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Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Palestinian Territories / Israel – January to June 2024

30 June 2024

08 January 2024

Deaths in airstrike in Rafah / latest developments

Israeli forces continue to attack targets in all parts of the Gaza Strip, including the southern city of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons are currently living. In an airstrike carried out on 04.01.24, a home in Rafah was hit, killing at least six people.

According to the Israeli Ministry of Defence, several thousand Hamas fighters remain in the northern Gaza Strip, where entire districts have now been destroyed by airstrikes. Heavy fighting is also taking place in the centre of the Gaza Strip and in the southern city of Khan Younis, where, according to the Israeli military, Hamas' military structure is still largely intact, unlike in the north around Gaza City.

According to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory, the Israeli military's attacks on the Gaza Strip by air, land and sea have so far killed more than 22,400 people, two thirds of them women and children. The Hamas-run Ministry of Health does not differentiate between civilians and fighters when counting the number of casualties. According to the Israeli military, at least 510 members of the Israeli military have been killed since the Hamas attack on 07.10.23.¹

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

There are also regular exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and the Israeli army. Due to the large number of incidents taking place, developments will be summarized.

The diplomatic rhetoric on both sides continues to point to the possibility of an agreement being reached on the border after the war between Israel and Hamas comes to an end. Within Lebanon, there are many calls for Hezbollah to refrain from targeting the civilian infrastructure when attacking Israel. So far, this request seems to have been met, for the most part. After Saleh al-Arouri, one of the most important leaders of Hamas, was killed in a drone attack in Beirut on 02.01.24 along with two other Hamas commanders and four Hamas members, the Israeli side said that this was not an attack on the Lebanese state. In the days that followed, Hezbollah stepped up its attacks on targets in Israel, but the accompanying statements issued by Hezbollah and above all the statements by Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah still did not indicate any intention to escalate the violence beyond the current level.

Attacks on both sides continue to occur on a daily basis. In the meantime, more than 175 people have been killed in Lebanon, including around 20 civilians; 14 people have been killed so far in Israel, including five civilians. Since the conflict began, around 36 strikes have been carried out on Lebanese army positions, resulting in the death of one Lebanese soldier so far. This has led to growing international criticism and is fuelling fears that the conflict could escalate.

According to aid organisations, around 76,000 people inside Lebanon and a similar number of people in Israel have been internally displaced as a result of the escalation in fighting along the border. Most of the internally displaced

persons in Israel are being accommodated in hotels. Around 80% of displaced Lebanese are staying with relatives in more northern parts of the country, while only around 2% are able to be housed in publicly-owned shelters.²

15 January 2024

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

Regular exchanges of fire continue unabated between Hezbollah and the Israeli army. Due to the large number of incidents taking place, developments will be summarized.

On the Lebanese side, more than 190 people have now been killed in Lebanon, including around 20 civilians and more than 150 Hezbollah militants, one Lebanese soldier and fighters of various other militant groups. So far, 19 Israelis have been killed, seven of whom were civilians.

According to aid organisations, around 76,000 people inside Lebanon and according to AP, 115,000 people in Israel remain internally displaced by the escalation along the border.³

22 January 2024

Current developments / humanitarian situation

According to media reports, the Israeli armed forces carried out their attacks in the Gaza Strip focusing on the central and southern parts of the coastal enclave. Meanwhile, local telecommunications outages lasting several days occurred. Palestinian militias attacked Israeli forces in the northern Gaza Strip, where Israeli units had previously carried out clearance operations against Hamas. After the Israeli military had reduced its presence in the north and switched to more targeted operations, the activity of Palestinian militias in the region had reportedly increased again. In the southern Gaza Strip around the city of Khan Younis, several attacks were carried out by Palestinian fighters as Israeli forces advanced. According to unconfirmed Palestinian reports, more than 30 Israeli military personnel were killed in the attacks. The Israeli military stated that dozens of Hamas fighters had been killed in combat operations in the city.

Several clashes erupted between the Israeli armed forces and Palestinian militias in the West Bank. The Israeli military continued to carry out raids and searches for enemy fighters in the Tulkarem refugee camp. According to Israeli reports, eight members of Palestinian militias were killed in the process. According to unverifiable eyewitness accounts, seven civilians were also killed.

According to media reports issued on 18.01.24, around 11 tonnes of essential medicines and relief supplies were delivered to the Gaza Strip via Egypt as part of an agreement brokered by Qatar and France. The agreement provides for the provision of medical care to Israeli hostages held by Hamas and, in return, the provision of medicines and humanitarian aid for the Palestinian civilian population. According to the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the organisation of the aid deliveries is proving to be difficult due to the widespread communications outages in the region.⁴

Situation along the border between Lebanon and Israel

Regular exchanges of fire continue unabated between Hezbollah and the Israeli army. Due to the large number of incidents taking place, developments will be summarized.

Diplomatic sources have repeatedly reported that all sides have indicated they do not want the situation to spiral into full-scale war. Meanwhile, 82% of the Lebanese population is experiencing multidimensional poverty, a situation that is further exacerbated by the ongoing attacks being carried out by both sides. Various important figures from all major denominations and ethnic groups continue to advocate that Lebanon maintain neutrality in the war between Hamas and Israel.

Attacks from both sides are a daily occurrence. On 20.01.24, another targeted attack was carried out on a senior Hezbollah member around 20 km north of the border. On the Lebanese side, more than 197 people have now been killed, including around 20 civilians and more than 150 Hezbollah militants, one Lebanese soldier and fighters of various other militant groups; on the Israeli side, over 19 people have been killed so far, seven of them civilians.

According to aid organisations, around 76,000 people inside Lebanon and according to press reports, 115,000 people in Israel remain internally displaced by the escalation along the border. However, donor pledges undertaken

at a recent donor conference for WFP aid were significantly lower than those undertaken in previous years, which is making it more difficult to provide assistance to Lebanon.⁵

29 January 2024

War in Gaza: current developments

On 23.01.24, the Israeli military surrounded Khan Younis, according to its own sources. In the largest city in the south of the Gaza Strip, Hamas fighters are reported to be engaged in heavy fighting with the advancing Israeli army. According to an ICRC spokesperson, many residents have fled the fighting on foot to Rafah, which is about four hours away and where, already, more than four times as many people are said to be living as before the war. On 24.01.24, the Israeli army ordered the evacuation of a district of Khan Younis, where two hospitals with a total of more than 600 beds are reported to be located.

A total of 20 Israeli armed forces personnel were killed on 23.01.24 during an attempt to carry out the controlled demolition of a residential building in the Gaza Strip near the border with Israel. According to media reports, controlled demolitions of infrastructure along an approximately 800 m wide "security strip" along the border area are intended to make future potential infiltrations into Israel more difficult. UN representatives criticise Israel's actions because Palestinian homes that pose no immediate threat are systematically destroyed in the process.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the war has claimed more than 26,000 lives and injured at least 63,000 Palestinians. According to UN figures, more than 60% of all houses in the Gaza Strip have now been damaged or destroyed. Israel claims to have killed around 9,000 armed Palestinians.

On 26.01.24, the UN dismissed 12 of its employees in the Gaza Strip and launched an investigation after the Israeli government presented evidence of the alleged involvement of the accused in the planning and execution of the Hamas attack on 07.10.23. Some donor states, including the US and Germany, suspended their funding for the Palestinian refugee relief organisation UNRWA in the wake of the allegations. However, in a joint statement issued by the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development on 27.01.24, it was confirmed that the current humanitarian aid would continue. It was only temporarily, until the incidents had been clarified, that no new funds would be made available for UNRWA in the Gaza Strip.

On 28.01.24, the Israeli military declared the area on the Israeli side near the Kerem Shalom border crossing a restricted military zone after Israeli protesters had increasingly blocked the flow of aid supplies into the Gaza Strip after 24.01.24. The protesters were family members of the more than 100 hostages who are currently still being held by Hamas and their circle of supporters. They demanded that humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip be stopped until Hamas releases the Israeli hostages. The military's action came two days after the International Court of Justice in The Hague ordered Israel on 26.01.24 to provide more humanitarian aid to the Palestinian civilian population.⁶

Situation along the border between Lebanon and Israel

Regular exchanges of fire continue unabated between Hezbollah and the Israeli army.

