

### Executive Summary

Fighting is highly likely to continue over the Israel-Gaza border between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants over the coming days after Hamas launched a surprise land, air and sea attack on Israel during the early morning hours of 7 October 2023. Since launch of the attack over the weekend, fighting on the ground has continued, with hundreds reported killed, thousands wounded and as many as 150 individuals taken hostage by Hamas. Israel has responded by launching airstrikes as well as a full blockade of the Gaza Strip and a declaration of war. In the coming days, fighting is likely to continue in Israel over the Israel – Gaza border between Israeli forces and Hamas militants. Military operations are expected to continue.

Anyone currently in or around the affected areas in Israel, the West Bank or the Gaza Strip is strongly advised to shelter in place until it is safe to leave the area and to overall limit your movements, remain extremely cautious, follow the instructions of the local authorities, monitor the local media to remain up to date on the evolving situation, and download an alerts application to receive detailed information and instructions, such as the Home Front Command.



### Latest Developments (as of 12 October 19:00 BTS)

Over the past several days, fighting between Israeli forces and Gaza-based militants has continued in the southern region of Israel, near the border between Israel and Gaza. There are reports that Hamas militants have infiltrated as many as 50 locations within Israel since 7 October, and have targeted both civilians and soldiers as well as launching thousands of rockets towards Israel. Projectile fire has targeted a number of cities in the central and southern regions of Israel, including Ashdod, Ashkelon, Bat Yam, Rishon LeZion, Sderot, Tel Aviv and Yavne, amongst others. On 12 October, a new barrage of rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip towards the cities of Ashkelon and Ashdod in southern Israel.

The aerial bombardment of the Gaza Strip has intensified in recent days. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) has reported that around 6,000 bombs have been dropped on the Gaza Strip by Israel since the fighting began on 7 October. Its air force meanwhile has said that it has hit more than 3,600 targets in Gaza since Saturday. Israeli jets also dropped leaflets over northern Gaza, telling people to leave their homes “immediately” and to head to “known shelters.” Within the Gaza Strip, the territory’s only power plant ran out of fuel and shut down on 11 October. Communication remains limited in the territory and information is scarce. Israel has said that no electricity, fuel or humanitarian aid will enter Gaza until Hamas releases all captives that were taken during the attack. Entry of supplies from Egypt have also been prevented. While rights groups have called for humanitarian corridors to be established, so far none have been set up. The Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor has also called for a 24-hour humanitarian ceasefire while the World Food Programme (WFP) has warned of a “dire situation” in the territory.

Regionally, there is a risk of the current conflict spreading beyond Gaza. Lebanese militant group Hezbollah has launched a number of rockets and drones against targets in northern Israel. Reports on the ground indicate that thousands of Israeli soldiers are being deployed to reinforce the northern border with Lebanon due to Hezbollah’s threat there. Over the past several days, there have been exchanges of fire across the border between Hezbollah and Israeli forces. On 11 October, Hezbollah fired anti-tank missiles at an Israeli military position, claiming to have killed and wounded troops. The Israeli military has confirmed the attack but has not commented on any casualties. The

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Israeli army shelled the area in southern Lebanon where the attack was launched. The Al-Quds Brigades, which is the military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement (PIJ), has also claimed responsibility for a ground infiltration from southern Lebanon into northern Israel. On 12 October, Syrian state media reported that Israeli airstrikes hit the international airports of the Syrian capital Damascus and the northern city of Aleppo, damaging their runways and putting them out of service.

As of 12 October, at least 1,300 people have been killed in Israel, including dozens of foreigners, with many others remaining missing. At least 1,417 people have been killed in the Gaza Strip and at least 31 in the Occupied West Bank. A further 3,200 people have been reported injured in Israel, more than 6,200 in the Gaza Strip and more than 600 in the Occupied West Bank.

