

Ynet-News, February 28, 2025 – Friday Adar 12th Month New Moon
– Purim March 13 -15

Ramadan Feb 28 to March 29 = Arab Jihad frenzy at the end

02.28.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Cairo talks focus on extending ceasefire by 42 days amid fragile hostage negotiations

02.28.25 – Fr- - - News Placed in February 28 spot – Friday

IDF searching homes in southern Syria, fire warning shots when locals gathered

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Hezbollah's smuggler killed in a strike, directly involved in purchasing weapons

02.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday New Moon 6:46pm

AG orders probe into 3 Netanyahu advisers, over payment from Qatar

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IDF's first Hashmonaim Brigade - all-Haredi combat unit - is way of the Maccabees

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Israel lifts ban on EU antisemitism, cites changes in their rhetoric and policies

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Hamas deception of Israel that led to October 7 intelligence breakdown

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14 injured in PA car ramming attack at northern town Junction near Jenin

02.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday New Moon 6:46pm

IDF will not allow new threats in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria or Jordan borders

02.27.25 – Th- - - News Placed in February 27 spot – Thursday New Moon 6:46pm

No Israeli withdrawal from Gaza's Philadelphi Corridor, PM confirmed

02.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday New Moon 6:46pm

Talks stall: New IDF chief with ample munitions is ready to eliminate Hamas

02.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday New Moon 6:46pm

20 years after Jews expelled from Gaza, will they return to rebuild?

02.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday New Moon 6:46pm

BBC censored Gazan remarks in documentary: not realistic to the culture of hate

02.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Deal releases convicted killers: These are the 620 prisoners set to be freed

02.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

IDF key failures of massacre; did not see Hamas as an army, allowed it at our border

02.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Southern Syrians chant 'bomb Tel Aviv' after IDF strike manufacturing & weaponry

02.26.25 – We- - - News Placed in February 26 spot – Wednesday

Ambassador Stefanik labels UN anti-Semitic; US stopped funds & may withdraw

02.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Hamas prisoners to be released in next 24 hours; Egypt will receive coffins

02.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Ukraine questions Israel after UN vote aligns with Trump pro-Russia stance

02.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

220-pound bomb attack against IDF forces in northern West Bank foiled

02.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Noa pleads for help at UN Council for 62 hostages who remain in captivity

02.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Iran braces for joint US-Israel strike on nuclear facilities before S-400 arrives

02.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Trump removes human rights condition from ensured foreign aid

02.25.25 – Tu- - - News Placed in February 25 spot – Tuesday

Israel braces for renewed fighting; 35-day pause allowed 30,000 PA to reorganize

02.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Zionist Party says win war, purge enemies; more important than saving hostages

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Elon Musk defends Netanyahu under criminal indictment; 'Deep State Is Everywhere'

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Israel joins US in opposing UN resolution on Ukraine war 3 year anniversary

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News Placed in February 24 spot – Monday

Hostage deal may extend one-and-a-half months through Ramadan

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Hezbollah orders Lebanese army to rebuild, replacing lost flow of Iranian cash

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Hamas official calls Oct. 7 massacre a mistake, after realizing consequences

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

ICC slams Germany's Merz for inviting PM to visit Germany despite warrant

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Belligerent outrage, protests in Lebanon over IDF bases in border zones

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Alon Ohel is chained, starved and injured in a tunnel, freed hostage tells family

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Entry ban for EU delegates who promote Anti-Israel media, boycotts & sanctions

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Israel demands return of all slain hostages without terrorist ceremony

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Former prime minister Olmert reveals secret map of 2008 two-state, Abbas refused

02.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

US support Israel delay of PA prisoner release as an appropriate response

02.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Israel increases alert in Gaza border with drones & live fire to push groups back

02.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

82 bombs in seconds: IDF release video of Nasrallah's elimination during his funeral

02.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

US envoy Witkoff to visit Middle East this week in bid for deal's 2nd phase

02.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Israeli jets fly over Beirut during Nasrallah funeral; killed by IDF five months ago

02.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

DOGE asked All US Govt Staff email 5 bullets what you accomplished last week

02.23.25 – Su- - - News – Placed in February 23 spot – Sunday

IDF place 3 tanks near Jenin to watch Jordan border, smuggling to Samaria

02.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Hamas says Israel's delay of prisoner release is a ploy to derail talks

02.22.25 – Sa - - News Placed in February 22 spot – Saturday
Israel weighs all living hostage deal possible in extended first phase

02.22.25 – Sa - - News – Saturday
Israel delays 620 Palestinian prisoners, to be released in eighth handover

02.22.25 – Sa - - News – Saturday
Over 60 hostages still in Gaza after six releases as Israel mulls second phase

02.22.25 – Sa - - News – Saturday
 Hamas seeks one-time hostage exchange amid phase 2 cease-fire talks

02.28.25 – Fr
Cairo talks focus on extending ceasefire by 42 days amid fragile hostage negotiations

02.28.25 – Fr
Cairo talks focus on extending ceasefire amid fragile hostage negotiations
Israel attempts to secure additional hostage releases before Saturday, but chances appear slim as discussions with Hamas on extending the deal terms have only just begun
Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi, Yael Ciechanover, Roni Green Shaulov|15:29

Negotiations regarding the continuation of the hostage deal have been ongoing in Cairo since Thursday. According to Egyptian sources who spoke to Reuters, Israel is attempting to extend the first phase by 42 days, meaning Hamas would release three hostages each week in exchange for prisoners released from Israeli jails. Sources in Cairo added Hamas does not agree to this and wishes to proceed to Phase B as originally agreed, which would bring the war to an end. An Israeli source confirmed only that "the goal is indeed to extend Phase A."

Israel's aim was to secure the release of additional hostages by Saturday, but sources familiar with the details say the chances of achieving results in the near term are "low," as negotiations on the terms for the continuation have just begun. If there is no additional release on Saturday, it will mark the first weekend during Donald Trump's presidency in which no hostages have been released—after 42 days and despite his strong threats against Hamas. Over the course of the deal, 33 hostages have been released in nine stages, 25 alive and eight deceased.

Hamas—and Arab media outlets—are accusing Israel of being unwilling to proceed to Phase B. Today, the organization officially announced the completion of the final stage of the deal and stated that they have fulfilled all of their obligations under it. In a statement identical to one released on Thursday, Hamas called on the international

community to "apply pressure" on Israel to move forward with Phase B "without any delay or evasion."

On Thursday, Hamas spokesperson Abd al-Latif al-Qanou stated that the terror organization is "ready to extend Phase A or merge the two phases, but only in accordance with our red lines." This morning, sources in the organization told the Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper that whether Phase A is extended or Phase B begins, they will demand that Israel release "more prisoners" in exchange for the remaining hostages in Gaza. According to the sources, who referred to the remaining hostages as "military" even though not all are soldiers, "the criteria will be 'different' from what was agreed upon in the past, as the price must be proportional." This suggests that the terror organization may demand the release of 150 prisoners or more for each hostage.

Meanwhile, Israel has announced that it will not withdraw from the Philadelphi Corridor, receiving backing from Trump, who stated that he would accept any decision by Israel since Hamas has not responded to the ultimatum to return all hostages at once. If hostages are not released soon, it is expected that fighting will resume, with Defense Minister Israel Katz warning that Hamas is "planning attacks on soldiers and communities."

As efforts to extend the ceasefire continue in Cairo, media outlets in Gaza reported on Friday that IDF carried out a drone strike in central Rafah, killing one Palestinian. At the same time, relatives of freed hostage Liri Albag held a celebration in her honor. During the event—before raising a toast—she said: "There are still 59 hostages that I want to bring back; they are my family. I want to say that although I've returned home, I won't feel complete until everyone is back."

Shir Siegel speaks in Shokeda Forest

Shir, daughter of freed hostage Keith Siegel, visited the Gaza border area on Friday for the first time since October 7. "If you had asked me a year and a half ago if there was a chance I would stand here and speak about hostages—I would have laughed," Shir said at an event supporting local businesses, marking Family Day in Shokeda Forest. "No one believed such a day would come, where so many people would be talking about hostages. Honestly, until my dad returned, I didn't really believe it either—it felt like a nightmare, not reality."

She continued: "Not far from here, my parents and my best friend were kidnapped. This is a place I have a love-hate relationship with—love for the landscape, the people, the community, and hate because of the fear, the race to the bomb shelter. I'm used to bad things happening here, but I didn't realize just how horrific the situation had become. Since then, I've been on a tumultuous journey of anxiety and fear, disappointment with those who were supposed to take responsibility, and the realization that the responsibility is on all of us. A journey of pleading, of hugs and connections, which taught us so much."

"We went through hell, but today I want to talk about the good. Every day in captivity, my dad asked the hostages to name one thing they could be grateful for. He returned to his faith and would pray and give thanks for what little they had. In hell, small acts of gratitude lit up days of darkness and silence. One of the first questions he asked when he got home was, 'What can I do to bring everyone back?' We leave no one behind—these

are values of mutual responsibility, the redemption of captives, and the faith that we must never give up on any of our brothers and sisters."

02.28.25 – Fr

IDF searching homes in southern Syria, fire warning shots when locals gathered

02.28.25 – Fr

IDF troops fire warning shots in southern Syria, protests break out near Damascus
Syrian media reports Israeli forces searching homes collected information on residents
before firing warning shots when locals gathered around them; shortly after,
demonstrators near Damascus protest Israeli control in border region
Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun|07:32

Israeli forces entered the Syrian village of Rafeed, south of Quneitra, on Friday morning, searching several homes before withdrawing after clashes with residents, the IDF said.

According to the military, dozens of Syrians gathered in front of the soldiers during the searches, prompting troops to fire warning shots into the air to disperse the crowd before leaving the area.

Syrian media claimed the soldiers were not only conducting searches but also "gathering information on residents" in the village.

Shortly after the incident, dozens of people gathered in the city of Douma, near Damascus, to protest what they called "ongoing Israeli violations in southern Syria." Demonstrators carried signs opposing Israeli control in the border region, with messages proclaiming "the Syrian people are united."

The protests come days after Israeli airstrikes targeted multiple sites in Syria, attacks for which Israel took responsibility. Some demonstrators reportedly called on Syrian rebel leader Ahmad al-Sharaa to "strike Tel Aviv" in response.

On Monday, protests erupted across Syria following remarks by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who called for "the complete demilitarization of southern Syria from the new regime's forces" and vowed to protect the country's Druze population. "We will not tolerate any threat against the Druze community in southern Syria," Netanyahu said, adding that Israeli forces would remain stationed "in the Mount Hermon area and the buffer zone indefinitely."

Demonstrations took place in multiple locations, including Bosra al-Sham, east of Daraa, as well as in Sweida and Quneitra. Footage from the protests showed demonstrators waving the Syrian flag and chanting slogans against Israel, Jews and Netanyahu himself.

A journalist from Quneitra province told Ynet that Netanyahu was trying to "provoke conflict between Sunnis and Druze," claiming the Israeli leader was seeking to prolong the war in the region.

"The war in Gaza and Lebanon will eventually end, but he is doing everything he can to extend his rule in Israel by provoking Syria," the journalist said. "After 14 years of war against Iran, Hezbollah and the Assad regime, another war cannot be ignited."

02.28.25 – Fr

Hezbollah's smuggler killed in a strike, directly involved in purchasing weapons

02.28.25 – Fr

IDF kills Hezbollah operative involved in arms smuggling, in targeted strike

Mohammed Mahdi Ali Shaheen was responsible for purchasing weapons, arranging their smuggling and distributing them to the terror group's units, the military says in a statement

Yoav Zitun|03:13

The IDF said on Friday that it had eliminated Mohammed Mahdi Ali Shaheen, an operative of the Hezbollah terror group in a targeted killing in the Beqaa Valley on Thursday.

He was described as a significant member of Hezbollah's Geographical Unit which is responsible for the Beqaa Valley area and was involved in the transportation of weapons across the Syrian border into Lebanon.

"As part of his role, Shaheen was responsible for making purchase deals for the Hezbollah and mediating the arrival of the shipments and their distributions to the various units, in order to continue Hezbollah's establishment and reinforcement," the military said in a statement adding that it included collaboration with weapons dealers and smugglers on the border.

"Shaheen's actions posed a threat to the State of Israel and constituted a violation of the understandings between Israel and Lebanon," the IDF said in conclusion of its statement.

In recent weeks the IDF has warned Hezbollah against its continued efforts to bring weapons in across the Syrian border and had launched attacks in the area.

On Wednesday, Mahran Ali Nasser Al-Din, a member of Hezbollah's 4400 Unit was killed in a targeted strike. According to the IDF he was directly involved in coordinating with smugglers operating along the Syria-Lebanon border.

"The unit was responsible for smuggling weapons into Lebanese territory from Iran and its proxies, aiming to maximize Hezbollah's weapons stockpiles. Since its establishment, Unit 4400 has established numerous smuggling routes along the Syria-Lebanon border," the military said.

02.27.25 – Th

AG orders probe into 3 Netanyahu advisers, over payment from Qatar

02.27.25 – Th

AG orders criminal probe into Netanyahu's office over ties to Qatar

Attorney General calls for criminal investigation into prime minister's advisers over alleged ties to Qatar, including a PR campaign promoting the Gulf state; probe, led by Shin Bet and Israel Police, raises concerns about foreign influence

Tova Zimuki|15:18

Israel's Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara announced on Thursday that her office will launch an investigation into connections between officials in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office and individuals linked to Qatar.

According to Baharav-Miara, during a discussion attended by the state attorney, the head of the Israel Police's Investigations and Intelligence Division, and Shin Bet professionals, information was presented regarding ties between individuals operating within the Prime Minister's Office and entities associated with Qatar.

The probe will be conducted by the Shin Bet and the police. Authorities believe the suspicions against the Prime Minister's Office officials involve abuse of power and actions taken while in a conflict of interest.

The case involves three of Netanyahu's associates: Eli Feldstein, his spokesman, who was previously investigated in a classified documents leak case; and advisers Yonatan Orich and Yisrael Einhorn, who are also suspects in that case. Einhorn has been abroad since the scandal broke.

The decision marks an escalation, shifting the case from a security review to a criminal investigation. Suspects will now be questioned under caution, not merely as witnesses.

Feldstein, though not formally employed by the PM's office, reportedly received payment from a private international firm for managing a PR campaign promoting Qatar's image in Israel.

The campaign focused on Qatar's role in hostage deal negotiations, with Feldstein arranging interviews with Qatari officials and disseminating their messages. This took place while Qatar mediated regional talks, despite Netanyahu's criticism of the Gulf state for "serving Hamas."

Orich and Einhorn allegedly provided PR consulting to Qatar, including a 2022 campaign ahead of the FIFA World Cup, aimed at portraying Qatar — a known funder of terrorism — as a legitimate supporter of regional peace.

Einhorn's firm, Perception, partnered with another company, Coyote, co-owned by retired Brig. Gen. Eli Ben-Meir, a former IDF intelligence official now leading an investigation into the October 7 attacks.

All individuals involved have denied the allegations. Netanyahu called the probe a "witch hunt" against him and his team, while opposition leader Yair Lapid warned of "an Arab state's infiltration into the Prime Minister's Office."

"Netanyahu's closest aides received large sums of money. This isn't just corruption — it's a dangerous threat to national security," Lapid added.

Qatar, one of the world's wealthiest nations and a key Hamas funder, has long used its financial influence to gain leverage globally. Reports of payments to Netanyahu's associates have raised concerns about similar efforts in Israel.

Netanyahu has denied any influence from the payments, claiming funds sent to Gaza were for humanitarian purposes, not Hamas. The Shin Bet remains the sole body authorized to investigate the matter, with Lapid stressing: "The suspects cannot fire the Shin Bet chief to control the probe."

02.27.25 – Th

IDF's first Hashmonaim Brigade - all-Haredi combat unit - is way of the Maccabees

02.27.25 – Th

IDF's Hashmonaim Brigade - first all-Haredi combat unit - is sworn in, but without the oath

In unusual scene for military event, audience separated by gender with partition; Instead of military band music, religious songs blast from speakers

Shilo Freid|14:02

Dozens of soldiers from the newly established Hashmonaim Brigade, the IDF's first ultra-Orthodox combat unit, gathered Thursday afternoon at the Maccabees' Tombs in Modiin for the unit's inaugural swearing-in ceremony. The soldiers, who received their unit insignia earlier this week, participated in a ceremony known as a "declaration" rather than an "oath" to align with the religious principles of the soldiers, who avoid oaths for religious reasons.

The ceremony was tailored to the lifestyle of the recruits and reflected the atmosphere the brigade strives to maintain. In an unusual scene for a military event, the audience was separated by gender with a partition. Instead of the usual military band music, speakers played religious songs performed solely by male singers.

Rabbi Moshe Korkus, the brigade's rabbi, offered his blessings to the soldiers. "Each one of you continues the way of the Maccabees, holding in one hand a sword and shield, and in the other hand declaring, 'Who is for God, come to me.'"

The ceremony included elements that deviate from standard military protocol. One officer even led a "Siyum Masechet," a prayer and blessing traditionally recited after completing the study of a section of the Talmud. The soldiers studied the tractate "Megillah" during their scheduled study times and marked their completion of it during the event. Prior to singing "Hatikvah" (the national anthem), they also sang "Mimkomcha Malkeinu Tofiah," a prayer traditionally sung on Shabbat in synagogues.

'Unusual in the community, natural to the soul'

Some of the soldiers participated in the ceremony without their families, who oppose their enlistment, but others shared with excitement how meaningful the ceremony was, a moment they had never experienced before.

Gideon Shushan, whose son enlisted in the brigade, told Ynet: "We are very proud of him and of all of them. We are proud of our sons studying in yeshivas, and of our sons serving in the army."

Asked if the enlistment was unusual for their community, Shushan said: "It's unusual in our community, but natural to our soul. Being part of the fight in a war — there is nothing more Jewish than that. We are very proud of him and of all those who support and serve."

When asked about the reactions they received to his son's enlistment, he replied: "The reactions in our town of Beit Shemesh have been all positive. Our rabbi supports it, and the community supports it. We all support both our sons and daughters who study in yeshivas and seminaries, and we are also proud of those who serve in the army, with God's help."

Mike, a relative of another soldier in the brigade, expressed his pride. "Despite all the questions and criticism about the army, we are very proud of Moshe for enlisting, for completing the course, and for participating in defending the homeland," he said.

When asked if he ever thought something like this could happen two or three years ago, he responded: "Honestly, I didn't think this was the path he would choose in life. But he's doing it, and in the end I think it's a good thing."

02.27.25 – Th

Israel lifts ban on EU antisemitism, cites changes in their rhetoric and policies

02.27.25 – Th

Israel lifts ban on European far-right parties, cites changes in their rhetoric and policies
Jerusalem removes sanctions on France's National Rally, Sweden Democrats and Spain's VOX; maintains restrictions on Germany's AfD and Austria's Freedom Party
Itamar Eichner|13:52

Israel has decided to lift its diplomatic ban on three far-right European political parties, including France's National Rally, Sweden's Sweden Democrats, and Spain's VOX, while maintaining its embargo on Austria's Freedom Party and Germany's Alternative for Germany (AfD), which secured strong results in recent elections.

Foreign Minister Eli Cohen directed his office and Israeli embassies in France, Sweden and Spain to engage with these far-right parties, noting that the move was based on a thorough review of their positions on Israel, antisemitism and Holocaust denial.

"We are examining how these parties behave today," Cohen said in a meeting with Jewish community leaders and pro-Israel organizations in Belgium. "We do not want to isolate ourselves from potential allies in Europe, but we also do not want to legitimize neo-Nazi movements."

Cohen emphasized that Israel's decision-making process involves a detailed assessment of each party's stance on critical issues such as antisemitism, support for Israel, and their position on Jewish traditions like circumcision and kosher slaughter. He also pointed out that some of these parties have problematic historical roots, but Israel is focusing on their current actions and whether they are distancing themselves from any antisemitic rhetoric.

