**Six Day War**

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Six-Day War** | | | Part of the [Arab–Israeli conflict](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab%E2%80%93Israeli_conflict) | | | Territory held by Israel before and after the Six Day War. The Straits of Tiran are circled, between the Gulf of Aqaba to the north and the Red Sea to the south. | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Date** | June 5–10, 1967 | | **Location** | Middle East | | **Result** | Decisive Israeli victory | | **Territorial changes** | Israel captures the [Gaza Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip) and the [Sinai Peninsula](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinai_Peninsula) from Egypt, the [West Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank) (including [East Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Jerusalem)) from Jordan, and the [Golan Heights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golan_Heights) from Syria. | | | | **Belligerents** | | | [**Israel**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) | [**Egypt**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt) [**Syria**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria) [**Jordan**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan) **Arab Expeditionary Forces:**  [Iraq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_(1958%E2%80%931968)) [Saudi Arabia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia) [Morocco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morocco) [Algeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algeria) [Libya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Libya) [Kuwait](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait) [Tunisia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunisia) [Sudan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Sudan_(1956%E2%80%931969)) [PLO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_Liberation_Organization) | | **Commanders and leaders** | | | [Yitzhak Rabin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Rabin) [Moshe Dayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moshe_Dayan) [Uzi Narkiss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzi_Narkiss) [Motta Gur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordechai_Gur) [Israel Tal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Tal) [Mordechai Hod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordechai_Hod) [Yeshayahu Gavish](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Yeshayahu_Gavish&action=edit&redlink=1) [Ariel Sharon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariel_Sharon) [Ezer Weizman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezer_Weizman) | [Abdel Hakim Amer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdel_Hakim_Amer) [Abdul Munim Riad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdul_Munim_Riad) [Zaid ibn Shaker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaid_ibn_Shaker) [Asad Ghanma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asad_Ghanma) [Nureddin al-Atassi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nureddin_al-Atassi) [Abdul Rahman Arif](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdul_Rahman_Arif) | | **Strength** | | | 50,000 troops 214,000 reserves 300 combat aircraft 800 tanks  **Total troops: 264,000** 100,000 deployed | Egypt: 240,000 Syria, Jordan, and Iraq: 307,000 957 combat aircraft 2,504 tanks  **Total troops: 547,000** 240,000 deployed | | **Casualties and losses** | | | 776–983 killed 4,517 wounded 15 captured 46 aircraft destroyed | **Egypt** – 10,000–15,000 killed or missing 4,338 captured **Jordan** – 6,000 killed or missing 533 captured **Syria** – 2,500 killed 591 captured **Iraq** – 10 killed 30 wounded ------- 5,500+ captured hundreds of tanks destroyed 452+ aircraft destroyed | |
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The **Six-Day War** ([Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language): מלחמת ששת הימים, *Milhemet Sheshet Ha Yamim*; [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): النكسة, *an-Naksah*, "The Setback," or حرب 1967, *Ḥarb 1967*, "War of 1967"), also known as the **June War**, **1967 Arab-Israeli War**, or **Third Arab-Israeli War**, was fought between June 5 and 10, 1967, by [Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) and the neighboring states of [Egypt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt) (known at the time as the [United Arab Republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Arab_Republic)), [Jordan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan), and [Syria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria).

The war began on June 5 with Israel launching surprise bombing raids against Egyptian air-fields after a period of high tension that included an Israeli raid into the Jordanian-controlled West Bank, Israeli initiated aerial clashes over Syrian territory, Syrian artillery attacks against Israeli settlements in the vicinity of the border followed by Israeli response against Syrian positions in the Golan Heights and encroachments of increasing intensity and frequency (initiated by Israel) into the demilitarized zones along the Syrian border and culminating in the Egyptian imposition of a [naval blockade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_blockade) on [Eilat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eilat) and ordering of the evacuation from the Sinai Peninsula of the U.N. buffer force.

Within six days, Israel had won a decisive land war. Israeli forces had taken control of the [Gaza Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip) and the [Sinai Peninsula](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinai_Peninsula) from Egypt, the [West Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank) and [East Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Jerusalem) from Jordan, and the [Golan Heights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golan_Heights) from Syria.

**Background and summary of events leading to war**

Main article: [Origins of the Six-Day War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origins_of_the_Six-Day_War)

After the 1956 [Suez Crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Crisis), Egypt agreed to the stationing of a [United Nations Emergency Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Emergency_Force) (UNEF) in the Sinai to ensure all parties would comply with the [1949 Armistice Agreements](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949_Armistice_Agreements). In the following years, there were numerous minor border clashes between Israel and its Arab neighbors, particularly Syria. On November 4, 1966, the [Soviet Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) vetoed a six-Power resolution, that invited Syria to prevent incidents that constitute a violation of the General Armistice Agreement.

Soon thereafter, in response to [Palestine Liberation Organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_Liberation_Organization) (PLO) guerilla activity, including a mine attack that killed three Israeli soldiers, the [Israeli Defense Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Defense_Force) (IDF) [attacked the village](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samu_Incident) of [as-Samu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/As-Samu) in the Jordanian-occupied West Bank. Jordanian units that engaged the Israelis were quickly beaten back. Between 14 and 21 Jordanian soldiers were killed in the operation and 37 more were wounded. Overall, 18 were killed, 130 wounded, while 125 houses, the school, and the clinic were destroyed in the attack. Israel's attack was [deplored](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_228) by the Security Council, which emphasized to Israel that actions of military reprisal could not be tolerated. King [Hussein of Jordan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hussein_of_Jordan) criticized Egyptian President [Gamal Abdel Nasser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamal_Abdel_Nasser) for failing to come to Jordan's aid, and "hiding behind UNEF skirts". The Samu raid shattered the fragile trust between Israel and Jordan, leading the Jordanian leadership to believe Israel's strategic goal was to occupy the West Bank. According to one source, this alleged fear that in the event of a regional war, Israel would invade the West Bank, led to King Husayn's decision to sign a joint defense pact with Egypt. Others however have theorized that Hussein's pact with Egypt was motivated by a desire to placate domestic pressures and preserve his throne. Still others have noted that Hussein closed ranks with Nasser because he had to convince Arabs "that he was not a puppet of the West."

Between 1966 and 1967 Israel’s borders saw repeated Arab terrorist attacks and Syrian military activity. On May 11, UN Secretary General U Thant leveled criticism at Syria for its sponsorship of Palestinian terrorism, denouncing those attacks as "deplorable," "insidious" and "menaces to peace."

During 1965-7, Israel's armed forces staged numerous provocations along the Israeli-Syrian border area. This escalation led the Syrians and the Soviets to believe Israel was planning to overthrow the Syrian regime using military force. On April 7, 1967, a serious incident broke out between Israel and Syria over a cultivation problem within the demilitarized zone. Israel took military action against Syria, and eventually both sides employed artillery, tanks, and mortars. During this clash Israeli airstrikes were launched a few miles from Damascus. Israel bombed both Syrian border villages, and Syrian military targets, and had refused a cease-fire proposal by the Chairman of Mixed Armistice Commission. After several hours the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization managed to arrange a cease-fire. Following this confrontation Arab governments pledged their support to Syria, but also complained that the Jordanian air force had done nothing to help Syrian planes even when they were shot down in Jordanian airspace.

In May 1967, Israeli officials began to publicly threaten military action against Syria if Syria did not stop Palestinian guerrillas from crossing the border into Israel. Following that, Nasser received false intelligence reports from the Soviet Union that an Israeli attack on Syria was imminent. Egyptian intelligence later confirmed that the Soviet reports of Israeli force concentrations were in fact groundless, but Nasser had by then already started his buildup and he feared that since a large portion of his army was already in the Sinai, a sudden callback of those forces would result in humiliation at a time when Nasser could ill afford being humiliated. On May 19, U Thant called statements attributed to Israeli leaders "so threatening as to be particularly inflammatory in the sense that they could only heighten emotions and thereby increase tensions on the other side of the lines". Nasser then misled the Egyptian people by perpetuating the falsehood claiming in an address on the anniversary of the Egyptian revolution, that the IDF was concentrating forces "on Syria's doorstep." Israel's threats to invade Syria appeared serious to Arab leaders, however, and foreign observers suspected that an Israeli strike on Syria was imminent. According to [Michael Oren](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Oren), Nasser disregarded the counsel of his own intelligence and began massing his troops in the Sinai Peninsula on Israel's border (May 16), expelled the UNEF force from Gaza and Sinai (May 19), and took up UNEF positions at [Sharm el-Sheikh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharm_el-Sheikh), overlooking the [Straits of Tiran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Straits_of_Tiran). According to Moshe Shemesh, as Egypt and Syria shared a mutual defense pact, Nasser responded to the Israeli threats by beginning to concentrate his troops in the Sinai Peninsula according to the "Qahir" (Conqueror) defense plan. He also decided to prepare the feda'iyyun for carrying out the "Fahd 2 (Leopard) Plan" [murderous attacks] inside Israel and to coordinate military operations with Syria.

The [Straits of Tiran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Straits_of_Tiran) was regarded by the Western Powers and Israel as an international waterway but its legal status was the subject of international controversy. The Arabs believed that they had the right to regulate passage of ships while Israel, with the support of other major world powers, countered that the Arab claims were legally not supportable. In 1967 Israel reiterated declarations made in 1957 that any closure of the Straits would be considered an act of war, or a justification for war. On May 22 Nasser declared the Straits closed to Israeli shipping. Nasser stated he was open to referring the closure to the [International Court of Justice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Court_of_Justice) to determine its legality, but this option was rejected by Israel Egyptian propaganda attacked Israel, and on May 27, Nasser stated "Our basic objective will be the destruction of Israel. The Arab people want to fight."

On May 30, Jordan and Egypt signed a defense pact. The following day, at Jordan's invitation, the Iraqi army began deploying troops and armored units in Jordan. They were later reinforced by an Egyptian contingent. On June 1, Israel formed a National Unity Government by widening its cabinet, and on June 4 the decision was made to go to war. The next morning, Israel launched [Operation Focus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Focus), a large-scale surprise air strike that was the opening of the Six-Day War.

Most scholarly accounts of the crisis attribute the drift to war to an escalation that was unwanted, however despite a desire to avoid war on all sides, everyone was in the end responsible for making the escalation unavoidable.

**Military preparations**

**Arab preparations**

On the eve of the war, Egypt massed approximately 100,000 of its 160,000 troops in the Sinai, including all of its seven divisions (four infantry, two armored and one mechanized), four independent infantry brigades and four independent armored brigades. No fewer than a third of them were veterans of Egypt's intervention into the [Yemen Civil War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemen_Civil_War) and another third were reservists. These forces had 950 tanks, 1,100 APCs and more than 1,000 artillery pieces.

At the same time some Egyptian troops (15,000–20,000) were still fighting in Yemen. Nasser's ambivalence about his goals and objectives was reflected in his orders to the military. The general staff changed the operational plan four times in May 1967, each change requiring the redeployment of troops, with the inevitable toll on both men and vehicles.

Towards the end of May, Nasser finally forbade the general staff from proceeding with the *Qahir* ("Victory") plan, which called for a light infantry screen in the forward fortifications with the bulk of the forces held back to conduct a massive counterattack against the main Israeli advance when identified, and ordered a forward defense of the Sinai. In the meantime, he continued to take actions intended to increase the level of mobilization of Egypt, Syria and Jordan, in order to bring pressure on Israel.