Hezbollah announced on 25.01.24 that it would also be using Fajr-1 missiles (unguided air-to-ground missiles of Iranian origin with a range of around 10 km) in future. This led to an intensification of attacks with dozens of attacks being carried out on Israeli territory that were met by corresponding counterattacks from the Israeli side the following day. The political debate is focusing on the plight of the civilian population and the damage to the infrastructure in the south. Furthermore, the political consensus is that Lebanon itself should be kept out of the war between Hezbollah and Israel.

Attacks from the Israeli and Hezbollah sides are a daily occurrence. In the meantime, on the Lebanese side, at least 206 people have been killed, including around 20 civilians and more than 150 Hezbollah militants, one Lebanese soldier and fighters of various other militant groups; on the Israeli side, over 19 people have been killed so far, seven of them civilians.

According to aid organisations, around 76,000 people inside Lebanon and according to press reports, 115,000 people in Israel remain internally displaced by the escalation along the border.⁷

05 February 2024

Current developments / humanitarian situation

According to media reports, Israeli attacks have continued in large parts of the Gaza Strip, resulting in further harm to people and damage to infrastructure.

Palestinian militias carried out two rocket attacks on southern Israel on 01.02.24. There were no reports of casualties. Further fighting was reported in the northern and central as well as in the southern Gaza Strip. Intense fighting continued in and around the southern city of Khan Younis, including near the Nasser and Al Amal hospitals. According to Israeli reports, a training centre belonging to the militant Islamist Hamas organisation was stormed and further members of the organisation were killed. A total of 17 out of 24 Hamas battalions have reportedly now been neutralised. According to information provided by the Hamas-controlled Palestinian Health Authority on 04.02.24, at least 127 people were killed and 178 others injured within 24 hours, including both civilians and Hamas fighters. The information provided by the parties to the conflict cannot be independently confirmed.

Violent clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian militias also continued in the West Bank.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is described as increasingly deteriorating. According to the WFP, one in four households in the Gaza Strip (around 500,000 people) is facing extreme hunger. According to reports, more Palestinians have sought refuge in the southern border city of Rafah, which, with over one million people, is already considered to be overcrowded. The ongoing fighting and evacuation orders are reportedly resulting in internally displaced people leaving their shelters to seek refuge again.

Media reports published on 02.02.24 say that according to a high-ranking Hamas member, negotiations are being conducted that envisage longer ceasefires in Gaza and a gradual exchange of Hamas hostages for Palestinians imprisoned in Israel.⁸

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to engage in regular exchanges of fire

It is becoming increasingly possible to quantify some of the damage caused by the ongoing exchanges of fire. On the Lebanese side, for example, around 2,000 hectares of forest and agricultural land have reportedly been burnt, around three times the amount contaminated with explosives. Around 55,000 olive trees that were between 25 and 250 years old have reportedly been destroyed. Estimates say this has reduced the production of Lebanese olive oil by around 20 percent. The tobacco industry has also been particularly hard hit, as more than half of the land used to grow tobacco is currently unusable. The corresponding tobacco-growing areas are concentrated in the region a few kilometres north of the border. On the Israeli side, economic life along the border has also ground to a halt, with at least 512 buildings damaged by Hezbollah fire to date.

Hezbollah has repeatedly announced that it would abide by a ceasefire in the Gaza war. Israel, on the other hand, is seeking a ceasefire that would allow the civilian population to return to the region.⁹

12 February 2024

Current developments

According to media reports issued on 07.02.24, fighting continued in the Gaza Strip. Israeli forces said that armed terrorist cells had been eliminated in and around the city of Khan Younis and numerous weapons had been seized. Armed Hamas fighters reportedly also confirmed an attack on Israeli soldiers in the west of the city on 07.02.24. According to information provided by the Hamas-controlled Palestinian Health Authority on 09.02.24, around 107 Palestinians were killed and 174 others were injured within 24 hours during further fighting.

On 09.02.24, Israeli forces launched bombardments on targets in the city of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, which is considered to be overcrowded. According to a report issued by the Palestinian news agency Wafa, more than 100 people were killed and others injured in the Rafah area in a series of Israeli attacks carried out on 12.02.24. Meanwhile, the Israeli armed forces announced that two hostages had been rescued during the night-time operations. The situation in Rafah is described as extremely problematic: the city is overcrowded, with many people living in tents without sufficient food or access to electricity or water.

According to Israeli and Palestinian reports, three Palestinians were killed in the West Bank on 07.02.24. According to the Israeli army, three armed men were involved. One of the individuals had been suspected of being involved in terrorist activities.

According to Israeli media reports issued on 09.02.24, large demonstrations took place in Jerusalem against negotiations with Hamas and in favour of a continuation of the Gaza war. At the same time, demonstrations took place in Tel Aviv in favour of an agreement to release the hostages still being held in the Gaza Strip. On 07.02.24, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected a proposal by the Hamas leadership for a three-stage agreement for a ceasefire, partly due to the conditions imposed.¹⁰

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to trade fire on a regular basis.

A study, the results of which were presented on 08.02.24, put the economic costs of the conflict in the border region at around USD 1.2 billion to date; this is largely due to damage caused to infrastructure, but markedly also due to the decline in business activity.

On 10.02.24, an airstrike was targeted at several Hamas members and one Hezbollah militant in Jadra, about 60 km north of the border. One Syrian and one Lebanese national were killed and the suspected target, a Palestinian Hamas commander, was wounded. One civilian was killed and nine were wounded in a drone attack on the town of Houla on 11.02.24. Since fighting began in Lebanon, 227 people have been killed, 200 of them fighters.¹¹

19 February 2024

Gaza Strip: current developments; humanitarian situation

According to media reports, the Israeli military stormed the Nasser Hospital in the city of Khan Younis on 15.02.24 after a siege lasting almost a week. According to the military, the troops were searching for more hostages, who are said to have been held there, or their bodies. One day before it was stormed, the military asked those who had fled to the hospital to leave. One person who was there for treatment was killed in a night-time airstrike and six others were wounded. The Hamas-run Ministry of Health also stated that five patients had died from lack of oxygen after a power cut disabled the ventilators. The Israeli military announced that it had detained dozens of fighters as part of the operation, including three who were allegedly involved in the attacks carried out on 07.10.23. In addition, grenades and mortar shells that had allegedly been fired from the hospital site about a month ago were found. According to the local Ministry of Health, Nasser Hospital, the second largest hospital in the Gaza Strip, had been forced to cease its operations due to a lack of staff, resources and equipment.

According to the Hamas Ministry of Health, a total of more than 28,985 people have been killed in the Gaza Strip. The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants. Israel reported that it had killed at least 12,000 Hamas fighters. According to a high-ranking Hamas official in Qatar, however, around 6,000 fighters have been killed. The Israeli military announced that it had destroyed 18 out of 24 Hamas battalions, while some of the remaining ones were said to be in the city of Rafah. The statements of the two parties to the conflict cannot be independently verified.

More than 85% of the 2.3 million inhabitants of the Gaza Strip are currently displaced from their homes, and the majority of the refugees are currently living in precarious humanitarian conditions in Rafah.¹²

West Bank: increase in settlers; deteriorating economic situation; armed clashes

According to a report published by an Israeli pro-settler group called WestBankJewishPopulationStats.com, the number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) increased by a total of 3% in 2023 compared to the previous year, to 517,407 people. The report said that in the last five years, there had been an overall increase of 15%. Israeli settlements in the areas of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip that have been under Israeli control since 1967 are considered to be illegal by the majority of the international community.

The WFP warns of the deteriorating economic situation in the West Bank. Since the beginning of the war in Gaza, the economy in the West Bank is reported to have shrunk by a fifth due to increased security measures by Israel (including further restrictions on freedom of movement and freezing of work permits for Palestinians in Israel). According to the WFP, the number of people affected by food insecurity has risen from 350,000 to 600,000.

The situation generally remains tense and there are repeated escalations between armed militias and the Israeli military. According to the Palestinian health authorities run by the Palestinian autonomous authorities, more than 395 people have been killed by Israeli military personnel in the West Bank since 07.10.23, most of them during armed clashes with the military.

