



S. DANIEL ABRAHAM
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

Israel and Middle East News Update

Friday, December 8

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News Excerpts

December 8, 2023

Al-Monitor

Former Israeli Military Chief Eisenkot's Son Killed in Gaza

The son of Israel's war cabinet minister and former Israeli military chief Gadi Eisenkot was killed fighting in the Gaza Strip, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesperson Daniel Hagari said. The death of Gal Eisenkot, 25, and another soldier, Jonathan Deutch, 34, brings the death toll for Israeli soldiers in Gaza to 89. Eisenkot was killed in a [booby-trapped tunnel](#) in the Jabalia camp in northern Gaza. He was taken to a hospital in serious condition, where he died of his injuries. Eisenkot is a current minister in the emergency government formed after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel as part of the [National Camp party](#) led by Benny Gantz, another former chief of the Israeli military. Eisenkot also holds an observer role in the war cabinet, responsible for overseeing decision-making in Gaza. As part of the unity agreement signed on Oct. 11, the war cabinet will last for the duration of the war.

Jerusalem Post

Israeli Soldiers Suffer Eye Injuries, Many Losing Their Vision

Hundreds of IDF soldiers fighting Hamas in Gaza suffered severe ophthalmologic injuries, with some even losing their vision in one or both eyes, Kan News reported. According to Kan, most of the eye injuries sustained were caused by IDF fighters not wearing protective gear, namely eye protection equipment, as required during battle. The eye injuries were sustained mostly through close contact with bullet shrapnel and recoil (the backward momentum of a discharging gun), although some fighters suffered direct hits from Hamas operatives, the report added. Alarmingly, some 10-15% of the injuries sustained resulted in the loss of eyesight in one or both eyes.

Times of Israel

Hamas Conned Israel by Passing Intel on PIJ

Hamas reportedly provided Israel with intelligence about Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip as part of its strategy to trick Israel into a false sense of security ahead of its devastating October 7 attack. [The Washington Post](#) report, citing an Israeli security official, is the latest to point to a series of alleged intelligence failures in the lead-up to the assault, which shattered the conception, apparently carefully planted by Hamas, that the group was uninterested in war. According to the official, Hamas provided unspecified information about PIJ, an Iran-backed terror group in the Strip second in power only to Hamas. In May, when a several-day flare-up of violence broke out in the Gaza Strip between Israel and PIJ, Hamas pointedly remained on the sidelines, with many seeing the decision as a sign of either the group's maturity or its weakness. Senior Israeli officials have admitted that they were wrong in the assessment of Hamas's mindset as well as Israel's ability to thwart the group via technological means. [Dig Deeper " Hamas Leader Sinwar Plotted Israel's Most Deadly Day in Plain Sight" \(Reuters\)](#)

UN Optimistic on Opening of Kerem Shalom Crossing

United Nations humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths expressed optimism regarding the potential opening of the Kerem Shalom crossing from Israel into the Gaza Strip, allowing aid to flow into the region. Before the war between Israel and Hamas, the Kerem Shalom checkpoint facilitated the transit of 60% of goods into the territory. Presently, only the Rafah border crossing with Egypt remains open. The conflict's toll and the resulting shortages in Gaza, compounded by limited supplies of essential items like food, water, fuel, and medicine due to the Israeli siege, have sparked global concern. [Read More "Israeli Cabinet Approves Increasing Amount of Fuel Allowed Into Gaza" \(Axios\)](#)

US Might Not Exercise UN Veto Unless Israel Increases Aid

United States officials representing President Joe Biden made it clear that Israel must increase humanitarian aid and fuel to Gaza if it wanted the US to continue vetoing any attempt to advance a decision in the Security Council on ending the fighting in Gaza. The American conditions for continued support for the fighting in Gaza and the response in the Security Council were presented to ministers who initially expressed opposition to continued support for the supply of fuel to Gaza and its expansion, although part of it normally gets diverted to Hamas. UN Secretary-General informed Israel, Antonio Guterres, of the activation of Article 99 of the UN Charter for the first time since 1989. According to the article, "the Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security." [Read More "Soon, Biden Will Call for the War to End. And Netanyahu Will Attack Him" \(Ha'aretz\)](#)

US Officials Say PA Must Be Involved in Post War Gaza

Senior US officials said Israel has no interest in discussing the "day after the war" because it does not want to send a message that the fighting is nearing its end, however in Israel, there is an understanding that the matter must be discussed although it has little political viability. Arab nations would have to be involved and they are concerned that Israel would not be prepared to discuss the broader plan. Israel said there would be no Palestinian Authority (PA) involvement in the rehabilitation of Gaza and that Arab nations were willing to be involved, but they seek assurances that a broad initiative would be discussed. The American officials said the US position was that the PA must be somehow involved in post-war Gaza, but no one could say what that involvement would look like. PA President Mahmoud Abbas would not be the one to run Gaza, but the PA's involvement is critical for the support of Arabs. The Biden administration describes a "revitalized Palestinian Authority," which would be stronger and different than the current PA. Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu told Sky News in Arabic that as long as he is prime minister, Abbas would not be given control of Gaza and the West Bank.