Regarding the continued ban on the AfD and Austria's Freedom Party, Israeli officials explained that it was not a random decision but based on specific criteria. They stated that, while Israel has traditionally viewed these parties with skepticism, they are closely monitoring whether they are taking effective measures to distance themselves from antisemitic elements. "It's about updating and reassessing based on their actions," one senior official said.

While the Sweden Democrats have Nazi roots, Israeli officials acknowledged that the party has evolved, with changes in both its leadership's rhetoric and internal policies. In contrast, the AfD and the Freedom Party's efforts to distance themselves from problematic elements regarding antisemitism have been deemed insufficient, officials said.

"We want to see how they treat Jewish life and Israel, and we will make our decisions accordingly," the official added.

Israeli officials also stressed the importance of dialogue with Jewish community leaders in these countries, ensuring that decisions regarding the relationship with these parties will be based on real-time developments rather than historical precedents.

02.27.25 – Th

Hamas deception of Israel that led to October 7 intelligence breakdown

02.27.25 – Th

How Hamas outsmarted Israel: The deception that led to the October 7 intelligence breakdown

IDF investigation uncovers how Hamas' strategic deception and Israeli intelligence failures paved the way for the devastating October 7 attack; report highlights systemic gaps, missed warnings and a false sense of security that left Israel unprepared

Yoav Zitun|13:34

The IDF's investigation into the failures surrounding a devastating Hamas attack over a year ago, published on Thursday, revealed systemic intelligence lapses and strategic deception by the terror group.

The report, part of the IDF's core reviews, highlights that former Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar believed success hinged on total surprise, a strategy solidified after he and his officials, Marwan Issa and Mohammed Deif, consolidated control over Gaza in early 2017.

Despite severe shortcomings, no personal accountability has been enforced, with responsibility for dismissals deferred to incoming Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Eyal Zamir. The investigation found that Hamas' strategic deception intensified in the years leading up to the attack. While publicly seeking a cease-fire, Hamas secretly prepared to breach the IDF's Gaza Division. Military intelligence failed to recognize this dual strategy.

Hamas also established a general headquarters for the first time after the 2014 Operation Protective Edge, with Raad Saad developing the "Jericho Wall" invasion plan in response to Israel's underground border barrier construction. The plan, which reached Israeli intelligence in 2018, was dismissed as unrealistic.

By 2019, Hamas had formed elite Nukhba battalions, with reserves completed that year. Intelligence gathered during operations last year revealed that the invasion plan, dating back to 2017, included live broadcasts from captured kibbutzim, symbolic siege of strategic sites and aims to reach cities like Be'er Sheva and Ashkelon. The plan initially targeted the murder of 600 civilians in Ofakim; 33 were murdered there on October 7.

The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the plan for two years, as Hamas diverted resources to pandemic management, further lulling Israel into complacency. Intelligence failures were compounded by missed warning signs, including a Hamas-produced TV series, "The Free Fist," which depicted scenes eerily similar to the October 7 attack. "Hamas knew they were 85% operationally ready by the end of 2022," the investigation revealed. "We later learned that Hamas saw 2022 as the year of great opportunities."

Sinwar's strategic decision to withdraw most Hamas forces to southern Gaza preserved the terror group's military wing and weapons stockpiles, anticipating Israel's overwhelming response.

The move proved successful, with Hamas recovering to over 10,000 terrorists by October 6, 2023. In the month before the attack, Hamas revived border protests as a deception tactic, while the 24 hours preceding the invasion saw complete quiet, and was not flagged by intelligence as suspicious.

The investigation concluded that the core failure lay in the growing gap between perceived and actual realities. "The Military Intelligence Directorate (MID) did not help decision-makers realize that their approach was wrong," the report read. "It was a classic intelligence failure, the kind books were written about after Pearl Harbor, Barbarossa and Yom Kippur." The Research Division's flawed methods and

organizational culture created biases, with a false sense of superiority and transparency over the enemy.

“Israel saw Hamas as a pragmatic movement with whom it could do business,” the report noted. “The MID underestimated Hamas, focusing more on its rocket system.” The investigation criticized the lack of skepticism within the MID, which sought explanations to fit prevailing narratives rather than challenging them.

“An illusion of certainty was created,” the report stated. “A false sense of intelligence superiority.”

The report also highlighted gaps in understanding Hamas’ culture and language, crucial for research professionalism. “They preferred harmony and synchronization within the MID, without debates,” it noted. “The research approach argued that there is a need to distinguish between the enemy’s capabilities and its intentions.”

The investigation called for broad systemic changes within the MID, beyond replacing senior officials or establishing new units. Maj. Gen. Shlomi Binder, the MID’s new chief, has adopted recommendations to revise warning models and expand intelligence-gathering units.

“The corrections will not take place through replacing one senior official,” the report warned. “A broad change is needed within the MID.”

Binder concluded that the IDF’s intelligence system exacerbated biases and professional gaps, with no adequate military research on Hamas despite its classification as a military force. “The deep understanding of the enemy eroded,” he said, “and the mistakes were rooted in perceptions — one of the oldest mistakes made in intelligence.”

02.27.25 – Th

14 injured in PA car ramming attack at northern town Junction near Jenin

02.27.25 – Th

14 injured in terror ramming attack near Pardes Hanna; car driven by Palestinian man from Jenin

At least one injured pedestrian in critical condition and 2 in serious condition after being struck by a vehicle; suspected terrorist fled, later neutralized by police at entrance to shopping complex in Gan Shmuel

Ynet|Updated:09:48

A car driven by a Palestinian who entered Israel illegally struck and injured at least 14 pedestrians at Karkur Junction near the northern town of Pardes-Hanna-Karkur, in what police said on Thursday was a terror attack. Medics first reported that 10 people were injured in the attack, among them a 17-year-old young woman in critical condition, two in serious condition, one in moderate condition and the rest lightly injured. One of the injured is a police officer who took part in the suspect's arrest.

Police said it caught the driver about four kilometers from the scene of the attack in a shopping center near Kibbutz Gan Shmuel, adding that he was neutralized by officers while attempting to ram a police car.

Police later identified the attacker as a 53-year-old Palestinian from a village near Jenin in the northern West Bank, who is married to an Arab Israeli woman from the Umm al-Fahm, adding that he entered Israel illegally.

Assi Aharoni, head of the police spokesperson division, reported that after the terrorist hit the pedestrians, he continued on his way, recognized police forces and tried to hit a police car and a police officer. "He was shot and neutralized by the police, and that ended the attack," he said, adding that the man got out of the car and threatened the police officers with a screwdriver. "We are still conducting scans to see if he took advantage of the opportunity and acted alone, or if there were other accomplices.

MDA Director-General Eli Bin said that paramedics treated the injured individuals before evacuating them to Hillel Yaffe Medical Center in Hadera. "Some of the injured were found scattered across the site. We are not yet sure if this was due to an attempt to flee or the force of the impact," he said.

When asked whether the police believe the terrorist also wanted to harm passersby in the shopping center, Police commissioner Daniel Levi said: "When a terrorist goes out and brutally harms people as they drive home and continues on his journey, we assume that he intends to continue harming."

The commissioner was also asked if there was a warning before the attack, and referred to the tense period as the month of Ramadan approaches. "As you know, we are approaching Ramadan, I say Ramadan Kareem to all Muslims - if anyone tries to harm or spoil the holiday with provocations or such events, we are prepared and ready to deal with each of them. I call on all Muslims in the country to celebrate the holiday. There are quite a few warnings of attacks, and therefore we are prepared and deployed everywhere," he said.

02.27.25 – Th

IDF will not allow new threats in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria or Jordan borders

02.27.25 – Th

Katz warns Hamas plotting attacks on Israeli soldiers, communities during cease-fire

Defense minister warns terror group using cease-fire to rebuild forces, relocate operatives and stockpile weapons; reveals Hamas had planned attacks in West Bank before October 7

Elisha Ben Kimon, Yoav Zitun|05:55

Defense Minister Israel Katz said Thursday that intelligence gathered during the cease-fire indicated Hamas was planning attacks on soldiers and communities.

His remarks followed reports that Hamas had relocated thousands of operatives from southern to northern Gaza, rebuilding its battalions, tunnels, rocket stockpiles and drone capabilities.

Katz stressed that the cease-fire was not due to a lack of munitions or troop exhaustion but solely to facilitate the return of hostages. "This is our top priority, our duty and our mutual responsibility," he said at a conference of regional council leaders. He emphasized that Israel was maintaining a buffer zone in Gaza, including military outposts beyond Israeli lines, and would not permit arms smuggling through humanitarian aid. "If we had withdrawn from the Philadelphi Corridor, within these 42 days, it would have been flooded with weapons," he warned.

With the first phase of the hostage deal completed—returning 25 living hostages and eight deceased—Katz said continued pressure was necessary to compel Hamas to release the remaining captives. "The best way forward is for Hamas to know that the IDF is ready to resume combat," he said, reiterating that "Hamas will not remain in control of Gaza, militarily or politically."

Katz also discussed efforts to facilitate voluntary emigration from Gaza. "I am rapidly advancing a voluntary migration initiative, enabling those who wish to leave Gaza to do so via Ashdod Port and Ramon Airport," he said.

Addressing threats in the West Bank, Katz revealed that Hamas had planned attacks there before October 7 and that Iranian-backed weapons and funding had fueled growing terrorist activity. "The refugee camps are the core of terrorism in the West Bank," he said, instructing the IDF to continue operations in Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams to dismantle terrorist infrastructure.

Regarding Israel's northern border, Katz said that Israeli forces would remain in strategic outposts in Lebanon indefinitely, with U.S. approval. He also reaffirmed that Israel would maintain its military presence in the buffer zone along the Syrian border indefinitely, citing security concerns.

"It was clear to me and the prime minister that we needed to secure the buffer zone, and our policy is to remain there—at the peak of Mount Hermon and other strategic positions—for an unlimited period," he said.

Addressing Syria's new Islamist leader Ahmad al-Sharaa, a former al-Qaeda and ISIS member, Katz dismissed him as unreliable. "He swapped his robes for suits and speaks well, but we do not trust him—we trust only the IDF," he said.

Katz reiterated Israel's demand for the demilitarization of southern Syria and confirmed that the IDF struck Syrian regime positions earlier in the week. "Two days ago, we hit the first attempt by the new regime to man positions and outposts," he said. "We will not allow violations of the demilitarization agreement in southern Syria, nor will we permit the emergence of new threats in the area."

Katz concluded by emphasizing a broader security doctrine: "Israel cannot allow extremist organizations to operate along its borders—whether in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria or the West Bank. This is our policy, and we will enforce it."

02.27.25 – Th

No Israeli withdrawal from Gaza's Philadelphi Corridor, PM confirmed

02.27.25 – Th

No Israeli withdrawal from Gaza's Philadelphi Corridor, official confirms

Israeli forces to remain in Gaza-Egypt border buffer zone despite hostage deal terms, citing Hamas rearmament and border security concerns; with 59 hostages still held, talks for next phase remain uncertain as Hamas demands full Israeli pullout and end to war
Itamar Eichner|05:22

Israel will not withdraw from the Philadelphi Corridor—a buffer zone along the Gaza-Egypt border—on the 42nd day of the hostage deal, despite the agreement brokered by Qatar and Egypt stipulating that the IDF would begin pulling out, an Israeli official said Thursday.

“We will not allow Hamas terrorists to once again roam our borders with trucks and rifles, nor will we let them rearm through smuggling,” the official stated.

The announcement came as the first phase of the agreement was completed, with the release of 33 hostages—including eight who were returned deceased. Fifty-nine hostages remain in Hamas captivity in Gaza after 510 days.

On Thursday morning, Hamas spokesman Abdel Latif al-Qanua said the group was willing to extend the first phase of the deal or merge it with the second phase, “in accordance with our red lines.” He specified that these conditions included a full Israeli withdrawal, an end to the war and reconstruction efforts in Gaza.

With the return of the four deceased hostages to Israel, the first phase of the deal has officially concluded. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to hold consultations Thursday on the next steps and discuss whether to send a negotiating delegation for the second phase of talks.

Netanyahu previously committed that if a delegation were dispatched, the Cabinet would first hold a debate on its mandate, but such a discussion has yet to take place. Instead, deliberations have shifted to Hamas' alleged violations of the agreement, which Netanyahu cited in his decision to halt the release of additional Palestinian prisoners.

It remains unclear when and where negotiations for the second phase will begin, though estimates suggest they may take place next week in Cairo or Doha. U.S. President Donald Trump's envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, is scheduled to visit the region early next week, including a stop in Israel, with expectations that his visit will help jumpstart discussions on the next stage of the deal.

The IDF was initially expected to begin its withdrawal from the Philadelphi Corridor on Saturday, with a full exit completed by March 9. However, the Israeli official's remarks confirm that the pullout will not happen.

Throughout the first phase of the agreement, the Philadelphi Corridor—considered a key element of the deal—was a subject of extensive debate. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich had listed Israel's presence there as one of his “red lines” for Netanyahu, threatening to collapse the government in the case of an Israeli withdrawal from the 8.7-mile stretch of land.

Some analysts had suspected Israel never intended to withdraw and that the move was tied to the second phase of the deal, which remains highly uncertain. A security official acknowledged Wednesday that the Philadelphi Corridor was a “complex issue” and that “there is significant uncertainty surrounding the expected withdrawal.”

The most immediate consequence of Israel remaining in the corridor is that negotiations for the second phase of the hostage release deal are unlikely to progress.

02.27.25 – Th

Talks stall: New IDF chief with ample munitions is ready to eliminate Hamas

02.27.25 – Th

Israel-Hamas cease-fire talks: interim deal, renewed fighting or Hamas escalating demands?

Israel readies a delegation for hostage deal talks, but Trump envoy warns of Middle East volatility; Hamas demands a higher price for additional hostage releases without ending the war, while uncertainty looms over the Philadelphi Corridor withdrawal deadline
Itamar Eichner|04:07

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has yet to decide how to proceed with the hostage deal, as the first phase has concluded. The proposed framework includes two additional phases: a second phase involving a permanent cease-fire, the release of all remaining living hostages and the full withdrawal of the IDF from Gaza—where it currently remains only in the buffer zone and along the Philadelphi Corridor. The third phase entails long-term reconstruction of Gaza, during which the remains of fallen hostages would also be returned.

Negotiations on the terms of the second phase were supposed to begin on the 16th day of the cease-fire—February 4—but have yet to start officially. However, talks are ongoing with the mediation of Qatar, Egypt and Trump's regional envoy, Steve Witkoff. Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, who is in the U.S. and was appointed by Netanyahu to lead the negotiations instead of the heads of the Mossad and Shin Bet, has been in discussions with Witkoff over the past week.

Israel is preparing to send a delegation to discuss the next steps, but it has yet to be determined whether talks will be held in Cairo or Doha. Israel is also waiting for Witkoff's visit, which was postponed this week. Sources in Israel were informed that he plans to arrive next week, but he made it clear that his visit will depend on progress in the negotiations.

Possible scenarios and the Philadelphi Corridor hurdle

"If negotiations progress positively enough—this is an initial stage where we set certain boundaries, outline what we want to discuss, and define the outcomes we expect... if everything goes well, I might be able to arrive on Sunday to finalize and implement the agreement," Witkoff said at an American Jewish Committee conference. He expressed optimism but remained cautious: "We've had many discussions and people are listening—but that doesn't mean it will happen. The Middle East is a very chaotic place."

Israel now stands at a crossroads with three main options: resuming hostilities, moving to Phase II or extending Phase I with additional hostage releases. Decision-makers in Jerusalem favor extending Phase I, which could also temporarily defuse political obstacles for Netanyahu, particularly the threat from Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich to quit the coalition if the war ends.

A security official described this scenario as an "interim deal" that could lead to the release of additional hostages. "We will try to prolong the cease-fire. Hamas does not want the fighting to resume—it is not in their interest," he said. U.S. President Donald Trump speaks about the possible next phase. Under this scenario, Israel is expected to demand the release of captive fathers still in Hamas' hands, as well as hostages believed to be wounded or ill based on information from captivity survivors. Witkoff hinted at this possibility, saying that advancing Phase II alongside the "release of additional hostages" is a "real option."

Hamas has not ruled out extending Phase I but has signaled that it will demand a higher price for each hostage—requiring new negotiations over prisoner-to-hostage release ratios.

Senior Hamas official Mousa Abu Marzouk, in an interview this week, expressed regret over the October 7 massacre due to the devastation it has brought upon Gaza. Speaking to The New York Times, he said that if Phase I is extended, Hamas will demand significantly more prisoners in exchange for each hostage—500 to 1,000 terrorists per hostage—viewing all remaining captives as soldiers. Israel also anticipates that Hamas will seek an increase in humanitarian aid to Gaza.

A further complication in this scenario is a clause in the current agreement requiring Israel to begin withdrawing from the Philadelphi Corridor by this Saturday—the 42nd day of the cease-fire—and to complete the withdrawal by day 50. This is one of the "red lines" Smotrich has set for Netanyahu.

Some believe Israel has no intention of pulling out of Philadelphi, as the withdrawal constitutes part of Phase II, which is unlikely to be agreed upon. The security official addressing the matter called it a "complex issue" and noted "significant uncertainty regarding the expected withdrawal."

The second option: Progressing to Phase II

Moving to Phase II appears highly unlikely at this stage. Israel insists on achieving all of its war objectives, including dismantling Hamas' military and governing capabilities. Israeli officials have made it clear that in any negotiations for Phase II, Hamas would be required to disarm, demilitarize Gaza entirely and exile its leadership—following the

Beirut 1982 model whereby Israel exiled the leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization to Tunisia following its invasion of Lebanon.

"If Hamas agrees—great, the war can end," an Israeli official said. However, the likelihood of Hamas accepting these terms is extremely low. The group has signaled a willingness—at least on paper—to relinquish control over the future governance of Gaza. However, Israel has made clear that it will not tolerate Hamas ruling from behind the scenes in a "Hezbollah model" akin to southern Lebanon.

If Hamas refuses, and Phase I is not extended, the only remaining option is resuming military operations. "If Hamas refuses, Israel will achieve its objectives through intense fighting," the security official asserted. "This will be combat under a new chief of staff, with weapons and munitions received after the lifting of arms embargoes and with unprecedented U.S. support—which also wants to see Hamas destroyed. The fighting will be intense, and we will eliminate Hamas' military and governing capabilities, including how humanitarian aid is handled. What was before will not be what happens now. The fighting will be different and so will the humanitarian aspect."

A senior Israeli official added: "Hamas will have to choose between three options—Phase II under Israeli terms, extending Phase I with additional hostage releases or a return to war."

02.27.25 – Th

20 years after Jews expelled from Gaza, will they return to rebuild?

02.27.25 – Th

20 years after Jews left Gush Katif, will they return to Gaza?

For 77 years, Israel has sought peace with the Palestinians through withdrawals and removals, but each attempt has led to more conflict

The Media Line/Maayan Hoffman|03:36

In 2005, Israel forcibly evacuated around 10,000 residents from Gush Katif in the Gaza Strip. The hope? Peace. Many believed that withdrawing from Gaza would pave the way for harmony with the Palestinians and, perhaps, even lay the foundation for a future Palestinian state.

Instead, Israel was met with relentless rocket fire, terror attacks, and, ultimately, the October 7 massacre—where Gazan terrorists and civilians brutally murdered 1,200 Jews.

Now, U.S. President Donald Trump has proposed a plan that could allow Jews to return to Gaza. Other proposals from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and regional players are also emerging. Many doubt Trump's vision will materialize, but one thing is clear: former Gush Katif residents say that Israel cannot return to the status quo.

"Ever since Donald Trump announced his plan, I can't get it out of my mind," Dror Vanunu, who served as Gush Katif's spokesperson during the 2005 disengagement, said.