The Israeli human rights organisation Yesh Din says that at least nine Palestinians were killed by settlers in the West Bank during the first month and a half of the war in the Gaza Strip.¹³

Israel: two Israelis killed by assailant

According to media reports, an assailant shot and killed two Israelis at a bus stop in southern Israel on 16.02.24. Four other people were wounded before the assailant was killed with a firearm by an (off duty) army reservist. The assailant was reportedly a Palestinian from East Jerusalem.¹⁴

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to trade fire on a regular basis. Due to the large number of incidents taking place, only events that show new trends or that affect civilians will be summarized.

The highest number of civilian casualties to date was recorded on 14.02.24. A total of 10 civilians were reportedly killed in an airstrike in Nabatieh (in which a Hezbollah commander and two other fighters were also killed) and in another airstrike carried out in Sawaneh. This marks a significant increase in the number of civilian casualties. In the days that followed, mutual shelling intensified. In the meantime, 268 fatalities have been reported on the Lebanese side, including 40 civilians, and 10 soldiers and six civilians have been killed on the Israeli side.¹⁵

26 February 2024

Gaza Strip: current developments; humanitarian situation

On 24.02.24, the Hamas-led Ministry of Health in the Gaza Strip stated that more than 29,606 Palestinians had been killed since the beginning of the war. Almost 70,000 others are reported to have been wounded. The Ministry does not officially distinguish between militants and civilians. According to official Israeli figures, more than 12,000 Hamas fighters have been killed by the military, while 239 Israeli military personnel have been killed in the fighting. According to a report released by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on 24.02.24, ground fighting is continuing, particularly in the north and in Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis. In addition, airstrikes on Rafah are said to have increased. The number of aid deliveries via the two border crossings of Rafah and Kerem Shalom reportedly fell by 50 percent in February 2024 (up to and including 24.02.24) compared to the previous month of January 2024, with an average of 98 truck loads per day delivering supplies.

The WFP announced on 20.02.24 that the delivery of food aid to the north of the Gaza Strip had been paused. It stated that the number of aid deliveries had already halved over the course of the previous two weeks due to the increasingly turbulent situation in the north. It added that during the ongoing bombardments and ground operations by the Israeli military as well as numerous attacks and looting by the remaining starving population, the safety and security of aid workers could not be guaranteed.¹⁶

West Bank: one Israeli killed; ongoing movement restrictions; new settlement plans

On 22.02.24, three Palestinian gunmen killed one Israeli and wounded five others when they opened fire with automatic weapons on cars that were stuck in a traffic jam on a highway heading towards Jerusalem. Two of the attackers were killed on the spot, while the third was captured shortly afterwards.

A Palestinian from the village of al-Dawha was wounded in raids and armed clashes between West Bank militias and the Israeli military.

According to reports, roadblocks and blockades that have restricted the movement of the Palestinian population since mid-October 2023 are still in place. Some villages and towns are said to be barely accessible by car, while major roads in the occupied West Bank are used almost exclusively by Israeli settlers.

On 22.02.24, the Israeli Minister of Finance announced new plans for the construction of further settlements with a total of 3,300 houses in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The plans were announced in response to the killing of an Israeli on the same day (see above).¹⁷

Situation along the border between Lebanon and Israel

Hezbollah and allied Islamist militia on the one side continue to trade nearly-daily fire with Israeli armed forces on the other. Due to the large number of incidents taking place, only events that report on civilian fatalities will be summarised.

On 21.02.24, an Israeli airstrike killed a Hezbollah fighter in the Lebanese village of Majdal Zoun. A civilian woman and a six-year-old girl were reportedly killed in another airstrike.

On 23.02.24, two paramedics and a Hezbollah fighter were killed in an airstrike on the border town of Blida. The medics belonged to the "Islamic Health Committee", which is run by Hezbollah.

Since the fighting began on 08.10.23, a total of 276 people have been killed in Lebanon, 44 of them civilians. In Israel, 16 people have been killed so far, six of them civilians.¹⁸

04 March 2024

Gaza Strip: current developments; humanitarian situation

On 01.03.24, the Hamas-led Ministry of Health stated that more than 30,228 people had been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war. More than 71,377 other people are said to have been wounded. The ministry does not officially distinguish between combatants and civilians. The fighting is continuing, particularly in the north and in central Gaza.

On 29.02.24, more than 115 Palestinians were killed and more than 750 others were wounded after a convoy carrying relief aid reached the north of the Gaza Strip and several thousand people tried to reach the trucks. According to eyewitness reports, the Israeli military opened fire on the crowd surrounding the lorries carrying aid. According to Israeli statements, the majority of the deaths were, however, caused by the outbreak of mass panic. According to these statements, warning shots were fired after part of the crowd moved threateningly towards the military personnel who had been deployed to escort the aid deliveries. The director of al-Awda Hospital, on the other hand, said that 142 of the 176 injured brought to the hospital had gunshot wounds, while the remaining 34 had injuries that could be consistent with a stampede, according to media reports. He was reportedly unable to comment on the fatal injuries of those killed as they had been taken to another hospital. The director of Kamal Adwan Hospital also attributed most of the injuries to gunshot wounds and added that many of the dead had gunshot wounds to the head, neck and chest, without giving exact figures.

According to UN figures released on 27.02.24, a quarter of the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip is at severe risk of famine, which is increasingly leading to the looting of aid supplies. At the same time, according to UNRWA, there are still far too few aid supplies being transported to the Gaza Strip. Instead of the target of 500 trucks a day, only an average of 97 a day are reported to have entered Gaza in February.

On 02.03.24, the US military, in coordination with the Jordanian Air Force, began air-dropping humanitarian aid over the Gaza Strip in order to deliver relief supplies to the starving population in the Gaza Strip. However, it was emphasised that, due to the limited scope of this aid, it can only supplement deliveries on the ground and not replace them.

The European Commission has declared its willingness to make further payments to UNRWA after the refugee relief organisation declared its readiness to conduct an independent investigation that will again examine the allegations that UNRWA employees were involved in the Hamas attack on Israel on 07.10.23.¹⁹

West Bank: two Israelis and two Palestinians killed; resignation of Prime Minister

According to media reports, an attacker from the Qalandiya refugee camp killed two Israeli citizens, including a child, on 29.02.24 when he opened fire at a petrol station near the Israeli settlement of Eli near Nablus. The attacker was shot and killed by an armed settler at the scene. The attacker is said to have been a member of Fatah and an officer in the Palestinian Authority security forces.

According to the Palestinian health authorities, one Palestinian was killed and another wounded by the Israeli military near Hebron. The two were reportedly searching for herbs. On the same day, UN OCHA reported that two brothers were shot dead when they and a third brother allegedly tried to enter Israel through an opening in the border barrier.

According to UNRWA reports, over 200 operations were carried out by the Israeli military in the West Bank between 22.02.24 and 28.02.24, during which at least 174 Palestinians are said to have been detained.

Since 07.10.23, UN OCHA has recorded 603 attacks by Israeli settlers against the Palestinian population in the West Bank. These have been aimed directly against the population, against their property or both.

On 26.02.24, the Palestinian Authority's Prime Minister, Mohammed Shtayyeh, announced his resignation in the West Bank. He said he would stay on as caretaker until President Mahmoud Abbas appointed his successor.²⁰

Situation along the border between Lebanon and Israel

Hezbollah and Israeli armed forces continue to trade fire.

On 29.02.24, caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati spoke to the press about the future development of the conflict. He stated that, in his opinion, Hezbollah would adhere to a ceasefire if one was agreed for Gaza. Furthermore, such a ceasefire would probably lead to third party-led negotiations on the land border between Lebanon and Israel. From the Israeli side, the withdrawal of Hezbollah behind the Litani River is seen as an essential prerequisite for a ceasefire on the border.

Since the fighting began, a total of 285 people have been killed in Lebanon, 44 of them civilians. In Israel, 10 soldiers and six civilians have been killed so far.²¹

11 March 2024

Gaza Strip: current developments; humanitarian situation

On 10.03.24, the Hamas-led Ministry of Health in the Gaza Strip stated that more than 31,112 people had been killed since the start of the war. More than 72,760 other people are said to have been wounded. The Ministry does not officially distinguish between combatants and civilians. According to Israeli sources, more than 10,000 Palestinian combatants have been killed. The fighting is continuing, particularly in the north and in central Gaza.

On 09.03.24, the Ministry of Health stated that 25 people had now died of dehydration or malnutrition. The information could not be independently verified.

