

Ynet-News, April 04, 2025 – Friday

Ramadan ended March 29 = Expect Arab Jihad frenzy through Passover

04.04.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday Q1 moon 9:16pm

Israel eyes Gaza's future: Hostages, Hamas eradication and Trump's vision

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Chief warns push for dismissal turns Shin Bet into Netanyahu's Secret Police

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Qatargate: Court orders Feldstein under house arrest, Urich to remain in custody

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US sending Israel 20,000 assault rifles Biden delayed by Bernie Sanders resolutions

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Turkey confrontation with Israel in Syria, join World Court halting all trade

04.04.25 – Fr- - - News Placed in April 04 spot – Friday Q1 moon 9:16pm

Turkey construction at Syria T4 airbase by Palmyra & Menagh near gas fields

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IDF widen security buffer on Gaza City's outskirts with heavy bombardments

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Hamas internal chaos and 60% pay, leaders consists of only 5 to 7 individuals

04.03.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Nisan 06

IDF post housing 60 females on Gaza border was left unguarded for 12 hours

04.03.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Nisan 06

Hostages & families urge US action at Senate hearing

04.03.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Nisan 06

Doha in first response to Qatargate: We didn't pay to undermine Egypt's standing

04.03.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Nisan 06

IDF strike northeast of Gaza City, Hamas control center, PA report at least 100 dead

04.03.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Nisan 06

Hungary began year-long process to withdraw from ICC as Netanyahu visits

04.03.25 – Th- - - News Placed in April 03 spot – Thursday Nisan 06

South Syria mosques urged residents to confront Israel forces; 10 killed in airstrike

04.03.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Nisan 06

Israel's constraint of multiple wars could create strategic friction in US-Iran crisis

04.03.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday Nisan 06

Hamas will not respond to Israel's rigid counter proposal, without a ceasefire

04.02.25 – We- - - News Placed in April 02 spot – Wednesday Nisan 05

Massive explosions reported in Syria strikes; 2 airbase runways wiped out

04.02.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday Nisan 05

IDF advance in southern Gaza, clear new corridor between Rafah and Khan Younis

04.02.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday Nisan 05

West Bank terror attacks down 80% compared to last year's Ramadan

04.02.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday Nisan 05

IDF struck Gaza command base, Hamas claimed it was UNRWA clinic

04.02.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday Nisan 05

Qatar prolongs negotiations without resolution, as an actor of influence, not loyalty

04.02.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday Nisan 05

IDF postpones some soldiers leave by four months, over manpower shortage

04.02.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday Nisan 05

PM set Shin Bet deputy as acting head until a permanent replacement is appointed

04.02.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday Nisan 05

Israel expands Gaza operations to seize wide areas as ceasefire talks stall

04.01.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Nisan 04

Iran tensions build as US military moves planes & ships to reinforce Middle East

04.01.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Nisan 04

Could a secret chat mishap like Trump's happen in Israel?

04.01.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Nisan 04

What the Shin Bet does—and why its leadership matters

04.01.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Nisan 04

Beirut strike foiled joint Hezbollah-Hamas plot to kill hundreds of Israelis overseas

04.01.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Nisan 04

Bennett 2026: Former PM Naftali Bennett registers new political party of chaos

04.01.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Nisan 04

Gaza claims food supplies scarce as fighting resumes, Israel says 50 days available

04.01.25 – Tu- - - News Placed in April 01 spot – Tuesday Nisan 04

PM reconsiders Shin Bet chief choice after criticism exposed anti-Trump article

04.01.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Nisan 04

Israel strikes Hezbollah terrorist & damaged upper three floors in southern Beirut

04.01.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Nisan 04

Israel spy jet in Greek NATO drill, with Arabs; Qatar, UAE & Turkey

03.31.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Nisan 03

Smotrich resigns Finance & Defense cabinet in coalition rift, to force MK Succot out

03.31.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Nisan 03

Israel awaits Hamas answer to proposal as military weakens targets

03.31.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Nisan 03

Problem in Shin Bet choice; Sharvit penned article in January, critical of Trump policies

03.31.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday Nisan 03

Flight of 150 Israel students on Poland trip, land in Turkey over engine issue

03.31.25 – Mo- - - News Placed in March 31 spot – Monday Nisan 03

Former Navy commander Eli Sharvit appointed as next Shin Bet chief

03.30.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday Nisan 02

Hamas is starting to blink: Israel increases pressure amid stalled negotiations

03.30.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday Nisan 02

Hostage families demand urgent meeting with Israeli negotiator Ron Dermer

03.30.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday Nisan 02

Trump: If Iran doesn't make a deal; tariffs & bombs like they've never seen before