Standing outside the Gush Katif Heritage Center in Nitzan, Vanunu's eyes were distant, lost in memory. He recalled how, in 2005, thousands of journalists from around the world descended upon Gush Katif. At the time, there was an illusion, he said—that expelling Jews from the 21 flourishing communities would bring peace, that Gaza would become another Singapore, that its shores would rival the French Riviera, and that “everything would be awesome.”

“They believed this was just a conflict over territory,” Vanunu said. “They thought that if the Israelis left everything we built over 35 years, there would be peace. But we knew that once you take us out of Gush Katif, there would be much more terrorism. We used to say Gush Katif was like the pin in the dam of terrorism. Once you pull it out, there will be massive terrorism.”

Two years after Israel's withdrawal, under pressure from the U.S. administration, the Palestinians held elections. The people voted Hamas into power. Within months, the newly elected leadership was throwing its Fatah rivals off rooftops and further radicalizing the enclave. In the years that followed, conflict after conflict erupted—major clashes in 2014 and 2021—culminating in the Hamas-led massacre of 2023. Instead of expelling the terrorists, they expelled the victims of terror.

“I think that after 20 years, most Israelis now realize expelling the Jews from Gush Katif was a terrible mistake,” Vanunu said. “Instead of expelling the terrorists, they expelled the victims of terror.”

Because what you have is, instead of punishing the victims, you need to punish the terrorists. The only solution is destruction and rebuilding it again—this time, in a different way. It's a brave solution.

“Because what you have is, instead of punishing the victims, you need to punish the terrorists,” he said. Gaza, he argued, is like biblical Sodom, with its vast underground terror tunnels. “The only solution is destruction and rebuilding it again—this time, in a different way. It's a brave solution.”

Building a dream

For 19 years, Laurence Beziz called Gush Katif home. An immigrant from France who also lived in Los Angeles, she saw her life there as part of something greater—a pioneering effort to build the state of Israel.

She and her husband arrived with nothing. Together, they built one of Israel's most successful farms.

“Life was less about what you wanted for yourself and more about what you wanted for the community,” Beziz recently recalled. “You looked at yourself as part of something larger. It was not about how much furniture you had or what your house was like, but what you could do for the country,” she said.

During those years, she and her husband were young, energetic, and driven by dreams.

“We had a lot of dreams, and basically, I can say that all of them came true,” Beziz said. When former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon first spoke of the disengagement, the Jewish residents of Gush Katif couldn’t believe it. The government had invested heavily in schools, infrastructure, and services, and the communities were thriving.

“It seemed impossible to destroy all of it,” Beziz said.

Moreover, the government was unprepared. Beziz recalled the chaos of August 15, 2005—the first and central day of the disengagement.

“There was a lot of chaos. A lot of people leaving, some refusing to leave, soldiers coming in, policemen everywhere,” she said.

She lost more than 10 acres of greenhouses, wiping away years of hard work. But more than that, she lost her dreams.

“Gush Katif is still very much anchored in us,” Beziz said. “Coming to Israel and feeling like pioneers—that connection between the land, ourselves, and building a community—that’s powerful. It’s a part of you. Looking back at my life, it was a great achievement.”

She added, “The way that we were uprooted from this land—it’s something we cannot forget. It was done in a way that didn’t respect all we built.”

A history of Jewish presence in Gaza

Jews have been present in the Gaza region since ancient times. According to the Torah, the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac spent time there.

Genesis 20:1 describes Abraham as settling in Gerar, a city within Gaza. Later, during a famine, Isaac considered traveling to Egypt, but God instructed him to stay in Gerar, saying: “Dwell in this land, and I will be with you, and I will bless you; for to you and your descendants I will give all these lands” (Genesis 26:3).

It was in Gaza that God reaffirmed His covenant, promising the Jewish people their inheritance in the Land of Israel.

For centuries, Jews lived in Gaza—only to be repeatedly expelled. The Romans forced them out, followed by the Crusaders, Napoleon, the Ottoman Turks, the British in 1929, and the Egyptians in 1948.

So when Israel reclaimed Gaza in the 1967 Six-Day War, it seemed natural for Jews to return and rebuild. “These were left-wing leaders at the time,” Vanunu said, “but they understood there had to be a presence in Gush Katif. They believed that if you want to protect the southern part of Israel, you must have communities [in Gaza], not just army bases.”

Of the 21 Jewish communities in Gaza, about 70% were religious or traditional, while the rest were secular. Most relied on agriculture. For 36 years, Gush Katif thrived, producing large quantities of peppers, tomatoes, flowers, and other crops for Israel and beyond.

Vanunu, like Beziz, recalled that residents never believed the disengagement would happen. But as the reality set in, they launched an 18-month campaign to stop it.

“We went all over the country,” Vanunu said. “We kept telling people it would be a disaster for Israel.”

But in the end, he said, it became clear that even if most of the Knesset opposed the plan, Sharon would find a way to push it through. And that’s exactly what happened.

A Life Built and Lost Vanunu remembers Gush Katif as a place with a “special atmosphere,” a thriving community where life felt meaningful and connected to the land. He and his wife lived there for 11 years with their three children; now they have six. In December 2003, after years of waiting, they finally received the permits to build their home. Construction began immediately. But in June 2004, the government announced its decision to disengage from Gaza.

“My wife and I didn’t know what to do,” Vanunu recalled. “We were hesitating, but in the end, we decided to move forward. We completed the home about five months before the expulsion. We loved it.”

Beyond their home, they loved Gush Katif—the beaches, the farms, the greenhouses, and the vibrant flowers and plants. “Gush Katif was a miracle,” Vanunu said. “When the Jews arrived, the Arabs asked what they planned to do with the land since it was just dunes. The Jews said agriculture. The Arabs said there was no chance—it was the desert. But the pioneers told them, ‘Don’t worry, you’ll see. This area will flourish.’ And it happened.” He added, “We were able to make the desert heaven.”

With Trump’s plan on the table, Vanunu has already considered whether he would return, saying, “There is a good chance” he would despite everything he lost.

After being forced out of Gaza, Vanunu lived in a hotel for six months, then in a caravan for nearly a decade before finally moving into a permanent home in Nitsan. Many families had it even harder—some waited 18 years to resettle.

“There was compensation,” he said, “but it was very low compared to what we lost.

For nearly 77 years, Israel has tried again and again to find solutions with the Palestinians, Vanunu said—whether by removing Jewish communities, withdrawing from hilltops, or even relinquishing entire cities. But each time, the result has been the opposite of peace. “Gaza became Sodom,” he said.

Now, for the first time in years, he feels a glimmer of hope that things might change.

Beiz shares that hope, though cautiously. What matters most to her is that Israel and the world remember Gush Katif—not just as a painful chapter but as proof that Israel can rebuild and thrive even after the most challenging times.

While not everyone managed to reclaim their lives, as Vanunu described, most of the 10,000 people who were evicted from Gush Katif in 2004 have since moved forward.

“Gush Katif is the Israel story—the Jewish story through the ages,” Beiz said. “We can have a crisis, we can know trauma. But we can cope. We can make things better.”

The story is written by Maayan Hoffman and reprinted with permission from The Media Line.

02.27.25 – Th

BBC censored Gazan remarks in documentary: not realistic to the culture of hate

02.27.25 – Th

The BBC censored Gazans remarks in controversial documentary: Instead of 'Jihad against Jews', 'Fighting Israeli forces'

BBC accused of mistranslating anti-Jewish rhetoric in 'Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone' documentary, sparking allegations of bias and whitewashing
Ynet|16:24

The BBC has been accused of “whitewashing” participants’ views in its controversial Gaza documentary by mistranslating references to “the Jews” and omitting praise of “jihad.”

An investigation by The Telegraph found that on at least five occasions, the words Yahud or Yahudy —Arabic for “Jew” or “Jews”— were changed to “Israel” or “Israeli forces” in subtitles, or removed entirely.

In one instance, an interviewee praised Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar for his “jihad against the Jews,” but the BBC translated it as “fighting Israeli forces.”

The broadcaster also faces pressure to clarify whether taxpayer money was given to Hamas during the production of "Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone." Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch said counter-terror police should investigate if funds were transferred.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy has also raised concerns with BBC director-general Tim Davie. “It is essential that the BBC maintains the highest standards of reporting,” she said, adding that she expects to be informed of the findings of the broadcaster’s internal investigation.

The documentary, originally promoted as an “unflinching” look at life in Gaza, was removed from iPlayer after it emerged that one of its main participants was the son of a Hamas minister.

New translations by the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA) have raised further questions about the BBC’s handling of the film.

In one scene, a Gazan woman fleeing an area under attack says: “The Jews invaded our [area].” The BBC subtitles quoted her as saying: “The Israeli army invaded our area.” In another, a boy says: “The Jews came, they destroyed us, Hamas and the Jews.” The subtitles rendered this as: “The Israelis destroyed everything, and so did Hamas.”

During a distressing moment where a doctor amputates a child’s arm, the subtitles quote him saying: “Look what the Israelis are doing to the children of Gaza.” However, the word “Israeli” was not actually used, according to CAMERA.

A young girl watching Iranian missiles in the sky during the Islamic Republic’s attack on Israel in October 2023 is quoted in the subtitles as saying: “We’re used to seeing flashes of lightning in the sky. But now it’s real missiles.” However, CAMERA’s translation states she actually said: “At first, when we would see these [flashes], they would be flares, by the way. From the Jews. But now they turned out to be [real] missiles.”

In another mistranslation, a woman discussing the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks is quoted as saying it was the “first time we invaded Israel.” However, she actually said: “We were invading the Jews for the first time.”

Later, a Palestinian woman showing footage of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar is quoted as saying he was “prepared for battle,” but CAMERA’s translation states she actually said he was “ready for jihad.” Another subtitle quotes her as saying Sinwar was “fighting and resisting Israeli forces,” but the actual translation, per CAMERA, is: “He was engaging in resistance and jihad against the Jews.”

Alex Hearn, co-director of Labour Against Antisemitism, accused the BBC of “sanitizing” views about Sinwar and presenting a “more acceptable version for a Western audience.”

“This whitewashing keeps viewers ill-informed about Hamas and promotes sympathy for their deadly ideology,” he said. “It signifies the institutional failure behind the BBC’s reporting of the Israel-Hamas conflict.”

Orly Goldschmidt, a spokeswoman for the Israeli embassy in the UK, called the mistranslations “intentional” and a “sinister and misleading policy.”

She said the changes “excuse racism” and “do not allow viewers to see how children, and Palestinians at large, have been taught to hate ‘Jews’ from a very young age.” She also criticized the omission of “jihad,” arguing that it “downplays the threat of terrorism that Israelis face daily.”

“The issue goes beyond one documentary,” she added. “It reflects a serious and systematic problem at the BBC regarding its anti-Israel bias.”

The BBC did not comment on the latest concerns but referred to previous findings by its editorial standards committee, which had not upheld complaints regarding the translation of the word Yahud.

02.26.25 – We

Deal releases convicted killers: These are the 620 prisoners set to be freed

02.26.25 – We

71 serving life sentences, Shalit deal releasees and convicted killers: These are the prisoners set to be freed

After a five-day delay due to Hamas violations and its macabre ceremonies, Israel is set to release more than 600 Palestinian prisoners; Of these, 457 will be sent to Gaza, including many arrested after the October 7 massacre

Liran Tamari|15:54

As part of the release last week of six living hostages, Israel is expected to free 620 Palestinian prisoners, whose release was postponed due to Hamas violations in the previous round, when the bodies of four hostages were returned. Among those to be released, 71 were sentenced to life terms, while 60 others received lengthy prison sentences. A total of 97 prisoners will be deported outside Palestinian territories, five will be released to East Jerusalem, 37 to the West Bank, and 457 to the Gaza Strip. Additionally, 105 prisoners will be released with 24 hours' worth of medication, and five will be transferred by ambulance.

The release also includes 47 prisoners who were re-arrested after being freed in the 2011 Shalit deal, as well as 445 Gazans who were detained following the October 7 attack.

Following Hamas' controversial "ceremony" in which it transferred the remains of hostages Oded Lifshitz, Ariel Bibas, and his infant brother Kfir, as well as an unrelated Palestinian woman's body instead of Shiri Bibas, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced a decision to delay the release of 620 prisoners "until the next hostages are freed and without further acts of desecration." The prisoners were originally slated for release following the handover of six living hostages on Saturday. However, even after being loaded onto transport vehicles, they were returned to prison. Subsequent understandings led to the decision to transfer four dead hostages without a public ceremony.

Among those to be deported is Nael Barghouti, convicted of murdering Israeli bus driver Mordechai Yekuel in 1978. Barghouti was initially freed in the Shalit deal but later re-arrested for violating his release terms. Another notable prisoner is Salama Qatawi, who led Hamas prisoners in Israeli jails over the past four years. Jailed in 2009 for activities with Hamas' military wing, he was sentenced to 15 years. Also being released is Bilal Abu Ghanem, sentenced to three life terms for the 2015 attack on Jerusalem's Bus 78, which killed Chaim Haviv, Alon Govberg and Richard Lakin.

Another prisoner set to be freed is Khalil Jabarin Abu Hamid, who murdered Ari Fuld in 2018 at the entrance to a shopping center in Gush Etzion. He was sentenced to life in prison. Also released will be Omar al-Zaben, who was convicted on multiple counts related to deadly attacks, sentenced to 27 life terms plus 25 years, and imprisoned for more than 19 years. A senior figure in Hamas' military wing, he was found responsible for multiple attacks that killed 27 Israelis.

This phase of the prisoner release, which was postponed, includes three veteran prisoners who will all be deported outside Palestinian territories. Alongside Barghouti, Samer Mahroun will be released after serving 38 years for the 1986 murder of a yeshiva student in Jerusalem, and Alaa al-Din al-Bazian, who served 42 years for involvement in various attacks, including the 2014 abduction and murder of Israeli teenagers Naftali Frenkel, Gil-Ad Shaer, and Eyal Yifrah.

On Thursday, Israeli ministers voted on a last-minute swap in which seven prisoners originally slated for deportation chose to remain in prison, and seven others were selected in their place, four of whom are now designated for expulsion.

02.26.25 – We

IDF key failures of massacre; did not see Hamas as an army, allowed it at our border

02.26.25 – We

'October 7 was not an accident—it was a disease that spread through the military'

Commander of military intelligence Unit 8200 says IDF probe into failures leading to massacre overlooked key questions about its root causes; 'We did not see Hamas as an army, so we allowed it to remain at our border'

Yossi Yehoshua|02:29

Nearly 17 months after Hamas' October 7 attack, the IDF's top leadership convened to review findings from the military's internal investigation. Among the 600 commanders present, Brig. Gen. Yossi Sarel, head of the military intelligence Unit 8200, drew the most attention, having already assumed responsibility and announced his resignation. He is set to be replaced in two weeks.

Sarel delivered a scathing critique of Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi and the investigation process, arguing that the inquiry failed to ask the most crucial questions and fully assume responsibility, instead shifting blame onto others.

Sarel's criticism was professional, not personal. He and Halevi have been close friends for years, dating back to Sarel's time as an intelligence officer under Halevi's command in the IDF's 91st Brigade.

"On October 7 at 06:29, I did not fulfill my mission as expected by my commanders, myself and—most importantly—the citizens of this country that I love so much," he said. "I failed. This cannot be undone, and I bow my head and ask for forgiveness."

He detailed the thorough, six-day probe conducted within the Intelligence Directorate, involving all active and reserve colonels and brigadier generals. "It was intense, earth-shattering. At times, I feared the intelligence apparatus would collapse, but because of these investigations, you now have a comprehensive inquiry," Sarel said. He invited those present to read the full 148-page report documenting the mistakes and failures of Unit 8200.

Sarel also addressed systemic military failures, saying, "October 7 was not an accident—it was a disease that spread through the military. We failed to investigate how it spread, and that critical question remains unanswered." He criticized the IDF for neglecting strategic assessments, particularly regarding Hamas' growing military capabilities.

Hamas terrorists rampaging through Sderot during the Oct. 7 massacre. He pointed to key intelligence failures, noting that Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar had identified two conditions that would have deterred his attack: IDF tanks positioned at the border and drones in the air. "We saw Hamas activating SIM cards and mobilizing emergency assets, yet we failed to respond. If we had deployed even minimal deterrence measures, the attack might never have happened," he argued.

Sarel accused senior commanders of avoiding accountability. "Had we made just two decisions that night—to move the tanks and launch the drones—Hamas would have scrapped its plan, except for a single unit that would have been neutralized. If that had happened, would anyone here have said the success wasn't theirs? Would they have passed the credit to the Air Force? Or would they have taken their share of the glory?"

He concluded by warning that the IDF's failure was not just operational but cultural. "We did not see Hamas as an army, so we allowed it to remain at our border, minutes from civilian communities. We believed the land barrier and intelligence units alone would secure us. That was a fundamental flaw in our military structure and values," he said. Referencing past political statements, Sariel remarked, "A politician once said he was responsible for a disaster but not to blame," alluding to former Public Security Minister Amir Ohana's response to the 2021 Mount Meron tragedy. "We in the military often looked down on politicians who were not raised on our values of real responsibility. But when we win, the entire military takes credit, and when we fail—suddenly, it's only the lower ranks who are to blame."

02.26.25 – We

Southern Syrians chant 'bomb Tel Aviv' after IDF strike manufacturing & weaponry

02.26.25 – We

Syrians call on leader to 'bomb Tel Aviv' after IDF strikes

Defense Minister Katz confirms Air Force strikes south of Damascus as preventive policy against local terror groups; Lebanon reports additional strikes despite Hezbollah cease-fire

Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun|01:13

Saudi outlet Al-Hadath reported on Wednesday that "aircraft, likely Israeli, carried out four strikes on military positions in the Al Kiswah area."

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Israel carried out "a series of strikes on military sites in Damascus' countryside" and later reported at least four fatalities.

Hezbollah-affiliated Al Mayadeen noted these were the most significant strikes since Syria's interim president Ahmad al-Sharaa took office. It claimed Israel "infiltrated Syria's communication network before the strikes" and is "expanding into southern Syria to fully control the area."

Protests were held in Damascus and Homs against "Israeli actions in southern Syria and attempt to partition the country," with demonstrators chanting, "Oh dear al-Joulani (al-Sharaa's previous nom de guerre), bomb Tel Aviv."

Another Syrian report said an additional strike hit the village of Ezra in Daraa province.

Al-Mayadeen cited sources saying an old Syrian army base was targeted.

Defense Minister Israel Katz previously confirmed that the Israeli Air Force carried out a "powerful strike in southern Syria as part of our new policy to demilitarize the area."

"The message is clear: we won't allow southern Syria to become southern Lebanon. We won't risk our citizens' security," Katz said. Reports later indicated at least two people were killed in the strike.

Katz warned that "any attempt by Syrian regime forces or terrorist organizations to establish themselves in southern Syria's buffer zone will be engaged." The IDF said it

struck "military targets in southern Syria including command centers and multiple sites containing weapons."

"The presence of military forces and assets in the southern part of Syria poses a threat to the citizens of Israel. The IDF will continue to operate in order to remove any threat to the citizens of the State of Israel," it added.

Meanwhile, Lebanon reported two people were killed in an Israeli strike in the Beqaa Valley. Lebanon's health ministry said two people were killed and three were injured. Al-Mayadeen reported that an Israeli drone carried out the strike near the village of Janta. The IDF confirmed it targeted two terrorists involved in manufacturing and storing strategic weaponry. "Activity at the site is a blatant violation of Israeli-Lebanese understandings," the military said.

Hezbollah condemned the strike. Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese MP Ibrahim Moussawi called it a "serious violation." Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem did not issue a direct threat but said, "We won't accept idly being killed and occupied."

Despite the cease-fire with Hezbollah, Israel continued striking targets in Lebanon to prevent violations and weapons smuggling to the terror group. Hezbollah has suffered heavy losses and its internal strength in Lebanon has weakened. Under the cease-fire, the Lebanese army is required to take control of areas previously under Hezbollah's authority.