On 09.03.24 and 10.03.24, first Canada and then Sweden announced that they had resumed payments following assurances from UNRWA that they would better monitor the use of funds in future. Several UNRWA employees are accused of having been involved in the massacres that occurred on 07.10.23. In addition, various indications that UNRWA facilities have been used by Hamas have been uncovered since the beginning of the ground offensive. On 08.03.24, UNRWA accused Israel in a statement of having forced several UN agency employees to make false confessions through torture.

Also on 08.03.24, according to eyewitness reports, several aid airdrop packages caused injuries to persons on the ground when parachutes failed to open. A total of five people are said to have been killed.²²

West Bank: new settlements greenlighted for construction

On 06.03.24, the Defence Ministry body responsible for building permit procedures in the occupied territories approved the construction of almost 3,500 additional housing units for Israeli settlements in the West Bank. This is the first time since 07.10.23 that such a decision has been made. The decision was welcomed by settler representatives and large sections of the governing coalition. It was largely rejected by the parliamentary opposition and various Palestinian and international organisations.²³

Security situation along the border between Lebanon and Israel

Hezbollah and the Israeli armed forces continue to trade fire on a regular basis. On 09.03.24, a family of four was killed in an airstrike.

In the meantime, on the Lebanese side, 303 people have been reported killed, including 50 civilians; 10 soldiers and seven civilians have been reported killed on the Israeli side.²⁴

18 March 2024

Gaza Strip: current developments; humanitarian situation

On 18.03.24, the Hamas-led Ministry of Health announced that more than 31,645 Palestinians had been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war. In addition, as of 15.03.24, more than 73,400 other people are said to have been wounded. The Ministry does not officially distinguish between combatants and civilians.

Furthermore, as of 15.03.24, according to the Israeli military, a total of 247 military personnel have been killed and 1,476 others wounded since the launch of the ground offensive.

On 18.03.24, the Israeli army began a new military operation in and around Shifa Hospital in the north of the Gaza Strip. After the military had already raided the hospital in November, the spokesperson of the Israeli forces justified the renewed advance, claiming high-ranking Hamas members had been regrouping on the hospital premises. Hamas attacks are also said to have been launched from Shifa Hospital.

Although tunnel connections and weapons were found on the hospital premises in November 2023, the allegations made by the Israeli military in November could not be fully proven and critics have accused the military of recklessly endangering the lives of civilians. According to the Ministry of Health, more than 30,000 people are currently sheltering at the hospital.

According to media reports, at least 21 Palestinians were killed on 12.03.24 as they waited for food to be distributed. The Ministry of Health accused Israeli forces of opening fire on the people waiting there. The Israeli military, on the other hand, reported that Palestinian fighters opened fire on the crowd as people were waiting for food trucks. Aid deliveries are still being dropped over the north of the Gaza Strip. Around 300,000 Palestinians are still believed to be residing there. In addition, 200 tonnes of relief supplies were brought to the Gaza Strip by ship for the first time. Nevertheless, aid groups are protesting that airdrops and sea shipments are far less efficient ways of delivering the massive amounts of aid needed in Gaza than overland transport by truck.

According to the Israeli military, a high-ranking Hamas member was killed in an airstrike carried out by Israeli Defence Forces on a UN food distribution centre in the south of the Gaza Strip. Four other people were killed in the attack and 22 others were injured. At least one person employed by UNRWA was reportedly amongst the dead. On 15.03.24, the Israeli Prime Minister's Office announced that plans for a further military offensive on Rafah in the south of the Gaza Strip had been approved. These plans envisaged the evacuation of the civilian population in Rafah, without specifying the exact destination. A few days earlier, the military had said "humanitarian islands" would be created in central Gaza.²⁵

West Bank: people killed and injured in armed clashes; entry to east Jerusalem during Ramadan

According to UN figures, 418 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in connection with armed conflicts since the start of the war in the Gaza Strip. The UN says 407 of them were killed by Israeli troops, nine by Israeli settlers and two by one of the two groups of actors. In addition, 15 Israelis, including four military personnel, have been killed in the occupied territories (excluding Gaza) and Israel. Ninety-nine other Israelis have been wounded.

On 14.03.24, armed Israeli settlers from the "Sde Efraim" settlement outpost raided the nearby village of Kafr Ni'ma in Ramallah. One Palestinian was wounded and numerous items of property were vandalised and destroyed. Since 07.10.23, the UN has recorded 646 attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians.

On 13.03.24, a Palestinian teenager was killed when he began stabbing Israeli military personnel near a checkpoint between the West Bank and Jerusalem. In addition, two Palestinians were killed during a military raid in Jenin. A 13-year-old Palestinian boy was killed when Israeli police reportedly responded to violent protests in a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

Palestinians from the West Bank were allowed to travel to the al-Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem as part of Friday prayers during the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan for the first time since the start of the war in the Gaza Strip. However, access was restricted to Palestinian men over the age of 55 and Palestinian women over the age of 50, as well as children under the age of 10. In addition, all visitors are obliged to apply for an online permit using an app.²⁶

25 March 2024

Gaza Strip: current developments; humanitarian situation

On 24.03.24, the Hamas-led Ministry of Health announced that more than 32,226 Palestinians had been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war. More than 74,518 other people are also said to have been wounded. The ministry does not differentiate between combatants and civilians. The Israeli military stated that at least a third of those killed were combatants.

In addition, the Israeli military says that a total of 250 Israeli military personnel have been killed and 1,489 others wounded since the beginning of the ground offensive as of 22.03.24. Israeli authorities estimate that 134 Israelis and other nationals or their remains are still being held hostage in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military operation in and around Shifa Hospital in Gaza City was still ongoing on 24.03.24. According to reports from the Gaza Strip, around 30,000 displaced people, patients and medical staff were unable to leave the building due to the fighting around the hospital. The military stated that it had arrested more than 500 suspects, including 358 who it claims to have identified as members of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) group. In addition, according to information provided by the Israeli military on 23.03.24, 170 people identified as Hamas members had been killed.

A member of the Israeli military was also killed. A correspondent for the Al Jazeera media platform was reportedly arrested by the Israeli army and released after 12 hours.

According to the Palestinian Red Crescent, Israeli troops began besieging two more hospitals in the southern city of Khan Younis on 24.03.24.

On 18.03.24, the international institution used to classify the severity of famine crises (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, IPC) warned of an imminent famine in the north of the Gaza Strip, while the rest of the Gaza Strip remains at the same level of risk. According to local authorities, 27 people, the majority of them children, have already died of malnutrition and dehydration in the north of the Gaza Strip. On 21.04.23, media outlets reported further aid deliveries from Israel to the north of the Gaza Strip. According to official reports, more than 7,000 lorries were waiting to enter the Gaza Strip on the Egyptian side of the border with the Gaza Strip. International organisations and Israel are blaming each other for the delays in aid deliveries.

According to UNRWA, more than 60 percent of housing units in the Gaza Strip have been destroyed, as well as 392 education facilities, 123 ambulances and 184 mosques.²⁷

West Bank: several killed in military operations

On 20.03.24, four Palestinians were killed in an Israeli airstrike carried out on a target near the city of Jenin in the north of the West Bank. According to the PIJ, at least three of those killed were members of the group.

In the following 24 hours, seven other Palestinians were also killed in various incidents. The incidents included a military raid to arrest a suspect, an armed confrontation and the killing of an individual who was allegedly acting suspiciously. Some media sources report that the individual was following Israeli army instructions and had his hands raised when he was shot. A further four people were killed in raids and airstrikes on the Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarem.

Clashes also erupted between Palestinian Authority security forces and armed militias in Jenin. This is said to have been triggered by the arrest of a militia member.

According to UN figures, 434 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in connection with armed clashes since the start of the war in the Gaza Strip. Of these, 421 were reportedly killed by the Israeli army, nine by Israeli settlers and three by one of the two groups of actors. More than 5,000 other Palestinians have been wounded. In addition, 15 Israelis, including four military personnel, have been killed in the occupied territories (excluding Gaza) and Israel. 109 other Israelis have been wounded.²⁸

08 April 2024

Gaza Strip: current developments; humanitarian situation

According to the Hamas-led health authorities based in the Gaza Strip, a total of 28 children have died of malnutrition and dehydration by 01.04.24. In northern Gaza, OXFAM estimates that the average individual has had no more than 245 calories a day since January. The entire population of the Gaza Strip is affected by high levels of acute food insecurity. According to figures from UN OCHA, around 83 percent of lorries carrying food deliveries were denied access or obstructed in March 2024.

