Yom Kippur War

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

|  |
| --- |
| **Yom Kippur War/October War** |
| Part of the [Cold War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War) and [Arab–Israeli conflict](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab%E2%80%93Israeli_conflict) |
| Egyptian forces crossing the Suez Canal on October 7 |
|

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | October 6–25, 1973 |
| **Location** | Both banks of the [Suez Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Canal), [Golan Heights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golan_Heights) and surrounding regions |
| **Result** | Israeli military victory* Political gains for Egypt and Israel
* 1978 Camp David Accords
 |
| **Territorialchanges** | * The Egyptian army occupied the eastern coast of the [Suez Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Canal) with the exception of the Israeli crossing point near [Deversoir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deversoir_Air_Base).
* The Israeli army occupied sixteen hundred square kilometers of territory on the southwestern coast of the Suez, within 100 km from Cairo, and encircled an Egyptian enclave in the east bank
* The Israeli army occupied five hundred square kilometers of the Syrian Bashan, on top of the [Golan Heights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golan_Heights), which brought it within 20 miles of [Damascus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damascus).
 |

 |
| **Belligerents** |
| [**Israel**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) | * [**Egypt**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt)

* [**Syria**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria)

[**Expeditionary forces**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yom_Kippur_War#Other_countries)**:*** [Iraq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ba%27athist_Iraq)

* [Jordan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan)

* [Saudi Arabia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia)

* [Algeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algeria)

* [Cuba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba)

* [Morocco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morocco)

*Supported by*:* [Libya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libyan_Arab_Republic)

 |
| **Commanders and leaders** |
| * [**Golda Meir**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golda_Meir)

* [Moshe Dayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moshe_Dayan)

* [David Elazar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Elazar)

* [Israel Tal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Tal)

* [Shmuel Gonen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shmuel_Gonen)

* [Yitzhak Hofi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Hofi)

* [Binyamin Peled](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binyamin_Peled)

* [Haim Bar-Lev](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haim_Bar-Lev)

* [Albert Mandler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Mandler) [**†**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killed_in_action)

* [Ariel Sharon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariel_Sharon)

 | * [**Anwar Sadat**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwar_Sadat)

* [**Hafez al-Assad**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hafez_al-Assad)

* [Ahmad Ismail Ali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmad_Ismail_Ali)

* [Mustafa Tlass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mustafa_Tlass)

* [Saad El Shazly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saad_El_Shazly)

* [Yusuf Shakkour](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Yusuf_Shakkour&action=edit&redlink=1)

* [Abdel Ghani el-Gammasy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdel_Ghani_el-Gamasy)

* [Ali Aslan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Aslan)

* [Omar Abrash](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Omar_Abrash&action=edit&redlink=1) [**†**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killed_in_action)

 |
| **Strength** |
| * 375,000–415,000 troops
* 1,700 tanks
* 3,000 armored carriers
* 945 artillery units
* 440 combat aircraft
 | **Egypt**:* 650,000–800,000troops (200,000 crossed)
* 1,700 tanks (1,020 crossed)
* 2,400 armored carriers
* 1,120 artillery units
* 400 combat aircraft
* 140 helicopters
* 104 Navy vessels
* 150 surface to air missile batteries (62 in the front line)

**Syria**:* 150,000 troops
* 1,200 tanks800–900 armored carriers
* 600 artillery units

**Expeditionary Forces**\*:* 100,000 troops
* 500–670 tanks
* 700 armored carriers

**Cuba**:* 1,500–4,000 troops

**Morocco**:* 5,500 troops
* 30 tanks
* 52 combat aircraft

**Saudi-Arabia:**3,000 troops**Total:*** 914,000–1,067,500 troops
* 3,430–3,600 tanks
* 3,900–4,000 armored carriers
* 1,720 artillery units
* 452 combat aircraft
* 140 helicopters
* 104 navy vessels
* 150 surface to air missile batteries
 |
| **Casualties and losses** |
| * 2,521–2,800dead
* 7,250–8,800wounded
* 293 captured
* 1,063 tanks destroyed, damaged or captured
* 407 armored vehicles destroyed or captured
* 102–387 aircraft destroyed
 | **Egypt:** 5,000–15,000 dead* 8,372 captured