"We're acting aggressively against Hezbollah targets, as seen in recent strikes," A military source said earlier this week. "They're trying to regain a foothold," he said. Last week, a Hezbollah-affiliated source told The Wall Street Journal that the terror group instructed its non-southern Lebanese operatives to vacate their posts so the Lebanese army could take control as per the cease-fire agreement.

"Hezbollah suffered heavy losses," the source said, adding the group had partially replenished its ranks with fighters from Syria, making some units ready for renewed fighting.

"The organization is weakened but not defeated," he claimed. The Wall Street Journal reported that Hezbollah has been humiliated and is struggling financially, to the point where it's having difficulty fulfilling commitments to its operatives.

02.26.25 – We

Ambassador Stefanik labels UN anti-Semitic; US stopped funds & may withdraw

02.26.25 – We

Impoverished UN moves to 'austerity measures' after Trump turns off cash tap

First report: The UN is taking emergency measures to prevent a budget collapse, after the US under Trump stopped providing money; At the NY headquarters, the heating temperature will be lowered and maintenance work will be postponed; translation services will be cut; meetings will be shortened; and reports will be delayed: 'A period of unprecedented uncertainty, with a real impact on its ability to fulfill its mission'

Daniel Edelson, New York|17:24

U.S. President Donald Trump is withholding the transfer of several budgets to the United Nations so far and the international organization, which is currently experiencing a serious economic crisis due to a sharp decline in its financial resources, has been forced to take drastic measures. According to a letter obtained by Ynet, the UN headquarters in New York has already begun making significant cuts, which are affecting the organization's ongoing activities.

Among the steps taken: cutting translation services; reducing live broadcasts of plenary debates; stopping holding meetings after 6:00 p.m.; shortening the length of reports by 10%; limiting the number of meetings with translation and interpretation services; delays in producing official minutes; lowering the temperature in the offices to save on heating costs; and even closing one of the main entrances to the UN headquarters on 42nd Street in Manhattan.

According to the letter, signed by the UN Secretary-General's Chief of Staff, Earle Courtenay Rattray, these steps are necessary to ensure that the organization can continue to operate, at least until the end of the year. "Without immediate spending restrictions, we will not be able to meet our financial obligations from September to December," the document states. It was also emphasized that due to the severity of the situation, the drastic measures taken last year will also continue, with new restrictions added to all key UN departments.

The impact of the measures is evident in every aspect of UN activity. For example, official meetings will only be held between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., and discussions outside these hours – including on weekends – will only take place if funding for this comes from external sources. UN bodies that hold 10 or more meetings a week will be required to reduce them by 10%.

Translation and interpretation services, essential for multilingual discussions, will be provided only during official hours, and only to a limited extent to those entitled to them, according to the regulations. Furthermore, the number of meetings budgeted for interpretation will be reduced to 55 per week, and the total number of meetings of the organization will be cut by 10%.

The UN's 'outreach activities' are also being harmed

The UN's internal communications are also being affected: the production of official documents will be significantly delayed; the length of reports will be reduced by 10%; and processing of official transcripts and records will only take place when funding is available. Another significant impact is on UN publications, including official reports and journals, which will experience significant delays in distribution.

On the public level, the UN's outreach activities also are being severely affected: the number of live broadcasts will be significantly reduced; UNTV teams will operate in a reduced format; and coverage of Security Council events may be lacking. The letter notes that photos and videos may not be tagged or distributed on the same day. Translation services for the UN's main websites and official content will be limited, and some of the secretary-general's official messages will not be distributed in all of the organization's official languages.

Additionally, budget constraints led to the cancellation of an innovative artificial intelligence project designed to help diplomats navigate the 80-year-old UN archives. Events outside of working hours, such as exhibition openings or events in the building's dining room, will only take place with full external funding.

The financial crisis is also directly affecting the organization's research and training services. According to the document, access to the UN Digital Library resources will be limited, language learning programs will be reduced, and essential databases for experts and diplomats will be less accessible. Even the basic maintenance of the UN headquarters is affected by the cuts: heating levels will be reduced, the purchase of new equipment will be almost completely halted, and non-urgent maintenance work will be postponed until further notice.

"We will continue to monitor the cash situation and update the emergency measures in accordance with developments," the letter said. "However, given the severity of the crisis, it is clear that the UN is entering a period of unprecedented uncertainty, with a real impact on its ability to fulfill its mission."

Not just Trump: China is also delaying payments

The UN's budget crisis stems mainly from the fact that its member states are not paying in full and on time the appropriations they themselves approved to finance the organization. A major factor in this is the U.S., after the Trump administration froze most international aid and is now not paying its share regularly.

Trump also ordered withdrawal from the World Health Organization and the UN Human Rights Council, and halted all funding to UNRWA, the UN relief agency for Palestinian refugees. He also ordered a review of U.S. membership in other UN organizations and its long-term participation in its activities. Trump and his designated UN ambassador, Elise Stefanik, accused the UN of being antisemitic and warned that if it did not change its ways the U.S. would withdraw from it altogether.

In recent years, China has also begun to delay its payments to the UN, and the closure of several large peacekeeping missions has exacerbated the cash crunch. As a result, the UN has been forced to take emergency measures such as postponing reimbursements to countries that contribute peacekeepers, reducing planned activities, and even shutting down certain offices as has already happened in UN offices in Geneva.

The situation is particularly acute due to the UN's financial system, in which the budget is set by the General Assembly, but there is no clear penalty mechanism for countries that do not pay on time. Although the UN constitution states that a country that accumulates debt for more than two years will lose its right to vote, many countries deliberately maintain debt below this threshold. In the absence of effective sanctions, the UN is forced to rely on creative approaches to cash management – which leads to a serious impairment of its ability to function properly and provide basic services to member states.

02.26.25 – We

Hamas prisoners to be released in next 24 hours; Egypt will receive coffins

02.26.25 – We

Crisis with Hamas resolved: 4 dead hostages, hundreds of Palestinian prisoners to be released in next 24 hours

Israeli officials confirmed that agreements reached marking completion of Phase I of cease-fire deal: Hamas will transfer coffins containing 4 hostages to Egypt without a ceremony, and at the same time the prisoners will be released

Itamar Eichner, Lior Ben Ari|16:49

Israel confirmed late Tuesday night that a solution to the issue of the delay in the release of Palestinian prisoners is emerging, under which Hamas will hand over the coffins of four dead hostages to Egypt in the next 24 hours without a ceremony, and Egypt will hand over the coffins to the Red Cross to bring them to Israel. At the same time as the dead hostages are transferred, Israel will release hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

Earlier, Hamas announced that an agreement had been reached to resolve the crisis of the delay of the release of Palestinian prisoners, and that they would be released at the same time as the dead hostages. The announcement came after Al Jazeera reported a solution "through the efforts of the mediators" for a one-off exchange.

Meanwhile, the visit of Steve Witkoff, US President Donald Trump's envoy to the Middle East, which was supposed to begin in the region on Wednesday, has been postponed by several days, and the Americans are clarifying that it was actually not scheduled at all. Witkoff had stated in interviews with the U.S. media on Tuesday that he would arrive in the region this week, probably on Wednesday, and many understood that to mean that he would arrive in Israel, but this is not certain to happen at all. Israel also noted that at no point did he officially announce a visit, despite what he said to the media.

The fact that Witkoff is not arriving in the region this week could reflect the crisis in the talks, but in the meantime Witkoff remains in the U.S. and is holding discussions with Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer, who is serving as the head of the new negotiating team in place of Mossad head David Barnea, who was removed from the position.

A senior source familiar with the details said earlier that attempts were being made to extricate Israel from the hole it had created for itself with the delay in releasing the prisoners. Hamas had refused to return the dead hostages before the prisoners, and each side entrenched itself in its position for fear of losing its achievements.

As the 50th day of the cease-fire approaches, Israel, according to the agreement, is supposed to complete the withdrawal from the Philadelphi Corridor, which further complicates matters

The purpose of Witkoff's arrival in the region is for discussions that are supposed to deal with the continuation of the hostage deal, and the transition to Phase II. Hamas officially made it clear above all else that it will not agree to negotiate and talk until the Palestinian prisoners are released.

"Israel's refusal to release Palestinian prisoners constitutes a serious violation of the cease-fire agreement signed by both sides through the mediators. The movement remains committed to implementing the agreement to achieve a permanent cease-fire and a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. Without the release of Palestinian prisoners as stipulated in the agreement, progress on any other issue cannot be discussed," sources in the organization accused in a conversation with the Saudi channel Asharq.

On Sunday, Witkoff said that he would visit the region this week, probably on Wednesday, and that the Americans "expect Phase II to come to fruition." In an interview with CNN, he said that "Netanyahu is motivated by the right reasons — Hamas cannot be part of any government in Gaza. Witkoff added: "We first need to extend Phase I. We hope to have enough time to start Phase II and finish it in order to release as many hostages as possible and advance the talks."

02.25.25 – Tu

Ukraine questions Israel after UN vote aligns with Trump pro-Russia stance

02.25.25 – Tu

Ukraine attacks Israel after its UN sovereignty vote aligns with Trump's pro-Russia stance

Israel's vote against Ukraine's sovereignty resolution at the UN has drawn sharp criticism from Ukraine; Ukraine's ambassador to Israel expressed disappointment; 'Knesset members and ordinary citizens say how ashamed they are of this vote'
Itamar Eichner|13:25

A day after Israel's dramatic vote at the UN General Assembly against the Ukraine-initiated resolution that calls for preserving its sovereignty and territorial integrity, Ukraine's ambassador to Israel expressed sharp criticism. "I constantly receive phone calls from Israeli ministers, Knesset members, and ordinary citizens who say how ashamed they are of this vote," said Ambassador Yevgen Korniychuk.

Israel joined the United States in voting against the resolution —a first for both nations since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war. The resolution, which was overwhelmingly approved by 93 countries, also calls for halting hostilities and pursuing a peaceful resolution to the war between Russia and Ukraine.

The unusual vote followed a dramatic shift in US policy regarding the war, after President Donald Trump harshly criticized Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and effectively adopted Russia's stance. Shortly after the UN vote, Trump stated during a press conference at the White House alongside French President Emmanuel Macron that he is focusing on achieving a cease-fire agreement between Russia and Ukraine "as quickly as possible." He added that the U.S. has held "several excellent conversations" with Russia since his inauguration last month.

Ukraine was stunned by Israel's decision. Korniychuk issued a statement noting: "On February 24, 2025, three years after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the General Assembly adopted the resolution 'Promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.' Supported by 93 countries, the document reaffirms Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and calls for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the UN Charter."

The ambassador also reiterated that he continues to receive calls from Israeli officials embarrassed by the vote, adding, "Unfortunately, Israel is among the 18 nations that opposed supporting fundamental principles of truth and democracy. I want to thank the people of Israel who supported Ukraine three years ago and continue to stand with us today. I repeatedly emphasize that the people of Ukraine and Israel are one big family that feels each other's pain. This makes it so difficult to understand the position of Israeli officials — a country at war after being attacked without provocation, a country that, like Ukraine, fights for its right to exist."

Up until the final moments before the vote, Israel was unsure of the United States' stance and whether it would indeed vote against the resolution. Israel aligned with the U.S. but was among only a handful of nations to do so — joined by allies like Hungary and Pacific Island nations. North Korea and Russia also opposed the resolution.

Since the war's onset, Israel has supported Ukraine's territorial integrity and even attempted to mediate between Ukraine and Russia. Former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett flew to Moscow on a Saturday in May 2022 to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Throughout the conflict, Israel sided with Ukraine and provided it with assistance, primarily in the form of protective equipment such as helmets, vests and gas masks. Israel also transferred its Red Alert rocket warning system to Ukraine, and the two nations have exchanged intelligence on Iranian aid to Russia, particularly regarding the supply of attack drones.

At the same time, Ukraine has expected Israel to step up its support by providing offensive weapons, a demand Israel has refrained from fulfilling due to concerns about provoking Russia's anger, which has caused significant disappointment in Ukraine. Recent reports suggested that Israel transferred Patriot defense systems to Ukraine, but it was later clarified that the systems were handed to the U.S., which then delivered them to Ukraine. Public opinion in Ukraine has sympathized with Israel following the October 7 massacre and, generally, the country has felt a shared sense of destiny with Israel.

02.25.25 – Tu

220-pound bomb attack against IDF forces in northern West Bank foiled

02.25.25 – Tu

220-pound bomb attack against IDF forces in northern West Bank foiled | Watch security forces dismantle the bomb

Shin Bet and IDF announce the arrest of a terror cell and seizure of its powerful bomb in the northern West Bank town of Qabatiya; arrests came after a tip from two terrorists arrested last month in Nablus who were on their way to carry out a shooting attack in Huwara using M-16 rifles

Elisha Ben Kimon|12:06

The Shin Bet announced Tuesday evening that it had foiled a shooting attack in Huwara planned by a terrorist cell, and at the same time thwarted an attack on IDF forces in the northern West Bank using a 100-kg (220-pound) bomb.

A joint statement with the IDF noted that Shin Bet operational unit fighters, Yamam - National Counter-Terrorism soldiers, and Shomron Brigade soldiers arrested terrorists Ahmed Ali Zakharna and Tariq Abu Zeid on January 11 in Nablus, who were traveling in their vehicle on their way to carry out a shooting attack. Two M-16 rifles were seized from their possession.

During their interrogation by the Shin Bet, it emerged that the two were on their way to carry out a shooting attack in Huwara, and that terrorist operatives from the Jenin Battalion had received a 100-kg (220-pound) bomb, which they wanted to use against IDF forces.

In light of the information received during the interrogation, additional operatives from the cell were arrested Monday night in a joint operation by the IDF and Shin Bet in the city of Qabatiya in the northern West Bank, who were in possession of weapons and the powerful 100-kg bomb.

At the same time, soldiers from the Nahal Brigade, who in recent days joined the counterterrorism operation in the northern West Bank, operated under the direction of the Shin Bet in Qabatiya, Silat al-Harithiya, and Al-Yamun. The forces searched dozens of terrorist infrastructures, arrested 15 terrorists, located weapons, and destroyed explosives, including the bomb.

02.25.25 – Tu

Noa pleads for help at UN Council for 62 hostages who remain in captivity

02.25.25 – Tu

'Until Avinatan returns, my heart is in captivity': Noa Argamani pleads for help at UN Security Council

She is the first hostage to survive captivity to speak before the international body and she demanded that all stages of the cease-fire deal be implemented to save her partner Avinatan Or and the 62 other hostages who remain in captivity; 'They are in absolute hell, abandoned by the world. Don't let the darkness last forever!'

Itamar Eichner|11:23

Rescued hostage Noa Argamani spoke to the UN Security Council on Wednesday evening, becoming the first Gaza hostage to survive captivity to speak to the council

since the outbreak of the war. In her remarks, she called on the international community to act more vigorously to free the 63 hostages who remain held in captivity in Gaza, and she also described some of the horrors she herself endured in captivity, until she was rescued in Operation Arnon last year.

Argamani demanded that all stages of the cease-fire and hostage release deal be implemented, and warned that the hostages, including her partner Avinatan Or, have no more time left. "Until Avinatan returns, my heart is in captivity," she said.

"My name is Noa Argamani. I was kidnapped by Hamas terrorists on October 7 from the Nova Festival along with my boyfriend, Avinatan Or. We were taken to Gaza by force, separated, and entered hell on earth. I held Avinatan's hand as long as I could, but in one moment of terror – we were torn apart from each other and dragged into the unknown." "After eight months in captivity, I was rescued by the Israeli soldiers. Being here today is a miracle, but I'm here today to tell you we have no time. As I speak, there are still 63 hostages living in a nightmare, including my partner Avinatan," Argamani said in her opening remarks.

"Our lives cannot go [on] without them. That's why I need to make sure the world knows this," she tells the council. "The deal must go on in its entirety, in all its stages. My partner and many other hostages are only supposed to be released in the second stage of the deal. We are talking about innocent people who were taken from their beds, from a music festival, from their simple lives – to a hellish hell," she added.

She referred in her remarks to the shocking murder of Shiri Bibs and her children Ariel and Kfir, whose bodies were returned last week as part of the deal and will be laid to rest tomorrow.

"You don't need me to tell you about a 9-month-old baby, Kfir, and his 4-year-old brother, Ariel Bibas, and their mother Shiri. A mother and her infants who were brutally murdered in captivity. They didn't die in battle. They weren't soldiers. They were tender children, whose blood was spilled with unimaginable brutality. This crime is unspeakable, we can't imagine it, but it happened. And that's why we can't leave anyone there. This is Hamas – an organization that crushes babies with its hands and celebrates death.

"I know what it feels like to be left behind, to see other hostages being released. Every moment feels like the last moment of their lives, every second counts. When I was in Gaza, I was held with two little girls, Hila Rotem and Emily Hand. Emily was 8 years old at the time and Hila was 12. I had to be brave, not only for myself but also for the girls. I had to act as if everything would be okay, which is why I told them, 'As long as we are here, together, alive in this room – nothing else matters.'"

She said: "I told them to ignore all the booms, the gunshots and everything else around us. Hila and Emily were both released in the first deal after 50 days. I saw them and two other women who were with me in captivity return home to their families while I stayed behind. I was not part of any category that I could be released under. I can't even begin to describe the feeling of being left behind, but I can say – this is exactly what the kidnapped feel today. Abandoned by the world."

She also described the bombing of the building where she was later held along with hostages Itay Svirsky and Yossi Sharabi. "After 54 days in captivity, only I, Itay Svirsky and Yossi Sharabi were left. Both were kidnapped from their homes in Kibbutz Be'eri. We were in a war zone 24/7. It was horrific, every day, every second. One evening, the house where we were being held was bombed, and we found ourselves buried under the rubble. Itay managed to get up, but Yossi and I were trapped beneath piles of concrete. I couldn't move. I couldn't breathe. I was drawn into darkness and thought this was it, these were the last seconds of my life. I screamed with all my might for someone to hear me, and I also heard Yossi's screams. Screams of pain, of pleading, of a person trapped between life and death. And then, after a few seconds, I heard only silence. Yossi died next to me, alone, helpless."

"I pulled myself out of the rubble and tried to help Yossi, but it was too late. Yossi was a close friend of mine, he was a pure soul and will remain in my heart forever. Itay and I were forced to look for another place to hide, so one of our captors took us to another house, but two days later Itay was murdered by the same captor. Itay was with me from the first day in captivity, we told each other everything, he was my soulmate. May their memory be a blessing."

" Hamas released a video of me describing what happened to Itai and Yossi and that I was injured and needed medical help, but of course I received nothing: no doctors, no Red Cross, nothing. From that moment on, I was alone with five terrorists holding me in the same house. You have to understand – every second in captivity is very dangerous. I didn't think I would survive. That's why it's absolutely critical that we put an end to this terrible tragedy. Without immediate action, many more innocent lives will end – including my partner Avinatan. Until Avinatan returns, my heart is in captivity."

At the end of her speech, she told the ambassadors of the Security Council member states: "I came to speak to you to say - don't let the darkness win! Work to bring everyone home now, work for the light and against the darkness. I came to speak to the Security Council today because I believe that all of you, the international community, must understand that the kidnapped are in hell. And after losing so many friends, I can say that they deserve to come home now. What kept me alive in captivity until this moment was something my mother used to tell me - always be nice to others. So in this forum, let me finish with this - be kind to each other, and please return everyone, bring them home now."

Argamani was kidnapped from the Nova party on October 7, and in footage that shocked the world at the time, she is seen forcibly separated from her partner Avinatan Or – who is still being held captive. In recent months, she has been working to return the hostages at various international events, and most recently attended an event in Miami commemorating the Nova party massacre, alongside President Donald Trump's Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff.

Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon, who initiated bringing Argamani to the Security Council, said: "We thank Noa for being here today, but she would not have been here today if the international community and this Council had acted against Hamas instead of looking the other way and remaining silent. The world must understand: Our hostages are living in hell on earth. They have no hope without action. It is time to make

a decision to unequivocally condemn Hamas. They must return home now and we will return them home."