Egypt Warned Israel of “A Rupture” if Palestinians Flee

Egypt warned the US and Israel that if Palestinian refugees flee into the Sinai as a result of the Israeli military operation in southern Gaza, it could create "a rupture" in relations between Egypt and Israel, according to four US and Israeli officials. The close relations between Egypt and Israel, especially between the military and intelligence services, have been critically important at several points in the war, including around the release of hostages. Egypt sees the war in Gaza as a threat to its national security and wants to prevent Palestinian refugees from crossing the border into its territory. According to UNRWA, almost 1.9 million people in Gaza, or nearly 85% of the population, were estimated to be internally displaced. At least 17,700 Palestinians — mostly women and children — have been killed, per the Ministry of Health in Hamas-run Gaza. Egypt, Jordan and the PA have been concerned since the early days of the war that Israel would push Palestinians from Gaza to Egypt — and not allow them to return after the war. Israeli officials denied this both in private and in public and gave assurances to Egypt that any wounded Palestinian permitted to leave Gaza for medical treatment would be allowed to return to the enclave.

Literary Hub

Poet Refaat Alareer Has Been Killed by an Israeli Airstrike

The Palestinian poet, writer, literature professor, and activist Dr. Refaat Alareer was killed in a targeted Israeli airstrike that also killed his brother, his sister, and her four children. Dr. Alareer was a beloved professor of world literature, comparative literature, Shakespeare, and creative writing at the Islamic University of Gaza, where he taught since 2007. He received his MA in Comparative Literature from the University College of London and his PHD in English Literature from Universiti Putra Malaysia. He was the co-editor of *Gaza Unsilenced* (2015) and the editor of [Gaza Writes Back: Short Stories from Young Writers in Gaza, Palestine \(2014\)](#). Dr. Alareer was also one of the founders of [We Are Not Numbers](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating “a new generation of Palestinian writers and thinkers who can bring together a profound change to the Palestinian cause.” This heartbreaking poem, pinned to his profile on X, [“Refaat in Gaza,”](#) since November 1, speaks to what Alareer could see coming, and to the resilience that gave so many of his followers hope in the darkest of times: If I must die, you must live, to tell my story, to sell my things, to buy a piece of cloth, and some strings (make it white with a long tail), so that a child, somewhere in Gaza, while looking heaven in the eye, awaiting his dad who left in a blaze, and bid no one farewell, not even to his flesh, not even to himself, sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up above, and thinks for a moment an angel is there, bringing back love, if I must die, let it bring hope, let it be a tale.

Biden Sets a Clear Price

By Amos Harel

- **Two months into the war with Hamas, the fighting in the Gaza Strip seems to be entering another critical phase. The Israel Defense Forces have intensified air and ground offensives and sent troops into Khan Yunis, in the southern Strip, even as the fighting in northern Gaza continues in Jabalya, Shujaiyeh and Zeitoun. In the Khan Yunis refugee camp, IDF forces are reportedly operating near the family home of the head of Hamas in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu even boasted that the army had encircled the house. Sinwar himself isn't there, but Israel is clearly trying to up the pressure on Hamas leaders, who are presumably hiding in the tunnels of southern Gaza.**
- **The ground operation in Khan Yunis is being led by the 98th Division, which includes elite regular and reservist infantry brigades supported by armored brigades. It is facing Hamas' territorial brigade for the Khan Yunis region, which consists of four battalions that had not suffered significant damage prior to the attack on the city. The IDF says the fighting has been difficult but that here, too, Hamas has largely avoided deploying large forces in favor of smaller units that emerge from the tunnels. Hamas employs mainly massive rocket-propelled grenades, fired from close range, as well as sniper fire and bombs its fighters try to attach to Israeli tanks and other military vehicles. Despite US warnings to take precautions to minimize civilian casualties, IDF operations in southern Gaza do not appear to be looking significantly different from those it conducted in the northern Strip.**
- **White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan, the administration's point man for talks with Israel about the continuation of the fighting, is expected to return to the region next week. This week, two senior aides to Vice President Kamala Harris visited Israel. Despite the administration's growing interest in ending the war, Israeli political and defense officials haven't gotten the impression that the Americans are close to slapping Israel with an ultimatum. US President Joe Biden apparently thinks the IDF should be allowed to complete its offensive in the Khan Yunis area and thereby exert increased pressure on Hamas, in the hope of taming its leaders' desire to continue fighting.**
- **It's reasonable to assume that Washington will let Israel keep fighting for another month or maybe a little longer, if the battles don't result in further mass Palestinian civilian casualties and if Gaza's humanitarian crisis doesn't spin out of control. The US formula currently seems to be humanitarian aid in exchange for time. The more food, equipment, fuel and medicine Israel allows into the Strip for its civilian population, the more time and space America will grant Israel's military operation. The IDF is expected to finish the bulk of its operations in northern Gaza within days, while the operation in Khan Yunis will take another few weeks. The question that will arise then will be whether to also launch a ground operation in Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city. That would likely be especially sensitive, given Rafah's proximity to the Egyptian border and Cairo's fear of a massive surge of desperate Palestinians across the border into the Sinai Peninsula.**