**Syria:*** 3,000–3,500 dead
* 392 captured

**Iraq:*** 278 dead
* 898 wounded
* 13 captured

**Jordan:*** 23 dead
* 77 wounded

**Morocco:*** 6 captured

**Total casualties:*** 8,000–18,500 dead
* 18,000–35,000wounded
* 8,783 captured
* 2,250–2,300 tanks destroyed
* 341–514 aircraft destroyed
* 19 naval vessels sunk
 |

The **Yom Kippur War**, **Ramadan War**, or **October War** [Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language): מלחמת יום הכיפורים‎‎ *Milẖemet Yom HaKipurim* or מלחמת יום כיפור *Milẖemet Yom Kipur*); ([Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): حرب أكتوبر‎‎ *Ḥarb ʾUktōbar*, or حرب تشرين *Ḥarb Tišrīn*, also known as the **1973 Arab–Israeli War**, was a war fought by a coalition of Arab states led by [Egypt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt) and [Syria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria)against [Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) from October 6 to 25, 1973. The fighting mostly took place in the [Sinai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinai) and the [Golan Heights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golan_Heights), territories that had been occupied by Israel since the Six of 1967. [Egyptian President](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_Egypt) [Anwar Sadat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwar_Sadat) wanted also to reopen the [Suez Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Canal). Neither specifically planned to destroy Israel, although the Israeli leaders could not be sure of that.

The war began when the Arab coalition launched a joint surprise attack on Israeli positions in the [Israeli-occupied territories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli-occupied_territories) on [Yom Kippur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yom_Kippur), the holiest day in Judaism, which also occurred that year during the Muslim holy month of [Ramadan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramadan). Egyptian and Syrian forces crossed ceasefire lines to enter the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights respectively. Both the United States and the [Soviet Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) initiated massive resupply efforts to their respective allies during the war, and this led to a near-confrontation between the two nuclear superpowers.

The war began with a massive and successful Egyptian [crossing of the Suez Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Badr_%281973%29). After crossing the cease-fire lines, Egyptian forces advanced virtually unopposed into the Sinai Peninsula. After three days, Israel had mobilized most of its forces and halted the Egyptian offensive, resulting in a military [stalemate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalemate). The Syrians coordinated their attack on the Golan Heights to coincide with the Egyptian offensive and initially made threatening gains into Israeli-held territory. Within three days, however, Israeli forces had pushed the Syrians back to the pre-war ceasefire lines. The [Israel Defense Forces](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Defense_Forces) (IDF) then launched a four-day counter-offensive deep into Syria. Within a week, Israeli artillery began to shell the outskirts of [Damascus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damascus). As Egyptian President Sadat began to worry about the integrity of his major ally, he believed that capturing two strategic [passes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_pass) located deeper in the Sinai would make his position stronger during post-war negotiations. He therefore ordered the Egyptians to go back on the offensive, but their attack was quickly repulsed. The Israelis then counter-attacked at the seam between the two Egyptian armies, crossed the Suez Canal into Egypt, and began slowly advancing southward and westward towards the city of [Suez](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez) in over a week of heavy fighting that resulted in heavy casualties on both sides.

On October 22 a [United Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations)–brokered ceasefire quickly unraveled, with each side blaming the other for the breach. By October 24, the Israelis had improved their positions considerably and completed their encirclement of Egypt's Third Army and the city of Suez. This development led to tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. As a result, a second ceasefire was imposed cooperatively on October 25 to end the war.