Syria's army had a total strength of 75,000 and amassed them along the Syrian border. Jordan's army had 55,000 troops and 300 tanks along the Jordanian border, 250 of which were U.S. [M48 Patton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M48_Patton), sizable amounts of [M113](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M113_Armored_Personnel_Carrier) APCs, a new battalion of [mechanized infantry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanized_infantry), and a [paratrooper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paratrooper) battalion trained in the new U.S.-built school. They also had 12 battalions of artillery and six batteries of 81 mm and 120 mm mortars.

Documents captured by the Israelis from various Jordanian command posts record orders from the end of May for the Hashemite Brigade to capture Ramot Burj Bir Mai'in in a night raid, codenamed "Operation Khaled". The aim was to establish a bridgehead together with positions in [Latrun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latrun) for an armored capture of [Lod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lod) and [Ramle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramle). The "go" codeword was *Sa'ek* and end was *Nasser*. The Jordanians planned for the capture of [Motza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motza) and [Sha'alvim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sha%27alvim) in the strategic [Jerusalem Corridor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem_Corridor). Motza was tasked to Infantry Brigade 27 camped near [Ma'ale Adummim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma%27ale_Adummim): "The reserve brigade will commence a nighttime infiltration onto Motza, will destroy it to the foundation, and won't leave a remnant or refugee from among its 800 residents".

100 Iraqi tanks and an infantry division were readied near the Jordanian border. Two squadrons of fighter-aircraft, [Hawker Hunters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawker_Hunter) and [MiG 21](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-21), were rebased adjacent to the Jordanian border.

On June 2, Jordan called up all reserve officers, and the West Bank commander met with community leaders in Ramallah to request assistance and cooperation for his troops during the war, assuring them that "in three days we'll be in Tel-Aviv".

The Arab air forces were aided by volunteer pilots from the [Pakistan Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan_Air_Force) acting in independent capacity, and by some aircraft from Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia to make up for the massive losses suffered on the first day of the war.

**Israeli preparations**



Israeli civilians dig trenches in anticipation of attack at [Sde Warburg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sde_Warburg).

Before the war, Israeli pilots and ground crews had trained extensively in rapid refitting of aircraft returning from [sorties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sortie), enabling a single aircraft to sortie up to four times a day (as opposed to the norm in Arab air forces of one or two sorties per day). This enabled the [Israeli Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Air_Force) (IAF) to send several attack waves against Egyptian airfields on the first day of the war, overwhelming the Egyptian Air Force, and allowed it to knock out other Arab air forces on the same day. This has contributed to the Arab belief that the IAF was helped by foreign air forces (see [Controversies relating to the Six-Day War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Controversies_relating_to_the_Six-Day_War#Combat_support)). Pilots were extensively schooled about their targets, and were forced to memorize every single detail, and rehearsed the operation multiple times on dummy runways in total secrecy.

The Egyptians had constructed fortified defenses in the Sinai. These designs were based on the assumption that an attack would come along the few roads leading through the desert, rather than through the difficult desert terrain. The Israelis chose not to risk attacking the Egyptian defenses head-on, and instead surprised them from an unexpected direction.

IDF soldiers had practiced driving vehicles through soft dunes in the [Negev](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negev), and discovered that vehicles would get greater maneuverability in desert terrain if tires were partially deflated. As a result, they could choose their angle of attack, and advance through areas the Egyptians least expected. In order to keep the performance of Israeli soldiers high in the heat of the Sinai desert, the Israeli army ordered that soldiers be supplied with one liter of water every hour, rather than the previous one liter per day. As a result, soldiers were able to perform better than their Egyptian counterparts.



Israeli civilians dig trenches at [Gan Shmuel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gan_Shmuel).

To prepare for war with Syria, the [Mossad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mossad) (Israeli secret service) had sent agent [Eli Cohen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eli_Cohen) to infiltrate the Syrian government, where he exploited his high-ranking position to provide crucial intelligence. Feigning sympathy for Syrian soldiers, he ordered trees planted by every Syrian emplacement to shade them. These trees were later used as targeting markers by the Israelis. Intelligence had revealed where the most difficult terrain was, so a route of attack was chosen that would avoid natural tank traps and surprise the Syrians.

The Mossad also carried out surveillance on Egypt. By the time war broke out, Mossad had either a [*katsa*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katsa) (field intelligence officer) or Egyptian informant in every Egyptian airbase and military headquarters. Three staff officers at the General High Command Headquarters were Israeli moles. Among the intelligence collected by the informants was embarrassing personal information on Egyptian servicemen. This information was sometimes used as blackmail to gain a new Mossad informant. Mossad also leaked details of many servicemen's private behavior to their families and colleagues by means of anonymous letters and phone calls.

This campaign caused considerable dissention in the Egyptian military, and led to the suicide of a senior officer. By early 1967, the Israeli intelligence network in Egypt had detected Nasser's preparations for war with Israel, and more informants were recruited. By early May 1967, the Mossad was able to inform Israeli commanders the precise time to attack Egyptian airbases.

In a campaign called "Operation Yated", Israel passed false information to the Egyptian via a [double agent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Double_agent). In the 1950s, Egyptian intelligence agent [Refaat Al-Gammal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refaat_Al-Gammal), posing as an [Egyptian Jew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Egypt) named Jacques Bitton, infiltrated Israel. He was soon arrested as a spy by [Shin Bet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shin_Bet), and elected to become a double agent rather than spend decades in prison. On the eve of the war, Gamal transferred false information to Egypt. He informed his Egyptian handlers that according to Israeli war plans, Israel would open an attack on Egypt with a ground offensive. His intelligence was one of the reasons the Egyptians left their planes in the open on the runways of their airbases, allowing the Israelis to easily destroy them.

The Israeli army had a total strength, including reservists, of 264,000, though this number could not be sustained, as the reservists were vital to civilian life. James Reston, writing in [*The New York Times*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_York_Times) on May 23, 1967, noted, "In discipline, training, morale, equipment and general competence his [Nasser's] army and the other Arab forces, without the direct assistance of the Soviet Union, are no match for the Israelis.... Even with 50,000 troops and the best of his generals and air force in Yemen, he has not been able to work his way in that small and primitive country, and even his effort to help the Congo rebels was a flop."

On the evening of June 1, Israeli Minister of Defense [Moshe Dayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moshe_Dayan) called Chief of Staff [Yitzhak Rabin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Rabin) and the [General Officer Commanding](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Officer_Commanding) (GOC), Southern Command Brigadier General [Yeshayahu Gavish](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Yeshayahu_Gavish&action=edit&redlink=1) to present plans against Egypt. Rabin had formulated a plan in which Southern Command forces would fight their way to the Gaza Strip and then hold the territory and its people hostage until Egypt agreed to reopen the Straits of Tiran; while Gavish had a more comprehensive plan that called for the destruction of Egyptian forces in the Sinai. Rabin favored Gavish's plan, which was then endorsed by Dayan with the caution that a simultaneous offensive against Syria should be avoided.

Even as plans were made for an offensive operation, Israeli society prepared for an Arab invasion. Israeli civilians dug fortifications and defenses, and preparations were made for evacuating children to Europe. About 14,000 hospital beds were readied. Antidotes for poison gas victims, expected to arrive in waves of some 200, were stockpiled, and Germany donated some 20,000 gas masks. Some 10,000 graves were dug. [Diaspora Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_diaspora) played a key role in the preparations. Volunteers arrived in great numbers, and preference was given to young and skilled bachelors.

There were massive donations and fund drives from both Jews and sympathetic non-Jews. [French Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_France) expressed their willingness to donate blood, house evacuated Israeli children, and sell artwork to raise money. According to [Michael Oren](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Oren)'s account of the war, there was a sense of an approaching catastrophe in Israel, with talk of widespread bombings of Israeli cities and an entire generation of soldiers being wiped out.

**The fighting fronts**

**Preliminary air attack**

Main article: [Operation Focus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Focus)

See also: [Order of battle for the Six-Day War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_battle_for_the_Six-Day_War)



Israeli troops examine destroyed Egyptian aircraft.



Dassault Mirage at the [Israeli Air Force Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Air_Force_Museum). Operation Focus was mainly conducted using French built aircraft.

Israel's first and most critical move was a surprise attack on the [Egyptian Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_Air_Force). Egypt had by far the largest and the most modern of all the Arab air forces, consisting of about 420 combat aircraft, all of them Soviet-built and with a heavy quota of top-of-the line [MiG-21](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikoyan-Gurevich_MiG-21) capable of attaining Mach 2 speed. Initially, both Egypt and Israel announced that they had been attacked by the other country.

Of particular concern to the Israelis were the 30 [Tu-16 "Badger"](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tupolev_Tu-16) [medium bombers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medium_bomber), capable of inflicting heavy damage on Israeli military and civilian centers. On June 5 at 7:45 Israeli time, as [civil defense sirens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_defense_siren) sounded all over Israel, the IAF launched [Operation Focus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Focus) (*Moked*). All but 12 of its nearly 200 operational jets left the skies of Israel in a mass attack against Egypt's airfields. The Egyptian defensive infrastructure was extremely poor, and no airfields were yet equipped with [hardened aircraft shelters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hardened_Aircraft_Shelter) capable of protecting Egypt's warplanes. Most of the Israeli warplanes headed out over the [Mediterranean Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea), flying low to avoid radar detection, before turning toward Egypt. Others flew over the [Red Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Sea).

Meanwhile, the Egyptians hindered their own defense by effectively shutting down their entire air defense system: they were worried that rebel Egyptian forces would shoot down the plane carrying Field Marshal [Abdel Hakim Amer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdel_Hakim_Amer) and Lt-Gen. Sidqi Mahmoud, who were en route from al Maza to Bir Tamada in the Sinai to meet the commanders of the troops stationed there. In any event, it did not make a great deal of difference as the Israeli pilots came in below Egyptian [radar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radar) cover and well below the lowest point at which its [SA-2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S-75_Dvina) surface-to-air missile batteries could bring down an aircraft.

Although the powerful Jordanian radar facility at [Ajloun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajloun) detected waves of aircraft approaching Egypt and reported the code word for "war" up the Egyptian command chain, Egyptian command and communications problems prevented the warning from reaching the targeted airfields. The Israelis employed a mixed attack strategy: bombing and [strafing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strafing) runs against planes parked on the ground, themselves, and bombing the runways with special [tarmac-shredding penetration bombs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarmac-shredding_penetration_bomb) developed jointly with France to disable them and leave surviving aircraft unable to take off. The runway at the [Arish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arish) airfield was spared, as the Israelis expected to turn it into a military airport for their transports after the war. The surviving aircraft were later taken out by several more attack waves. The operation was more successful than expected, catching the Egyptians by surprise and destroying virtually all of the Egyptian Air Force on the ground, with few Israeli losses. Only four unarmed Egyptian training flights were in the air when the strike began. A total of 338 Egyptian aircraft were destroyed and 100 pilots were killed, although the number of aircraft actually lost by the Egyptians is disputed.