Danon added: "Through the story of Noa, the Bibas family and many others, the world has been exposed to the depth of Hamas' inhumanity. It is time to recognize that Hamas has no place in Gaza's future. It is time to put an end to the games. Hamas does not deserve to be a party to any negotiations. The world must act decisively, allow the return of the kidnapped and ensure that this terrorist apparatus is wiped out once and for all."

"For months, Hamas has psychologically tortured families, played with them, and kept them in cruel uncertainty," Danon said. "There is no other place in the world where parents go to sleep without knowing whether their children are alive or dead and the international community stands by. It is time to finally make a decision to unequivocally condemn Hamas. This should have happened 16 months ago, but better late than never. After Noa's testimony, I am not sure how anyone in this room can oppose such a decision."

02.25.25 – Tu

Iran braces for joint US-Israel strike on nuclear facilities before S-400 arrives

02.25.25 – Tu

'The entire country is on high alert': Iran braces for joint US-Israel strike on nuclear facilities

Fearing attack, Iran has heightened its defense readiness, deploying additional missile systems; Concerns grow as reports suggest Israel is preparing for significant attacks, with US support in the form of intelligence and aerial refueling

Ynet|10:33

Apprehension is mounting within the Islamic Republic due to a possible joint US-Israeli strike on their nuclear facilities, and the Iranian regime has elevated alert levels on its missile defense systems and reinforced defenses around key nuclear sites.

Reports from the British Telegraph, citing senior officials in Tehran, indicate that additional air defense launchers have been deployed near critical missile sites as part of these heightened security measures. These steps are reportedly a response to growing fears of coordinated military action by Israel and the United States.

Approximately two weeks ago, reports from the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post revealed that U.S. intelligence assessments suggest Israel is contemplating "significant strikes" on nuclear facilities in Fordow and Natanz, potentially as early as the first half of 2025. The timing aligns with the transition between the end of the Biden administration and the early days of the Trump administration.

"Iranian authorities are bracing for an attack and expect it to occur at any night in the near future. The entire country is on high alert, even at sites whose existence is unknown to most," a source told the Telegraph. "Efforts to strengthen nuclear sites have been ongoing for years but have intensified over the past year, particularly since Israel's first

strike. Recent developments, including President Trump's statements and reports of his potential plans to target Iran have only accelerated these activities."

Australian military revokes security clearance of Jewish officer citing loyalty to Israel. Since the outbreak of hostilities, Israel and Iran have exchanged direct attacks, but Tehran now fears that, with President Donald Trump's support, Israel is nearing a decisive strike on its nuclear facilities. According to the Wall Street Journal, a summary of the intelligence report noted that Israel is likely to pressure Trump's administration for backing, as it views Trump as more inclined to join such an operation than Biden.

A source speaking to the Telegraph acknowledged Iran's vulnerability to a large-scale attack, particularly as its defense systems were weakened by an Israeli strike last year. "Additional air defense launchers have been deployed, but there's an understanding that they may not withstand a large-scale assault," the source explained.

Satellite images have revealed damage caused by Israeli strikes on sites such as the Shahroud Space Center in northern Iran's Semnan province, used for launches by the Revolutionary Guards. These strikes were part of Operation "Days of Repentance, three waves of Israeli strikes against 20 locations in Iran and other locations in Iraq, and Syria on October 26, 2024.

The Ayatollah regime has developed domestic defense systems and possesses Russian-made S-300 missile launchers. However, the Telegraph noted these systems are considered insufficient to defend against Israel's advanced military capabilities, thus prompting Iran to pressure Russia to expedite the delivery of the S-400 air defense system.

Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the Revolutionary Guards' Aerospace Force, announced this week that Iran is also developing a ballistic missile defense system to counter Israeli strikes. "Recent events have exposed gaps in our ballistic defense sector, highlighting the need for this new system," he stated. The defense system is expected to be operational by March and deployed in Tehran and several major cities. "We currently have the capability to produce missiles with a range of 1,240 miles and face no technical limitations in this regard. Should there be a threat from the US, we can target nearby objectives at minimal cost," he claimed.

The weakening of Iran's proxies, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, along with the fall of Assad's regime in Syria, has further strained Tehran's position, making it more vulnerable to Trump's policies. Since returning to the White House, Trump has reinstated his "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran, aiming to prevent it from acquiring nuclear weapons and reducing Iranian oil exports "to zero." This week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that, with Trump's support, Israel would "finish the job" with Iran. However, analysts suggest Israel is unlikely to dismantle Iran's nuclear program without U.S. assistance.

In recent months, Trump has repeatedly expressed a preference for negotiating a deal with Iran but has also made it clear that military action remains on the table if talks fail. An Iranian official told the Telegraph that there is growing concern in Tehran that "the U.S. might join Israel in launching a large-scale attack that could threaten the very existence of the Islamic Republic." Earlier Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas

Araghchi, after meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, stated that Tehran would not negotiate under threats or pressure. "There will be no direct talks with the U.S. as long as the 'maximum pressure' policy continues," he declared.

Jason Brodsky, policy director at the United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI) organization, told the Telegraph that there are several ways the U.S. could support Israel in a strike against Iran's nuclear facilities. "The U.S. could provide political backing, assist with intelligence reconnaissance and aerial refueling, or supply advanced weaponry to destroy the nuclear program," he explained.

"There's always the possibility that the U.S. could directly participate in the strikes alongside Israel," Brodsky added. "The Iranian regime is fatigued and is considering all these possibilities. Its anxiety has grown due to American media reports and intelligence assessments indicating that Israel is preparing to strike Iran's nuclear program."

Iran is now exploring ways to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement, which Trump withdrew from in 2018, while the U.S. continues to push for Tehran's complete disarmament.

"As long as both sides cling to such opposing demands, a diplomatic resolution is unlikely," Brodsky stated. "This will require the U.S. to exert significant pressure, a strategy that the Trump administration has already begun implementing."

02.25.25 – Tu

Trump removes human rights condition from ensured foreign aid

02.25.25 – Tu

Trump administration quietly removes human rights condition from foreign aid

Internal document reveals Trump quietly canceled Biden-era directive requiring US military aid recipients, including Israel amid Gaza war, to comply with international humanitarian law

Daniel Edelson, New York|02:22

The Trump administration has quietly revoked a Biden-era requirement that countries receiving American weapons must pledge not to use them in ways violating international humanitarian law, according to a document cited by the Washington Post on Monday.

The February 2024 directive, established during former President Joe Biden's tenure, mandated that countries receiving U.S. military aid—Israel among them—must commit in writing to uphold international humanitarian law and ensure the safe passage of American humanitarian aid deliveries.

U.S. National Security Advisor Michael Waltz ordered the revocation in an internal document obtained by The Washington Post. Several administration officials anonymously confirmed the decision, though the White House has not issued a public announcement on the matter.

The removal of the condition aligns with Trump's "America First" policy and follows other recent steps to relax U.S. restrictions on arms exports. Last week, the administration

also halted funding for Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces as part of a broader freeze on U.S. foreign aid.

Biden-era officials had viewed the memorandum as critical leverage, particularly during the Gaza war, to ensure Israel's cooperation with humanitarian relief efforts but critics argued that Biden had failed to enforce it effectively.

During Trump's first term, Washington cut direct aid to the PA but continued financing security training through the U.S. Security Coordinator (USSC), which acts as a liaison between Israel and the PA.

PA security forces spokesperson Anwar Rajab told the Washington Post that the U.S. "has been a major contributor to PA projects," including force training. A former Israeli official said the USSC had "not been significantly affected" by the funding freeze, as "other donors stepped in to fill the gap." However, a senior PA official said the freeze had already led to cuts in certain training programs.

02.25.25 – Tu

Israel braces for renewed fighting; 35-day pause allowed 30,000 PA to reorganize

02.25.25 – Tu

As hostage talks stall, Hamas quietly prepares for renewed war in Gaza

After Israeli withdrawal from Netzarim Corridor, Hamas tightens control over Gaza power centers, redeploying thousands of terrorists northward as Israel raises alert level along border and mobilizes reserve forces ahead of possible renewed ground offensive
Yoav Zitun|01:56

The crisis stemming from Israel's delay in releasing Palestinian prisoners has intensified doubts over the continuation of the cease-fire and the second phase of hostage negotiations, prompting both Israel and Hamas to brace for renewed fighting.

The 35-day cease-fire has allowed Hamas to reorganize its severely weakened forces, rebuild units damaged during 14 months of fighting and remain committed to attacking Israel, similar to its assault on October 7, 2023.

During the cease-fire, thousands of Hamas operatives, mingled with returning civilians, moved northward in Gaza following Israel's withdrawal from the Netzarim Corridor and the return of about half a million Palestinians to Gaza City. Tens of thousands found damaged or destroyed homes and returned to displacement centers near Khan Younis. Hamas terrorists regrouped into new combat units alongside thousands who had remained in northern Gaza throughout the fighting, though Israeli security officials assess these new formations remain weaker than Hamas' military capabilities prior to the war.

Hamas' reorganization likely includes appointing new commanders, utilizing undetected tunnels, constructing additional underground spaces, clearing explosives previously set to target Israeli troops and creating new explosive traps.

Israeli surveillance identified rocket launchers and camera installations intended to monitor military activity. At least three rockets were fired from Gaza last week, likely accidentally, amid these preparations. Surveillance drones were also launched, and attempts by Israeli Arabs to smuggle equipment via drones were intercepted.

Israeli military sources say Hamas learned key lessons from previous Israeli ground operations, noting that the group never deployed its entire 30,000-strong force during the previous fighting, recognizing it would not receive support from Hezbollah or other fronts.

Additionally, Hamas has used civilian governance to rebuild its military and economic strength. During the cease-fire period, the terror group reclaimed control over municipalities and civilian infrastructure, including schools and social services. Hamas terrorists have set up checkpoints to seize hundreds of tons of food, fuel and water entering Gaza daily under agreements with Israel, re-establishing taxation systems to finance salaries for operatives.

"Every day of the cease-fire helps Hamas relocate operatives, issue commands and rebuild," IDF officials said. "They face severe shortages in personnel, equipment and command infrastructure due to Israel's offensive, but the last month proves significant work remains before Hamas is defeated."

Meanwhile, given the Israeli government's apparent reluctance to move toward the second phase of the hostage deal, the IDF is preparing for renewed ground combat, gathering new targets intended to weaken Hamas' civilian control in Gaza. Such operations would involve substantial troop deployments with close air support. However, military commanders remain aware of the strain on reserve forces, extensively mobilized over the past year-and-a-half.

Regarding the Gaza emigration proposal championed by U.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, security sources now indicate it is unlikely to move forward. The primary obstacle is the absence of a third country willing to accept Palestinians voluntarily leaving Gaza.

"There are far more problems than realistic chances of this initiative succeeding," a senior security official said. "If we manage a pilot program, perhaps with a few hundred Gazans voluntarily leaving despite Hamas checkpoints, others might follow—particularly if offered the option to return later. Jordan and Egypt, however, are unwilling to accept such migrants, highlighting a gap between public statements and practical realities." IDF officials further question the initiative's value in achieving Israel's strategic goals. "Even if we succeeded in relocating tens or even hundreds of thousands of Gazans without accusations of war crimes, how would this topple Hamas?" one official asked. "While Hamas' internal legitimacy might suffer, it would still retain control over more than a million Palestinians in Gaza."

02.25.25 – Tu

Zionist Party says win war, purge enemies; more important than saving hostages

02.25.25 – Tu

Minister says winning war more important than saving hostages

Orit Strock says prioritizing military victory over hostage recovery was once Israeli consensus, adding she would 'with a heavy heart' forgo release of some hostages to achieve 'strategic victory' in Gaza

Moran Azulay|00:03

Minister for Settlement and National Missions Orit Strock said Monday that achieving victory in the war in Gaza was more important than securing the release of hostages held by Hamas.

In an interview, Strock, a member of the far-right Religious Zionist Party, said this stance had once been the Israeli consensus and was even reflected in a past bill proposed by Opposition Leader Yair Lapid. She added that, while difficult, she would “with a heavy heart” be willing to “give up” on some hostages in order to achieve a “strategic victory” over Gaza.

"We don't deserve neighbors who teach their children to dance when Israeli children are strangled to death," Strock said. "The land of Israel belongs to the people of Israel. Anyone who wishes to live here respectfully will receive full civil rights, and anyone who works against us will find himself out of the game."

Strock has previously opposed agreements to secure hostage releases. Last July, she warned that if the Israeli military withdrew from the Netzarim and Philadelphi corridors in Gaza, her party would resign from the government, threatening to collapse the ruling coalition.

"We made this clear," she said at the time. "[Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu is well aware."

Religious Zionist Party leader and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has also warned that if Israel agrees to a cease-fire in Gaza, he would withdraw his party from the government, potentially bringing down the coalition.

02.24.25 – Mo

Elon Musk defends Netanyahu under criminal indictment; 'Deep State Is Everywhere'

02.24.25 – Mo

Elon Musk defends Netanyahu under criminal indictment ; 'Deep State Is Everywhere'

Billionaire serving in senior Trump administration role shares favorable film of the prime minister's trial, broadcast on Fox on his platform X
Ynetnews|15:55

Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, tasked by former President Donald Trump with leading massive cuts to the U.S. government, weighed in Monday on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ongoing trial, claiming that the "deep state is everywhere."

Musk, who has a friendly relationship with Netanyahu, shared a post on X from Fox News commentator Mark Levin. Levin had reposted an old documentary about Netanyahu's legal battle, titled The Trial, describing it as part of the "legal war against Netanyahu."

The documentary, directed by Gilad (Gili) Goldschmidt and Yoad Ben Yosef, focuses on the bribery charges in Case 4000, the most serious corruption case against Netanyahu. The filmmakers claim it explores unprecedented legal decisions, including the prosecution's argument that Netanyahu allegedly received bribes in the form of favorable media coverage.

Earlier Monday, Netanyahu completed his 12th day of testimony in court. In a rare move, the judges heard classified arguments from Military Intelligence Directorate Chief Maj. Gen. Aharon Haliva behind closed doors. As a result, they canceled Netanyahu's scheduled testimony for Tuesday. The proceedings were recorded manually and placed in a secure vault.

Before Netanyahu took the stand, the court had ruled that the prosecution's direct examination would last 14 sessions, while the defense would submit a list of witnesses. The trial is scheduled to proceed three times a week unless the court decides otherwise.

02.24.25 – Mo

Israel joins US in opposing UN resolution on Ukraine war 3 year anniversary

02.24.25 – Mo

Israel joins US in opposing UN resolution on Ukraine war anniversary

Resolution, marking 3 years since Russia's invasion, calls for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity; US vote reflects policy shift, but measure passes with majority support from 93 member states

Itamar Eichner, Roy Rubinstein|15:37

Israel joined the United States on Monday in voting against a United Nations General Assembly resolution marking the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The measure, introduced by Ukraine and the European Union, called for upholding Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, an end to hostilities and a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The resolution passed with 93 countries voting in favor, while 65 abstained. Eighteen nations opposed it, including the U.S., Israel, Russia, Hungary, Nicaragua, Sudan, Mali, the Marshall Islands, Haiti, Eritrea, Niger and Palau.

The vote marked the first time since the war began that both Israel and the U.S. opposed a Ukraine-related resolution at the UN, reflecting a shift in Washington's stance following former President Donald Trump's recent criticism of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and his alignment with Russian positions.

Until the last moment, it was unclear how the U.S. would vote, and Israel ultimately followed Washington's lead. However, Israel was among a small group of nations to do so, along with Hungary and several Pacific states. North Korea and Russia also opposed the resolution.

Since the war began, Israel has publicly supported Ukraine's territorial integrity and even attempted mediation efforts between Kyiv and Moscow. Then-Prime Minister Naftali Bennett traveled to Moscow early in the conflict in an effort to broker peace. While Israel has provided Ukraine with protective gear—including helmets, bulletproof vests and gas masks—it has refrained from supplying offensive weapons, citing concerns over its strategic ties with Russia.

Israel has also shared intelligence with Ukraine regarding Iran's military support for Russia, particularly the supply of attack drones. However, Kyiv has repeatedly pushed Israel to increase its aid, particularly in the form of offensive weapons—a request Israel has resisted.

Recent reports suggested that Israel transferred Patriot missile defense systems to Ukraine, but it was later clarified that the systems were first sent to the U.S., which then delivered them to Ukraine.

Despite occasional tensions over military assistance, Ukrainian public opinion has largely remained sympathetic to Israel, particularly after the October 7 Hamas-led attacks. Many Ukrainians have drawn parallels between their struggle against Russian aggression and Israel's fight against terrorism.

However, Israel's decision to vote against the resolution drew sharp criticism domestically. Gilad Kariv, chairman of the Knesset's Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs Committee, called the move a "moral and ethical disgrace."

"On the day the world marks three years since Russia's assault on Ukraine, Israel has chosen to vote against the attacked party," Kariv said. "This is a moral and ethical failure that could ultimately harm Israel. The free world must stand with Ukraine, not reward an aggressor that undermines fundamental values of sovereignty and democracy."

02.24.25 – Mo

Hostage deal may extend one-and-a-half months through Ramadan

02.24.25 – Mo

Inside the talks: Can the hostage deal be rescued?

Explainer: Israel delaying release of 620 Palestinian prisoners to pressure Hamas to expedite return of hostage remains and halt public ceremonies; talks continue on extending deal into Ramadan
Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi, Ron Crissy|15:32

Intense negotiations are underway to resolve a standoff over the return of four Israeli hostages' remains, as Israel delays the release of Palestinian prisoners while demanding the immediate handover of the bodies without a publicized ceremony.

Mediators are scrambling to salvage the fragile deal, with U.S. presidential envoy Steve Witkoff expected to arrive in the region on Wednesday to help facilitate progress.

Israeli officials said Monday they believe negotiations for the return of the remains of Tsahi Idan, Shlomo Mansour, Ohad Yahalomi and Itzik Elgart could soon succeed. However, Hamas has publicly refused the arrangement, despite reports suggesting it may agree.

According to sources familiar with the talks, who spoke to the London-based Arabic newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat, Hamas could transfer the bodies of two hostages as early as Tuesday if negotiations proceed as planned. The sources indicated that the terrorist group is willing to do so without a ceremony but is demanding the release of Palestinian prisoners who were scheduled for release on Saturday—potentially doubling the original number.

Israel insists that the return of the remains must occur without a staged event, unlike the previous handover of the Bibas family children and Oded Lifshitz. In response, it has postponed the release of 620 Palestinian prisoners. Hamas, for its part, is demanding their release to coincide with the return of the bodies, while Israel insists on first completing identification procedures. This comes in light of a previous mix-up, when the body of a Palestinian woman was initially transferred instead of Shiri Bibas.

Israel has reportedly expressed willingness to release prisoners if Hamas returns the hostages' remains. The United States, Egypt and Qatar are actively working to broker a resolution. Israeli officials assess that Hamas is interested in completing the current phase of the deal and may be willing to adhere to Israel's condition that no public ceremony accompany the transfer of the bodies.

Palestinian sources claimed Monday that negotiations had made progress and that discussions were ongoing over a potential release of two bodies within hours, though no such transfer had taken place by late evening.

A senior Israeli official dismissed these reports. Shortly after, senior Hamas official Mahmoud Mardawi also denied any change in the group's stance, insisting that Israel must first release over 600 prisoners in accordance with the agreement.

Meanwhile, Israel has signaled willingness to extend the initial phase of the deal by one to one-and-a-half months, which would prolong the cease-fire through Ramadan. Israeli officials maintain that any continuation of the truce must be accompanied by the release

of additional hostages, though the size and timing of these future exchanges remain unclear.