It is estimated that around 55.9 percent of the buildings in the Gaza Strip have been damaged or destroyed. Only ten out of 36 hospitals are still functional, and around 70 percent of the population, corresponding to around 1.7 million people, are internally displaced within the Gaza Strip. Following new fighting between the Israeli army and armed Palestinians in and around Shifa Hospital (cf. BN of 25.03.24), the WHO stated that the hospital was no

longer operational. According to Israeli military sources, more than 200 armed persons were killed in the offensive. Unverifiable reports say that hospital patients were also killed.

On 01.04.24, seven humanitarian aid workers from the organisation World Central Kitchen, six of them foreign nationals, were killed by Israeli airstrikes on three of their vehicles. The Israeli military has stated that the attack was the result of a misidentification of an armed individual and, in addition, did not fulfil the requirements for an airstrike. Hence, a colonel and a major were dismissed from the ranks of the military and three other high-ranking military members were reprimanded a few days later. Criticism was directed at the Israeli military's operational regulations and at missing transparency and investigations into other cases that did not result in foreign casualties. Following the incident, World Central Kitchen and several other organisations suspended their aid programmes in the Gaza Strip.

In recent developments, the Israeli government has announced that the northern Erez border crossing from Israel into the Gaza Strip would be opened for humanitarian aid. In addition, the Israeli port of Ashdod would be opened for aid deliveries; also, another land border crossing into the Gaza Strip would be opened for the import of aid supplies from Jordan. It has remained unclear when these measures would actually begin.

On 07.04.24, the military also announced to withdraw its troops from the city of Khan Younis in the south of the Gaza Strip. This would result in the smallest number of Israeli troops present since the ground offensive began last year. The withdrawal is reportedly part of the preparations for an offensive in the city of Rafah. Evacuations there are set to begin next week and might last for several months.²⁹

West Bank: several dead in armed clashes

Almost daily military raids in the West Bank are leading to increasing numbers of arrests of Palestinians and to fighting between Israeli troops and armed individuals and groups in the West Bank.

Media report that on 27.03.24, three Palestinians were killed during a military raid in Jenin, two of them by a drone attack. Another Palestinian was killed on 05.04.24 in Tulkarem during a military raid after he had allegedly thrown explosive devices at Israeli military personnel. The day before, one Palestinian was killed while trying to escape from arrest by the Israeli border police. Since 07.10.23, a total of 456 Palestinians have apparently been killed and 4,750 others wounded in the West Bank.³⁰

Israel: Protesters demand ceasefire agreement and resignation of the government

On 31.03.24, the largest demonstrations since 07.10.23 were staged in Jerusalem. Several tens of thousands of participants demanded both a ceasefire agreement with Hamas, aiming at the release of the hostages still in the Gaza Strip, as well as early elections. Rallies were also held in Tel Aviv and continued over the following days.

As of 07.04.24, around 90,000 people have still not returned to their homes near the Gaza Strip border, six months after they fled their homes following the Hamas attacks and the start of the war in the Gaza Strip on 07.10.23.³¹

Situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to fire at each other. Recently, there has been a trend towards a higher number of casualties and a greater intensity of strikes.

The actions of Hezbollah and its allied militias continue to be strongly criticized within Lebanese politics. Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah recently confirmed on 06.04.24 that Hezbollah would remain militarily active at a comparable level as long as fighting continued in Gaza. In contrast, other Lebanese politicians, such as those from the Christian-dominated Free Patriotic Movement and Lebanese Forces parties, have now made clear demands for a ceasefire regardless of the situation in Gaza.

On 07.04.24, a representative of the Lebanese Forces was abducted in Byblos by unidentified individuals. Protests by supporters of the Lebanese Forces led to road blockades in the night of 08.04.24.

On 07.04.24, the Israeli army confirmed that it was now in a "new phase" of preparations for a possible war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, in which a transition from defensive to offensive measures was conceivable.

In total, at least 354 people, 68 of them civilians, have been reported dead on the Lebanese side, and ten soldiers and eight civilians on the Israeli side.³²

15 April 2024

Israel: Major attack by Iran

In the night to 14.04.24, Iran fired more than 300 ballistic missiles, drones, and cruise missiles at Israel, as was reported by Israeli sources. 99 percent of the missiles were apparently intercepted by the Israeli air defence and its partners, among them the USA and Great Britain, but also by or with the support of Arab countries. Media report that also the Houthis and groups in Iraq took part in the attacks on Israel.

Air alerts were triggered in numerous areas in Israel. In southern Israel, a child was seriously wounded. An air force base in Nevatim, in the south of the country, suffered minor material damage. An Israeli intelligence centre was also among the targets, the Iranian military stated. These two targets were strategically and operationally important for the attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus on 01.04.24 (cf. BN of 08.04.24).

It was the first direct attack from Iran on Israel after decades of hostility and confrontation by Iranian proxy groups.³³

Gaza Strip: current developments; humanitarian situation

The Hamas-led health ministry stated on 12.04.24 that around 33,634 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war. In addition, more than 76,214 people were reportedly wounded. The ministry does not officially distinguish between combatants and civilians.

According to Israeli figures, more than 12,000 militia members have been killed. These figures cannot be independently verified.

In addition, according to the Israeli military, 259 military personnel have been killed and 1,561 wounded since the start of the ground offensive up to 12.04.24.

Fighting in the Gaza Strip is continuing, including ongoing airstrikes. On 11.04.24, the Israeli military announced the start of a ground offensive in central Gaza. On 10.04.24, an aid convoy of the UN Children's Fund UNICEF reportedly came under fire as it attempted to deliver humanitarian aid to the north of the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli government has deviated from its plan to open the Erez border crossing to Israel in the north of the Gaza Strip and announced instead the construction of a new border crossing. Apparently, this crossing was opened on 12.04.24 for deliveries that had previously been checked at the Kerem Shalom border crossing. Aid deliveries to the Gaza Strip have increased since 07.04.24. Israeli sources say that more than 400 lorry deliveries have been transferred to the Gaza Strip every day. The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, however, recorded only a slight increase in aid deliveries and published figures for 08., 09. and 10.04.24 amounting to a total of 141 to 246 lorry deliveries per day, in contradiction to the figures provided by Israel. Despite the increase, the UN said that the aid is not sufficient, partly because not all deliveries are reaching where they are most needed due to the difficulties in distributing aid within the Gaza Strip.³⁴

West Bank: Attacks by settlers after kidnapping of an Israeli teenager; several dead

On 12.04.24, one Palestinian was killed and 25 other Palestinians were injured in a violent attack by Israeli settlers on the Palestinian village of al-Mughayyir. The attackers used firearms and set fire to houses. The night before, two Palestinians, among them one Hamas member, were reportedly killed in fighting with the military during a military raid.

Mesdia report that the settlers were looking for an Israeli teenager from a nearby settlement who had previously been reported missing. A day later, the 14-year-old was found dead, which triggered new vandalism and attacks on Palestinian villages. According to Israeli media reports, the Israeli teenager was killed. Details of the circumstances of his death were not initially known. The Israeli military spoke of a murder in a terrorist attack.

In the attacks targeting al-Mughayyir, twelve houses and several cars were destroyed or damaged. In the village of Douma, a further 15 houses and ten farms were set on fire. In total, more than ten villages were attacked, according to the Israeli organisation Yesh Din.

UN OCHA has stated that since 07.10.23, the Israeli military has erected a total of 114 additional roadblocks in the West Bank, further restricting the inhabitants' freedom of movement.³⁵

Situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to fire at each other regularly. At least 363 casualties, among them 70 civilians, have now been reported on the Lebanese side; ten military personnel and eight civilians have been killed on the Israeli side.³⁶

22 April 2024

Gaza Strip: Current developments; humanitarian situation

On 22.04.24, the Hamas-led health ministry stated that at least 34,097 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war. In addition, more than 76,980 people have reportedly been wounded. The ministry does not officially distinguish between combatants and civilians.

According to Israeli figures, more than 13,000 militia members and Hamas fighters have been killed. None of the figures can be independently verified.

In addition, the Israeli military has informed that a total of 259 military personnel have been killed and 1,582 others wounded since the start of the ground offensive up to 19.04.24. The Israeli authorities estimate that 133 hostages or their remains are still being held in the Gaza Strip.