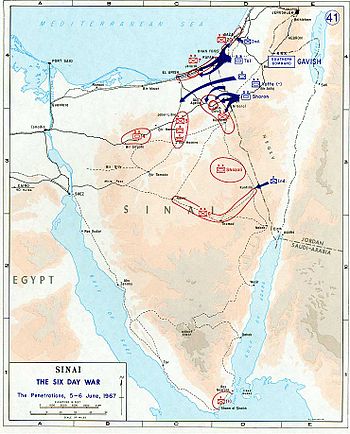
Among the Egyptian planes lost were all 30 Tu-16 bombers, 27 out of 40 [Il-28](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-28) bombers, 12 [Su-7](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Su-7) fighter-bombers, over 90 [MiG-21s](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-21), 20 [MiG-19s](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-19), 25 [MiG-17](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-17) fighters, and around 32 assorted transport planes and helicopters. In addition, Egyptian radars and SAM missiles were also attacked and destroyed. The Israelis lost 19 planes, including two destroyed in air-to-air combat and 13 downed by anti-aircraft artillery. One Israeli plane, which was damaged and unable to break radio silence, was shot down by Israeli [Hawk missiles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MIM-23_Hawk) after it strayed over the [Negev Nuclear Research Center](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negev_Nuclear_Research_Center). Another was destroyed by an exploding Egyptian bomber.

The attack guaranteed Israeli [air superiority](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_superiority) for the rest of the war.

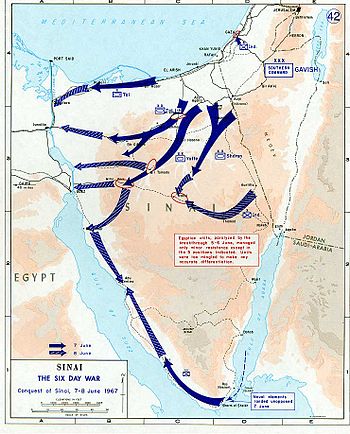
Attacks on other Arab air forces took place later in the day as hostilities broke out on other fronts. Also on the morning of June 6, 1967, a Lebanese Hunter, one of 12 Lebanon had, was shot down over the Israel-Lebanon border by an Israeli  [Mirage IIICJ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dassault_Mirage_III) piloted by Uri Even-Nir.

The numbers of Arab aircraft claimed destroyed by Israel were at first regarded as "greatly exaggerated" by the Western press. However, the fact that the Egyptian Air Force, along with other Arab air forces attacked by Israel made practically no appearance for the remaining days of the conflict proved that the numbers were most likely authentic. Throughout the war, Israeli aircraft continued strafing Arab airfield runways to prevent their return to usability. Meanwhile, Egyptian state-run radio had reported an Egyptian victory, falsely claiming that 70 Israeli planes had been downed on the first day of fighting.

**Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula**



Conquest of Sinai. June 5–6, 1967



Conquest of Sinai. June 7–8, 1967



Israeli women and children in a bomb shelter at [Kfar Maimon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kfar_Maimon) near the Egyptian border.

The Egyptian forces consisted of seven [divisions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Division_(military)): four [armored](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Division_(military)#Armored_divisions), two [infantry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Division_(military)#Armored_divisions), and one [mechanized infantry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanized_infantry). Overall, Egypt had around 100,000 troops and 900–950 [tanks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tank) in the Sinai, backed by 1,100 [APCs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armored_personnel_carrier) and 1,000 [artillery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artillery) pieces. This arrangement was thought to be based on the Soviet doctrine, where mobile armor units at [strategic depth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_depth) provide a dynamic defense while infantry units engage in defensive battles.

Israeli forces concentrated on the border with Egypt included six armored [brigades](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigade), one infantry brigade, one mechanized infantry brigade, three [paratrooper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paratrooper) brigades, giving a total of around 70,000 men and 700 tanks, who were organized in three armored divisions. They had massed on the border the night before the war, camouflaging themselves and observing radio silence before being ordered to advance.

The Israeli plan was to surprise the Egyptian forces in both timing (the attack exactly coinciding with the IAF strike on Egyptian airfields), location (attacking via northern and central Sinai routes, as opposed to the Egyptian expectations of a repeat of the 1956 war, when the IDF attacked via the central and southern routes) and method (using a combined-force flanking approach, rather than direct tank assaults).

The northernmost Israeli division, consisting of three brigades and commanded by Major General [Israel Tal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Tal), one of Israel's most prominent armor commanders, crossed the border at two points, opposite [Nahal Oz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahal_Oz) and south of [Khan Yunis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khan_Yunis). They advanced swiftly, holding fire to prolong the element of surprise. Tal's forces assaulted the "Rafah Gap", a seven-mile stretch containing the shortest of three main routes through the Sinai towards [Qantara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qantara) and the [Suez Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Canal). The Egyptians had four divisions in the area, backed by minefields, pillboxes, underground bunkers, hidden gun emplacements and trenches. The terrain on either side of the route was impassable. The Israeli plan was to hit the Egyptians at selected key points with concentrated armor.

Tal's advance was led by the [7th Armored Brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7th_Armored_Brigade_(Israel)) under Colonel [Shmuel Gonen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shmuel_Gonen). The Israeli plan called for the 7th Brigade to outflank Khan Yunis from the north and the 60th Armored Brigade under Colonel Menachem Aviram would advance from the south. The two brigades would link up and surround Khan Yunis, while the paratroopers would take the [Rafah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rafah). Gonen entrusted the breakthrough to a single battalion of his brigade.

Initially, the advance was met with light resistance, as Egyptian intelligence had concluded that it was a diversion for the main attack. However, as Gonen's lead battalion advanced, it suddenly came under intense fire and took heavy losses. A second battalion was brought up, but was also pinned down. Meanwhile, the 60th Brigade became bogged down in the sand, while the paratroopers had trouble navigating through the dunes. The Israelis continued to press their attack, and despite heavy losses, cleared the Egyptian positions and reached the [Khan Yunis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khan_Yunis) railway junction in little over four hours.

Gonen's brigade then advanced nine miles to Rafah in twin columns. Rafah itself was circumvented, and the Israelis attacked [Sheikh Zuweid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheikh_Zuweid), eight miles to the southwest, which was defended by two brigades. Though inferior in numbers and equipment, the Egyptians were deeply entrenched and camouflaged. The Israelis were pinned down by fierce Egyptian resistance, and called in air and artillery support to enable their lead elements to advance. Many Egyptians abandoned after their commander and several of his staff were killed.

The Israelis broke through with tank-led assaults. However, Aviram's forces misjudged the Egyptians' flank, and were pinned between strongholds before they were extracted after several hours. By nightfall, the Israelis had finished mopping up resistance. Israeli forces had taken significant losses, with Colonel Gonen later telling reporters that "we left many of our dead soldiers in Rafah, and many burnt-out tanks." The Egyptians suffered some 2,000 casualties and lost 40 tanks.



Major-General [Ariel Sharon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariel_Sharon) during the [Battle of Abu-Ageila](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Abu-Ageila_(1967)).

**Advance on Arish**

With the road open, Israeli forces continued advancing towards [Arish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arish). Already by late afternoon, elements of the 79th Armored Battalion had charged through the seven-mile long Jiradi defile, a narrow pass defended by well-emplaced troops of the Egyptian 112th Infantry Brigade. In fierce fighting which saw the pass change hands several times, the Israelis charged through the position. The Egyptians suffered heavy casualties and tank losses, while Israeli losses stood at 66 dead, 93 wounded and 28 tanks. Emerging at the western end, Israeli forces advanced to the outskirts of Arish. As it reached the outskirts of Arish, Tal's division also consolidated its hold on Rafah and Khan Yunis.



Israeli reconnaissance forces from the "[Shaked](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaked)" unit in Sinai during the war.

The following day, the Israeli forces on the outskirts of Arish were reinforced by the 7th Brigade, which fought its way through the Jiradi pass. After receiving supplies via an airdrop, the Israelis entered the city and captured the airport at 7:50 am. The Israelis entered the city at 8:00 am. Company commander [Yossi Peled](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yossi_Peled) recounted that "Al-Arish was totally quiet, desolate. Suddenly, the city turned into a madhouse. Shots came at us from every alley, every corner, every window and house." An IDF record stated that "clearing the city was hard fighting. The Egyptians fired from the rooftops, from balconies and windows. They dropped grenades into our half-tracks and blocked the streets with trucks. Our men threw the grenades back and crushed the trucks with their tanks." Gonen sent additional units to Arish, and the city was eventually taken.

Further south, the Israeli 38th Armored Division under Major-General [Ariel Sharon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariel_Sharon) assaulted [Um-Katef](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Um-Katef) a heavily fortified area defended by the Egyptian 2nd Infantry Division under Major-General Sa'adi Nagib. The Egyptians also had a [battalion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battalion) of [tank destroyers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tank_destroyer) and a tank regiment, formed of Soviet World War II armor, which included 90 [T-34-85](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T-34_tank) tanks (with 85 mm guns), 22 [SU-100](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SU-100) tank destroyers (with 100 mm guns), and about 16,000 men. The Israelis had a man-power of about 14,000, and 150 post-World War II tanks including the [AMX-13](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AMX-13) with 90 mm guns, [Centurions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centurion_tank), and [M50 Super Shermans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M50_Super_Sherman) (modified [M-4 Sherman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M-4_Sherman) tanks).

Sharon's plan was to cross the sand wastes the Egyptians thought to be impassable, and attack from the north. Simultaneously, his tanks from the west would engage Egyptian forces on Um-Katef ridge and block any reinforcements. Israeli infantry would clear the three trenches, while heliborne paratroopers would land behind Egyptian lines and silence their artillery. An armored thrust would be made at al-Qusmaya to preoccupy and isolate its garrison.



Israeli Armor of the Six Day War: pictured here the [AMX 13](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AMX_13).

As Sharon's division advanced into the Sinai, Egyptian forces staged successful delaying actions at Tarat Umm, Umm Tarfa, and Hill 181. An Israeli jet was downed by anti-aircraft fire, and Sharon's forces came under heavy shelling as they advanced from the north and west. The Israelis had to struggle through sand dunes and mines while under heavy fire, and took heavy casualties. However, Israeli tanks managed to penetrate the northern flank of Abu Ageila, and by dusk, all units were in position. The Israelis then brought up 90 105mm and 155mm artillery guns for a preparatory barrage, while civilian buses brought reserve infantrymen under Colonel [Yekutiel Adam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yekutiel_Adam) and helicopters arrived to ferry the paratroopers. These movements were unobserved by the Egyptians, who were preoccupied with Israeli probes against their perimeter.

As night fell, the Israeli assault troops lit flashlights, each battalion a different color, to prevent [friendly fire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friendly_fire) incidents. At 10:00 pm, Israeli artillery began a barrage on Um-Katef, firing some 6,000 shells in less than twenty minutes. Israeli tanks assaulted the northernmost Egyptian defenses and were largely successful, though an entire armored brigade was stalled by mines, and had only one mine-clearance tank. Israeli infantrymen assaulted the triple line of trenches in the east. To the west, paratroopers commanded by Colonel [Danny Matt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danny_Matt) landed behind enemy lines, though half the helicopters got lost and never found the battlefield, while others were unable to land due to mortar fire.

The paratroopers who did land assaulted the Egyptian artillery park. The confusion sown among the artillery crews helped to slow but not quite stop artillery fire. The overall plan was met and sometimes exceeded. Egyptian reinforcements from Jabal Libni advanced towards Um-Katef to counterattack, but failed to reach their objective, being subjected to heavy air attacks and encountering Israeli lodgments on the roads. Egyptian commanders then called in artillery attacks on their own positions. The Israelis accomplished and sometimes exceeded their overall plan, and had largely succeeded by the following day. The Egyptians took heavy casualties, while the Israelis lost 40 dead and 140 wounded.