02.24.25 – Mo

Hezbollah orders Lebanese army to rebuild, replacing lost flow of Iranian cash

02.24.25 – Mo

Hezbollah orders operatives to withdraw from Southern Lebanon, allow Lebanese army takeover

Hezbollah-affiliated source say group has been weakened, but it has not been defeated and had partially replenished its ranks with operatives from Syria even before the fall of the Assad regime

Ynetnews|12:51

A week after Israel completed its withdrawal from most of southern Lebanon, a Hezbollah-affiliated source told The Wall Street Journal on Monday that the terror group has issued an internal memo instructing its combat units to vacate positions in the region.

The directive applies to operatives not originally from southern Lebanon and is intended to allow the Lebanese army to take control of the area under the terms of the cease-fire agreement.

"Hezbollah has suffered heavy losses," the source said, noting that the group had partially replenished its ranks with operatives from Syria even before the fall of the Assad regime. Despite this, some units remain prepared for renewed fighting. "The group has been weakened, but it has not been defeated," the source added.

Following two and a half months of cease-fire and its subsequent extensions, during which the IDF continued maneuvering in southern Lebanon to destroy Hezbollah's military infrastructure, Israeli forces completed their withdrawal last Tuesday. However, the IDF has maintained a limited troop presence at five strategic outposts just a few hundred meters from the border fence. These positions, staffed by hundreds of soldiers, will remain occupied until further notice from Israel's political leadership.

Three months after Hezbollah agreed to the cease-fire, the extent of the group's financial and operational damage is becoming clear. According to The Wall Street Journal, Hezbollah has been significantly weakened, and its economic capabilities have been severely impacted, to the point where it is struggling to meet its financial commitments to its fighters and supporters.

Before the war, Hezbollah operated as a "state within a state," providing jobs and social services to its backers. The organization had also pledged financial support to the families of its fallen fighters and to civilians who lost homes or businesses. However, the mounting costs of these promises have made many of the payments impossible.

Some residents say Al-Qard Al-Hassan, Hezbollah's financial arm, which was targeted by Israeli airstrikes during the conflict, has recently frozen compensation payments. Others say they have received no assistance at all. "I have so many questions about why we were dragged into this conflict, the suffering we endured, and who will compensate us for our losses," Jalal Nassar, a restaurant owner in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre, told The Wall Street Journal. He said he had to pay \$100,000 to rebuild his restaurant after it was completely destroyed in airstrikes.

Nassar added that an engineering team affiliated with Hezbollah visited his business to assess the damage but provided no financial support. "The war was a mistake," he said. Hezbollah's financial struggles

Hezbollah's financial difficulties stem in part from efforts by Lebanon's new U.S.-backed government to curb the flow of Iranian cash to the terror group. The fall of the Assad regime in Syria has also dealt a blow to Hezbollah, cutting off critical smuggling routes for weapons and money.

Since the cease-fire took effect in late November, Hezbollah has been trying to regroup. According to a source at Al-Qard Al-Hassan, the group has allocated \$630 million in payments to families who lost homes or whose residences were damaged in the war. Committees managed by Hezbollah have reportedly assessed damage to hundreds of thousands of homes.

A researcher at a Beirut-based think tank told The Wall Street Journal that Hezbollah's recent calls for the Lebanese government to absorb much of the reconstruction costs suggest the group will likely rely on the administration of President Michel Aoun to cover its financial shortfalls. This, the researcher added, could help Hezbollah ease growing frustration among its supporters. "Lebanon's government wants to weaken Hezbollah's role in society," the source said. "But to do that, it must deliver results."

02.24.25 – Mo

Hamas official calls Oct. 7 massacre a mistake, after realizing consequences

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Hamas official calls Oct. 7 massacre a mistake, after realizing consequences

Mousa Abu Marzook says he would not have supported the attack if he had known the devastation it would bring to Gaza; hints at internal divisions within Hamas over military strategy and cease-fire negotiations

Ynetnews|12:47

A senior Hamas official has expressed regret over the group's Oct. 7 terror attack on Israel, acknowledging that he would not have supported the assault had he known the scale of destruction it would bring to Gaza.

Mousa Abu Marzouk, head of Hamas's foreign relations office, said in an interview with The New York Times that the consequences of the attack—an Israeli military campaign

that has devastated the enclave and killed tens of thousands of Palestinians—would have made it “impossible” for him to back the operation.

“If it was expected that what happened would happen, there wouldn’t have been Oct. 7,” Abu Marzouk said. He noted that he was not informed about the specific plans for the attack but had endorsed Hamas’s broader military strategy.

His remarks stand in contrast to statements from other Hamas officials who have continued to justify the assault. While Hamas has declared “victory” over Israel and vowed future attacks, Abu Marzouk’s comments suggest internal divisions over the decision and its aftermath.

Abu Marzouk, 74, also indicated that Hamas may be open to discussing the future of its weapons in Gaza—an issue that has stalled negotiations with Israel. “We are ready to speak about every issue,” he said when asked about the group’s military arsenal.

This stance appears to contradict statements from other Hamas leaders, including Osama Hamdan, who recently ruled out any discussion on disarmament. Abu Marzouk dismissed Hamdan’s remarks, saying no single leader could set the group’s agenda alone. His comments hint at growing pressure on Hamas leadership, as the humanitarian crisis in Gaza worsens and frustration among Palestinians rises. Analysts suggest that acknowledging strategic miscalculations could be an attempt to influence ongoing cease-fire negotiations.

Israel and Hamas were expected to resume discussions on the next phase of a cease-fire, which would involve a permanent end to hostilities, an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, and the release of more hostages and Palestinian prisoners. However, delays in talks and disputes over implementing the first phase have raised concerns that fighting could resume.

Abu Marzouk suggested Hamas was open to negotiating a large-scale hostage-prisoner exchange. While Israel has resisted previous proposals, he indicated the group might agree to a “comprehensive deal” if Israel freed thousands of Palestinian prisoners, ended the war, and withdrew from Gaza.

Despite his remarks, Hamas terrorists have continued to parade with weapons in Gaza, signaling defiance. Abu Marzouk’s comments underscore the fractures within Hamas leadership, but it remains unclear whether his position reflects a broader shift in the group’s stance—or an attempt to pressure Israel into further negotiations.

02.24.25 – Mo

ICC slams Germany's Merz for inviting PM to visit Germany despite warrant

02.24.25 – Mo

ICC slams Germany's Merz for inviting Netanyahu despite arrest warrant

Court says member states legally obligated to enforce its decisions and cannot unilaterally determine their validity

Ynet|12:39

The International Criminal Court on Monday dismissed comments by Friedrich Merz, leader of Germany's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), who suggested he would invite Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to visit Germany and find a way to prevent his arrest under an ICC warrant.

In a statement, the ICC stressed that member states are legally obligated to enforce its decisions and cannot unilaterally bypass its rulings. "It is not for states to unilaterally determine the soundness of the court's legal decisions," the court said, adding that any concerns should be addressed through legal channels in a "timely and efficient manner."

The ICC issued arrest warrants last November for Netanyahu and former defense minister Yoav Gallant over alleged war crimes committed during the ongoing war in Gaza. Netanyahu's office confirmed that Merz, whose conservative party secured the most seats in Germany's parliamentary elections on Sunday, had already extended the invitation.

"Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had a warm conversation with Friedrich Merz following his election victory and congratulated him," the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

According to the PMO, Merz expressed his support by extending an invitation for an official visit to Germany in what was described as a "blatant response to the scandalous decision by the ICC to define the prime minister as a war criminal." Netanyahu, in his own statement, said he looks forward to working closely with Merz to strengthen the Israel-Germany partnership.

02.24.25 – Mo

Belligerent outrage, protests in Lebanon over IDF bases in border zones

02.24.25 – Mo

Netanyahu's sparks outrage, protests across border after remarks on demilitarization, Druze

Syrians stage widespread protests, denouncing prime minister's demand for a demilitarized southern Syria and the need to protect the local Druze community; Syrian anger focuses on IDF troop presence undermining Syrian sovereignty

Lior Ben Ari|11:16

Protests broke out in Syria early on Monday, after comments made by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday, warning Israel would not allow the new Syrian regime to send troops south of Damascus.

"We demand the complete demilitarization of southern Syria in the provinces of Quneitra, Daraa and Suwayda from the forces of the new regime. Likewise, we will not tolerate any threat to the Druze community in southern Syria."

In a speech to a ceremony for graduates of the IDF's combat officer course, Netanyahu said that IDF troops would remain "on Mount Hermon and in the buffer zone indefinitely."

The demonstrations erupted in multiple locations, including the city of Bosra al-Sham, east of Daraa, as well as As-Suwayda and Quneitra. Video clips from the protests showed demonstrators waving the new Syrian flag and chanting slogans inciting against Israel, Jews, and Netanyahu himself.

A journalist from Quneitra told Ynet that there was widespread anger following Netanyahu's remarks and tension along the border. "There are nine Israeli military bases or positions inside Syrian territory," he said. "This violates the Disengagement Agreement between Israel and Syria from 1974. There is no justification for these troops to enter Syrian territory. They damage agricultural lands, block civilians from accessing their towns, and harm their lands and properties."

Since the fall of Assad's regime, IDF troops have been stationed in the demilitarized zone. "There is immense anger among people in Quneitra, Daraa, and As-Suwayda following Netanyahu's statements," the journalist said. "There is no justification for these remarks, and no justification for him to interfere in Syria again. Netanyahu is trying to incite conflict between Sunnis and Druze, but this has no place among the Syrian people. He is attempting to prolong the war in the Middle East. The war will end in Gaza and Lebanon, but he is doing everything he can to extend his rule in Israel by provoking Syria. A new war cannot be ignited after 14 years of fighting against Iran, Hezbollah, and Assad's regime."

Reactions to Netanyahu's statements

He also claimed that Netanyahu's remarks were a direct challenge to Syrian sovereignty. "This is a direct threat to the government. The Syrian people have just emerged from war; they want nothing but stability and security—so why is Netanyahu threatening Syrian territory?"

Syria had paid a heavy price for its 14-year war—in lives, property, and widespread destruction, he said. "The whole world thought there would be a civil war in the country after Bashar Assad fell, but that didn't happen. There was a breakthrough, and coexistence was achieved. In Quneitra, we were surprised by the entry of Israeli troops. They took away our joy over the regime's fall and the departure of Iran from Syria."

The journalist said there was no justification for Israel's incursion into Syrian territory. "The Syrian people are highly aware, educated, and know right from wrong. There is absolutely no justification for the entry of foreign troops into Syrian territory." He claimed it was Syria that fought to expel Iran, and now Israel is labeling Syrians as terrorists, despite it being the Syrians who removed the Iranians. "I am on Syrian soil, in southern Syria, and I do not see what Netanyahu is talking about," he added.

Regarding the protests throughout the day, the journalist noted: "Large demonstrations will be held today and tomorrow, especially in southern Syria." He explained that Syrians in the As-Suwayda, Daraa, and Quneitra regions are asking the Syrian government to allow their new military forces to enter their areas to protect them. He said the Syrian government is working hard to control the borders, collecting scattered weapons across the country, and that the new leadership seeks to represent the entire spectrum of the Syrian people.

In recent weeks, reports from Arab media have described various interactions—some welcomed, others less so—between Syrian civilians near the border and IDF soldiers operating in the area. According to Al-Arabiya, IDF has made financial offers to residents of southern Syria. Sources from Quneitra told the Saudi outlet that IDF recently surveyed the population in various areas, examining the number of residents and their occupations, and offered some of them the opportunity to work in Israel.

"The Israeli army informed those who were offered work that they would be issued entry permits to Israel to work there, similar to what is done with Palestinians, in exchange for a sum of money for each worker—a sum considered significant compared to wages in Syria." According to the report, daily wages range from \$75 to \$100, which could attract many Syrians, though others rejected the offer, claiming Israel is occupying their land. Last week, Al-Mayadeen cited a local Syrian source, who said that IDF troops had entered villages in the Quneitra area of southern Syria, conducted a census, which they claimed was intended to provide aid to the population. However, residents refused to accept assistance from IDF.

02.24.25 – Mo

Alon Ohel is chained, starved and injured in a tunnel, freed hostage tells family

02.24.25 – Mo

'Alon Ohel is chained, starved and injured in a tunnel,' freed hostage tells family
Captives who were freed recently tell Ohel's family about the dire conditions their son is enduring, his eye is hurt and untreated, he sees only shadows is in pain with shrapnel lodged in his body, arms and neck; 'He must be released, it is critical,' father says
Lihi Gordon|10:15

Alon Ohel, held hostage by Hamas since his abduction during the Hamas massacre, has been in a dark tunnel for the entire time in captivity, chained and starved, Kobi, his father said on Monday after hearing from Eliya Cohen, who was with his son until his release last Saturday.

Alon who was injured in his eye at the Nova music festival has not received treatment. He is in pain and sees only shadows. "It is critical that he receive care," his father said.

The first sign of life came after the release of Eli Sharabi and Or Levy who were also with Alon.

The hostages slept on the floor in difficult conditions, the distraught father said after he received the call. "It confirmed the urgency of returning Alon home," he said. "From what we understand these have been the conditions of their captivity since they were taken during the massacre. Alon has shrapnel lodged in his body, arms and neck. That can be felt by touch."

Eliya who was released along with Omer Shem Tov, Omer Wenkert, Avera Mengistu and Hisham Al-Sayed on Saturday described how difficult it was for him to leave Alon behind. "Despite it all, Alon has survived although he does not know what the future holds or what Hamas has planned for him," Kobi said. "I don't know either. All they had to eat was one pita bread a day. In the last couple of weeks, they were given a bit more but very little, and not food that is in anyway healthy, especially in the condition Alon is in."

Sharabi, who was released a week before Eliya and whose appearance shocked the world had shared a blanket with Alon. "Both Eli and Or Levy who was released at the same time said they had a close connection to Alon, had shared their lives with him and consider themselves one family."

Ohad Ben Ami, Eli Sharabi, Or Levy during their release from Hamas captivity

"Alon must be released as quickly as possible, he is a humanitarian case. The deal must not be stopped. We must do everything to get him out. I see no logic to renewing the war before the hostages are freed."

02.24.25 – Mo

Entry ban for EU delegates who promote Anti-Israel media, boycotts & sanctions

02.24.25 – Mo

Israel bans entry for EU parliamentarian over calls for boycott

French Rima Hassan, who identifies as Palestinian a fierce Israel critics, refused entry at Ben Gurion Airport by orders of Interior Minister Moshe Arbel; Itamar Eichner|09:04

Interior Minister Moshe Arbel ordered Monday to deny entry to European Parliament member Rima Hassan while she was already en route to Israel from Brussels.

Hassan, who was scheduled to arrive as part of a European Union delegation, was barred on the recommendation of the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism due to her anti-Israel activism, including support for boycotts

Hassan claimed her visit was for a project in East Jerusalem. However, upon landing, she and three who were accompanying her were denied entry and will be deported. Hassan, a French citizen born in the Palestinian refugee camp of Neirab in Syria, identifies as Palestinian and is widely regarded as one of Israel's harshest critics in the

European Parliament. Israeli officials have linked her to pro-Hamas campaigns. She has denied supporting the militant group, saying that while she condemns Hamas' "war crimes," she refuses to "bow to the political-media order that demands turning this natural empathy into support for the State of Israel."

According to the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs, Hassan has publicly called for boycotting Israeli-linked businesses, participated in initiatives aimed at isolating the country, and promoted sanctions against it. On May 31, 2024, she called for a boycott of French TV channel TF1 after it broadcast an interview with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Two months later, she accused Israel of apartheid, comparing it to South Africa's former regime and called for a complete boycott. In September, she urged a boycott of French supermarket chain Carrefour after it began operations in Israel. Just last week, she voiced support for a boycott of Starbucks, alleging the company was "complicit in genocide in Gaza."

On Sunday, Hassan posted images of Palestinian youths throwing stones at Israeli tanks, with the caption: "1986 in Palestine, 2025 in Palestine." Throughout the war, she has shared hundreds of posts about Palestinian casualties in Gaza and the West Bank, repeatedly accusing Israel of "genocide."

Arbel's office said in a statement: "Hassan, who is expected to land in Israel, consistently promotes boycotts against the country and frequently makes anti-Israel statements in both social media and media interviews. Following the recommendation of the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, Interior Minister Moshe Arbel has decided to deny her entry to Israel. Upon arrival, she will be sent back to Brussels."

Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli, who recommended barring her, added: "The State of Israel is not obligated to grant entry to any foreign official, including members of parliament if they work to delegitimize or boycott the country. Rima Hassan, a European Parliament member, actively leads anti-Israel campaigns, calls for boycotts, and encourages economic sanctions. Israel will not provide a platform or legitimacy to those acting against it. We will use all available means to prevent the exploitation of our democracy for anti-Israel agendas. Israel's sovereignty is not up for grabs, and we will defend it with determination."

02.24.25 – Mo

Israel demands return of all slain hostages without terrorist ceremony

02.24.25 – Mo

Israel demands: Release of terrorists for immediate return of 4 slain hostages
Jerusalem also demands assurances no public ceremonies will take place, similar to those that occurred during release of Bibas children and Oded Lifshitz
Itamar Eichner|06:05

Israel has conveyed a proposal to mediators offering to release 620 Palestinian prisoners whose release has been delayed since Saturday in exchange for the immediate return of four slain hostages, an Israeli official told Ynet on Monday.

As part of the proposal, Israel is demanding assurances that no public ceremonies will take place, similar to those that occurred during the release of the Bibas family children and Oded Lifshitz, the official said.

Israel's decision to delay the prisoner release stemmed from such incidents, which it views as an affront to national dignity, the official added. "Our response to the murder of the Bibas family will be powerful. We have not forgotten. Right now, we are focused on the mission of returning the fallen hostages," he said.

Later Monday, a Hamas official said the terrorist group is insisting that Israel release the Palestinian prisoners before it hands over the four remaining fallen hostages.

As negotiations continue, Israel has reiterated that it will pursue all its war objectives. According to the Israeli official, Hamas must choose between negotiating a second phase of the cease-fire that would lead to the release of all remaining hostages, the disarmament and demilitarization of Hamas, and the exile of its leaders under a model similar to the 1982 Beirut agreement.

If Hamas agrees, the war could end. If Hamas rejects Israel's terms, the military campaign will escalate with newly acquired weaponry following the lifting of an arms embargo. The official said the operation would continue with "unprecedented U.S. support," citing statements from senior Trump administration officials advocating for Hamas' destruction. Another possibility is prolonging the current phase of the cease-fire with U.S. backing.

Under this scenario, no full cease-fire would be declared unless additional hostages are released. Israel would seek the release of four fathers of young children, as well as hostages recently confirmed to be wounded or ill. A new negotiation framework would be established, with an understanding that Hamas would likely demand the release of additional prisoners and increased humanitarian aid to Gaza.

To advance negotiations, White House envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff is expected to visit the region on Wednesday, with planned stops in Israel, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. In the meantime, he continues discussions with Israeli Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, who remains in the U.S. Both governments agree that Hamas must not retain control of Gaza in the next phase, according to an Israeli source. A delegation from Israel is expected to travel to Cairo or Doha in the coming days to discuss the various options, the source added.

Meanwhile, Egyptian sources told the Qatari news outlet Al-Araby Al-Jadeed that senior Egyptian officials see "positive indications" for the start of negotiations on a second phase of the cease-fire agreement. They also suggested that the Trump administration is interested in securing the release of all hostages and avoiding a resumption of full-scale fighting in Gaza. According to the report, Israel's security establishment is pressuring Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to move forward with a deal.

Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem accused Israel of violating the cease-fire agreement by delaying the release of Palestinian prisoners. Speaking to Qatar's Al-Araby network, he said the group was in talks with mediators about what he called an Israeli breach of the deal, with American backing. "The prisoners must be released before any discussion of negotiations on the next phase," Qassem said. "Extending the first phase depends on what is on the table and on guarantees of Israel's commitment. Serious assurances are needed from the mediators and even from the U.S. Israel has always refused to honor the agreements it signs."