In the first comments relating to the attack, the head of Israel's army admitted that security forces had failed to prevent Hamas's attack on 7 October. An investigation will likely be launched into the intelligence failures in the lead up to the attack. An Israeli military spokesman, Lt. Col. Richard Hecht, confirmed on 12 October that forces "are preparing for a ground manoeuvre" should political leaders order one. The Israeli government is under growing pressure from the public to topple Hamas, which has ruled the Gaza Strip since 2007. Israel has called up some 360,000 army reservists and has threatened an unprecedented response to Hamas' attack over the weekend.

A number of governments around the world have started to arrange repatriation flights from Tel Aviv in the wake of the conflict in Israel. The Argentinian foreign ministry has said that it has started to evacuate its citizens who are in Israel. Australia organized two special flights on Friday and Sunday to bring back citizens from Israel, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced on 11 October. Austria has said that its armed forces have started to evacuate Austrians from Israel, with a transport plane with a capacity of about 60 passengers taking off from Hörsching airbase. Belgium is set to bring back travellers from Israel while a total of 14 Bolivian tourists were evacuated from the country on 11 October on a Spanish Air force flight. Brazil has also evacuated a number of its nationals, with two flights already leaving and four additional flights planned for Sunday. Canada's first evacuation flight left Israel on 12 October, with government officials saying that about 1,000 Canadians in Israel want to leave. A total of 209 Chileans have been evacuated to Athens and Madrid while the first flight repatriating Colombians left Israel on 12 October. The Czech Republic has brought back 34 of its citizens while the Danish government has made available a cargo plane for evacuation of its citizens, though this flight is not expected to occur before 13 October. Finland has offered to evacuate its citizens and holders of permanent Finnish residency from Israel, while France is set to organize repatriation flights from Tel Aviv's airport on 13 and 14 October. A special Air France flight on 12 October is also set to help repatriate French nationals. German airline Condor announced on 12 October that it is planning two special flights to evacuate German citizens from the Jordanian city of Aqaba, near the border with Israel, on Sunday. The German foreign ministry has said that 5000 German citizens have registered to leave Israel. Iceland has also set up repatriation of its citizens while Italy is arranging seven flights between Tuesday and Wednesday as part of efforts to repatriate about 900 Italian citizens. Kazakhstan coordinated a repatriation flight on Tuesday, with a number of its nationals landing in Almaty late on 10 October. The Mexican army is carrying out humanitarian flights, with some 5,000 Mexican nationals in Israel. Norwegian Air cancelled a planned evacuation flight from Tel Aviv to Oslo on 12 October because of a lack of insurance cover, the carrier reported. Poland is set to send military planes to evacuate its citizens while Portugal saw the arrival of 22 people, including a number of foreigners, in Lisbon on 12 October. South Korea repatriated 192 of its citizens on 11 October, while Spain has sent two military aircraft to Israel to evacuate some 500 Spaniards. The UK is set to have a flight depart Tel Aviv on 12 October, and the US is working to arrange charter flights to Europe for US citizens wanting to leave Israel.

### Travel Disruptions

Disruptions to travel continue to take place. On 11 October, British Airways announced that it was suspending all its flights to Tel Aviv after it diverted a flight from London back to Britain citing security concerns in Israel. A spokesperson for Israel's airports authority disclosed that rockets were flying around Tel Aviv at the time of the British Airways diversion, but that there was no immediate threat to the flight or to Ben Gurion Airport (TLV). Virgin Atlantic has also announced that it will halt all flights to and from Tel Aviv for the next 72 hours, citing the safety of passengers and crew.

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The ongoing fighting in Israel has caused significant disruptions to flights and travel, with the Israel Airports Authority temporarily closing multiple airports in the central and southern areas of Israel on 7 October. As of 12 October, Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport (TLV) remains open though a number of international airlines have cancelled flights to and from Israel. These include Royal Air Maroc, Delta Airlines, United Airlines, American Airlines, Air Canada, Cathay Pacific, Korean Air, Lufthansa, Ryanair, Easyjet, Air France, Norwegian Air, Finnair, Hungarian Wizz Air, Portugal's TAP, Iberia and Vueling, Air Europa, Italy's ITA, Aegean Airlines, Air Malta, Icelandair, Poland's LOT, Emirates, EgyptAir, Etihad Airways and Gulf Air.