Meanwhile, two Israeli reserve brigades under Brigadier-General [Avraham Yoffe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avraham_Yoffe), each equipped with 100 tanks, penetrated the Sinai south of Tal's division and north of Sharon's, capturing the road junctions of Abu Ageila, Bir Lahfan, and Arish, taking all of them before midnight. Two Egyptian armored brigades counterattacked, and a fierce battle took place until the following morning. The Egyptians were beaten back by fierce resistance coupled with airstrikes, sustaining heavy tank losses. They fled west towards Jabal Libni.

Further south, the [8th Armored Brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/8th_Armored_Brigade_(Israel)) under Colonel [Albert Mandler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Mandler), initially positioned as a ruse to draw off invasion forces from the real invasion routes, attacked the fortified bunkers at Kuntilla, a strategically valuable position whose capture would enable Mandler to block reinforcements from reaching Um-Katef and to join Sharon's upcoming attack on [Nakhl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nekhel). The defending Egyptian battalion, outnumbered and outgunned, fiercely resisted the attack, hitting a number of Israeli tanks. However, most of the defenders were killed, and only three Egyptian tanks, one of them damaged, survived. By nightfall, Mendler's forces had taken Kuntilla.

Yoffe's attack allowed Tal and Sharon to complete the capture of the Jiradi defile, Khan Yunis and Um-Katef. All of them were taken after fierce fighting. The main thrust at Um-Katef was stalled due to mines and craters. After IDF engineers had cleared a path by 4:00 pm, Israeli and Egyptian tanks engaged in fierce combat, often at ranges as close as ten yards. The battle ended in an Israeli victory, with 40 Egyptian and 19 Israeli tanks destroyed. Meanwhile, Israeli infantry finished clearing out the Egyptian trenches, with Israeli casualties standing at 14 dead and 41 wounded and Egyptian casualties at 300 dead and 100 taken prisoner. Gonen subsequently dispatched force of tanks, infantry and engineers under Colonel Yisrael Granit to continue down the Mediterranean coast towards the [Suez Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Canal), while a second force led by Gonen himself turned south and captured Bir Lahfan and Jabal Libni.

With the exceptions of Rafah and Khan Yunis, Israeli forces had initially avoided entering the [Gaza Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip). Israeli Defense Minister [Moshe Dayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moshe_Dayan) had expressly forbidden entry into the area. After Palestinian positions in Gaza opened fire on the Negev settlements of [Nirim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nirim) and [Kissufim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kissufim), IDF Chief of Staff [Yitzhak Rabin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Rabin) overrode Dayan's instructions and ordered the 11th Mechanized Brigade under Colonel Yehuda Reshef to enter the Strip. The force was immediately met with heavy artillery fire and fierce resistance from Palestinian forces and remnants of the Egyptian forces from Rafah.

By sunset, the Israelis had taken the strategically vital Ali Muntar ridge, overlooking [Gaza City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza), but were beaten back from the city itself. Some 70 Israelis were killed, along with Israeli journalist Ben Oyserman and American journalist [Paul Schutzer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Schutzer). Twelve members of [UNEF](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Emergency_Force) were also killed. On the war's second day, the Israelis were bolstered by the 35th Paratroopers Brigade under Colonel [Rafael Eitan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rafael_Eitan), and took Gaza City along with the entire Strip. The fighting was fierce, and accounted for nearly half of all Israeli casualties on the southern front. However, Gaza rapidly fell to the Israelis.

During the ground fighting, remnants of the [Egyptian Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_Air_Force) attacked Israeli ground forces, but took losses from the Israeli Air Force and from Israeli anti-aircraft units. Throughout the last four days, Egyptian aircraft flew 150 sorties against Israeli units in the Sinai.

Many of the Egyptian units remained intact and could have tried to prevent the Israelis from reaching the [Suez Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Canal) or engaged in combat in the attempt to reach the canal. However, when the Egyptian Minister of Defense, Field Marshal [Abdel Hakim Amer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdel_Hakim_Amer) heard about the fall of [Abu-Ageila](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu-Ageila), he panicked and ordered all units in the Sinai to retreat. This order effectively meant the defeat of Egypt.



Menu

0:00



Newsreel from June 6 about the first Israeli-Egyptian fighting.

As Egyptian columns retreated, Israeli aircraft and artillery attacked them. Israeli jets used [napalm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napalm) bombs during their sorties. The attacks destroyed hundreds of vehicles and caused heavy casualties. At Jabal Libni, retreating Egyptian soldiers were fired upon by their own artillery. At Bir Gafgafa, the Egyptians fiercely resisted advancing Israeli forces, knocking out three tanks and eight half-tracks, and killing 20 soldiers. Due to the Egyptians' retreat, the Israeli High Command decided not to pursue the Egyptian units but rather to bypass and destroy them in the mountainous passes of West Sinai.

Therefore, in the following two days (June 6 and 7), all three Israeli divisions (Sharon and Tal were reinforced by an armored brigade each) rushed westwards and reached the passes. Sharon's division first went southward then westward, via [An-Nakhl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An-Nakhl_Fortress), to [Mitla Pass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitla_Pass) with air support. It was joined there by parts of Yoffe's division, while its other units blocked the [Gidi Pass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gidi_Pass). These passes became killing grounds for the Egyptians, who ran right into waiting Israeli positions and suffered heavy losses. According to Egyptian diplomat [Mahmoud Riad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahmoud_Riad), 10,000 men were killed in one day alone, and many others died from hunger and thirst. Tal's units stopped at various points to the length of the Suez Canal.

Israel's blocking action was partially successful. Only the Gidi pass was captured before the Egyptians approached it, but at other places, Egyptian units managed to pass through and cross the canal to safety. Due to the haste of the Egyptian retreat, soldiers often abandoned weapons, military equipment, and hundreds of vehicles. Many Egyptian soldiers were cut off from their units had to walk about 200 kilometers through by foot before reaching the Suez Canal with limited supplies of food and water and were exposed to intense heat.

Thousands of soldiers died as a result. Many Egyptian soldiers chose instead to surrender to the Israelis. However, the Israelis eventually exceeded their capabilities to provide for prisoners. As a result, they began directing soldiers towards the Suez Canal and only taking prisoner high-ranking officers, who were expected to be exchanged for captured Israeli pilots.

During the offensive, the [Israeli Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Navy) landed six [combat divers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frogman) from the [Shayetet 13](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shayetet_13) naval commando unit to infiltrate [Alexandria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria) harbor. The divers sank an Egyptian [minesweeper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minesweeper_(ship)) before being taken prisoner. Shayetet 13 commandos also infiltrated into [Port Said](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port_Said) harbor, but found no ships there. A planned commando raid against the [Syrian Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_Navy) never materialized. Both Egyptian and Israeli warships made movements at sea to intimidate the other side throughout the war, but did not engage each other. However, Israeli warships and aircraft did hunt for Egyptian submarines throughout the war.

On June 7, Israel began the conquest of [Sharm el-Sheikh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharm_el-Sheikh). The [Israeli Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Navy) started the operation with a probe of Egyptian naval defenses. An aerial reconnaissance flight found that the area was less defended than originally thought. At about 4:30 am, three Israeli [missile boats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missile_boat) opened fire on Egyptian shore batteries, while paratroopers and commandos boarded helicopters and [Nord Noratlas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nord_Noratlas) transport planes for an assault on Al-Tur, as Chief of Staff Rabin was convinced it was too risky to land them directly in Sharm el-Sheikh.

However, the city had been largely abandoned the day before, and reports from air and naval forces finally convinced Rabin to divert the aircraft to Sharm el-Sheikh. There, the Israelis engaged in a pitched battle with the Egyptians and took the city, killing 20 Egyptian soldiers and taking 8 prisoner. At 12:15 pm, Defense Minister Dayan announced that the [Straits of Tiran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Straits_of_Tiran) constituted an international waterway open to all ships without restriction.

On June 8, Israel completed the capture of the Sinai by sending infantry units to [Ras Sudar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ras_Sudar) on the western coast of the peninsula.

Several tactical elements made the swift Israeli advance possible: first, the surprise attack that quickly gave the [Israeli Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Air_Force) complete air superiority over the [Egyptian Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_Air_Force); second, the determined implementation of an innovative battle plan; third, the lack of coordination among Egyptian troops. These factors would prove to be decisive elements on Israel's other fronts as well.

**West Bank**

See also: [Jordanian campaign (1967)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordanian_campaign_(1967))



The Jordan [salient](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salients,_re-entrants_and_pockets), June 5–7.

Jordan was reluctant to enter the war. [Nasser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamal_Abdel_Nasser) used the [obscurity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fog_of_war) of the first hours of the conflict to convince [King Hussein](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hussein_of_Jordan) that he was victorious; he claimed as evidence a radar sighting of a squadron of Israeli aircraft returning from bombing raids in Egypt which he said was an Egyptian aircraft en route to attacking Israel. One of the Jordanian brigades stationed in the [West Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank) was sent to the [Hebron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebron) area in order to link with the Egyptians. Hussein decided to attack.

The [Jordanian Armed Forces](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordanian_Armed_Forces) included 11 brigades totaling some 55,000 troops, equipped with some 300 modern Western tanks. Of these, nine brigades (45,000 troops, 270 tanks, 200 artillery pieces) were deployed in the [West Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank), including elite armored 40th, and two in the [Jordan Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan_Valley_(Middle_East)). The [Jordanian Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordanian_Army), then known as the [Arab Legion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Legion), was a long-term-service, professional army, relatively well-equipped and well-trained. Furthermore, Israeli post-war briefings said that the Jordanian staff acted professionally as well, but was always left "half a step" behind by the Israeli moves. The small [Royal Jordanian Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Jordanian_Air_Force) consisted of only 24 British-made [Hawker Hunter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawker_Hunter) fighters, six transports, and two helicopters. According to the Israelis, the Hawker Hunter was essentially on par with the French-built [Dassault Mirage III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dassault_Mirage_III) – the IAF's best plane.

Against Jordan's forces on the West Bank, Israel deployed about 40,000 troops and 200 tanks (8 brigades). Israeli Central Command forces consisted of five brigades. The first two were permanently stationed near [Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem) and were called the [Jerusalem Brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem_Brigade) and the mechanized [Harel Brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harel_Brigade). [Mordechai Gur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordechai_Gur)'s 55th [paratrooper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paratrooper) brigade was summoned from the Sinai front. The 10th Armored Brigade was stationed north of the [West Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank). The Israeli Northern Command provided a division (3 brigades) led by Major-General [Elad Peled](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elad_Peled), which was stationed to the north of the West Bank, in the [Jezreel Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jezreel_Valley). The IDF's strategic plan was to remain on the defensive along the Jordanian front, to enable focus in the expected campaign against Egypt.

Intermittent machine-gun exchanges began taking place in Jerusalem at 9:30 am, and the fighting gradually escalated as the Jordanians introduced 3-inch mortars and 106mm recoilless rifles. Under the orders from General Narkis, the Israelis responded only with small-arms fire, firing in a flat trajectory to avoid hitting civilians, holy sites or the Old City. At 10:00 am on June 5, the [Jordanian Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordanian_Army) began shelling Israel. Two batteries of 155mm [Long Tom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/155_mm_Long_Tom) cannons opened fire on the suburbs of [Tel Aviv](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Aviv) and [Ramat David Airbase](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramat_David_Airbase). The commanders of these batteries were instructed to lay a two-hour barrage against military and civilian settlements in central Israel. Some shells hit the outskirts of [Tel Aviv](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Aviv).