Fighting in the Gaza Strip is continuing, including airstrikes carried out by Israel. At least nine people were reportedly killed in one of the attacks launched on targets in Rafah on 20.04.24. According to the administration of the hospital that received the victims, six children were among those killed. Further airstrikes the following night apparently raised the death toll to 22. According to the Hamas-led health ministry, 18 of the dead were children.

On 14.04.24, WFP relief supplies were brought in via the Erez border crossing for the first time in six months, enabling some bakeries in the north and in central Gaza to resume work.³⁷

East Jerusalem: Israeli court orders eviction of Palestinian family in Sheikh Jarrah

On 15.04.24, an Israeli court ordered the eviction of a Palestinian family from their home in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah. The family claims to have lived there for decades. However, the Israeli district court now ruled that the premises are Jewish property that was stolen after the first Arab-Israeli war and that the Palestinian family therefore has no right to it.

The case was brought to the court by Nahalat Shimon Ltd, a settler organisation that has for years been involved in the eviction of Palestinian families from the neighbourhood. The organisation has based its case on a new law intended to enable Jewish Israelis to reclaim property that had been in Jewish ownership before the state of Israel was founded. The Palestinian family says that they have been living in the house since 1955. During this time (until 1967), East Jerusalem was under Jordanian control. In similar proceedings, the supreme court had suspended the forced eviction of four families from Sheikh Jarrah in March 2022 (cf. BN of 07.03.22). The family concerned in the new case has announced to take legal action against the order.³⁸

West Bank: Numerous dead in armed clashes

The Palestinian health ministry stated that on 19.04. and 20.04.24, at least 14 people were killed in two days of fighting between the Israeli military and armed groups in the Nur Shams refugee camp in the town of Tulkarem. The Tulkarem Brigade was apparently involved in the fighting. The Islamic Jihad in Palestine (PIJ) group stated that three of those killed were members of its organisation. A Palestinian aged 15 or 16 was reportedly among the dead. Various media have reported different ages.

According to the Israeli military, 14 gunmen were killed and eight suspects arrested in the incident. The Palestinian news agency WAFA stated that the internet in the town was temporarily switched off. Several residential buildings in the densely built camp were damaged in the fighting.

On 20.04.24, the Palestinian driver of an ambulance was reportedly shot in the chest near the village of Sawiyya while on a mission to treat wounded victims of an attack by Israeli settlers on a Palestinian village. It was not initially clear who fired the fatal shot.

On 21.04.24, two Palestinians were reportedly killed when they attempted to attack Israeli military personnel with a knife at a checkpoint near Hebron. According to the Israeli military, one of the two also shot at the soldiers with a firearm. In a separate incident on 20.04.24, a Palestinian woman was killed after she attacked Israeli military personnel with a knife near the Beka'ot settlement.

The Palestinian health ministry has stated that since October 2023, at least 469 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli troops in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.³⁹

29 April 2024

Gaza Strip: Recent developments; humanitarian situation

Fighting in the Gaza Strip, including aerial bombardments, continues. At the same time, rockets are repeatedly fired from the Gaza Strip towards Israel, most recently on 23.04.24 when four rockets were intercepted by Israeli air defence. In total, more than 16,000 missiles were reportedly fired from the Gaza Strip since 07.10.23.

At least 20 Palestinians were killed in Israeli airstrikes on three houses in Rafah, in the south of the Gaza Strip, on 29.04.24, according to medics.

Mass graves containing the bodies of Palestinians killed have been found near the two hospitals Shifa in Gaza City and Nasser in Khan Younis. Intense fighting had taken place in and around the two hospitals as part of military operations. In response to allegations, Israeli authorities and the military denied having dug mass graves, stating that instead, the mass graves had been dug by Palestinians. However, some bodies were exhumed for identification purposes to determine whether they may be the human remains of hostages still in the Gaza Strip.

A study of satellite images by the UN Education Cluster shows that around 73 percent of Gaza's educational institutions have been either completely destroyed or significantly damaged. In addition, 65 percent of the schools used as accommodation for internally displaced people have apparently been directly hit by attacks or damaged during the war.

WFP has informed that in Gaza, the three famine markers (food insecurity, malnutrition, mortality) will be reached within the next six weeks.⁴⁰

West Bank: Minor and two gunmen killed

On 25.04.24, a 16-year-old Palestinian was shot dead by the Israeli military in Ramallah after Palestinians had thrown stones at the soldiers, as was reported by the military.

In the night of 26.04.24, two Palestinian gunmen were killed in an armed attack on the border crossing to Israel in the northern West Bank. The Islamic Jihad in Palestine (PIJ) group has confirmed that several militia members attacked the border crossing.⁴¹

06 May 2024

Gaza Strip: Recent developments; humanitarian situation

The Hamas-led health ministry stated on 05.05.24 that more than 34,600 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war. The ministry does not officially distinguish between combatants and civilians. The figures cannot be independently verified.

In addition, according to the Israeli military, a total of 262 military personnel have been killed and 1,602 others wounded since the beginning of the ground offensive until 01.05.24.

Fighting in Gaza continues, including airstrikes by the Israeli military. On 05.05.24, Hamas forces fired rockets at the Kerem Shalom border crossing in southern Gaza, the main point of entry for humanitarian aid from Israel: Three Israeli soldiers were killed in the incident. The border crossing was temporarily closed to further aid deliveries, and targets near the border crossing at Rafah were bombed by the Israeli military.

On 06.05.24, ahead of an announced military offensive on the overcrowded town of Rafah in southern Gaza, the Israeli military called on the approximately 1.4 million people living there to leave the eastern part of the town bordering Egypt and to move to the al-Mawasi camp on the coast. More than one million Palestinians from other parts of Gaza have apparently sought refuge there. The military offensive will initially be launched on a limited scale.

A UN study concluded that rebuilding the destroyed homes in Gaza would take until at least 2040, assuming that work could be carried out at five times the rate of past reconstruction projects. With reconstruction capacities similar to those seen after past military conflicts, it would take around 80 years. More than 370,000 housing units are estimated to have been damaged, of which 79,000 are considered destroyed.

The UN report also assumes a total casualty rate of 5 percent of the 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza. This figure is based on the number of deaths and injuries reported by the Hamas-led authorities on the ground. In the last quarter of 2023, Gaza's economy shrank by 81 percent, and much of its economic base was destroyed.

On 01.05.24, the Israeli military opened the Erez border crossing to allow more aid into northern Gaza via Israel. However, food shortages and hunger remain widespread, particularly in northern Gaza.⁴²

West Bank: Several killed in armed clashes

On 02.05.24, a Palestinian was killed by Palestinian security forces in a rare inter-Palestinian armed conflict. He was reportedly a member of the Islamic Jihad in Palestine (PIJ) group. According to the Palestinian Authority, fire was opened at a patrol of the security forces, which they returned.

Both Palestinian and Israeli authorities have stated that on 04.05.24, five Palestinians were killed in a raid by the Israeli military and subsequent armed clashes with armed Palestinians in the village of Deir al-Ghusun near the town of Tulkarem. Four of those killed have reportedly been confirmed by Hamas as members of the group. The fifth victim has not yet been identified. The Israeli military has blamed the group for several attacks on Israeli military personnel and civilians.

According to UN OCHA data of 01.05.24, at least 800 attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinian people and property in the West Bank have been recorded since 07.10.23. In the course of these attacks, 31 Palestinians were reportedly killed by settlers or the military.⁴³

Israel: Government bans Al Jazeera news channel

On 05.05.24, the Israeli government announced the closure and banning of the Al Jazeera news network in Israel, describing the medium as a "mouthpiece of Hamas". Equipment was confiscated during a raid on the network's premises. Al Jazeera, which is based in Qatar, said it would take legal action against the ban. Press associations and human rights groups have criticised the ban. Just last month, parliament had passed a law allowing the government to temporarily close foreign media organisations if they pose a threat to national security in times of war.

The network's activities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are not expected to be affected by the ban.⁴⁴

13 May 2024

Gaza Strip: Current developments; humanitarian situation

The Hamas-led Ministry of Health said on 12.05.24 that more than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war. The ministry does not officially distinguish between combatants and civilians. The Israeli military claims to have killed more than 13,000 militia members. None of the figures can be independently verified.