Reports indicate that El Al (LY) is still operating flights to and from TLV under adjusted schedules, however due to the ongoing situation in Israel, there is a risk of further delays or cancellation to flights. Regulators, including the US Federal Aviation Authority, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency, and Israel's aviation authority have all urged airlines operating flights to TLV to use caution in Israeli airspace, though as of 12 October they have stopped short of suspending flights.

On the ground, movements remain complicated due to the high security threat and closures being enforced by the local authorities. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have closed roads near the border with the Gaza Strip. This includes Route 4 from the Zikim junction to Netiv Ha'asara, Route 34 from the Yad Mordechai junction to Nir Am, and Route 232 from Mefalsim to Sa'ad and Nir Yizhak to Kerem Shalom. Zikim beach on the border with Gaza is also closed and train services between Ashkelon and Sdero have been suspended. As of 10 October, land border crossings are open. This includes the Jordan River Crossing/Beit Shean (operating between 08:30 and 17:00), Allenby Crossing (8:00 – 15:00), the Jericho Crossing (open though the Israeli army strongly recommends against entering Jericho due to the current situation), Aqaba/Jordan/Rabin Crossing (open from Sunday to Thursday between 20:00 and 06:30; Friday and Saturday between 20:00 – 08:00), and Taba/Begin Crossing is open only in the morning. The Rachel Crossing/300/Bethlehem is closed. It should be noted that these border crossings could close, or their opening hours could change, dependent on the developing situation on the ground.

### Advisory

**The security situation in Israel is likely to be significantly impacted in the short term and could deteriorate with little warning. Heightened security measures and disruptions to business and transport are likely to continue in the central and southern areas of Israel. Heightened security is also likely at all points of entry into Israel. Additionally, the status of border crossings, airports, seaports, rail services and roads could change on short notice, depending on the evolution the security situation on the ground. Anyone currently in Israel, notably in the impacted areas, is advised to shelter in place. The threat of attack remains significant and ground and road movements currently remain a high risk and should be avoided whenever possible.** If carrying out any ground movements, avoid all demonstrations and concentrations of security personnel. Follow the instructions of the local authorities, maintain communications with responsible parties and ensure that in the event that the security situation were to degrade, a friend/family member knows where you are and can alert the appropriate officials. Monitor the local media to remain up-to-date on the unfolding situation and adhere to security forces' directives. In the event of any incoming mortar rounds or rockets, warning sirens will sound in the general vicinity. In such case, report to the nearest bomb shelter and await further instructions from the local officials. If there is no nearby shelter, remain indoors, stay away from windows and exterior walls; if possible, move to a ground floor or basement. Maintain contact with your diplomatic mission. It is advisable to follow numerous diplomatic missions to assess the overall picture. If attempting to leave Israel, confirm your flight's status before leaving your accommodation. While some flight companies – British Airways, Virgin Atlantic and EL AL continue to operate flights to TLV, they are likely to be on reduced schedules. Additional cancellations at airports could also occur with little warning. Travellers should be ready for unexpected security alerts at the airport, closures of airspace and/or cancellation of flights should the security situation on the ground deteriorate further. It is understood that currently taxis to carry out ground movements from a hotel/home to the airport may be difficult to obtain. Travellers are advised to assess all ground movement options for any intended movements in advance. Anyone considering travelling to Israel and the Palestinian territories is advised against any non-essential travel, notably to the central and southern regions of Israel until the situation stabilizes. If travelling to Israel, reconfirm the status of your flight as well as the status of border crossings and roads.