



## **BRIEFING**

**Saturday October 7, 2023**

### **ISRAEL : STATE OF THE PLAY AT 11:00 GMT**

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Note: *this briefing is based on public sources (OSINT) and official statements by Israeli authorities or Hamas spokespersons.*



*Rockets fired from Gaza (image AP)*

Hamas launched a surprise and unprecedented attack against Israel this morning, with over 2,500 missiles/rockets fired from Gaza and a massive terrorist infiltration by land and sea.

Yesterday was the **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the “Kippur War”** (October 6, 1973)

In a statement, **Ismail Haniyeh, head of Hamas**, said: "We are waging a battle of resistance and respect for the defense of al-Aqsa, under the title - 'Storm of al-Aqsa'. The storm began in Gaza and will continue in the West Bank and beyond, and wherever our people are."

First statement from **Tsahal** (Israel Defence Forces, IDF) say **at least 22 Israeli were killed, and around 545 wounded. Around 60 are said to be in “serious to critical” condition.**



*Building targeted in Tel Aviv (Image: Ha'aretz)*

**Clashes were or are reported in dozens of locations in the South of Israel, near the border with the Gaza Strip.**

The **chief of Israeli police** for the Southern district said: **“This will probably go on for days”**

For the moment **the situation remains calm in the West Bank (despite incidents in East Jerusalem Silwan Neighborhood and in the settlement of Beit Aryeh) and at the Lebanese border** (despite a statement by Hezbollah supporting the Hamas offensive).

Here is a summary of the events so far (local time is GMT + 3):

#### **A/ Situation on the field**

- **Emergency services said 22 Israelis were killed this morning in “ Hamas combined attacks”;**
- **Sirens alerting residents to incoming rockets blared across southern regions surrounding Gaza, Negev areas, and the greater Tel Aviv region in the early hours of Saturday. IDF confirms at least 2,500 rockets were launched from Gaza into Israel throughout the morning;**

- Rocket impacts are reported in **Yavne**, **Ashkelon**, and **Kfar Aviv**, which is near Ashdod;



*Building Targeted in Ashkelon (image: Ha'aretz)*



*Ashkelon (image: Ha'aretz)*

- 14:00 (Local Time): Around eight terrorists who had entered the town of **Ofakim**, in the south of the country, were killed. **Fighting with the terrorists who entered the town is continuing, and the security forces are laying siege to a building** where the terrorists are located.

- At 12:30 (local time) **Itamar Ben-Gvir (National Security Minister)** said he ordered a **"State of emergency"** which will take effect in the evening. This will give more legal powers to the police forces;
- At 12:00 (local time), Israeli media reported that **IDF have set up roadblock on Highway 4 to stop Hamas terrorists from reaching Tel Aviv area;**
- At 12:00 (local time) **Hamas said it kidnapped 53 people;**
- After 10h30 (local time), **IDF Spokesman Brigadier General Daniel Hagari said:** "Terrorists who infiltrated Israel are still in the field, focusing on fighting in the area surrounding Gaza";
- Around 10:00 (local time), **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu makes a first public statement since beginning of Hamas attacks:** "We are at war. Not an operation, not an escalation — at war. We will win.";



*IDF "Merkava" tank destroyed at Gaza border ((Image AP)*

- At 10/00 it was announced that **reservists are mobilized** in all the country;
- Earlier in the morning, U.S embassy in Israel asks U.S. residents and tourists to "remain vigilant and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness";
- Around 10:00, **Israeli forces have reportedly taken back control of the police station in Sderot**, which was captured by Hamas terrorists.
- IDF confirmed **Hamas infiltrated Israel by land, air and sea, using boats and paragliders** to enter the country;
- Around 09:45 (local time) IDF said **dozens of Air Force fighter jets were attacking Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip in several locations.** The response operation of IDF is codenamed **"Iron Sword"**. 17 military facilities and 4 HQ are said to be treated;

- **At 09:32, rocket alert sirens were heard in Tel Aviv;**
- At 09:30 (local time), it was announced that **Ofir Libstein, head of the Shaar Hanegev Regional Council (South), was killed in a shootout with Hamas terrorists:** "In the wake of the terrorist attack that is now taking place on the Otaf settlements, we update with great sadness and pain that the head of the regional council, Ofir Liebstein, was killed in an exchange of fire with terrorists”;
- After 09:00, Hamas claimed to have kidnapped 35 Israeli civilians and soldiers. No Israeli official confirmation;

## **B/ International reactions**

- **UN envoy to the Middle East** condemned Hamas attacks;
- The **European Union** has "unequivocally" condemned the Hamas attacks and expressed "its solidarity with Israel", saying the country had "the right to defend itself";
- **NATO:** Following the surprise attack on Israel, **NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoana** said: "Only a few weeks ago, I was in Israel, working to take our partnership with NATO to new heights. Today, I mourn with our Israeli friends and stand in absolute solidarity with them in the face of these terrible acts of terrorism."
- **France** condemns "in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks" against Israel (ministry);
- **Berlin** "strongly condemns the terrorist attacks from Gaza against Israel" (minister);
- **United Kingdom** condemned Hamas attacks: "The UK unequivocally condemns the horrific attacks by Hamas on Israeli civilians. The UK will always support Israel’s right to defend itself," Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said;
- **Russia** is calling for "restraint" following attacks on Israel by the Islamist movement Hamas, a senior Russian diplomat has said;
- **Ukraine** said it supports Israel in its "right to defend itself and its people";
- **Egypt** has announced "intensive contacts with the Israeli and Palestinian parties to prevent an escalation of violence";
- **Saudi Arabia** calls for immediate de-escalation between Palestinians and Israelis;
- In Lebanon, **Hezbollah** welcomed the Gaza operation against Israel.

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