

---

## News Update - November 12

1 message

---

**S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace** <info@centerpeace.org>  
Reply-To: "S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace" <info@centerpeace.org>  
To: kmccarthy@fmep.org

Tue, Nov 12, 2024 at 2:16 AM



S. DANIEL ABRAHAM  
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

# Israel and Middle East News Update

*Tuesday, November 12*

[Click here for a printer-friendly version](#)

[Please Forward News Update to Your Friends & Colleagues. They Can Use this Link to Subscribe](#)

### Headlines:

- **Israeli Strikes Kill 37 as Attacks Intensify in Central and Southern Gaza**
- **IDF Expands Designated Humanitarian Zone in Southern Gaza**
- **Trump and Netanyahu Envoy Met About Middle East Wars**
- **Saudi Arabia Calls for International Mobilization to End War in Gaza**
- **Smotrich Orders Defense Ministry to Prepare for West Bank Annexation**
- **Hezbollah Rockets Wound Several, Damage Property in 80-Rocket Barrage**
- **Saudi Crown Prince Says Israel Must Not Attack Iran**
- **Rights Group Calls for International Force to Protect Sudanese**

### Commentary:

- **Israel Hayom: "West Bank Annexation"**  
- By Yehuda Schlesinger and Hanan Greenwood
  - **Israel Hayom: "Navigating Policy on Lebanon and Gaza"**  
- By Shirit Avitan Cohen
-

Reuters

## **Israeli Strikes Kill 37 as Attacks Intensify in Central and Southern Gaza**

An Israeli airstrike killed seven people at a café near the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, Palestinian medics said, bringing the death toll from Israeli strikes since Sunday night to at least 37. In central Gaza, Israeli forces sent tanks into the Nuseirat camp from the west, sparking panic among residents and displaced families as advancing tanks opened fire. Twenty people were killed by air and ground strikes in Nuseirat, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee sites. With the war in Gaza now in its 14th month, Israel is focusing its operations in the north and center of the enclave in what it says is a campaign to stop Hamas militants from waging attacks and regrouping. Tens of thousands of Palestinian residents have been told to evacuate the areas, fueling fears that they may never be allowed to return. The already slim chances of a ceasefire receded further at the weekend when mediator Qatar said it was suspending its efforts until both Israel and Palestinian group Hamas showed greater willingness to reach an agreement. [Read More "Sharp Drop Seen in Reservist Response Rate Due to Burnout amid Long War" "IDF Reservist Killed in Jabaliya, 1st Soldier to Fall in Gaza in 9 Days" \(Ynet News\)](#)

Times of Israel

## **IDF Expands Designated Humanitarian Zone in Southern Gaza**

The Israel Defense Forces said that it had expanded the designated “humanitarian zone” in southern Gaza, where the vast majority of the Palestinian population in the Strip currently resides. It also said it would allow more tents, shelter materials, food, water, and medical supplies to enter. According to a map released by the IDF, several neighborhoods of Khan Younis and some areas on the outskirts of the Nuseirat refugee camp were being added to the humanitarian zone. The zone is where most aid is directed and where several field hospitals have been established. Its size has changed multiple times amid evolving IDF operations against the Hamas terror group. The zone expansion came as a deadline approached for the US to assess that Israel has improved supplies of humanitarian aid to Gaza. In mid-October, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned Israel in a letter that it had 30 days — until November 13, tomorrow — to implement significant improvements to the humanitarian situation in Gaza or jeopardize the continued supply of US weapons. [Read More “Gaza Mother Struggling to Feed Children Says Only Death Can End Their Suffering” \(Reuters\) "\\$10 for a Kilogram of Tomatoes: Gazans Can't Afford the Skyrocketing Prices" "Israel Worried US Could Halt Weapons Supply amid Looming Ultimatum on Gaza Aid" \(Ha'aretz\)](#)

Axios

## **Trump and Netanyahu Envoy Met About Middle East Wars**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's confidant Ron Dermer met President-elect Trump in Mar-a-Lago. An Israeli official said the meeting was aimed at passing messages from Netanyahu to Trump and briefing the President-elect on Israel's plans in Gaza, Lebanon and Iran for the next two months before Trump takes office. US officials mentioned the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire efforts, the plan for Gaza after the war ends and Israeli-Saudi normalization efforts as issues the Israelis want to take Trump's pulse on. Dermer, who is Netanyahu's Minister of Strategic Affairs, and Trump worked together during the first Trump administration when Dermer was the Israeli ambassador to Washington. [Read More "Families of Hostages Tell Thousands of Jews at DC Rally Its Time for Deal to End War" \(Ynet News\)](#)