02.24.25 – Mo

Former prime minister Olmert reveals secret map of 2008 two-state, Abbas refused

02.24.25 – Mo

Olmert reveals the 'napkin map': Former prime minister shows never-before-seen two-state proposal

In new documentary, Ehud Olmert shows map he presented to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in 2008, which would have seen both parties exchange territory in and near West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem

Ynet|03:11



Former prime minister Ehud Olmert has revealed for the first time a map outlining a proposed Israeli-Palestinian peace deal that he presented to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in August 2008.

The map, which had never been disclosed until now, was part of Olmert's offer for a two-state solution. Abbas, Olmert said, had to sketch the proposal onto a napkin during their meeting. "For the next 50 years, you won't find a single Israeli leader who will offer you what I'm offering now," Olmert recalled telling Abbas in an interview for the documentary "Israel and the Palestinians – The Road to October 7."

Olmert said he urged Abbas to sign the agreement immediately. "I told him, 'Sign this, sign this now!'" The plan included Israel annexing 4.9% of the West Bank, while ceding an equivalent amount of land to a future Palestinian state, which would have been granted sovereignty over more than 94% of the territory.

As part of the proposal, Israel would have connected the West Bank to the Gaza Strip – already under Hamas control at the time – via a tunnel or highway. Olmert recalled Abbas' reaction to the offer, saying the Palestinian leader responded: "Prime Minister, this is very serious. Very, very serious." Abbas later claimed in interviews with Israeli media that, had negotiations continued, he believed a deal could have been reached "within two months."

The plan would have allowed Israel to retain its major settlement blocs, including Maale Adumim, Ariel and Kedumim, but required the evacuation of dozens of smaller settlements throughout the West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

Olmert's proposal also sought to address the division of Jerusalem, one of the most contentious issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Under the plan, each side could have claimed parts of the city as its capital, while a "trusteeship committee" consisting of Israel, the Palestinians, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United States would have overseen the administration of the Old City and its religious sites.

Olmert said he never gave Abbas a copy of the proposed map and insisted the Palestinian leader could only receive it if he signed the agreement on the spot. Abbas refused, saying he needed to consult with his advisers. "We parted ways as if we were about to make history," Olmert said.

However, Abbas' then-chief of staff, Rafiq al-Husseini, described a different reaction in the documentary. He said that after the meeting the Palestinian delegation laughed in the car on the way back. He argued that Olmert's political situation — he had already announced plans to resign amid corruption investigations — meant the offer was unlikely to be implemented. "No matter how nice he was, Olmert was a lame duck," al-Husseini said. "We knew this wasn't going anywhere."

The situation in Gaza also complicated the peace process. Months after the proposal, Israel launched a military offensive, Operation Cast Lead, following repeated rocket attacks from the Strip.

Olmert maintains that Abbas missed a historic opportunity. "It would have been very smart of Abbas to sign this," he said. Had the Palestinian leader accepted the plan, Olmert argued, any future Israeli prime minister who sought to revoke it would have borne full responsibility for the failure of the peace process.

Months later, in February 2009, Israel held elections that brought Benjamin Netanyahu—then and now prime minister — back to power. Olmert's proposal and map, the documentary's creators note, became a historical footnote.

02.24.25 – Mo

US support Israel delay of PA prisoner release as an appropriate response

02.24.25 – Mo

'An appropriate response': US supports Israel's delay of Palestinian prisoner release
Spokesperson says Trump supports Israel in every step it decides to take against Hamas;
Remarks follow Israel's decision to delay the release from prison of 620 terrorists over
violations in last hostage handovers
Daniel Edelson, New York|16:50

The White House on Sunday called Israel's decision to delay the Palestinian prisoner release following Hamas' violation of the cease-fire agreement after the handover of a Palestinian woman's body instead of that of Shiri Bibas "an appropriate response" and said U.S. President Donald Trump supports it.

White House National Security Council spokesman Brian Hughes told Ynet that "given Hamas' barbaric treatment of the hostages, including the hideous parade of the Bibas children's coffins through the streets of Gaza, Israel's decision to delay the release of prisoners is an appropriate response. The president is prepared to support Israel in whatever course of action it chooses regarding Hamas.

The terror group's official Basem Naim warned that the organization wouldn't negotiate further cease-fire terms via mediators unless Palestinian prisoners were released as agreed.

Senior Hamas member Mahmoud Mardawi echoed this, saying: "There will be no talks with the enemy at any stage before the release of Palestinian prisoners that Israel agreed to free in exchange for the six Israeli captives. Mediators must force Israel to honor the agreement."

Meanwhile, the Commission of Detainees' Affairs & Palestinian Society Prisoners accused Israel of "deliberately stalling" the seventh prisoner release in the deal and committing "terror against prisoners and their families." It added that "There is no release set as of now."

Earlier, Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff said he would visit the region this week, likely on Wednesday, and added, "I expect Phase II to be implemented." In an interview with CNN, he said, "Netanyahu is motivated by the right reasons — Hamas cannot be part of any government in Gaza."

Witkoff added: "We first need to extend Phase I. We hope to have enough time to start Phase II and finish it in order to release as many hostages as possible and advance the talks."

When asked whether Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants to continue the deal or resume fighting in Gaza, he replied: "I believe the prime minister wants to see hostages released — that's certain. He also wants to protect Israeli citizens. He has a red line — Hamas cannot govern Gaza when this war ends. We're trying to square the circle."

The hostage and cease-fire's first phase is set to conclude this week, with four deceased hostages scheduled for release on Thursday. Of the 33 hostages included in this phase, Shlomo Mansour, Ohad Yahalomi, Tsachi Idan, and Itzik Elgart remain in captivity. If the first phase is not extended, it will end once the remains of these hostages are positively identified.

Despite the crisis, Israel is preparing for a possible extension of Phase I, which would prioritize four fathers alongside injured or ill hostages whose conditions were only recently confirmed through testimonies from released captives.

A lengthy discussion on the terms is expected to take place before any extension takes place about how many Palestinian prisoners will be freed in exchange for the next hostages. This could allow for two or three additional releases, possibly coinciding with Ramadan, a period during which Hamas has no interest in resuming fighting.

However, extending releases in stages contradicts the wishes of many families whose loved ones — both living and deceased — were excluded from Phase I. These families are demanding a single release for all.

02.23.25 – Su

Israel increases alert in Gaza border with drones & live fire to push groups back

02.23.25 – Su

Israel increases alert in Gaza border communities as decision on cease-fire looms
IDF says it increased readiness in the Gaza border region ahead of next weekend, when a decision will be made on whether the cease-fire will continue or fighting will resume
Roni Green Shaulov|15:40

The IDF announced Sunday that it has increased military readiness and operational preparedness in the Gaza border region following a security assessment. However, the IDF stated that there are no changes to Home Front Command guidelines at this time.

The increased alert level comes amid intelligence warnings and ongoing deliberations over whether cease-fire negotiations will continue into next weekend or if hostilities will resume. In response, the IDF is adjusting troop deployments in the buffer zone and reinforcing defensive positions in the western Negev. Meanwhile, combat brigades continue preparations for a possible large-scale ground incursion should the negotiations collapse.

Despite heightened military activity, the IDF clarified that "no approach to the border fence has been detected." The Eshkol Regional Council also issued a statement to reassure residents: "Following media reports, we emphasize that there is no infiltration event in the Gaza border area — only an increase in readiness. There are no changes to civilian directives. We are in continuous contact with the military and will provide updates as necessary."

The announcement follows an incident two weeks ago when, just hours after the IDF withdrew from the Netzarim corridor, several dozen Gaza residents were seen within a few hundred meters of the border fence near Nahal Oz. According to cease-fire terms, Israel is supposed to maintain control over a 700-meter-wide buffer zone. However, residents of Israeli border communities reported that Gazans were spotted much closer to the fence.

In response, Israeli forces opened fire, killing three Palestinians and wounding at least six others. The IDF said it used drones and live fire to push the group back, describing them as unarmed civilians scavenging near the ruins of the Netzarim corridor. While the individuals retreated after the gunfire, they did not appear to be attempting to rush the fence.

02.23.25 – Su

82 bombs in seconds: IDF release video of Nasrallah's elimination during his funeral

02.23.25 – Su

82 bombs in seconds: IDF releases footage of Nasrallah's elimination during funeral | Watch

Military releases footage of the elimination of one of its most bitter enemies five months after his death - and during his funeral; Fighter jets fly above funeral site
Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun|13:17

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit on Sunday released footage of the September 27 elimination of former Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, coinciding with his funeral in Beirut. The footage shows a fighter jet dropping at least seven bombs in succession.

The munition was part of the 82 bombs dropped on Hezbollah's underground command center in Beirut, where Nasrallah and other senior officials were killed. A massive series of explosions is seen in the Dahieh district, lasting only a few seconds.

Footage of Hassan Nasrallah's elimination

The footage was released as Hezbollah attempted to turn Nasrallah's funeral, attended by hundreds of thousands, into a show of strength after suffering heavy losses against Israel.

The funeral had been delayed for five months due to the ongoing fighting and Hezbollah's wait for an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, which hasn't yet been completed since Israel still controls five strategic border points.

US Christian leaders to sign resolution backing Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria To counter Hezbollah's display, Israeli Air Force jets flew over the Beirut stadium where Nasrallah's memorial service was held before a mass procession to his final burial site at a cemetery in Dahieh. At least four Israeli fighter jets flew over the stadium, where crowds chanted: "At your command, Nasrallah! Death to America! Death to Israel!"

The jets also flew low while Hezbollah's new secretary-general, Naim Qassem, delivered a speech via video; he did not attend the memorial in person. The coffin of Nasrallah's designated successor Hashem Safieddine, who was killed days later and is set to be buried Monday, was also displayed at the event.

A military official told Ynet that some of the jets in the Beirut flyover had also participated in Nasrallah's elimination. "The flyover is a clear message — we are above, watching and will strike anywhere at any time," he said. Reports also surfaced of multiple Israeli strikes in Lebanon throughout Sunday.

"Israeli fighter jets flying over Nasrallah's funeral in Beirut send a clear message: those who threaten to destroy Israel and attack Israel will meet this fate. You will mourn at funerals — we will celebrate victories," Defense Minister Israel Katz said.

Nasrallah was eliminated in late September 2024 in an airstrike that ended his 32-year reign over Hezbollah, transforming the terror group into a full-fledged army. The elimination of Nasrallah, Safieddine and nearly the entire Hezbollah command, combined with heavy Israeli bombardments and ground operations, severely weakened Hezbollah's standing in Lebanon and the Iranian axis, where Nasrallah was a key figure.

The IDF official stressed: "One of the greatest achievements of the war — enabling all other IDF successes in the north — is the air superiority we worked extremely hard to establish. This was a force multiplier for ground operations. We now have air dominance over Lebanon and Syria."

He described three categories of Israeli strikes in Lebanon: targeting arms deliveries along the Syrian border, responding to Hezbollah violations ignored by international cease-fire monitors and eliminating operatives in southern Lebanon. "It's clear they're trying to recover in some way," he noted.

02.23.25 – Su

US envoy Witkoff to visit Middle East this week in bid for deal's 2nd phase

02.23.25 – Su

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Trump's envoy says US administration interested in seeing all hostages come out of Gaza while advancing talks; Israel aims to extend deal's first phase instead of ending war
Itamar Eichner|09:54

U.S. President Donald Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff said Sunday he would visit the region this week, likely on Wednesday, and added, "I expect Phase II to be implemented." In an interview with CNN, he said, "Netanyahu is motivated by the right reasons — Hamas cannot be part of any government in Gaza."

Witkoff added: "We first need to extend Phase I. We hope to have enough time to start Phase II and finish it in order to release as many hostages as possible and advance the talks."

When asked whether Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants to continue the deal or resume fighting in Gaza, he replied: "I believe the prime minister wants to see hostages released — that's certain. He also wants to protect Israeli citizens. He has a red line — Hamas cannot govern Gaza when this war ends. We're trying to square the circle."

The hostage and cease-fire's first phase is set to conclude this week, with four deceased hostages scheduled for release on Thursday. Of the 33 hostages included in this phase, Shlomo Mansour, Ohad Yahalomi, Tsachi Idan, and Itzik Elgart remain in captivity. If the first phase is not extended, it will end once the remains of these hostages are positively identified.

Families of hostages expected to be released this week expressed concern over the government's decision to delay the release of Palestinian prisoners "until the next hostages' release is guaranteed and without humiliating ceremonies."

Despite the crisis, Israel is preparing for a possible extension of Phase I, which would prioritize four fathers alongside injured or ill hostages whose conditions were only recently confirmed through testimonies from released captives.

A lengthy discussion on the terms is expected to take place before any extension takes place about how many Palestinian prisoners will be freed in exchange for the next hostages. This could allow for two or three additional releases, possibly coinciding with Ramadan, a period during which Hamas has no interest in resuming fighting.

However, extending releases in stages contradicts the wishes of many families whose loved ones — both living and deceased — were excluded from Phase I. These families are demanding a single release for all.

02.23.25 – Su

Israeli jets fly over Beirut during Nasrallah funeral; killed by IDF five months ago

02.23.25 – Su

Israeli jets fly over Beirut during Nasrallah funeral as hundreds of thousands attend

Hundreds of thousands reported in and around sports stadium chanting 'Death to America, death to Israel'; current Hezbollah chief stays away, sends video message vowing to continue Nasrallah's path '

Lior Ben Ari|06:55

Hundreds of thousands gathered in and around the Camille Chamoun sport arena in Beirut for the funeral of slain Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and his successor Hashem Safieddine who were both killed by the IDF five months ago during the war.

The crowd chanted "Death to America, and death to Israel" as the coffins of the two leaders were brought into the stadium while scriptures from the Quran were read and the Hezbollah anthem was played over the loud speakers and projected on large screens to the crowds outside. A message from Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei was delivered by a Muslim cleric, vowing that the "conflict against the arrogance" will not end.

At the same time four Israeli Air Force fighter jets flew above the city as Hezbollah attempted to demonstrate its greatest show of force since the cease-fire came into effect last November.

The IDF confirmed that it had conducted strikes against Hezbollah targets in South Lebanon and in the Beqaa Valley in the east after violations by the Iran-backed terror group, of the cease-fire agreement.

"The IDF struck military sites containing rocket launchers and weapons where Hezbollah activity was identified in the area of Baalbek and several additional areas in southern Lebanon," the military said in a statement. These activities of the Hezbollah terrorist organization are in violation of the understandings between Israel and Lebanon and constitute a threat to the State of Israel and its civilians."

Defense Minister Israel Katz confirmed the flyover was an Israeli show of force. "Israeli Air Force planes in the sky over Beirut while the funeral of Hassan Nasrallah was underway deliver a clear message: anyone who threatens Israel with destruction of attacks Israel will meet this end," he said. "You practice funerals and we practice victories."

Hezbollah's current leader Naim Qassem did not attend the funeral himself, likely out of security concerns, but spoke in a video address to the crowd vowing to continue Nasrallah's policy and path. He said the Lebanese government was responsible to oppose Israeli violations of the cease-fire. "We agreed to a truce because we are not interested in fighting a war without a political or territorial end. We complied with the terms, but Israel has not."

The funeral which was described as the biggest seen in Lebanon in two decades, was reported to include hundreds of thousands of participants. Representatives of countries, mostly those affiliated with Iran's Shi'ite axis arrived to attend. Among them were Iran's

Speaker of Parliament arliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi who arrived on a direct flight from Tehran on Sunday. They met with Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun who said in the meeting that Lebanon was tired of others' wars. "The unity of the Lebanese people is the best way to deal with any loss or aggression. Lebanon has paid too heavy a price for the Palestinian cause," Aoun said. "We support the outcomes of the recent Riyadh summit regarding a two-state solution."

02.23.25 – Su

DOGE asked All US Govt Staff email 5 bullets what you accomplished last week

02.23.25 – Su

Musk Says All US Govt Staff Must Justify Their Work or Lose Jobs

Sunday, 23 February 2025 05:52 AM EST

Elon Musk, the billionaire advisor to Donald Trump, said Saturday that all US federal employees must justify their work or lose their jobs, hours after the president pushed him to be "more aggressive" in slashing government spending.

Musk -- the world's richest person and Trump's biggest donor -- has led the effort to fire swaths of the government workforce.

"All federal employees will shortly receive an email requesting to understand what they got done last week. Failure to respond will be taken as a resignation," Musk wrote.

According to a copy of the email provided to AFP, federal workers were asked to submit "approx. 5 bullets of what you accomplished last week."

The email came from the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM), with the subject line "What did you do last week?". The deadline to reply was 11:59 pm Monday, though the message did not say failure to do so would lead to termination.

The OPM did not immediately reply to AFP's request for comment on Saturday evening.

"A large number of good responses have been received already. These are the people who should be considered for promotion," Musk posted on X after issuing the deadline.

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the largest federal employee union, vowed to challenge any unlawful terminations in a statement from national president Everett Kelley.

Kelley slammed Musk and the Trump administration, saying the move showed "their utter disdain for federal employees and the critical services they provide to the American people."

"It is cruel and disrespectful to hundreds of thousands of veterans who are wearing their second uniform in the civil service to be forced to justify their job duties to this out-of-touch, privileged, unelected billionaire who has never performed one single hour of honest public service in his life," he said.

Several federal employees told AFP they were advised by their agencies not to respond to the email and wait for further instruction, a recommendation echoed by the National Treasury Employees Union.

"I have so much work to do, I am not going to neglect actual patient care for this drama," a physician at the Department of Veterans Affairs, who received the email, told AFP.

Musk later appeared to downplay the requirements of the request, writing on X that the bar is "very low" and saying, "An email with some bullet points that make any sense at all is acceptable!"

- 'More aggressive' -

Earlier Saturday, Trump said on his Truth Social platform that Musk was "doing a great job, but I would like to see him get more aggressive."

Trump has put the tech entrepreneur in charge of the new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) advisory body, tasking him with slashing public spending and tackling alleged waste and corruption.

In the latest cuts announced Friday, the US Defense Department is to reduce its civilian workforce by at least five percent starting next week.

Trump's administration has already begun firing many other federal workers who are on probationary status.

DOGE is a free-ranging entity run by Musk, though its cost-cutting spree has been met with pushback on several fronts and mixed court rulings.

A judge on Thursday denied a union bid to temporarily halt the firing of thousands of people.

Musk said this week he would work with Trump for as long as he "can be helpful," as the pair dismissed concerns over conflicts of interest due to the tycoon's government contracts.

"Elon is doing a great job," Trump told a meeting of conservative activists on Saturday, running through a list of what he said were "some of the flagrant scams" that had been uncovered.

"We love Elon, don't we? He's a character," Trump added. "People said, what official position does he have? I said, 'Patriot'."

Musk said this week DOGE was publicizing its actions on its website and that the transparency would hold him accountable.

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02.23.25 – Su

IDF place 3 tanks near Jenin to watch Jordan border, smuggling to Samaria

02.23.25 – Su

IDF tanks near Jenin as Israel expands West Bank anti-terror operation

Arab media reports Israel imposes 48-hour curfew on the town of Qabatiya, south of Jenin as the military operation spreads to further villages; IDF says a number of tanks positioned for defensive purposes only

Elisha Ben Kimon, Yoav Zitun, Einav Halabi|03:08

For the first time since the Second Intifada, Israeli tanks were sighted in the West Bank on Sunday morning near the village of Muqeibila, close to Jenin. The presence of armored vehicles comes as the IDF announced a ramping up of anti-terror operations following last week's attempted coordinated bus bombings in central Israel.

The IDF said that it deployed only 3 tanks to the area which it emphasized would only serve for defensive measures and not take part in offensive operations.

Palestinian sources told Al Jazeera that Israeli forces have imposed a 48-hour curfew in the town of Qabatiya, south of Jenin, as part of the widening military operation.