- **The Americans have additional expectations from Israel, including steps to ease the situation in the West Bank, which is worrying Washington greatly. The measures under discussion include allowing a limited number of West Bank Palestinians to resume working in Israel, subject to a security review by the Shin Bet security service. The Palestinian Authority's economic situation is terrible, due to the crisis over transferring tax revenue Israel collects on its behalf and the blanket ban on Palestinians working in Israel since the war began on October 7 with Hamas' massacre of Israelis in communities near Gaza.**
- **Letting West Bank Palestinians resume working in Israel, like the American demand to allow more fuel into Gaza, is controversial within the governing coalition. Netanyahu will presumably seek to have these decisions approved by the diplomatic-security cabinet. But he is expected to run into opposition from the far-right ministers who belong to it. The continuation and intensification of military operations in Gaza are happening over the vehement objections of the hostages' families. Recordings of the tense meeting between some of the families and members of the war cabinet have sparked a stormy public response. The families warned that the 138 hostages still in Hamas' captivity are in very poor shape, and every day that passes increases the risk to their lives. Netanyahu told them there is no proposal on the table for an "everyone for everyone" swap, in which Hamas would free all of the hostages in exchange for Israel freeing all of the thousands of Palestinian prisoners in its jails. But most of the families argue that continuing the military offensive will significantly increase the threat to their loved ones' lives.**
- **It's true that no comprehensive deal for the hostages' return has yet been discussed. Judging from public statements by senior Hamas officials, the organization intends to demand that any such deal also include a complete cease-fire, a full withdrawal of IDF forces from Gaza and Arab and international guarantees that Israel won't assassinate Hamas' leaders. But Sinwar may not yet feel that discussing such a proposal is urgent. Netanyahu, for his part, would certainly object to such a deal, both on principle and because it would almost certainly bring down his government. The IDF also wants to continue exerting military pressure on Hamas and does not want to halt its ground maneuvers for a second time after resuming them last Friday, when a cease-fire collapsed. Consequently, there are apparently no real negotiations happening right now on a deal to free more of the hostages, and Israel isn't yet ready to draft a list of Palestinian prisoners that it would agree to release in a future deal with Hamas. For the families, this is a frightening situation, and they will likely escalate their protests. These won't be polite protests, and the public storm over this issue is only likely to intensify in the near future.**