I24 News

## **Saudi Arabia Calls for International Mobilization to End War in Gaza**

Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan outlined the urgent need for international action to halt the ongoing conflict in Gaza during a press conference held on the sidelines of the Riyadh summit. Emphasizing that “stopping the war is our top priority,” he announced plans for a diplomatic offensive in the coming days and weeks to ensure that the international community no longer tolerates what he described as Israel's crimes. Bin Farhan expressed concern over the humanitarian crisis affecting Palestinians, stating, “We cannot tolerate hundreds of thousands of Palestinians suffering daily from hunger, fear, and exodus.” He stressed that the establishment of a Palestinian state is a fundamental requirement for achieving lasting peace in the region. Criticizing what he referred to as the “negligence of the international community,” the Saudi Foreign Minister reaffirmed support for the Palestinian Authority. He characterized it as the only entity capable of managing the situation in the West Bank and Gaza. He called for protective measures against Israeli actions that aim to weaken the Palestinian Authority’s capacity to govern effectively. [Read More “Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince MBS Condemns Gaza ‘Genocide’ During Riyadh Summit” \(Ynet News\)](#)

AI-Monitor

## **Smotrich Calls for Annexation of Occupied West Bank**

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said that Trump’s election opens up an opportunity for Israeli annexation of the occupied West Bank and that he has already ordered his department to prepare for this annexation. In a press conference before a meeting of his Religious Zionism Party in the Knesset, Smotrich said that “the time has come to apply [Israeli] sovereignty to the settlements in Judea and Samaria (the biblical term by which some Israelis refer to the occupied West Bank).” Smotrich is the leader of the far-right Religious Zionism Party and — per a February 2023 agreement with former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant — maintains a ministerial role in Israel’s Defense Ministry, in which he has significant authority over the Civil Administration and Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, effectively supervising Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. [Read More "Ex-Trump Aides Warn Israeli Ministers Not to](#)

[Assume He'll Back Annexation in 2nd Term" \(Times of Israel\) "Sa'ar: Creating a Palestinian State Would Mean Establishing a Hamas State" \(I24 News\)](#)

Jerusalem Post

## **Hezbollah Rockets Wound Several, Damage Property in 80-Rocket Barrage**

Around seven Israelis were wounded, including several, during an intense bombardment of around 90 rockets on the North by Hezbollah. Hezbollah's approximately 90 rocket barrage targeted Haifa and its bayside suburbs, according to an IDF statement. They later reported that the Israeli air force and artillery batteries targeted a rocket launcher from which rockets were launched toward several areas in northern Israel. The IDF said on X/Twitter that it will continue defending its civilians against "Hezbollah's aggression." Lebanese Hezbollah-affiliated network "Al Maydeen" claimed that Hezbollah launched two ballistic missiles during the attack. [Read More "Netanyahu Approved Pager Attacks Against Hezbollah; Spokesman Says" "At Least 23 Killed in Israeli Strike on Lebanon's Almat, Ministry Says" \(Reuters\) "Traumatized by War, Hundreds of Lebanon's Children Struggle with Wounds Both Physical and Emotional" \(Associated Press\)](#)

Al-Monitor

## **Saudi Crown Prince Says Israel Must Not Attack Iran**

Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler called on Israel to respect Iran's sovereignty and refrain from attacking Iranian soil, highlighting warming ties between the Middle East rivals. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told a summit of Arab and Muslim leaders that the international community should oblige Israel "to respect the sovereignty of the sisterly Islamic Republic of Iran and not to violate its lands." Sunni Muslim-majority Saudi Arabia and Shiite-majority Iran have often found themselves on opposing sides of regional conflicts, including Syria's. In 2015, Saudi Arabia mobilized a military coalition to support Yemen's internationally recognized government after Iran-backed Houthi rebels seized the capital, Sanaa and advanced towards the main southern city of Aden. The following year, Riyadh and Tehran severed ties following attacks on Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran during protests over Riyadh's execution of Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr. In March 2023, however, they announced a rapprochement deal brokered by China. Though issues remain in the complex relationship, the rapprochement amounts to a signature diplomatic achievement for Prince Mohammed, who has taken a more conciliatory approach to regional diplomacy in recent years. Saudi Arabia and Iran have maintained high-level contact as part of efforts to contain the war that broke out in Gaza following Hamas's unprecedented attack on southern Israel on October 7 last year. This diplomatic outreach led to the first phone call between Prince Mohammed and Iran's then-president Ebrahim Raisi -- just five days after the war broke out -- and a visit by Raisi to Riyadh a year ago for a joint summit of the Arab League and the Organization of

Islamic Cooperation. In October, Saudi Arabia announced it had held war games with Iran and other countries in the Sea of Oman. [Read More "Katz: Iran Nuclear Facilities 'More Exposed than Ever' Following Israeli Strikes" \(Times of Israel\)](#)