Israel assumed that the attacks were a symbolic gesture of solidarity with Egypt, and sent a message to [King Hussein](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hussein_of_Jordan) promising not to initiate any action against Jordan if it stayed out of the war. King Hussein replied that it was too late, "[the die was cast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alea_iacta_est)". At 11:15 am, Jordanian howitzers began a 6,000-shell barrage at Israeli Jerusalem. The Jordanians initially targeted [kibbutz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kibbutz) [Ramat Rachel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramat_Rachel) in the south and [Mount Scopus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Scopus) in the north, then ranged into the city center and outlying neighborhoods. Military installations, the Prime Minister's Residence, and the [Knesset](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knesset) compound were also targeted. Israeli civilian casualties totaled 20 dead and about 1,000 wounded. Some 900 buildings were damaged, including [Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadassah_Medical_Center).

At 11:50 am, sixteen Jordanian Hawker Hunters attacked [Netanya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netanya), [Kfar Sirkin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kfar_Sirkin) and [Kfar Saba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kfar_Saba), killing one civilian, wounding seven and destroying a transport plane. Three Iraqi Hawker Hunters strafed civilian settlements in the Jezreel Valley, and an Iraqi [Tu-16](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tupolev_Tu-16) attacked [Afula](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afula), and was shot down near the Megiddo airfield. The attack caused minimal material damage, hitting only a senior citizens' home and several chicken coops, but sixteen Israeli soldiers were killed, most of them when the Tupolev crashed.

**Israeli cabinet meets**

When the [Israeli cabinet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_of_Israel) convened to decide what to do, [Yigal Allon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yigal_Allon) and [Menahem Begin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menahem_Begin) argued that this was an opportunity to take the [Old City of Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_City_(Jerusalem)), but Eshkol decided to defer any decision until [Moshe Dayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moshe_Dayan) and [Yitzhak Rabin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Rabin) could be consulted. [Uzi Narkiss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzi_Narkiss) made a number of proposals for military action, including the capture of [Latrun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latrun), but the cabinet turned him down. Dayan rejected multiple requests from Narkiss for permission to mount an infantry assault towards Mount Scopus. However, Dayan sanctioned a number of more limited retaliatory actions.

**Initial response**

Shortly before 12:30 am, the [Israeli Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Air_Force) attacked Jordan's two airbases. The Hawker Hunters were refueling at the time of the attack. The Israeli aircraft came within two waves, the first of which cratered the runways and knocked out the control towers, and the second wave destroyed all of Jordan's Hawker Hunter fighters, along with six transport aircraft and two helicopters. One Israeli jet was shot down by ground fire.

Israeli aircraft also attacked H-3, an [Iraqi Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraqi_Air_Force) base in western Iraq. During the attack, 12 MiG-21s, 2 MiG-17s, 5 Hunter F6s, and 3 Il-28 bombers were destroyed or shot down. A Pakistani pilot stationed at the base managed to shoot down an Israeli fighter and bomber during the raid. The Jordanian radar facility at [Ajloun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajloun) was destroyed in an Israeli airstrike. Israeli [Fouga Magister](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fouga_Magister) jets attacked the Jordanian 40th Brigade with rockets as it moved south from the Damiya Bridge. Dozens of tanks were knocked out, and a convoy of 26 trucks carrying ammunition was destroyed. In Jerusalem, Israel responded to Jordanian shelling with a missile strike which devastated Jordanian positions. The Israelis used the L missile, a [surface-to-surface](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surface-to-surface) missile developed jointly with [France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) in secret.

**Jordanian battalion at Government House**

*Further information:* [*Battle of Ammunition Hill*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ammunition_Hill)

A Jordanian battalion advanced up Government House ridge and dug in at the perimeter of Government House, the headquarters of the United Nations observers, and opened fire on Ramat Rachel, the Allenby Barracks and the Jewish section of [Abu Tor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Tor) with mortars and recoilless rifles. UN observers fiercely protested the incursion into the neutral zone, and several manhandled a Jordanian machine gun out of Government House after the crew had set it up in a second-floor window. After the Jordanians occupied [Jabel Mukaber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jabel_Mukaber), an advance patrol was sent out and approached Ramat Rachel, where they came under fire from four civilians, including the wife of the director, who were armed with old Czech-made weapons.



Israeli paratroopers flush out Jordanian soldiers from trenches during the [Battle of Ammunition Hill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ammunition_Hill).



Silhouette of Israeli paratroops advancing on Ammunition Hill.

The immediate Israeli response was an offensive to retake Government House and its ridge. The Jerusalem Brigade's Reserve Battalion 161, under Lieutenant-Colonel Asher Dreizin, was given the task. Dreizin had two infantry companies and eight tanks under his command, several of which broke down or became stuck in the mud at Ramat Rachel, leaving three for the assault. The Jordanians mounted fierce resistance, knocking out two tanks.

The Israelis broke through the compound's western gate and began clearing the building with grenades, before General [Odd Bull](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odd_Bull), commander of the UN observers, compelled the Israelis to hold their fire, telling them that the Jordanians had already fled. The Israelis proceeded to take the Antenna Hill, directly behind Government House, and clear out a series of bunkers to the west and south. The fighting, often conducted hand-to-hand, continued for nearly four hours before the surviving Jordanians fell back to trenches held by the Hittin Brigade, which were steadily overwhelmed. By 6:30 pm, the Jordanians had retreated to [Bethlehem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethlehem), having suffered about 100 casualties. All but ten of Dreizin's soldiers were casualties, and Dreizin himself was wounded three times.

**Israeli counter offensives**

During the late afternoon of June 5, the Israelis launched an offensive to encircle Jerusalem which lasted into the following day. During the night, they were supported by intense tank, artillery and mortar fire to soften up Jordanian positions. Searchlights placed atop the Labor Federation building, then the tallest in Israeli Jerusalem, exposed and blinded the Jordanians. The Jerusalem Brigade moved south of Jerusalem, while the mechanized [Harel Brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harel_Brigade) and paratroopers under [Mordechai Gur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordechai_Gur) encircled it from the north.

A combined force of tanks and paratroopers crossed no-man's land near the [Mandelbaum Gate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandelbaum_Gate). One of Gur's paratroop battalions approached the fortified Police Academy. The Israelis used [bangalore torpedoes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangalore_torpedo) to blast their way through barbed wire leading up to the position while exposed and under heavy fire. With the aid of two tanks borrowed from the Jerusalem Brigade, they captured the Police Academy. After receiving reinforcements, they moved up to attack [Ammunition hill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ammunition_hill).

The Jordanian defenders, who were heavily dug-in, fiercely resisted the attack. All of the Israeli officers except for two company commanders were killed, and the fighting was mostly led by individual soldiers. The fighting was conducted at close quarters in trenches and bunkers, and was often hand-to-hand. The Israelis captured the position after four hours of heavy fighting. During the battle, 36 Israeli and 71 Jordanian soldiers were killed.

The battalion subsequently drove east, and linked up with the Israeli enclave on [Mount Scopus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Scopus) and its [Hebrew University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_University_of_Jerusalem) campus. Gur's other battalions captured the other Jordanian positions around the [American Colony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Colony,_Jerusalem), despite being short on men and equipment and having come under a Jordanian mortar bombardment while waiting for the signal to advance.

At the same time, the mechanized [Harel Brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harel_Brigade) attacked the fortress at [Latrun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latrun), which the Jordanians had abandoned due to heavy Israeli tank fire. The brigade attacked [Har Adar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Har_Adar), but seven tanks were knocked out by mines, forcing the infantry to mount an assault without armored cover. The Israeli soldiers advanced under heavy fire, jumping between stones to avoid mines. The fighting was conducted at close-quarters, often with knives and bayonets.

The Jordanians fell back after a battle which left two Israeli and eight Jordanian soldiers dead, and Israeli forces advanced through [Beit Horon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beth-Horon) towards [Ramallah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramallah), taking four fortified villages along the way. By the evening, the brigade arrived in Ramallah. Meanwhile, the 163rd Infantry Battalion secured [Abu Tor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Tor) following a fierce battle, severing the Old City from Bethlehem and Hebron.

Meanwhile, 600 Egyptian commandos stationed in the West Bank moved to attack Israeli airfields. Led by Jordanian intelligence scouts, they crossed the border and began infiltrating through Israeli settlements towards [Ramla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramla) and [Hatzor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatzor). They were soon detected and sought shelter in nearby fields, which the Israelis set on fire. Some 450 commandos were killed, and the remainder escaped to Jordan.

From the American Colony, the paratroopers moved towards the Old City. Their plan was to approach it via the lightly defended Salah al-Din Street. However, they made a wrong turn onto the heavily defended Nablus Road. The Israelis ran into fierce resistance. Their tanks fired at point-blank range down the street, while the paratroopers mounted repeated charges. Despite repelling repeated Israeli charges, the Jordanians gradually gave way to Israeli firepower and momentum. The Israelis suffered some 30 casualties – half the original force, while the Jordanians lost 45 dead and 142 wounded.

Meanwhile, the Israeli 71st Battalion breached barbed wire and minefields and emerged near Wadi Joz, near the base of Mount Scopus, from where the Old City could be cut off from Jericho and East Jerusalem from Ramallah. Israeli artillery targeted the one remaining route from Jerusalem to the West Bank, and shellfire deterred the Jordanians from counterattacking from their positions at Augusta-Victoria. An Israeli detachment then captured the [Rockefeller Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rockefeller_Museum) after a brief skirmish.

Afterwards, the Israelis broke through to the Jerusalem-Ramallah road. At Tel al-Ful, the Israelis fought a running battle with up to thirty Jordanian tanks. The Jordanians stalled the advance and destroyed a number of half-tracks, but the Israelis launched air attacks and exploited the vulnerability of the external fuel tanks mounted on the Jordanian tanks. The Jordanians lost half their tanks, and retreated towards [Jericho](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jericho). Joining up with the 4th Brigade, the Israelis then descended through [Shuafat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shuafat) and the site of what is now [French Hill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Hill), through Jordanian defenses at Mivtar, emerging at Ammunition hill.



An Israeli airstrike near the Augusta-Victoria Hospital.

With Jordanian defenses in Jerusalem crumbling, elements of the Jordanian 60th Brigade and an infantry battalion were sent from Jericho to reinforce Jerusalem. Its original orders were to repel the Israelis from the Latrun corridor, but due to the worsening situation in Jerusalem, the brigade was ordered to proceed to Jerusalem's Arab suburbs and attack [Mount Scopus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Scopus). Parallel to the brigade were infantrymen from the Imam Ali Brigade, who were approaching [Issawiya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Issawiya). The brigades were spotted by Israeli aircraft and decimated by rocket and cannon fire. Other Jordanian attempts to reinforce Jerusalem were beaten back, either by armored ambushes or airstrikes.

Fearing damage to holy sites and the prospect of having to fight in built-up areas, Dayan ordered his troops not to enter the Old City. He also feared that Israel would be subjected to a fierce international backlash and the outrage of Christians worldwide if it forced its way into the Old City. Privately, he told [David Ben-Gurion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Ben-Gurion) that he was also concerned over the prospect of Israel capturing Jerusalem's holy sites, only to be forced to give them up under the threat of international sanctions.