According to the IDF Spokesperson's Unit, forces will operate in additional villages under the Menashe Brigade's jurisdiction. "The IDF, Shin Bet, and Border Police continue counterterrorism operations in northern Samaria and are expanding offensive activity in the area. A tank unit will operate in Jenin as part of the offensive efforts. Forces continue their operations in both the Jenin and Tulkarem regions," the statement read.

The counter-terror operation focuses primarily on Jenin and the Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarem. The tanks are expected to be deployed inside Jenin in the coming days as part of efforts to clear the area of explosive devices. So far, the IDF has demolished dozens of homes belonging to militants in the heart of the refugee camp, which has become a stronghold for armed groups in recent years.

The deployment of tanks in the West Bank is highly unusual. Until now, the IDF has relied on D9 armored bulldozers and reinforced vehicles for operations in northern Samaria. The use of tanks signals a strategic shift, with the military aiming to exert additional pressure on militant groups in the area.

Since the beginning of Operation "Iron Wall," the IDF said that more than 200 wanted suspects were arrested and at least 71 terrorists killed. According to military sources, 217 firearms have been seized, and over 100 explosive-making facilities have been destroyed. Security forces have also tightened control over key roads in the region, setting up additional checkpoints to increase pressure on terror organizations.

Investigation into bus bombings continues

Meanwhile, security officials were continuing to investigate Thursday's bus bombings, which were carried out using improvised explosive devices similar to those frequently encountered by the IDF in the northern West Bank. Authorities were working to identify the network responsible and prevent future attacks.

The IDF was also facing growing concerns over possible "game-changing" weapons smuggling along the Jordanian border with the West Bank. The military views the deployment of tanks in the northern West Bank as a clear message to terror groups that Israel was determined to neutralize them.

Defense officials also believe that some of the convicted Palestinian terrorists who were released to the West Bank as part of Israel's cease-fire and hostage release deal with Hamas may return to terrorist activities. Security forces were closely monitoring these individuals in an effort to prevent the rebuilding of Hamas infrastructure, particularly ahead of the upcoming Muslim holy month of Ramadan that begins next month.

02.23.25 – Su

Hamas says Israel's delay of prisoner release is a ploy to derail talks

02.23.25 – Su

Hamas says Israel's delay of prisoner release ploy to derail talks

Hamas defends decision to force two hostages to watch Saturday's release 'ceremony,' calling it a message that 'military options have failed' and that negotiations are only way to secure further releases

Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi|01:32

The Hamas terror group on Sunday said Israel's failure to release 620 Palestinian prisoners as part of the cease-fire agreement was a violation of the deal. "Netanyahu's decision is a deliberate attempt to derail the agreement, is a clear violation of its terms and is evidence of the occupation's lack of credibility in living up to its commitments," the terror group said in a statement. "We call on the mediators and the international community to pressure the occupation to comply with the cease-fire deal and release the prisoners without delay."

A senior Hamas official said earlier that the group is in contact with mediators and sees "positive signs" for a potential prisoner release, even as Israel delayed the scheduled release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, citing terror groups' repeated violations of a cease-fire agreement.

Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanou told Qatar's Al-Araby channel that the group was ready to negotiate the next phase of a deal and would release all Israeli hostages if Israel agreed to a full military withdrawal from Gaza, a complete cease-fire, and the reconstruction of the enclave.

In a separate interview with Al Jazeera, al-Qanou defended Hamas' decision to force two Israeli hostages—Guy Gilboa-Dalal and Evyatar David—to watch the release of Omer Wenkert, Omer Shem Tov, and Eliyah Cohen on Saturday. He called it a message that “military options have failed” and that negotiations are the only way to secure the hostages' return. Israeli officials condemned the move as psychological abuse.

“These ceremonies contain no insult to the prisoners but rather reflect the humane and generous treatment they receive,” Hamas said in a statement, accusing Israel of mistreating Palestinian prisoners during their release. “The real humiliation is what our prisoners endure—from torture, beatings, and deliberate mistreatment to their final moments in detention. They are released with their hands bound and eyes covered, while their families are threatened not to celebrate their return.”

Early Sunday, the Prime Minister's Office announced that the release of 620 Palestinian prisoners had been postponed “until the next group of hostages is secured and without disgraceful ceremonies.” The decision followed a high-level security consultation led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday night, attended by senior security and political officials.

Security officials had recommended proceeding with the prisoner release to facilitate the return of the remains of four Israeli hostages expected Thursday. However, after a break in discussions, political leaders decided to halt the release, accusing Hamas of breaching its commitments. Israeli officials said the group had disregarded assurances that hostage transfers would take place without public celebrations, instead staging elaborate ceremonies they described as grotesque.

Later Saturday night, Hamas returned the body of Israeli hostage Shiri Bibas, after having falsely claimed on Thursday to have already handed over her remains. That day, the group had transferred a coffin containing the body of a Palestinian woman instead. The return of Bibas' remains followed a similar incident in which Hamas handed over the bodies of Oded Lifshitz and brothers Kfir and Ariel Bibas. Before transferring the remains to Israel, Palestinian terror groups held a public ceremony that included processions and symbolic displays. Israeli officials condemned the event as a deliberate provocation, calling it an attempt to humiliate Israel and exploit the hostages' deaths for propaganda purposes.

Shiri Bibas and her two sons were taken hostage during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack and later murdered in captivity by Al-Mujahdeen ("Lords of the Wilderness"), a Salafi extremist group separate from Hamas. Her husband, Yarden Bibas, who was also kidnapped, was released as part of the first phase of the current hostage deal. The fate of the remaining hostages and the future of the prisoner exchange remain uncertain as negotiations continue.

02.22.25 – Sa

Israel weighs all living hostage deal possible in extended first phase

02.22.25 – Sa

Israel's dilemmas ahead of the hostage's deal possible second phase

Netanyahu hold security assessment alongside security officials trying to ensure release of all Israeli hostages; while Hamas seeks deal's second phase, Israeli interests align with extended first phase

Itamar Eichner|14:41

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is holding a security assessment on Saturday, with an Israeli official stating the goal is to return all hostages, both living and deceased.

Meanwhile, Israel is delaying the release of Palestinian prisoners in response to Hamas' breach of the agreement by returning the body of an unrelated Palestinian woman instead of Shiri Bibas, who was murdered in captivity. A decision on how Israel will proceed will be made after the meeting.

Participants include Mossad chief David Barnea, Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar, Defense Minister Israel Katz, Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, Shas party leader Aryeh Deri, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, outgoing IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, and incoming Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. (res.) Eyal Zamir and other officials. Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, leading negotiations for the second phase of the hostage deal, remains in the U.S. and is not attending.

Thursday's planned return of four deceased hostages at risk. The latest handover marks the end of the first stage of the hostage deal.

The current standoff follows previous warnings that Hamas would "pay the price" for returning the wrong body. U.S. President Donald Trump commented that Netanyahu is "angry, and rightfully so" and wants to resume fighting in Gaza.

However, the delay is not expected to derail negotiations entirely, as Israel seeks to secure both the return of the four additional hostages and an extension of the first stage to release more living captives.

Despite Hamas' breach, the terror group quickly corrected the mistake, returning Bibas' body within a day. Israeli officials believe the mix-up was likely an error rather than an intentional act.

Meanwhile, Israel has completed the largest single-day hostage release of the deal, freeing six hostages alive. Negotiation sources say this, along with Hamas' swift correction regarding Bibas, provides hope for continuing the deal. Hamas wants to proceed to the deal's second phase under the existing agreement, rejecting additional Israeli demands such as disarmament, exile and dismantling its military wing.

Israel believes that if a second-stage deal appears unattainable, Hamas may agree to extend the first phase in exchange for better terms, including changing Palestinian prisoner exchange ratios and increasing humanitarian aid, particularly caravans and construction equipment for Gaza.

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff is handling negotiations and met with Dermer in Miami on Thursday. To bridge gaps, Witkoff is expected to pressure both sides into concessions.

Netanyahu, despite not admitting it publicly, is wary of the second phase, which includes a demand for Israel to complete its withdrawal from the Philadelphi Corridor by day 50 — a potential trigger for Smotrich to collapse his coalition.

Netanyahu's interest is to extend the first phase, securing more hostage releases while prolonging the cease-fire.

Preparations for second-phase talks are underway, though details remain uncertain, including whether they will take place in Qatar or involve Witkoff shuttling between Doha, Cairo and Jerusalem. Israel will insist that mediators ensure the release of all hostages believed to be alive.

02.22.25 – Sa

Israel delays 620 Palestinian prisoners, to be released in eighth handover

02.22.25 – Sa

Israel delays Palestinian prisoners' release in eighth handover

Officials say delay comes amid Netanyahu's planned security assessment aimed at consulting on deal's second phase; 620 prisoners set to be freed

Einav Halabi, Itamar Eichner|09:47

Palestinian sources on Saturday reported that Israel would delay the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners scheduled for Saturday, saying that their release would take place only in the evening.

According to the reports, Palestinian police forces arrived at the prisoner drop-off point near the West Bank's Ramallah but withdrew after being informed of the delay. The handover was reportedly pushed back to 8:00 p.m.

Israeli officials confirmed the reports and linked the delay to a security assessment set to be held by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later in the evening regarding a possible implementation of the second phase of the deal with Hamas. "A decision on the next steps and the completion of returning deceased hostages will be made only after the consultation," they said.

Earlier this week, Netanyahu vowed that Hamas would "pay the full price" after initially handing over the body of a Gazan woman instead of former hostage Shiri Bibas on

Thursday, officials believe this was likely a mistake, as Hamas claimed and Shiri's body was recovered overnight and identified at the Abu Kabir Forensic Institute.

Israel does not intend to break the deal and four additional bodies of deceased hostages are still set to be returned in another handover next week.

02.22.25 – Sa

Over 60 hostages still in Gaza after six releases as Israel mulls second phase

02.22.25 – Sa

Over 60 hostages still in Gaza after six releases as Israel mulls deal's second phase
Return of six living hostages marks penultimate captive handover in cease-fire's first phase, with officials assessing options for further releases during the second phase's negotiations
Ynet|09:10

The seventh handover of living hostages in the first phase of Israel's cease-fire deal with Hamas was completed on Saturday with six hostages released: Tal Shoham and Avera Mengistu from Rafah, Omer Wenkert, Omer Shem Tov and Eliya Cohen from the Nuseirat refugee camp and Hisham al-Sayed from Gaza City.

Mengistu and al-Sayed were held captive for a decade, while the other four, abducted on October 7, endured 505 days in captivity.

The latest handover marked the final release of live hostages in the deal's first phase, which included 33 hostages in total. So far, 29 Israelis have been freed during the first phase, including this week's release of the bodies of hostages murdered in captivity — Shiri Bibas and her children, Ariel and Kfir, along with Oded Lifshitz. Four more bodies are set to be returned as part of the deal next week, including Shlomo Mansour, who has already been officially declared deceased. This will mark the final week of the first phase, which lasted 42 days.

Some 59 hostages will remain in Gaza following it, including 35 confirmed as deceased. Among the 24 classified as alive but not included in the first phase are two foreign nationals — Bipin Joshi from Nepal and Pinta Nattapong from Thailand.

Talks for the deal's second phase, which is meant to secure the release of all remaining live hostages and end the war in Gaza, have not officially begun and its prospects remain unclear. Negotiations are expected to be complex, with Israel demanding all terror groups in the Strip disarm themselves.

On Friday, U.S. President Donald Trump suggested that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wanted to resume fighting “He’s not divided on this decision. He wants to continue,” he said.

Another possibility raised is extending the first phase with additional hostage releases. Under the agreed framework, the temporary cease-fire could continue as long as negotiations for the second phase progress, even beyond the initial 42-day period. Meanwhile, an Israeli official said on Saturday that Netanyahu will convene a security assessment "aimed at returning all of our hostages - living and deceased."

02.22.25 – Sa

Hamas seeks one-time hostage exchange amid phase 2 cease-fire talks

02.22.25 – Sa

Hamas seeks one-time hostage exchange amid cease-fire talks

Terror group accuses Israel of delaying second phase talks in 'attempt to evade agreement'; Hamas demands full cease-fire, Israeli withdrawal and prisoner releases, while Israel insists on Gaza's demilitarization and Hamas leaders' exile
Einav Halabi|04:15

Hamas announced Saturday that it is prepared to complete the second phase of the hostage deal in a single exchange, setting conditions that include a permanent cease-fire, a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the release of Palestinian prisoners.

Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem reiterated the group's stance, saying, "The only path to freeing the hostages is through negotiations and Israel's commitment to the terms of the agreement." The group warned against "attempts to evade the deal", accusing Israel of delaying its implementation.

As discussions over a potential second phase of the cease-fire and hostage release continue, Israeli officials have outlined their own demands, including Hamas relinquishing control of Gaza, demilitarization of the territory, exile of top Hamas leaders and no transfer of control to the Palestinian Authority.

Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, who was appointed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to lead Israel's negotiating team, has traveled to Miami for talks with U.S. presidential envoy Steve Witkoff. Witkoff, representing President Donald Trump, has been holding shuttle diplomacy talks with Qatari, Egyptian and Israeli officials in an effort to broker a breakthrough.

A senior Israeli source said Witkoff is "determined to secure a deal," suggesting he may attempt to "impose an agreement" on Netanyahu. Another Israeli official described the U.S. role in negotiations as "highly active," emphasizing that American involvement is crucial in advancing the talks.

Netanyahu has instructed Dermer's team to continue discussions with Witkoff, but any progress will require approval from the Security Cabinet. A source familiar with the talks said, "Netanyahu is playing both sides—preparing for either a return to fighting or a second-phase deal. It all depends on what Witkoff delivers."

Israel is preparing for a possible request from Witkoff to send negotiation teams to Doha as early as next week. Several scenarios remain on the table: Extension of the current cease-fire and hostage releases, finalizing an agreement for a second phase or breakdown in talks and a return to full-scale military operations.

Meanwhile, the seventh round of hostage releases was underway on Saturday, with six Israeli captives expected to be freed from Gaza, amid heightened tensions over the fragile cease-fire.

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Ynet-News, February 21, 2025 – Friday Sevat 11th Month Q3

02.21.25 – Fr - - - News – Friday

Israel expands manhunt after bus bombing suspects

02.21.25 – Fr - - - News – Friday

Hamas hands over coffin it claims contains Shiri Bibas' remains

02.21.25 – Fr - - - News – Friday

Trump condemns Bibas family killings by Hamas, backs PM's Gaza offensive

02.21.25 – Fr - - - News – Friday

PM visited Samaria refugee camp after bus bombings, to bolsters troop deployment

02.21.25 – Fr - - - News – Friday

Trump's envoy declares Hamas is going to face total annihilation

02.21.25 – Fr - - - News – Friday

Netanyahu pledges Hamas to pay full price for failing to return Shiri Bibas

02.21.25 – Fr - - - News – Friday

Israel braces for strong winds, temperatures below freezing and snowfall

02.21.25 – Fr - - - News – Friday

Six hostages to release Saturday as Israel weighs response to Hamas brutality

02.21.25 – Fr - - - News – Friday

Shin Bet arrest three Israeli Jews for planting bus bombs in the Tel Aviv area

02.21.25 – Fr - - - News – Friday

Egypt to present alternative Gaza plan, aiming to counter Trump proposal

02.21.25 – Fr - - - News – Friday

Tel Aviv bus passenger spots suspicious bag, alerts driver; empty bus explodes

02.21.25 – Fr- - - News Placed in February 21 spot – Friday
IDF confirm Hamas brutally murdered 2 Bibas children; third body not their mother

02.20.25 – Th- - - News Placed in February 20 spot – Thursday Q3 Moon 11:34am
Explosions on 3 buses in Tel Aviv area; 2 unexploded charges found on other buses

02.20.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Q3 Moon 11:34am
JD Vance & Witkoff to bring hostages home & resettle Gaza in Egypt and Jordan

02.20.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Q3 Moon 11:34am
Bodies of 4 hostages arrive at forensic institute to be identified

02.20.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Q3 Moon 11:34am
BBC airing film 'How to Survive in a War Zone' narrated by Hamas official's son

02.20.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Q3 Moon 11:34am
Israelis line streets to honor 4 dead hostages as they return home: It is a sad day

02.20.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Q3 Moon 11:34am
Israeli robotic driveline with two wheels, connects as part of the vehicle

02.19.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday
IDF examining AI-generated fake videos about Egypt prepared for war with Israel

02.19.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday
Dozens of Hasidim clash with IDF, attempting to visit tomb of Rabbi in Lebanon

02.19.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday
Hamas open to new Gaza leadership but refuses to disarm or be exiled

02.19.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday
Scramble to avoid crisis after Israeli envoy accuses Egypt of peace treaty violations

Full Arab League summit in Cairo, March 4

02.19.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday
After a decade in Hamas captivity, 2 civilian hostages to be freed Saturday

02.19.25 – We- - - News Placed in February 19 spot – Wednesday
As Lebanese celebrate return to border villages, 2 Hezbollah rise from the ruins

02.18.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday
Netanyahu confidant Ron Dermer to lead Phase II of cease-fire, hostage release talks

02.18.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Lebanese military moving into areas, reopen roads, as Israeli forces withdraw

02.18.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Tel Aviv residents petition court to end asylum-seekers' protection status

02.18.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Israel, Hamas confirm six live hostages from Phase I to be freed on Saturday

02.18.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Israel demands demilitarized Gaza, without PA or Hamas control

02.18.25 – Tu- - - News Placed in February 18 spot – Tuesday

Six hostages may be freed this week, depending on heavy equipment & caravans

02.17.25 – Mo- - - News Placed in February 17 spot – Monday

Egypt bunkers, ammunition, fuel reserves & vehicles increase along Israeli borders

02.17.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Amid fragile truce, fresh IDF division prepares for next phase assault on Gaza

02.17.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

UK reviews UNRWA funding after concerned allegations by Hamas Hostage

02.17.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Israel to receive bodies of 4 dead hostages, demanding six hostages on Thursday

02.17.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Israel security buffer, 5 outposts will remain in Lebanon to protect border communities

02.17.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Israel drone strike kills Hamas commander in Lebanon, stalls PM's court case

02.17.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Steve Witkoff Mideast envoy attended Nova remembrance event in Miami

02.17.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Trump: Hostages have to come back now but Netanyahu can do what he wants

02.17.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Saudi desires Iran de-escalate; wants US-Iran to mediate new nuclear deal

02.16.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Families of hostages to mark 500 days with a Monday fast 11:40 AM to 8 PM

02.16.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

IAF probe Oct. 7; lacking ground information, IAF followed pre-existing plans

02.16.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

IDF strikes Lebanon sites; withdraw by Tuesday, retaining five strategic positions

02.16.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Arab List of collaborators will intimidate anyone who helps police

02.16.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Phase 2 of Gaza deal; return of 19 live IDF & all hostages held by Hamas

02.16.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Israelis arrested in Thailand for illegal performance without proper permits

02.16.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

IAF strike near Border Corridor kill two Hamas, wound three, moving toward IDF

02.16.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Netanyahu & Rubio with Trump on Gaza ultimatum, Syria, Lebanon & Iran

02.16.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

IDF & Pentagon coordination ultimate goal is overthrow of regime in Tehran

02.16.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Undercover officers raid wedding in Tayibe and arrest suspects who attacked police

02.16.25 – Su- - - News Placed in February 16 spot – Sunday

Arms shipment released by Trump arrived in Israel; heavy bombs & bulldozers

02.15.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday

IDF set to withdraw from Lebanon in days; Hezbollah drone specialist eliminated

02.15.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday

Two Israelis stabbed in Athens speak Hebrew; Gaza-born suspect arrested

02.15.25 – Sa- - - News Placed in February 15 spot – Saturday

Saudi Arabia spearheads Arab scramble for alternative to Trump's Gaza plan

02.15.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday

Abbas slams delusional Trump plan to displace Gaza, undermining two-state solution

02.15.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday

Hamas stages propaganda event as 3 hostages are released in Gaza

02.15.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday

Hezbollah organized supporters to attack UN convoy in Beirut; filmed boasting