Associated Press

## **Rights Group Calls for International Force to Protect Sudanese**

A leading rights group called for an international force to protect civilians in war-torn Sudan amid reports that a notorious paramilitary group has killed dozens of civilians and committed widespread rapes during a rampage in a province neighboring Khartoum. Sudan has been plunged into war for nearly 19 months in a struggle for power between the military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, which has been accused of atrocities in multiple areas where it has seized control. The Rapid Support Forces rampaged through the province of Gezira last month, attacking towns and villages. Human Rights Watch said the RSF has “killed, injured, and unlawfully detained scores of civilians and raped women and girls” in Gezira. It urged Britain to use its turn as president of the United Nations Security Council this month to push for U.N. action to deploy a mission to protect civilians in Sudan. The war began in April 2023 when growing tensions between the military and RSF exploded into fighting in the capital Khartoum and around Sudan. More than 24,000 people have been killed and more than 14 million people — about 30% of the population — have been driven from their homes, creating the world’s largest displacement crisis this year, according to the International Organization for Migration, or IOM. Famine has struck some areas, and a cholera outbreak has killed more than 800 people and sickened 28,000 others.

---

Israel Hayom

## **West Bank Annexation**

By Yehuda Schlesinger and Hanan Greenwood

- Members of the prime minister’s inner circle have come to sound more reassured and optimistic than ever in the past number of days. After Trump’s victory, Gallant’s dismissal and the addition of Saar’s faction to the coalition, members of the prime minister’s inner circle believe that they are in for “smooth sailing,” and not only are the coalition and the government not at risk, but they can now begin to take meaningful and dramatic action. Israel Hayom has learned that the word “sovereignty” is now back on the agenda in Netanyahu’s inner circle. Senior government officials have not made do with merely making plans in principle that might culminate at most in public statements and nothing more and have begun to work on the first stage of an actionable plan [to apply Israeli] sovereignty to parts of Judea and Samaria (West Bank).

- On the agenda: mainly the areas that are in consensus, such as Maale Adumim, the Jordan Valley and the Etzion Bloc. The political strategy vis-à-vis the United States is not to “antagonize” the Biden administration until Trump takes office in January. Consequently, the issue of sovereignty is currently being discussed only as a task for the future, and it is only being discussed by Netanyahu’s aides and is not being publicly discussed as a clear and orderly plan.
- Nevertheless, it is absolutely part of the important plans that the government intends to set in motion after Trump takes office. Government officials are well aware of the fact that Trump’s election could prove to be a double-edged sword, and the main question is who will be appointed to key positions of power in his administration. As opposed to the Democratic administration, Israel cannot squabble or play games [with a Republican administration], since that could end in an own-goal.
- Even though the issue of sovereignty is now back on the table, government officials know that it is the “grand prize,” and attaining it will be very challenging. Therefore, several concrete measures are currently being planned to reinforce the view that [the government] needs to strengthen [the settlement enterprise in] Judea and Samaria as much as possible and to secure political achievements from the friendly administration. The first achievement that is now needed is to convene the Civil Administration’s Supreme Planning and Construction Committee, which last met in August.
- Government officials waited patiently for the [American] elections to be over in response to clear messages that Netanyahu sent that he does not wish to jeopardize a Trump victory in any way at all. But pressure [to convene the committee] is now mounting once again. In one envisioned scenario, the Supreme Planning and Construction Committee will be convened in the next few weeks to approve the construction of between 7,000 and 11,000 apartments. But the committee meeting might be postponed in the service of other Israeli interests, such as [the receipt of] munitions from the United States. The goal, after Trump takes office, is to have the Supreme Planning and Construction Committee meet once every three months, if not more frequently, so as to achieve the goal of having a million Israelis [living] in Samaria within a decade. Another issue that is on the table is the sanctions that the Democratic administration imposed.  
Israeli officials recognize that the sanctions will not be lifted under the outgoing administration, but the goal is to place that issue on the incoming Republican administration’s agenda early in Trump’s tenure as president.
- Israel had previously made preparations to apply sovereignty. Minister Yariv Levin was responsible for overseeing those preparations—the materials, the proposed motions and maps that were presented to the Americans ahead of their approval by the [Israeli] cabinet. Levin was in ongoing communication with the American administration and the settler leadership. When the plan was presented, Levin was in the Oval Office alongside Prime Minister

Netanyahu, and he also attended closed-door meetings with Trump. The assessment is that if plans to apply sovereignty are put back on the table, Levin is likely to be at the forefront of that effort and will be in contact with the Trump administration and the settlers.

- Four years ago, Trump and Netanyahu presented the deal of the century, which included American recognition of Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) —prompting celebration by some government officials. Jonathan Urich, Prime Minister Netanyahu’s adviser, wrote on Twitter that the issue of sovereignty would be discussed by the cabinet, but the issue was struck from the agenda in response to American opposition. Netanyahu said yesterday that he had spoken three times with President-elect Trump in the past number of days. “They were good and very important conversations,” said Netanyahu, “conversations that were intended to further strengthen the firm alliance between Israel and the United States. We see eye-to-eye on all components of the Iranian threat and the danger it poses. We also see the great opportunities that are before Israel in the sphere of peace and its expansion, and other spheres.”