**The Old City (June 7)**

On June 7, heavy fighting ensued. Dayan had ordered his troops not to enter the Old City; however, upon hearing that the UN was about to declare a ceasefire, he changed his mind, and without cabinet clearance, decided to capture it. Two paratroop battalions attacked Augusta-Victoria Hill, high ground overlooking the Old City from the east. One battalion attacked from Mount Scopus, and another attacked from the valley between it and the Old City. Another paratroop battalion, personally led by Gur, broke into the Old City, and was joined by the other two battalions after their missions were complete. The paratroopers met little resistance. The fighting was conducted solely by the paratroopers; the Israelis did not use armor during the battle out of fear of severe damage to the Old City.

In the north, one battalion from Peled's division was sent to check Jordanian defenses in the Jordan Valley. A brigade belonging to Peled's division captured the western part of the West Bank. One brigade attacked Jordanian artillery positions around [Jenin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jenin), which were shelling [Ramat David Airbase](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramat_David_Airbase). The Jordanian 12th Armored Battalion, which outnumbered the Israelis, held off repeated attempts to capture Jenin. However, Israeli air attacks took their toll, and the Jordanian [M48 Pattons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M48_Patton), with their external fuel tanks, proved vulnerable at short distances, even to the Israeli modified Shermans. Twelve Jordanian tanks were destroyed, and only six remained operational.



[IDF](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Defense_Forces) Paratroopers at [Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem)'s [Western Wall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Wall) shortly after its capture.

Just after dusk, Israeli reinforcements arrived. The Jordanians continued to fiercely resist, and the Israelis were unable to advance without artillery and air support. One Israeli jet attacked the Jordanian commander's tank, wounding him and killing his radio operator and intelligence officer. The surviving Jordanian forces then withdrew to Jenin, where they were reinforced by the 25th Infantry Brigade. The Jordanians were effectively surrounded in Jenin.

Jordanian infantry and their three remaining tanks managed to hold off the Israelis until 4:00 am, when three battalions arrived to reinforce them in the afternoon. The Jordanian tanks charged, and knocked out multiple Israeli vehicles, and the tide began to shift. After sunrise, Israeli jets and artillery conducted a two-hour bombardment against the Jordanians. The Jordanians lost 10 dead and 250 wounded, and had only seven tanks left, including two without gas, and sixteen APCs. The Israelis then fought their way into Jenin, and captured the city after fierce fighting.

After the Old City fell, the Jerusalem Brigade reinforced the paratroopers, and continued to the south, capturing [Judea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judea) and [Gush Etzion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gush_Etzion). [Hebron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebron) was taken without any resistance. Fearful that Israeli soldiers would exact retribution for the [1929 massacre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1929_Hebron_massacre) of the city's Jewish community, Hebron's residents flew white sheets from their windows and rooftops, and voluntarily gave up their weapons. The Harel Brigade proceeded eastward, descending to the [Jordan River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan_River).

On June 7, Israeli forces seized [Bethlehem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethlehem), taking the city after a brief battle which left some 40 Jordanian soldiers dead, with the remainder fleeing. On the same day, one of Peled's brigades seized [Nablus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nablus); then it joined one of Central Command's armored brigades to fight the Jordanian forces; as the Jordanians held the advantage of superior equipment and were equal in numbers to the Israelis.

Again, the air superiority of the IAF proved paramount as it immobilized the enemy, leading to its defeat. One of Peled's brigades joined with its Central Command counterparts coming from Ramallah, and the remaining two blocked the Jordan river crossings together with the Central Command's 10th. [Engineering Corps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combat_Engineering_Corps) sappers blew up the Abdullah and Hussein bridges with captured Jordanian mortar shells, while elements of the Harel Brigade crossed the river and occupied positions along the east bank to cover them, but quickly pulled back due to American pressure. The Jordanians, anticipating an Israeli offensive deep into Jordan, assembled the remnants of their army and Iraqi units in Jordan to protect the western approaches to [Amman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amman) and the southern slopes of the [Golan Heights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golan_Heights).

No specific decision had been made to capture any other territories controlled by Jordan. After the Old City was captured, Dayan told his troops to dig in to hold it. When an armored brigade commander entered the West Bank on his own initiative, and stated that he could see [Jericho](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jericho), Dayan ordered him back. It was only after intelligence reports indicated that Hussein had withdrawn his forces across the Jordan River that Dayan ordered his troops to capture the West Bank. According to Narkis:

First, the Israeli government had no intention of capturing the West Bank. On the contrary, it was opposed to it. Second, there was not any provocation on the part of the IDF. Third, the rein was only loosened when a real threat to Jerusalem's security emerged. This is truly how things happened on June 5, although it is difficult to believe. The end result was something that no one had planned.

**Golan Heights**



The Battle of Golan Heights, June 9–10.

False Egyptian reports of a crushing victory against the Israeli army and forecasts that Egyptian forces would soon be attacking [Tel Aviv](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Aviv) influenced Syria's willingness to enter the war. Syrian artillery began shelling northern Israel, and twelve Syrian jets attacked Israeli settlements in the [Galilee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galilee). Israeli fighter jets intercepted the Syrian aircraft, shooting down three and driving off the rest.

On the evening of June 5, the Israeli Air Force attacked Syrian airfields. The [Syrian Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_Air_Force) lost some 32 [MiG 21s](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG_21), and 23 [MiG-15](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-15) and MiG-17 fighters, and two Ilyushin Il-28 bombers, two-thirds of its fighting strength. The Syrian aircraft that survived the attack retreated to distant bases without playing any further role in the ensuing warfare. Following the attack, Syria understood that the news it had heard from Egypt of the near-total destruction of the Israeli military could not have been true.

A minor Syrian force tried to capture the water plant at [Tel Dan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Dan) (the subject of a fierce escalation two years earlier), [Dan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan,_Israel), and [She'ar Yashuv](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/She%27ar_Yashuv). These attacks were repulsed with the loss of twenty soldiers and seven tanks. An Israeli officer was also killed. But a broader Syrian offensive quickly failed. Units of Syrian reserves were broken up by Israeli air attacks, and several Syrian tanks were reported to have sunk in the Jordan River.

Other problems included tanks too wide for bridges, lack of radio communications between tanks and infantry, and units ignoring orders to advance. A post-war Syrian army report concluded "Our forces did not go on the offensive either because they did not arrive or were not wholly prepared or because they could not find shelter from the enemy's planes. The reserves could not withstand the air attacks; they dispersed after their morale plummeted. The Syrians abandoned hopes of a ground attack and began a massive bombardment of Israeli communities in the [Hula Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hula_Valley) instead.



Israeli children in a bomb shelter at [Kibbutz Dan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan,_Israel) during the war.

On June 7 and 8, the Israeli leadership debated about whether the Golan Heights should be attacked as well; the attack on Syria was initially planned for June 8, but was postponed for 24 hours. At 3 am on June 9, Syria announced its acceptance of the cease-fire. Despite this, four hours later at 7 am, Israeli Defense Minister [Moshe Dayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moshe_Dayan) "gave the order to go into action against Syria." Syria had supported the pre-war raids that had helped raise tensions and had routinely shelled Israel from the Heights, so some Israeli leaders wanted to see Syria punished."

Military advice was that the attack would be extremely costly, since assailing the heights would be an uphill battle against a strongly fortified enemy. The western side of the Golan Heights consists of a rock escarpment that rises 500 meters (1700 ft) from the [Sea of Galilee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_of_Galilee) and the [Jordan River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan_River), and then flattens to a more gently sloping plateau. Dayan believed such an operation would yield losses of 30,000 and opposed it bitterly. Prime Minister [Levi Eshkol](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levi_Eshkol), on the other hand, was more open to the possibility of an operation in the Golan Heights, as was the head of the Northern Command, [David Elazar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Elazar), whose unbridled enthusiasm for and confidence in the operation may have eroded Dayan's reluctance. Eventually, as the situation on the Southern and Central fronts cleared up, intelligence estimated that the likelihood of Soviet intervention had reduced, [reconnaissance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconnaissance) showed some Syrian defenses in the Golan region collapsing, and an intercepted cable showed Nasser urging the President of Syria to immediately accept a cease-fire, Dayan became more enthusiastic about the idea, and he authorized the operation.

The Syrian army consisted of about 75,000 men grouped in nine brigades, supported by an adequate amount of artillery and armor. Israeli forces used in combat consisted of two brigades (The [8th Armored Brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/8th_Armored_Brigade_(Israel)) and the [Golani Brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golani_Brigade)) in the northern part of the front at [Givat HaEm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Givat_HaEm), and another two (infantry and one of Peled's brigades summoned from Jenin) in the center. The Golan Heights' unique terrain (mountainous slopes crossed by parallel streams every several kilometers running east to west), and the general lack of roads in the area channeled both forces along east-west axes of movement and restricted the ability of units to support those on either flank. Thus the Syrians could move north-south on the plateau itself, and the Israelis could move north-south at the base of the Golan escarpment. An advantage Israel possessed was the excellent intelligence collected by [Mossad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mossad) operative [Eli Cohen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eli_Cohen) (who was captured and executed in Syria in 1965) regarding the Syrian battle positions. Syria had built extensive defensive fortifications in depths up to 15 kilometers, comparable to the [Maginot Line](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maginot_Line).

As opposed to all the other campaigns, IAF was only partially effective in the Golan because the fixed fortifications were so effective. However, the Syrian forces proved unable to put up an effective defense largely because the officers were poor military leaders and treated their soldiers poorly; often officers would retreat to escape danger, leaving their men confused and ineffective. The Israelis also had the upper hand during close combat which took place in the numerous Syrian bunkers along the Golan Heights, as they were armed with the [Uzi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzi), a light submachine gun, designed for close combat, while Syrian soldiers were armed with the heavier [AK-47](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AK-47) assault rifle, designed for combat in more open areas.



Israeli tanks advancing on the Golan Heights.

On the morning of June 9, Israeli jets began carrying out dozens of sorties against Syrian positions from Mount Hermon to Tawfiq, using rockets salvaged from captured Egyptian stocks. The airstrikes knocked out artillery batteries and storehouses and forced transport columns off the roads. The Syrians suffered heavy casualties and a drop in morale, with a number of senior officers and troops deserting. The attacks also provided time as Israeli forces cleared paths through Syrian minefields. However, the airstrikes did not seriously damage the Syrians' bunkers and trench systems, and the bulk of Syrian forces on the Golan remained in their positions.

About two hours after the airstrikes began, the [8th Armored Brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/8th_Armored_Brigade_(Israel)), led by Colonel [Albert Mandler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Mandler), advanced into the Golan Heights from [Givat HaEm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Givat_HaEm). Its advance was spearheaded by [Engineering Corps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Engineering_Corps_(Israel)) sappers and eight bulldozers, which cleared away barbed wire and mines. As they advanced, the force came under fire, and five bulldozers were immediately hit. The Israeli tanks, with their maneuverability sharply reduced by the terrain, advanced slowly under fire toward the fortified village of Sir al-Dib, with their ultimate objective being the fortress at Qala. Israeli casualties steadily mounted. Part of the attacking force lost its way and emerged opposite of Za'ura, a redoubt manned by Syrian reservists. With the situation critical, Colonel Mandler ordered simultaneous assaults on Za'ura and Qala. Heavy and confused fighting followed, with Israeli and Syrian tanks struggling around obstacles and firing at extremely short ranges. Mandler recalled that "the Syrians fought well and bloodied us. We beat them only by crushing them under our treads and by blasting them with our cannons at very short range, from 100 to 500 meters." The first three Israeli tanks to enter Qala were stopped by a Syrian bazooka team, and a relief column of seven Syrian tanks arrived to repel the attackers. The Israelis took heavy fire from the houses, but could not turn back, as other forces were advancing behind them, and they were on a narrow path with mines on either side. The Israelis continued pressing forward, and called for air support. A pair of Israeli jets destroyed two of the Syrian tanks, and the remainder withdrew. The surviving defenders of Qala retreated after their commander was killed. Meanwhile, Za'ura fell in an Israeli assault, and the Israelis also captured the 'Ein Fit fortress.

