last remaining hostage in Gaza, found and being returned for burial in Israel, IDF says*
- *Israel to open Gaza's Rafah crossing once search for body of last hostage ends, according to PM's Office*
- *F-15s, aircraft carrier and destroyers: What U.S. has deployed in Mideast amid potential Iran strikes*
- *Police foil Gaza-bound smuggling worth 1 million shekels in Negev raid*
- *Three Gazans killed by Israeli fire, as Witkoff seeks to advance cease-fire phase two*
- *Netanyahu: Israel is conducting 'large-scale operation' to find Ran Gvili's remains*
  - *Iranian supreme leader ordered protests 'crushed by any means'*
- *Doctors Without Borders says it will comply with Israel's 'unreasonable demands' to continue Gaza operations*

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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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***Iran Warns Protesters to Surrender within Three Days;*** Iran’s national police chief, Gen. Ahmad-Reza Radan, issued an ultimatum on Monday, January 19, urging people who took part in what authorities call “riots” to turn themselves in within three days or face prosecution. Officials said those “deceived” into joining would be treated with “leniency,” even as the scope of arrests and the scale of violence remained murky amid a prolonged internet blackout. The heads of Iran’s executive, legislative, and judicial branches simultaneously pledged to tackle the economic grievances that helped ignite the unrest, while promising to “decisively punish” those they accuse of orchestrating “terrorist incidents.” Rights groups say thousands have been killed since the demonstrations began, and the United Nations warned this week that executions have been used as a tool of intimidation. Security officials cited by Iranian media have reported thousands of arrests; outside advocates believe the true tally could be much higher. With connectivity still restricted, images of burned buildings and damaged public infrastructure have trickled out piecemeal, while authorities insist order will be restored and vow firm action against perceived instigators. *(TOI/VFI News)*

***Horrific New Photos Spotlight Brutality of Iran’s Protest Crackdown;*** Newly circulated images on January 22 shed stark light on the injuries and devastation tied to Iran’s sweeping clampdown, capturing bloodied backs from pellet fire, scenes of chaos in Tehran, and the fear that keeps the wounded from seeking hospital care. Eyewitness testimony from those who fled describes security forces shooting at demonstrators’ backs and spot-checking people for signs of gunshot or pellet wounds—accounts consistent with what rights monitors have documented as the death toll has mounted under the cover of an internet blackout since early January. Amid that fear, volunteers and even doctors have quietly moved through neighborhoods to treat people in homes. Community members say they opened doors to provide first aid to scores of teenagers and young adults caught up in the unrest. The emerging picture of young women and men taking to the streets, of ordinary Iranians risking detention simply for possessing protest footage underscores how deeply the crisis has touched family life across the country. *(NYP/VFI News)*

***Trump Warns Iran of Massive Retaliation if Protesters are Killed;*** US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday, January 20, that any Iranian move to kill protesters or act on threats against him would trigger overwhelming US retaliation. In a televised interview, he declared that “anything happens, they’re going to wipe them off the face of this earth,” insisting the military option remains on the table. He also claimed Iran had backed off from mass executions following warnings from Washington, while adding that future outcomes are uncertain. His remarks came as tensions rose over both Iran’s internal repression and its posture toward the United States and Israel. While the administration projects readiness to act, officials continue to weigh diplomatic, economic, and military levers amid fast-moving events and conflicting reports about the pace of arrests and fatalities. *(INN/VFI News)*

***‘Theater of the Absurd’: Israel Withdraws from Open Government Partnership;*** Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar announced on Wednesday, January 21, that Israel will leave the Open Government Partnership (OGP), arguing the body “has become a political tool for attacking Israel.” The decision, to be advanced with Economy Minister Nir Barkat, follows an OGP steering committee review process that Jerusalem viewed as driven by baseless allegations. Sa’ar cited Israel’s blocked participation at a September 2025 conference in Spain an exclusion he said drew no response from OGP leadership as part of a broader pattern undermining the organization’s stated principles. Israel originally joined OGP in 2012 to promote transparency and accountability in government. (*INN/VFI News*)

***UK Schools Marking Holocaust Remembrance Day Drop Nearly 60% Since Oct. 7;*** A UK nonprofit reported a steep decline in secondary schools commemorating International Holocaust Remembrance Day, with observances falling from more than 2,000 schools in 2023 to 854 in 2025. With this year’s memorial set for January 27, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis warned that opting out due to controversy undermines core civic education and risks corroding society’s moral foundations. The group cited heightened polarization since the Gaza war began on October 7, 2023, as one driver of the drop-off. Jewish organizations cautioned that Holocaust remembrance is not political, but an act of human memory vital to resisting hatred and extremism particularly as anti-Semitic incidents have surged across the UK. (*TOI/VFI News*)

***IDF: 30,000 Israelis Labeled Draft Evaders—Real Number Likely Higher;*** Briefing lawmakers on Tuesday, January 20, Lt. Col. Avigdor Dickstein told the Knesset’s Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that 30,000 people are currently designated as draft evaders. About half are ultra-Orthodox and half of uncertain religious status, with the figure expected to climb by “many thousands” in the coming month. The discussion came as the coalition races to pass a Haredi conscription bill that critics say is riddled with loopholes and won’t boost enlistment. The IDF says manpower strains from the Gaza war and other fronts require roughly 12,000 additional recruits. Since a 2024 High Court ruling ended blanket exemptions, the military has increased enforcement and penalties while yeshiva budgets tied to draft compliance have been curtailed—steps supporters call necessary, and opponents decry as punitive. (*TOI/VFI News*)

***In First, Police Allow Printed Prayers on the Temple Mount;*** On Wednesday, January 21, police allowed Jewish visitors to bring printed prayer sheets up to the Temple Mount—an incremental but symbolic shift at the contested holy site. Flyers distributed by the Temple Mount Yeshiva included guidance for pilgrimage, a pre-ascent prayer, and the Amidah. Police said the material could be used only in specific areas, while emphasizing freedom of worship and visitation for all communities. Jewish prayer at the Mount had long been restricted under the status quo with Jordan’s Islamic Waqf, though in recent years, quiet prayer has occurred, especially in the eastern part of the complex. Activists lauded the new policy as a formal acknowledgment of existing practice; officials framed it as maintaining order while accommodating worshippers. (*TOI/VFI News*)

***Kushner Unveils Futuristic Gaza Renderings in Davos;*** At the World Economic Forum on Thursday, January 22, Jared Kushner showcased glossy concepts for a rebuilt Gaza—luxury towers, waterfront promenades, and high-tech districts. He argued that prosperity depends on Hamas laying down arms, urged Israelis to “calm down,” floated amnesty for gunmen who surrender, and cast the plan as a “catastrophic success” if militias disarm and governance is stabilized. Reporting from Davos the same day echoed those conditions: no disarmament, no reconstruction. The renderings drew intense reactions—hope from some for a post-war economic horizon, skepticism from others who questioned financing, security, and

oversight. The debate underscores a central dilemma: how to translate ceasefire mechanics into lasting security guarantees and credible civilian administration that can protect residents and investors alike. (NYP/VFI News)

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