The war had far-reaching implications. The [Arab World](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_World), which had experienced humiliation in the lopsided rout of the Egyptian–Syrian–Jordanian alliance in the Six-Day War, felt psychologically vindicated by early successes in the conflict. In Israel, despite impressive operational and tactical achievements on the battlefield, the war led to recognition that there was no guarantee that Israel would always dominate the Arab states militarily, as it had consistently through the earlier [First Arab–Israeli War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Arab%E2%80%93Israeli_War), the [Suez War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Crisis) and the [Six-Day War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-Day_War). These changes paved the way for the subsequent [peace process](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_peace_process). The 1978 [Camp David Accords](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_David_Accords) that followed led to the return of the Sinai to Egypt and normalized relations—the first peaceful recognition of Israel by an Arab country. Egypt continued its drift away from the Soviet Union and left the [Soviet sphere of influence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_sphere_of_influence) entirely.

**Events leading up to the war**

Four months before the war broke out, [Henry Kissinger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Kissinger) made an offer to Ismail, Sadat's emissary. Kissinger proposed returning the Sinai Peninsula to Egyptian control and an Israeli withdrawal from all of Sinai, except for some strategic points. Ismail said he would return with Sadat's reply, but never did. Sadat was already determined to go to war. Only an American guarantee that the United States would fulfill the entire Arab program in a brief time could have dissuaded Sadat.

Sadat declared that Egypt was prepared to "sacrifice a million Egyptian soldiers" to recover its lost territory. From the end of 1972, Egypt began a concentrated effort to build up its forces, receiving [MiG-21](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-21) jet fighters, [SA-2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-2_Guideline), [SA-3](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-3_Goa), [SA-6](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-6_Gainful) and [SA-7](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SA-7_Grail) antiaircraft missiles, [T-55](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T-55) and [T-62](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T-62) tanks, [RPG-7](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RPG-7) antitank weapons, and the [AT-3 Sagger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9K11_Malyutka) [anti-tank guided missile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-tank_guided_missile) from the Soviet Union and improving its [military tactics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_tactics), based on Soviet battlefield doctrines. Political generals, who had in large part been responsible for the rout in 1967, were replaced with competent ones.

The role of the superpowers, too, was a major factor in the outcome of the two wars. The policy of the Soviet Union was one of the causes of Egypt's military weakness. President Nasser was only able to obtain the materiel for an [anti-aircraft missile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surface-to-air_missile) defense wall after visiting Moscow and pleading with Kremlin leaders. He said that if supplies were not given, he would have to return to Egypt and tell the Egyptian people Moscow had abandoned them, and then relinquish power to one of his peers who would be able to deal with the Americans. The Americans would then have the upper hand in the region, which Moscow could not permit.

Egyptian President [Anwar Sadat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwar_Sadat).

One of Egypt's undeclared objectives in the [War of Attrition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_Attrition) was to force the Soviet Union to supply Egypt with more advanced arms and materiel. Egypt felt the only way to convince the Soviet leaders of the deficiencies of most of the aircraft and air defense weaponry supplied to Egypt following 1967 was to put the Soviet weapons to the test against the advanced weaponry the United States had supplied to Israel.

Nasser's policy following the 1967 defeat conflicted with that of the Soviet Union. The Soviets sought to avoid a new conflagration between the Arabs and Israelis so as not to be drawn into a confrontation with the United States. The reality of the situation became apparent when the superpowers met in [Oslo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oslo) and agreed to maintain the status quo. This was unacceptable to Egyptian leaders, and when it was discovered that the Egyptian preparations for crossing the canal were being leaked, it became imperative to expel the Soviets from Egypt. In July 1972, Sadat expelled almost all of the 20,000 Soviet military advisers in the country and reoriented the country's foreign policy to be more favorable to the United States. The Syrians remained close to the Soviet Union.

The Soviets thought little of Sadat's chances in any war. They warned that any attempt to cross the heavily fortified Suez Canal would incur massive losses. Both the Soviets and Americans were then pursuing [détente](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%A9tente) and had no interest in seeing the Middle East destabilized. In a June 1973 meeting with American President [Richard Nixon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Nixon), Soviet leader [Leonid Brezhnev](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonid_Brezhnev) had proposed Israel pull back to its 1967 border. Brezhnev said that if Israel did not, "we will have difficulty keeping the military situation from flaring up"—an indication that the Soviet Union had been unable to restrain Sadat's plans.