In the central sector, the Israeli 181st Battalion captured the strongholds of Dardara and Tel Hillal after fierce fighting. Desperate fighting also broke out along the operation's northern axis, where [Golani Brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golani_Brigade) attacked thirteen Syrian positions, including the formidable Tel Fakhr position. Navigational errors placed the Israelis directly under the Syrians' guns. In the fighting that followed, both sides took heavy casualties, but the Israelis lost all nineteen of their tanks and half-tracks.

The Israeli battalion commander then ordered his twenty-five remaining men to dismount, divide into two groups, and charge the northern and southern flanks of Tel Fakhr. The first Israelis to reach the perimeter of the southern approach laid bodily down on the barbed wire, allowing their comrades to vault over them. From there, they assaulted the fortified Syrian positions. The fighting was waged at extremely close quarters, often hand-to-hand.

On the northern flank, the Israelis broke through within minutes and cleared out the trenches and bunkers. During the seven-hour battle, the Israelis lost 31 dead and 82 wounded, while the Syrians lost 62 dead and 20 captured. Among the dead was the Israeli battalion commander. The Golani Brigade's 51st Battalion took Tel 'Azzaziat, and Darbashiya also fell to Israeli forces.



Menu

0:00



[Universal Newsreel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Newsreel) from June 9 about the war and UN reactions.

By the evening of June 9, the four Israeli brigades had all broken through to the plateau, where they could be reinforced and replaced. Thousands of reinforcements began reaching the front, those tanks and half-tracks that had survived the previous day's fighting were refueled and replenished with ammunition, and the wounded were evacuated. By dawn, the Israelis had eight brigades in the sector.

Syria's first line of defense had been shattered, but the defenses beyond that remained largely intact. Mount Hermon and the Banias in the north, and the entire sector between Tawfiq and Customs House Road in the south remained in Syrian hands. In a meeting early on the night of June 9, Syrian leaders decided to reinforce those positions as quickly as possible, and to maintain a steady barrage on Israeli civilian settlements.

Throughout the night, the Israelis continued their advance. Though it was slowed by fierce resistance, an anticipated Syrian counterattack never materialized. At the fortified village of Jalabina, a garrison of Syrian reservists, leveling their anti-aircraft guns, managed to hold off the Israeli 65th Paratroop Battalion for four hours before a small detachment managed to penetrate the village and knock out the heavy guns.

Meanwhile, the 8th Brigade's tanks moved south from Qala, advancing six miles to Wasit under heavy artillery and tank bombardment. At the Banaias in the north, Syrian mortar batteries opened fire on advancing Israeli forces only after Golani Brigade sappers cleared a path through a minefield, killing sixteen Israeli soldiers and wounding four.

On the next day, June 10, the central and northern groups joined in a [pincer movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pincer_movement) on the plateau, but that fell mainly on empty territory as the Syrian forces retreated. At 8:30 am, the Syrians began blowing up their own bunkers, burning documents and retreating. Several units joined by Elad Peled's troops climbed to the Golan from the south, only to find the positions mostly empty. When the 8th Brigade reached Mansura, five miles from Wasit, the Israelis met no opposition and found abandoned equipment, including tanks, in perfect working condition. In the fortified Banaias village, Golani Brigade troops found only several Syrian soldiers chained to their positions.

During the day, the Israeli units stopped after obtaining maneuver room between their positions and a line of volcanic hills to the west. In some locations, Israeli troops advanced after an agreed-upon cease-fire to occupy strategically strong positions. To the east, the ground terrain is an open gently sloping plain. This position later became the cease-fire line known as the "[Purple Line](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple_Line_(border))".

[*Time*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_(magazine)) magazine reported: "In an effort to pressure the United Nations into enforcing a ceasefire, Damascus Radio undercut its own army by broadcasting the fall of the city of [Quneitra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quneitra) three hours before it actually capitulated. That premature report of the surrender of their headquarters destroyed the morale of the Syrian troops left in the Golan area."

**Weapons**

With the exception of Jordan, the Arabs relied principally on Soviet weaponry. Israeli weapons were mainly of Western origin. Its air force was composed principally of French aircraft while its armored units were mostly of British and American design and manufacture. Some infantry weapons, including the ubiquitous [Uzi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzi), were of Israeli origin.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Arab armies** | **IDF** |
| [**AFVs**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armoured_fighting_vehicle) | Egypt, Syria and Iraq used [T-34/85](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T-34/85), [T-54](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T-54), [T-55](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T-55), [PT-76](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PT-76), and [SU-100](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SU-100)/[152](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISU-152) World War II-vintage self-propelled guns. Jordan used [M-47](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M-47_Patton), [M-48](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M48_Patton) and M-48A1 Patton tanks. [Panzer IV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panzer_IV) (used by Syria) | [M50](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M50_Super_Sherman) and [M51 Shermans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M50_Super_Sherman), [M48A3 Patton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M48_Patton), [Centurion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centurion_tank), [AMX-13](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AMX-13). The Centurion was upgraded with the British [105 mm L7 gun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Ordnance_L7), prior to the war. The Sherman also underwent extensive modifications including a larger 105mm medium velocity, French gun, redesigned turret, wider tracks, more armor and upgraded engine and suspension. |
| [**APCs**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armoured_personnel_carrier)**/**[**IFVs**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infantry_fighting_vehicle) | [BTR-40](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BTR-40), [BTR-152](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BTR-152), [BTR-50](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BTR-50), [BTR-60](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BTR-60) APC's | [M2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M2_Half_Track_Car) [/M3 Half-track](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M3_Half-track) |
| **Artillery** | [M1937 Howitzer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M1937_Howitzer), [BM-21](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BM-21_Grad), [D-30 (2A18) Howitzer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/122_mm_howitzer_2A18_(D-30)), [M1954 field gun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/130_mm_towed_field_gun_M1954_(M-46)), M-52 105mm self-propelled howitzer (used by Jordan) | [M50 self-propelled howitzer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postwar_Sherman_tanks#Artillery_tanks) and [Makmat 160 mm self-propelled mortar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postwar_Sherman_tanks#Artillery_tanks), [Obusier de 155 mm Modèle 50](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obusier_de_155_mm_Mod%C3%A8le_50), [AMX 105mm Self-Propelled Howitzer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AMX-13#105_mm_Self_Propelled_Howitzer) |
| **Aircraft** | [MiG-21](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-21), [MiG-19](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-19), [MiG-17](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-17), [Su-7](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Su-7)B, [Tu-16](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tu-16), [Il-28](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-28), [Il-18](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-18), [Il-14](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilyushin_Il-14), [An-12](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonov_An-12), [Hawker Hunter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawker_Hunter) used by Jordan and Iraq | [Dassault Mirage III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dassault_Mirage_III), [Dassault Super Mystère](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dassault_Super_Myst%C3%A8re), [Sud Aviation Vautour](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sud_Aviation_Vautour), [Mystere IV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mystere_IV), [Dassault Ouragan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dassault_Ouragan), [Fouga Magister trainer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fouga_Magister) outfitted for attack missions, [Nord 2501IS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nord_Noratlas) military cargo plane |
| **Helicopters** | [Mi-6](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-6), [Mi-4](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-4) | [Super Frelon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Super_Frelon), [Sikorsky S-58](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikorsky_S-58) |
| [**AAW**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-aircraft_warfare) | [SA-2 Guideline](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S-75_Dvina), [ZSU-57-2 Twin 57mm mobile anti-aircraft cannon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ZSU-57-2) | [MIM-23 Hawk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MIM-23_Hawk), [Bofors 40 mm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bofors_40_mm) |
| **Infantry weapons** | [Port Said submachinegun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Gustav_M/45#Manufacturers_and_users), [AK-47](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AK-47), [RPK](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RPK), [RPD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RPD_(weapon)), [DShK](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DShK) HMG, [B-10](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-10_recoilless_rifle) and [B-11 recoilless rifles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-11_recoilless_rifle) | [Uzi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzi_submachine_gun), [FN FAL](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FN_FAL), [FN MAG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FN_MAG), [AK-47](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AK-47), [M2 Browning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M2_Browning_machine_gun), [Nord SS.10](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nord_SS.10), [RL-83 Blindicide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RL-83_Blindicide) anti-tank infantry weapon, [Jeep mounted 106mm recoilless rifle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M40_recoilless_rifle) |

**Conclusion of conflict and post-war situation**



Menu

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[Universal Newsreel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Newsreel) from June 13 about the war

By June 10, Israel had completed its final offensive in the Golan Heights, and a [ceasefire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ceasefire) was signed the day after. Israel had seized the [Gaza Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip), the [Sinai Peninsula](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinai_Peninsula), the [West Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank) of the Jordan River (including East Jerusalem), and the [Golan Heights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golan_Heights). Overall, Israel's territory grew by a factor of three, including about one million Arabs placed under Israel's direct control in the newly captured territories. Israel's strategic depth grew to at least 300 kilometers in the south, 60 kilometers in the east and 20 kilometers of extremely rugged terrain in the north, a security asset that would prove useful in the [Yom Kippur War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yom_Kippur_War) six years later.

The political importance of the 1967 War was immense; Israel demonstrated that it was able, and willing to initiate strategic strikes that could change the regional balance. Egypt and Syria learned tactical lessons and would launch an attack in 1973 in an unsuccessful attempt to reclaim their lost territory.

Speaking three weeks after the war ended, as he accepted an honorary degree from Hebrew University, [Yitzhak Rabin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Rabin) gave his reasoning behind the success of Israel:

Our airmen, who struck the enemies' planes so accurately that no one in the world understands how it was done and people seek technological explanations or secret weapons; our armored troops who beat the enemy even when their equipment was inferior to his; our soldiers in all other branches... who overcame our enemies everywhere, despite the latter's superior numbers and fortifications-all these revealed not only coolness and courage in the battle but...an understanding that only their personal stand against the greatest dangers would achieve victory for their country and for their families, and that if victory was not theirs the alternative was annihilation.

In recognition of contributions, Rabin was given the honor of naming the war for the Israelis. From the suggestions proposed, he "chose the least ostentatious, the Six-Day War, evoking the days of creation."

Dayan's final report on the war to the Israeli general staff listed several shortcomings in Israel's actions, including misinterpretation of Nasser's intentions, overdependence on the United States, and reluctance to act when Egypt closed the Straits. He also credited several factors for Israel's success: Egypt did not appreciate the advantage of striking first and their adversaries did not accurately gauge Israel's strength and its willingness to use it.

After the [1973 Arab-Israeli War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1973_Arab-Israeli_War), Egypt reviewed the causes of its loss of the 1967 war. Issues that were identified included "the individualistic bureaucratic leadership"; "promotions on the basis of loyalty, not expertise, and the army's fear of telling Nasser the truth"; lack of intelligence; and better Israeli weapons, command, organization, and will to fight.