In addition, according to the Israeli military, a total of 266 military personnel were killed and 1,610 others wounded since the beginning of the ground offensive up to 10.05.24.

Fighting in Gaza, including airstrikes by the Israeli military, continues. The Israeli military started an offensive in the southern governorate of Rafah on 07.05.24. According to UNRWA, more than 300,000 people have already fled Rafah. The area around al-Mawasi, which Israel has designated as a "humanitarian zone" and to which people are supposed to move, is already overcrowded and lacks water and supplies. As a result, many refugees have also moved to the largely destroyed city of Khan Younis and Deir al-Balah further north to seek shelter. In al-Mawasi, there is a lack of sanitation, accommodation, and drinking water. Jaundice, believed to be caused by hepatitis, is spreading there.

On 07.05.24, the Rafah border crossing on the Gaza side was brought under Israeli control. Both southern border crossings, Rafah and Kerem Shalom, were initially closed due to heavy fighting. On 08.05.24, the Kerem Shalom crossing was reopened, but work on the Palestinian side was initially unable to resume due to ongoing fighting. The only border crossing that remained operational was the Erez crossing into Israel, in northern Gaza. A total of 60 truckloads were able to enter Gaza via this crossing on 09.05.24. The main hospital in southern Gaza, Abu Youssef al-Najjar, had to be closed and evacuated due to the fighting.

On 11.05.24, the Israeli military ordered further evacuations from densely populated parts of Rafah. It is estimated that an additional 40,000 people were affected by the new orders. The following day, the Israeli military extended its offensive to these areas.

In northern Gaza, particularly Gaza City, heavy fighting resumed after Hamas fighters regrouped there. According to a UN spokesperson, an estimated 300,000 people in northern Gaza are still suffering from acute famine. A lack of fuel has prevented the transfer of medical patients from the north to the south of the Gaza Strip. The UN have warned that hospitals and ambulances would soon be forced to suspend their services due to the lack of fuel. On 10.05.24, ten of the twelve bakeries supported by aid organisations in southern Gaza had to cease operations. The remaining four are not operating at full capacity and are likely to close soon due to lack of fuel and ingredients.⁴⁵

Israel: Several people injured by rockets from the Gaza Strip; ongoing protests

On 08.05.24, a woman in Beersheba, in southern Israel, was lightly injured by a Hamas rocket from Gaza while she was in a playground that was hit by the rocket.

On the night of 12.05.24, three more people were injured when a rocket from Gaza hit their house in the Israeli city of Ashkelon.

The weekly protests in Tel Aviv demanding an agreement with Hamas for the release of the hostages and the resignation of Prime Minister Netanyahu continued. Police used water cannons and clashes between demonstrators and security forces increased.⁴⁶

Security situation in the Lebanese-Israeli border area

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to exchange fire. In response to the Israeli takeover of the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt, Hezbollah has announced the mobilisation of its forces.

At least 402 people are now reported dead on the Lebanese side, among them 79 civilians, and 14 military personnel and nine civilians on the Israeli side. The financial damage caused by the conflict to Lebanon's infrastructure and economy is now estimated at USD 1.5bn.⁴⁷

27 May 2024

Gaza Strip: latest developments; humanitarian situation

On 27.05.24, the Hamas-led health ministry stated that almost 36,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war. The ministry does not officially distinguish between combatants and civilians.

In addition, according to the Israeli military, a total of 285 military personnel have been killed and 1,781 others wounded since the start of the ground offensive until 24.05.24. In the night of 25.05.24, the bodies of three more hostages were recovered in the Gaza Strip, following the discovery of three a week earlier.

Fighting in Gaza, including airstrikes by the Israeli military, continues. In Rafah and in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the north of Gaza in particular, Israeli troops and Palestinian militia members were engaged in heavy fighting.

According to Palestinian health workers, 35 people were killed in an airstrike on 26.05.24 on a refugee camp near the city of Rafah. The Israeli military claimed to have hit a Hamas facility and killed two high-ranking Hamas members. The neighbourhood where the attack took place has not yet been called for evacuation as part of the military offensive in Rafah. The Red Crescent stated that the area was one of the humanitarian zones designated by the military.

Since the start of the military offensive in Rafah on 06.04.24, the south of Gaza has been largely cut off from humanitarian aid. More than 1 million Palestinians have fled the city. Egypt has refused to open the Rafah border crossing, which is under Israeli control on the Gaza side. On 21.05.24, the UN suspended food distribution in Rafah due to the lack of goods and the security situation. On 26.05.24, under a new agreement with Egypt to bypass the Rafah crossing, some 200 trucks of aid resumed entering through the Kerem Shalom crossing in southern Gaza. However, it initially remained unclear whether aid organisations in Gaza would be able to reach the deliveries via Kerem Shalom in view of the ongoing fighting. According to the UN, access to the border crossing has usually been too dangerous since the start of the offensive in Rafah. Before the start of the offensive in the south, some 300 trucks a day were able to enter Gaza via the two southern crossings.

Two crossing allow aid to enter northern Gaza. In addition, the floating dock facility now completed by the US military allows several dozen trucks a day to enter via a floating jetty. However, there are reports that there is still a shortage of relief supplies. Humanitarian organisations estimate that a total of 600 trucks a day would be needed to meet the demand.

As of 24.05.24, there were still 15 (out of a total of 36) partially functioning hospitals and six field hospitals available to the population. According to the UN, there is no functioning hospital accessible in northern Gaza. Hospitals in the south and in central Gaza continue to be threatened by fuel shortage. A hospital in Deir al-Balah was forced to cut its electricity supply on 23.05.24.⁴⁸

Israel: Rocket alert in Tel Aviv

On 26.05.24, rockets fired from Gaza set off air raid sirens in the Israeli capital Tel Aviv for the first time in four months. Several of the eight rockets were reportedly intercepted by the air defence system. The military said the rockets were fired from Rafah. Hamas has claimed responsibility for the attacks. Two people were lightly injured on their way to shelters.⁴⁹

West Bank: Several dead and injured in military operations; one minor killed after attempted knife attack

In the late evening of 17.05.24, Israeli fighter jets and helicopters targeted Jenin in the north of the West Bank. The Islamic Jihad in Palestine (PIJ) group has claimed that a member of the Jenin Brigade was killed in the attack. In addition, media reports also stated that eight people were injured.

On 23.05.24, the Israeli military ended a two-day military operation in Jenin. In the fights, at least twelve people were reportedly killed and 25 others injured. At least eight of those killed were Hamas and al-Aqsa Brigade members. The PIJ said that some of their fighters were also among the dead but gave no numbers. The director of a hospital in Jenin stated that one of his doctors was among the victims. He had been on his way to work.

Media report that on 26.05.24, a 14-year-old Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli soldiers after he tried to attack them with a knife near Saeer village in the southern West Bank. According to dpa, 191 Palestinians have been killed in clashes with the Israeli military, attempted attacks, and attacks by militant settlers since the beginning of the year. This brings the total number of Palestinians killed since the beginning of the war in Gaza to 497.⁵⁰

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to exchange artillery fire.

At least 440 people, among them 84 civilians, have now been reported dead on the Lebanese side, and 14 soldiers and eleven civilians on the Israeli side.

On 26.05.24, Israel celebrated the Jewish feast of Lag BaOmer, when many Jews traditionally make a pilgrimage to Mount Meron. The area had been closed due to the threat posed by Hezbollah. However, a group of several thousand pilgrims attempted to enter the area, leading to violent clashes with Israeli security forces.⁵¹

03 June 2024

Gaza Strip: Current developments; humanitarian situation

In the night of 26.05. to 27.05.24, the Israeli army carried out an attack on a target in Rafah that resulted in 46 civilian deaths, according to the Hamas-controlled Palestinian health authority. While Hamas claimed that the target was a refugee camp, the Israeli army said it had targeted a Hamas base where two senior figures of the terrorist organisation were killed; the subsequent spreading fire was triggered by secondary explosions from ammunition stored at the target site. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu described the scale of the damage as a tragic mistake. An investigation has been launched into the incident.

According to consistent information from various organisations and the Israeli government, more than one million civilians have now been evacuated from Rafah to the newly established security zone in Khan Younis.