In an interview published in [*Newsweek*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newsweek) (April 9, 1973), Sadat again threatened war with Israel. Several times during 1973, Arab forces conducted large-scale exercises that put the Israeli military on the highest level of alert, only to be recalled a few days later. The Israeli leadership already believed that if an attack took place, the [Israeli Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Air_Force) (IAF) could repel it.

Almost a full year before the war, in an October 24, 1972, meeting with his Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, Sadat declared his intention to go to war with Israel even without proper Soviet support. Planning had begun in 1971 and was conducted in absolute secrecy—even the upper-echelon commanders were not told of the war plans until less than a week prior to the attack, and the soldiers were not told until a few hours beforehand. The plan to attack Israel in concert with Syria was code-named [Operation Badr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Badr_%28Yom_Kippur_War%29) ([Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) for "[full moon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Full_moon)"), after the [Battle of Badr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Badr), in which Muslims under [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) defeated the [Quraish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quraysh_%28tribe%29) tribe of Mecca.

**Lead-up to the surprise attack**

The [Israel Defense Forces](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Defense_Forces) (IDF) [Directorate of Military Intelligence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_Intelligence_Directorate_%28Israel%29)'s (abbreviated as "Aman") [Research Department](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research_Department_%28Aman%29) was responsible for formulating Israel's intelligence estimate. Their assessments on the likelihood of war were based on several assumptions. First, it was assumed correctly that Syria would not go to war with Israel unless Egypt did so as well. Second, the department learned from [Ashraf Marwan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashraf_Marwan), former President Nasser's son-in-law and also a senior [Mossad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mossad) agent, that Egypt wanted to regain all of the Sinai, but would not go to war until they were supplied [MiG-23](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiG-23) [fighter-bombers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fighter-bomber) to neutralize the Israeli Air Force and [Scud missiles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scud_missile) to be used against Israeli cities as a deterrent against Israeli attacks on Egyptian infrastructure.

Since they had not received MiG-23s and Scud missiles had only arrived in Egypt from Bulgaria in late August and it would take four months to train the Egyptian ground crews, Aman predicted war with Egypt was not imminent. This assumption about Egypt's strategic plans, known as "the concept", strongly prejudiced the department's thinking and led it to dismiss other war warnings.

By mid-1973, Aman was almost completely aware of the Arab war plans. It knew that the Egyptian Second and Third Armies would attempt to cross the Suez Canal and advance ten kilometres into the Sinai, followed by armored divisions that would advance towards the [Mitla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitla_Pass) and [Gidi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gidi_Pass) Passes, and that naval units and paratroopers would then attempt to capture [Sharm el-Sheikh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharm_el-Sheikh). Aman was also aware of many details of the Syrian war plan. However, Israeli analysts, following "the concept", did not believe the Arabs were serious about going to war.

The Egyptians did much to further this misconception. Both the Israelis and the Americans felt that the expulsion of the Soviet military observers had severely reduced the effectiveness of the Egyptian army. The Egyptians ensured that there was a continual stream of [false information](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disinformation) regarding maintenance problems and a lack of personnel to operate the most advanced equipment. The Egyptians made repeated misleading reports about lack of spare parts that made their way to the Israelis. Sadat had so long engaged in [brinkmanship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brinkmanship) that his frequent war threats were being ignored by the world.

In April and May 1973, Israeli intelligence began picking up clear signals of Egypt's intentions for war, recognizing that it had the necessary divisions and bridging equipment to cross the Suez Canal and a missile umbrella to protect any crossing operation from air attack. However, Aman Chief [Eli Zeira](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eli_Zeira) was still confident that the probability of war was low.

In May and August 1973, the Egyptian Army conducted military exercises near the border, and Ashraf Marwan inaccurately warned that Egypt and Syria would launch a surprise attack on May 15. The Israeli Army mobilized in response to both exercises at considerable cost. These exercises were to ensure that the Israelis would dismiss the actual war preparations right before the attack was launched as another exercise.