According to [Chaim Herzog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaim_Herzog):

On June 19, 1967, the National Unity Government [of Israel] voted unanimously to return the Sinai to Egypt and the Golan Heights to Syria in return for peace agreements. The Golan’s would have to be demilitarized and special arrangement would be negotiated for the Straits of Tiran. The government also resolved to open negotiations with King Hussein of Jordan regarding the Eastern border.

The Israeli decision was to be conveyed to the Arab nations by the United States. The US was informed of the decision, but not that it was to transmit it. There is no evidence of receipt from Egypt or Syria, and some historians claim that they may never have received the offer.

In September, the [Khartoum Arab Summit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khartoum_Resolution) resolved that there would be "no peace, no recognition and no negotiation with Israel." However, as [Avraham Sela](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avraham_Sela) notes, the Khartoum conference effectively marked a shift in the perception of the conflict by the Arab states away from one centered on the question of Israel's legitimacy toward one focusing on territories and boundaries and this was underpinned on November 22 when Egypt and Jordan accepted United Nations Security Council [Resolution 242](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN_Security_Council_Resolution_242).

The June 19 Israeli cabinet decision did not include the [Gaza Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip), and left open the possibility of Israel permanently acquiring parts of the [West Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank). On June 25–27, Israel incorporated [East Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Jerusalem) together with areas of the West Bank to the north and south into Jerusalem's new municipal boundaries.

Yet another aspect of the war touches on the population of the captured territories: of about one million Palestinians in the West Bank, 300,000 (according to the [United States Department of State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Department_of_State)) fled to Jordan, where they contributed to the growing unrest. The other 600,000 remained. In the Golan Heights, an estimated 80,000 Syrians fled. Only the inhabitants of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights became entitled to receive full Israeli citizenship, as Israel applied its law, administration and jurisdiction to these territories in 1967 and 1981 respectively, and the vast majority in both territories declined to do so. See also [Israeli-Palestinian conflict](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli-Palestinian_conflict) and [Golan Heights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golan_Heights).

Both Jordan and Egypt eventually withdrew their claims to the West Bank and Gaza (the Sinai was returned on the basis of the [Camp David Accords](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_David_Accords) of 1978). After Israeli conquest of these newly acquired 'territories,' a large settlement effort was launched to secure Israel's permanent foothold. There are now hundreds of thousands of Israeli settlers in these territories, though the [Israeli settlements](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_settlement) in Gaza were evacuated and destroyed in August 2005 as a part of [Israel's unilateral disengagement plan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel%27s_unilateral_disengagement_plan).

The 1967 War laid the foundation for future discord in the region.

On November 22, 1967, the [UN Security Council](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN_Security_Council) adopted [Resolution 242](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN_Security_Council_Resolution_242), the "[land for peace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_for_peace)" formula, which called for Israeli withdrawal "from territories occupied" in 1967 and "the termination of all claims or states of belligerency." Resolution 242 recognized the right of "every state in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force." Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt in 1978, after the [Camp David Accords](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_David_Accords), and disengaged from the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2005, though its army frequently re-enters Gaza for military operations and still retains control of border crossings, seaports and airports.

The aftermath of the war is also of religious significance. Under [Jordanian rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_the_West_Bank_and_East_Jerusalem_by_Jordan), Jews were effectively barred from visiting the [Western Wall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Wall) (even though Article VIII of the [1949 Armistice Agreement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949_Armistice_Agreements#With_Jordan) demanded Israeli Jewish access to the Western Wall). Jewish holy sites were not maintained, and their cemeteries had been desecrated. After the annexation to Israel, each religious group was granted administration over its holy sites. Despite the [Temple Mount](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Mount)'s importance in Jewish tradition, the [al-Aqsa Mosque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Aqsa_Mosque) is under sole administration of a Muslim [Waqf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waqf), and Jews are barred from conducting services there.

After following other Arab nations in declaring war, Mauritania remained in a [declared state of war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauritania-Israel_war_of_1967) with Israel until about 1999.

**Casualties**

Main article: [Israeli casualties of war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_casualties_of_war)

Between 776 and 983 Israelis were killed and 4,517 were wounded. 15 Israeli soldiers were captured. Arab casualties were far greater. Between 9,800 and 15,000 Egyptian soldiers were listed as killed or missing in action. An additional 4,338 Egyptian soldiers were captured. Jordanian losses are estimated to be 6,000 killed or missing and 533 captured, though Gawrych cites a number of some 700 killed in action with another 2,500 wounded. The Syrians were estimated to have sustained some 1,000 killed in action. 367 Syrians were captured.

**Controversies**

Main article: [Controversies relating to the Six-Day War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Controversies_relating_to_the_Six-Day_War)

**Preemptive strike v. unjustified attack**

At the commencement of hostilities, both Egypt and Israel announced that they had been attacked by the other country. The Israeli government later abandoned its initial position, acknowledging Israel had struck first, claiming that it was a pre-emptive strike in the face of a planned invasion by the Arab countries. On the other hand, the Arab view was that it was an unjustified attack.

**Allegations of atrocities against Egyptian soldiers**

It has been alleged that Nasser did not want Egypt to learn of the true extent of his defeat and so ordered the killing of Egyptian army stragglers making their way back to the Suez canal zone. There have also been allegations from both Israeli and Egyptian sources that Israeli troops killed unarmed Egyptian prisoners.

**Allegations of military support from the U.S., UK and Soviet Union**

There have been a number of allegations of direct military support of Israel during the war by the U.S. and the UK, including the supply of equipment (despite an embargo) and the participation of U.S. forces in the conflict. Many of these allegations have been disputed and it has been claimed that some were given currency in the Arab world to explain the Arab defeat. It has also been claimed that the Soviet Union, in support of its Arab allies, used its naval strength in the Mediterranean to act as a major restraint on the U.S. Navy.

**The USS *Liberty* incident**

Main article: [USS Liberty incident](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Liberty_incident)

On June 8, 1967, [USS *Liberty*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Liberty_(AGTR-5)), a [United States Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy) [electronic intelligence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ELINT) vessel sailing 13 nautical miles (24 km) off [Arish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arish) (just outside Egypt's [territorial waters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorial_waters)), was attacked by Israeli jets and torpedo boats, nearly sinking the ship, killing 34 sailors and wounding 171. Israel said the attack was a case of mistaken identity, and that the ship had been misidentified as the Egyptian vessel *El Quseir*. Israel apologized for the mistake, and paid compensation to the victims or their families, and to the United States for damage to the ship. After an investigation, the U.S. accepted the explanation that the incident was friendly fire and the issue was closed by the exchange of diplomatic notes in 1987. The surviving crew members, and others, have claimed that the attacks were deliberate.

**Displaced populations**

**Arab**

As a result of the war, a wave of Palestinians was displaced. An estimated 300,000 Palestinians left the [West Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank) and [Gaza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza), most of whom settled in Jordan.

In his book *Righteous Victims*, Israeli "[New Historian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Historian)" [Benny Morris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benny_Morris) writes:

In three villages southwest of Jerusalem and at Qalqilya, houses were destroyed "not in battle, but as punishment... and in order to chase away the inhabitants... — contrary to government... policy," Dayan wrote in his memoirs. In Qalqilya, about a third of the homes were razed and about 12,000 inhabitants were evicted, though many then camped out in the environs. The evictees in both areas were allowed to stay and later were given cement and tools by the Israeli authorities to rebuild at least some of their dwellings.

But many thousands of other Palestinians now took to the roads. Perhaps as many as seventy thousand, mostly from the Jericho area, fled during the fighting; tens of thousands more left over the following months. Altogether, about one-quarter of the population of the West Bank, about 200–250,000 people, went into exile.... They simply walked to the Jordan River crossings and made their way on foot to the East Bank. It is unclear how many were intimidated or forced out by the Israeli troops and how many left voluntarily, in panic and fear. There is some evidence of IDF soldiers going around with loudspeakers ordering West Bankers to leave their homes and cross the Jordan. Some left because they had relatives or sources of livelihood on the East Bank and feared being permanently cut off.  
  
Thousands of Arabs were taken by bus from East Jerusalem to the Allenby bridge, though there is no evidence of coercion. The free Israeli-organized transportation, which began on June 11, 1967, went on for about a month. At the bridge they had to sign a document stating that they were leaving of their own free will. Perhaps as many as seventy thousand people emigrated from the Gaza Strip to Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world.

On July 2, the Israeli government announced that it would allow the return of those 1967 refugees who desired to do so, but no later than August 10, later extended to September 13. The Jordanian authorities probably pressured many of the refugees, who constituted an enormous burden, to sign up to return. In practice only 14,000 of the 120,000 who applied were actually allowed by Israel back into the West Bank by the beginning of September. After that, only a trickle of "special cases" were allowed back, perhaps 3,000 in all. (328–9)

In addition, between 80,000 and 110,000 Syrians fled the Golan Heights, of which about 20,000 were from the city of Quneitra. According to more recent research by the Israeli daily [*Haaretz*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haaretz), 130,000 Syrian inhabitants were expelled from the territory, most of them by the Israeli army.

**Jews in Arab countries**

Main article: [Jewish exodus from Arab and Muslim countries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_exodus_from_Arab_and_Muslim_countries)

The minority Jews living across the Arab world had immediately faced persecution and expulsion, following the Israeli victory. According to historian Michael B. Oren:

Mobs attacked Jewish neighborhoods in Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Morocco, burning synagogues and assaulting residents. A pogrom in [Tripoli, Libya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tripoli,_Libya), left 18 Jews dead and 25 injured; the survivors were herded into detention centers. Of Egypt's 4,000 Jews, 800 were arrested, including the chief rabbis of both [Cairo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cairo) and [Alexandria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria), and their property sequestered by the government. The ancient communities of [Damascus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damascus) and [Baghdad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baghdad) were placed under house arrest, their leaders imprisoned and fined. A total of 7,000 Jews were expelled, many with merely a [satchel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satchel_(bag)).

**Jews in communist countries**

Antisemitic purges started in communist countries as a retaliatory violence. Some 11,200 Jews from Poland immigrated to Israel during [1968 Polish political crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1968_Polish_political_crisis) and the following year.

**See also**

* [1948 Arab–Israeli War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Arab%E2%80%93Israeli_War)
* [1949 Armistice Agreements](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949_Armistice_Agreements)
* [Khartoum Resolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khartoum_Resolution)
* [List of modern conflicts in the Middle East](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_modern_conflicts_in_the_Middle_East)
* [Suez Crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Crisis)
* [Syrian towns and villages depopulated in the Arab-Israeli conflict](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_towns_and_villages_depopulated_in_the_Arab-Israeli_conflict)
* [USS Liberty incident](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Liberty_incident)
* [Yom Kippur War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yom_Kippur_War) (also known as the October War)

**Key people involved**

* [Gamal Abdel Nasser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamal_Abdel_Nasser), President of Egypt
* [Hafez al-Assad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hafez_al-Assad), President of Syria
* [Leonid Brezhnev](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonid_Brezhnev), Soviet Leader
* [Moshe Dayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moshe_Dayan), Israeli Defense Minister
* [Abba Eban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abba_Eban), Israeli Foreign Minister
* [Levi Eshkol](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levi_Eshkol), Prime Minister of Israel
* King [Hussein](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hussein_of_Jordan) of Jordan
* [Lyndon B. Johnson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyndon_B._Johnson), President of the United States
* [Robert McNamara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_McNamara), U.S. Defense Secretary
* [U Thant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U_Thant), Secretary General of the United Nations

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