### Israel Hayom

## **Navigating Policy on Lebanon and Gaza**

By Shirit Avitan Cohen

- Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has decided to end the war in the north and return the residents to their homes while extending the war in Gaza to achieve the war’s objectives of defeating Hamas as a military and civilian power and freeing the hostages. Netanyahu is fighting the objections that have been voiced by some of his ministers and has been working to persuade them that the achievements in the war on the northern front are sufficient to achieve the objective of allowing the residents of northern Israel to return to their homes. At the cabinet meeting that was held yesterday morning, Netanyahu demanded that the ministers maintain complete secrecy and presented them with details of the emerging deal that is being brokered by the Biden administration, which is also expected to serve the needs of the incoming Trump administration.
- Netanyahu dispatched two people to mediate the agreement on two fronts. Ron Dermer was sent to the United States to guarantee that the IDF would retain military freedom of action in Lebanon in the event of any violation of the agreement, and Yisrael Katz said in a speech as he assumed office as defense minister that Israel had defeated Hizbullah, in a statement that was aimed at the Israeli public. Katz’s public statements were designed to prevent members of the government’s right-wing flank from opposing a deal. For the time being, it seems that this

opposition has remained on a low flame. That said, cabinet ministers are demanding explanations about why Israel is prepared to end the war even though Hizbullah still retains significant military capabilities. Some of them even demanded, as part of an agreement, that the IDF seize key sites inside Lebanon.

- Netanyahu, however, rejected that demand. Either way, a declaration of victory will not be sufficient. To ensure victory, Hizbullah must be denied the option of retaining a troop presence on the ground [in southern Lebanon]. American-led international pressure is currently focused on the “starvation” of the civilian population in the northern Gaza Strip. The IDF has acted in keeping with instructions it received from the political echelon to cleanse northern Gaza of Hamas terrorists by evacuating the population south, and preventing the delivery of aid. But Netanyahu simultaneously ordered that effort [to stop aid deliveries] to be halted.
- Alongside repeated decisions, such as to hook up a desalination installation to the [Israeli] electricity grid (an order given two months ago), the army is now renewing aid activity at the Kissufim crossing. Furthermore, yesterday’s Netanyahu-Katz-Dermer meeting demanded the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories present the UN aid coordinator with a plan to increase aid to northern Gaza. This was Netanyahu’s second meeting in a few days with UN aid coordinator Sigrid Kaag.
- The meetings were held amid a White House ultimatum to increase humanitarian aid to the northern Gaza Strip, an ultimatum that is due to expire on November 13. The first meeting was held on Wednesday, and American Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin called Katz over the weekend, demanding the issue of aid to the northern Gaza Strip be discussed by the cabinet at the meeting that was held yesterday. It seems that the Biden administration, which has had its fill of [Israeli] promises in recent weeks, wants to see results immediately.
- Now, however, Netanyahu and the government’s theater of the absurd is coming to light: This morning, the prime minister instructed to increase the flow of aid to areas in which the IDF is fighting to defeat Hamas, coupled with his demand to fight until total victory is achieved. The result has been a fraught war that has claimed the lives of our troops, who, once again, have been forced to return to Sajaiya and Jabalya. With all due respect to mounting pressure from the Americans and other global forces, Netanyahu has to decide either to rebuff the pressure or to give



in to it and (successfully) present that capitulation as a firm stand.

- **At the end of September, when the ground operation in Lebanon first began, Netanyahu instructed the military to take action in the northern Gaza Strip, which was in the spirit of the so-called generals' plan. This was confirmed by political and defense officials. But then, in the face of repeated threats from the White House, he began to accede to those demands even while IDF troops were operating in the sector. In closed-door meetings, he provided his ministers with words of encouragement and support, including support for Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich's demands to use Israeli troops to halt the aid to Gaza so as to cut off oxygen to Hamas.**
- **Defense officials claim that reopening the Kissufim crossing is designed to deliver aid to the very areas where the IDF is not fighting and that, in areas that have been cleared, efforts are currently underway to transfer control into the hands of the clans. But words aren't enough to defeat Hamas in Gaza, as has been proved by IDF soldiers who have been working toward the goals set a year and a month ago and which have not yet been achieved. On this matter, at least since his dismissal last week, Gallant can no longer be used as an excuse.**

---

S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace  
1725 I Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20006  
For comments, please contact us at [info@centerpeace.org](mailto:info@centerpeace.org).  
[www.centerpeace.org](http://www.centerpeace.org)

*2024 S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace, All rights reserved.*

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