Looking for the Breaking Point

By Yossi Yehoshua

- Only in a country like Israel could a former chief of staff and senior minister in the war cabinet find himself on a visit to the field headquarters of the division his son is fighting in and receive word that his son had been killed. People who spoke with Gadi Eisenkot yesterday said that he did not watch the battle his son, Gal Meir Eisenkot, was fighting in on the screens set up in the war room. After a while, however, Maj. Gen. Nadav Paran approached Eisenkot and told him that at 11:56 am, his son had been mortally wounded by an IED that exploded at the opening of a tunnel shaft in Jabalya and died of his wounds at Assuta Hospital a short while later. Eisenkot cut short the visit to return home to Herzliya to tell his wife Chana the terrible news. It is so very tragic to think about the fact that Eisenkot was the one with the foresight to correctly read the map long before Hamas terrorists attacked the Gaza periphery communities.
- At the height of the crisis inside the military over the judicial reform, Eisenkot warned of a potential disaster on the scale of the Yom Kippur War. They said he was spreading “panic;” then, his accuracy exploded at all of us. To his horror, he had a bad feeling over the past few days as well. He was worried about the war and fearful for his son Gal, his beloved son who was born when Eisenkot was considered an “old” father, a warrior and medic in the 699th Battalion of the 551st Brigade. Gal’s presence on the front lines did not prevent Eisenkot from pushing for a hostage deal two weeks ago on one hand, while on the other hand demanding crushing pressure on the accursed land of Gaza in order to defeat Hamas.
- We spoke about the ground campaign at the beginning of the week after there had been a certain delay in mobilizing the troops. Knowing his son was “inside” and that the situation was very dangerous, Eisenkot told me, “It would be terrible if they don’t fight hard.” I asked him if the political echelon was hesitant. “On the contrary. We must use all our power to achieve the goals of the war.” At every meeting with family members of the hostages, he said he was acting as if his own granddaughter were being held captive and his son was in Gaza. This was not the first time that Gal fought in Gaza under his father’s command: When Eisenkot was chief of staff, Gal was there as a soldier in the elite Maglan strike force. This time it ended in tragedy and an entire country is mourning with Eisenkot, his wife Chana, and the rest of the family.
- At the height of the second part of the ground campaign, the IDF is trying to wrap up two months of combat on multiple fronts, the bulk of which has been against Hamas in Gaza, but the situation in the north continues to be worrying. A civilian was killed by an anti-tank missile that Hizbullah fired, and pressure is growing from evacuated residents of the communities near the Lebanese border who want to know when they will be able to return home safely. At the same time, the fighting in Gaza can be boiled down to one sentence: so far, there have been thousands of tactical victories over Hamas, but there still has been no strategic victory.

- Given international pressure and the shape of Israel's economy, with more and more reservists screaming for help and still not getting it from our leaders, one can only hope it will come soon. The opening maneuver was successful despite fears about the IDF's ground abilities, and the IDF made it to Shifa Hospital, a place few believed our forces would enter. Gaza City was conquered and despite the ceasefire, the IDF resumed fighting with strength. Right now, the army is focusing on three locations: Sajaiya, Jabalya, and Khan Yunis, where the 98th Hod Division is operating. As of last night, neither neighborhood had fallen and fighting there was fierce but making progress. We are speaking about two of the Hamas battalions that have caused the most extensive damage to residents of the Gaza periphery communities and have prepared for the IDF incursion for many years.
- Incidentally, the IDF also went into Jajaiya during Operation Protective Edge, but no IDF soldier has set foot in the Jabalya refugee camp since the military operation that preceded the disengagement in 2005. A picture from Jabalya must be seared into the consciousness, an extraordinary image documenting something we have not yet seen during this war: several dozen people suspected of involvement in terrorism with their hands up, presumably after some of them surrendered and turned themselves over to IDF troops. In addition, our troops have killed hundreds of terrorists in both locales. The Golani, Paratroopers, Kfir, and 188th Brigades, as well as combat engineers, are engaged in close-quarters combat and demonstrating clear superiority over the enemy.
- There have been injuries and losses, but given the challenge, it is hard to envision any other army in the world achieving better results in an above-ground, and especially underground, environment. We mourn every one of the 87 heroes who have fallen in the operation, but Hamas has sustained more than 6,600 fatalities and several thousands more injured. The Gaza Strip has been thoroughly demolished; which has started attracting domestic Palestinian criticism of Hamas's murderous leadership. Their October 7 attack cost the lives of tens of thousands of Gazans and left hundreds of thousands wounded.
- Still, it is important to say: Israel has not yet reached the breaking point, the point where Hamas says "enough." This could have happened with the assassination of Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Deif, or Marwan Issa, but it hasn't happened yet. This task is mainly in the purview of the GSS; until the opportunity presents itself, the IDF must achieve a breaking point during the fighting in Khan Yunis. Only pressure like that can bring Hamas to make another deal to release more hostages. "If we hear them say 'enough,' it will all be turned on its head," said one senior member of the IDF General Staff. The challenge in Khan Yunis is to deal a death blow to the enemy without hurting the hostages.
- The army is treating testimony detailing the conditions of captivity and Hamas's brutal treatment of the hostages very seriously and has set limits on using the air force and special forces. Also, the captives' and hostages' war room under the command of Maj. Gen. (res.) Nitzan Alon is operating in coordination with the General Staff and the IDF Southern Command.

- **This means days and nights in which the nerves of the families of the hostages, the families of IDF combat soldiers, and the entire public that has been watching the war in real time for two months will be stretched to the breaking point. That is exacting an economic price and tough, sad moments that we will, unfortunately, continue to experience. But there is no choice: if we want to be worthy of the sacrifices that families like the Eisenkots have made, the only option is victory.**