On 03.06.24 it was confirmed that the remains of a man who had previously been considered a possible hostage in Gaza were identified in Kibbutz Nir Otz. He had already been murdered on 07.10.23.⁵²

Situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border

Shelling between Hezbollah and the Israeli army continues.

At least 451 people have now been reported killed on the Lebanese side, including at least 84 civilians, and 14 soldiers and eleven civilians on the Israeli side.⁵³

10 June 2024

Gaza Strip: Current developments; humanitarian situation

On 07.06.24, the Hamas-led health ministry stated that more than 36,731 Palestinians have been killed and 83,530 others wounded in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war. The ministry does not officially distinguish between combatants and civilians.

In addition, the Israeli military says that a total of 294 military personnel have been killed and 1,902 others wounded since the start of the ground offensive.

Fighting in Gaza, including airstrikes by the Israeli military, continues. Prior to 07.06.24, an intensification of airstrikes was recorded in central Gaza, including in al-Bureij, al-Maghazi, eastern Deir al-Balah and the Nuseirat refugee camp. Ground fighting continued to be recorded, particularly in Rafah.

On 08.06.24, the Israeli military freed four of the hostages held by Hamas in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza. Many Palestinians were apparently killed in the operation. While the Hamas-led authorities put the death toll at 274 and the wounded at around 700, the Israeli military estimated fewer than 100 dead. Although the Hamas-led authorities did not attribute the death toll directly to the hostage rescue, media reports speculated that the deaths were caused by the heavy fighting. One Israeli soldier was also killed. The four freed hostages were taken to Israel for further treatment.

On 09.06.24, the WFP announced the suspension of food aid deliveries via the temporary floating port built by the U.S. military. This was due to security concerns after two warehouses had come under fire, leaving one of the organisation's staff injured.

Since 07.05.24, it has not been possible to evacuate people for medical reasons. The WHO estimates that more than 14,000 people are currently in need of medical treatment outside Gaza.

A preliminary report by the satellite observation programme of the UN Training and Research Institute UNOSAT says that 55 percent of the buildings in the Gaza Strip have been (possibly) damaged or destroyed. According to the report, damage has increased most in the Deir al-Balah and Gaza governorates since 01.04.24.

Surveys conducted by UNICEF between December 2023 and April 2024 found that nine out of ten children in Gaza were experiencing severe food poverty, living on two or fewer of the eight food groups per day.⁵⁴

West Bank: Several dead and injured

On 04.06.24, two armed Palestinians opened fire on Israeli military personnel near the Israel-West Bank border west of Tulkarem. The two Palestinians were subsequently shot dead by the forces present.

On 29.05.24, two Israeli military personnel were killed after being run over by a vehicle at a checkpoint near Nablus. The driver later surrendered to the Palestinian security forces, claiming it was an accident.

On 30.05.24, one Palestinian was killed and four others wounded during military operations in Ramallah and al-Birah. On 01.06.24, two underage Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli military personnel. The circumstances were not fully clarified at first. During a military raid on a wedding in Nablus on 03.06.24, a Palestinian was killed trying to escape. During further raids in Nablus on the same night, two people were killed and nine others wounded in clashes between armed groups and the Israeli military. Those killed were reportedly bystanders.

On 03.06.24, three Palestinians were reportedly killed and 13 others wounded during a military raid in Jenin.

This brings the total number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank between 07.10.23 and 03.06.24 to 508. A further 5,150 people were reportedly wounded. Twelve Israelis, among them five settlers and seven military personnel, were also killed and 105 others were wounded during the same period.⁵⁵

Situation in the Lebanese-Israeli border area

Intense shelling between Hezbollah and the Israeli army has continued.

At least 458 people have now been reported dead on the Lebanese side, including at least 90 civilians, and 15 soldiers and eleven civilians on the Israeli side.⁵⁶

17 June 2024

Gaza Strip: current developments; humanitarian situation

On 14.06.24, the Hamas-led health ministry stated that more than 37,266 Palestinians had been killed and 85,102 others wounded in Gaza Strip the start of the war. The ministry does not officially distinguish between combatants and civilians.

In addition, according to information from the Israeli military on 16.06.24, a total of 309 military personnel have been killed since the start of the ground offensive.

Fighting in Gaza continues, including airstrikes by the Israeli military. Limited ground offensives are also taking place throughout the Gaza Strip, including in Beit Hanoun in the north, south of Gaza City, eastern Deir al-Balah, the northeastern part of Khan Younis and eastern, western and central Rafah.

According to UN OCHA on 14.06.24, the latest military developments have led to a further deterioration in the water supply. In Jabaliya, five wells have been destroyed, and in Rafah two wells, a supply line from an Egyptian desalination plant and two local desalination plants. Overall, it is estimated that about 67 percent of water and sanitation facilities and infrastructure have been destroyed or damaged in the last eight months.

17 of the 36 hospitals in the Gaza Strip are still partially functional, but 14 of them are only partially accessible due to the destruction around them and the critical security situation. In Rafah, where the ground offensives continue, there is no functioning hospital. Instead, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) operates a field hospital there. Another field hospital, run by the UAE, is only partially operational due to limited accessibility. In Khan Younis, the al-Khair hospital has been able to resume partial and limited operation. In northern Gaza, access to three hospitals has been restored to a limited extent since the partial withdrawal of Israeli troops on 31.05.24. Necessary evacuations of patients from Gaza are still not possible.

According to UN estimates, more than 1 million Palestinians may be facing extreme hunger by mid-July 2024. On 14.06.24, the U.S. military announced that the temporary floating harbour would have to be disconnected from the mainland due to bad weather conditions and potential damage. The UN has not yet resumed food aid distribution via the facility after a temporary pause to reassess the security situation and resolve ethical concerns following the military use of parts of the pier facility to evacuate the four freed hostages and one wounded soldier last week (cf. BN of 10.06.24). On 16.06.24, the Israeli military announced that it would immediately begin to observe daytime breaks in fighting on an approximately 12 km stretch of road in Rafah to allow for the distribution of humanitarian aid supplies via the Kerem Shalom crossing. The military stressed that operations in Rafah would continue as planned. The UN has informed that between 06.05. and 06.06.24, it only had access to an average of 68 trucks with aid supplies per day (500 are needed daily) due to the critical security situation. According to the Israeli authorities, an average of 201 trucks entered Gaza every day between 02.05. and 23.06.24. However, many aid deliveries are still piling up at the border crossings.⁵⁷

West Bank: Several dead and injured

The Palestinian health ministry stated that on 11.06.24, six Palestinians were killed in armed clashes with the Israeli military in Jenin, in the northern part of the West Bank.

In the previous week, 13 more Palestinians were reportedly killed and 75 others wounded during operations by Israeli military in refugee camps and villages in the West Bank. Most of them were in the al-Far'a refugee camp, in Jenin and in the Aqabat Jaber refugee camp.

On 15.06.24, a minor Palestinian was shot dead by the Israeli military in the city of Nablus, in the north of the West Bank. According to an anonymous statement by an employee in the Israeli security sector, Israeli troops opened fire on Palestinians who were throwing stones at military personnel during an operation.

This brings the total number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank between 07.10.23 and 10.06.24 to 521. More than 5,200 others were apparently wounded. During the same period, twelve Israelis, including five settlers and seven military personnel, were also killed and 105 others were wounded. Between 07.10.23 and 10.06.24, a total of 968 Palestinians were also reported to have been attacked by settlers.⁵⁸

Situation in the Lebanese-Israeli border area

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to exchange fire. After a high-ranking Hezbollah commander was killed in an Israeli military strike on 11.06.24, mutual shelling intensified significantly in the following days.

At least 471 people, including at least 91 civilians, have now been reported dead in the border area on the Lebanese side, and 15 soldiers and eleven civilians on the Israeli side.⁵⁹

24 June 2024

Security situation in the Lebanese-Israeli border region

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to exchange fire. There has been a marked escalation in rhetoric on both the Israeli and Hezbollah sides. In a television interview, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said that the reduced intensity of the fighting in Gaza following the Rafah offensive would set free forces to be deployed to the north. According to various sources, mediator Amos Hochstein's last trip to Lebanon was also accompanied by clear warnings that time was running out for a peaceful solution.

At least 480 people have now been reported dead on the Lebanese side, among them 93 civilians, and 15 military and 11 civilians on the Israeli side.⁶⁰

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration
Briefing Notes
BN-Redaktion@bamf.bund.de

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