03.30.25 – Su- - - News Placed in March 30 spot – Sunday Nisan 02

Hamas began brutal crackdown on Gaza protests with torture & executions

03.30.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday Nisan 02

Hamas turn down \$2B US offer to disarm & relocate top commanders from Gaza

03.30.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday Nisan 02

Families demand more efforts to bring hostages home; Trump has his own agenda

03.30.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday Nisan 02

Fabric of Life Road connects Jerusalem to West Bank annex & blocks PA access

03.30.25 – Su - - News – Sunday Nisan 02

Hezbollah's chief Quds Day speech warns Israel after Beirut strike on drones

03.29.25 – Sa - - News – Saturday New moon 6:00am Nissan 1st Month

Erdoğan's ridiculous moral sermons: Israel, Turkey trade barbs over IDF strike on Beirut

03.29.25 – Sa - - News – Saturday New moon 6:00am

Israeli forces push deeper into Rafah as IDF expands Gaza buffer zone

03.29.25 – Sa - - News – Saturday New moon 6:00am

Amsterdam University alumni return diplomas in protest of anti-Israel decision

03.29.25 – Sa - - News Placed in March 29 spot – Saturday New moon 6:00am

Hamas offers to free 5 hostages, Israel demands 10 – no deal

04.04.25 – Fr

Israel eyes Gaza's future: Hostages, Hamas eradication and Trump's vision

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Israel eyes Gaza's future: Hostages, Hamas eradication and Trump's vision

A senior Israeli official reveals internal divisions within Hamas as Israel negotiates under fire; Talks stall over hostages, while Netanyahu's government pushes for Hamas' elimination and congratulates Orban for removing Hungary from the ICC

Itamar Eichner, Budapest|12:37

On Friday, a senior Israeli official revealed that cracks are beginning to form within Hamas as Israel resumes fighting and negotiates under fire. "There's a rift between Hamas leaders abroad and those inside Gaza, as well as between the north and south," said the official, emphasizing that Israel remains committed to eliminating Hamas and rescuing hostages.

The official dismissed claims that Israel should have agreed to a deal releasing all remaining hostages before renewing military action. "This is a deception tactic," he said, explaining that Hamas seeks to dictate terms rather than cooperate. He noted that Israel is prepared to discuss the next phase of negotiations but will continue to act militarily in the meantime.

Regarding the future of Gaza, the official reiterated Israel's position: "In the end, there will be no Hamas in Gaza, and no Iranian bases within striking distance of our cities." He added that Israel is working on a large-scale voluntary emigration plan for Gaza residents, based on Trump's Gaza vision. "This isn't about small-scale movement. It's about significant, voluntary departures. We're in talks with several countries, offering strategic benefits in exchange for their agreement." He emphasized that, during an initial transitional period, Israel may need to maintain control of Gaza but hopes to bring in Gulf states to manage the territory. Regardless, security responsibility will remain solely with Israel.

The official also spoke about hostages, sharing that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is personally engaging with families. "It's incredibly difficult. Families are begging for their children. Some are in a very emotional state. The Prime Minister is looking for every possible path to achieve their release," he said. The official also revealed that, at the start of the war, some security officials doubted any hostages could be rescued, but Netanyahu insisted it was possible through a combination of military pressure and diplomacy. "So far, we've rescued 147 hostages alive. At least 21 are still alive, while 36 have been killed," he explained.

Addressing accusations that Netanyahu initiated Qatari funding to Hamas, the official clarified that the transfers began under former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and were later supported by all Israeli security organizations to prevent a humanitarian collapse in Gaza. "This funding replaced financial aid once provided by the Palestinian Authority, which Mahmoud Abbas cut off. The idea was to prevent a humanitarian disaster, not to buy serenity," he said. The official added that Hamas' October 7 attacks were carried out with basic weapons like pickup trucks and rifles, not infrastructure funded by Qatari money, which was instead used to build underground barriers.

When discussing Iran, the official expressed doubt that diplomacy would prevent the country from acquiring nuclear weapons. "We want to ensure Iran never gets nuclear weapons. Whether a diplomatic solution is possible, I'm doubtful," he said, referencing past examples like Libya and Ukraine.

The official also addressed tensions with Turkey, explaining that while Israel is not seeking conflict, it opposes any Turkish presence near its borders. "We hope Ankara doesn't want a confrontation either, but we won't allow a Turkish foothold near us," he said. He added that Netanyahu raised concerns about Turkey's influence in Syria during talks with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

The conversation also touched on Hungary's recent decision to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC), which the official described as a significant step in the fight against the court's "corrupt practices." He accused ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan of targeting Israel to deflect sexual harassment allegations against himself, claiming, "Just weeks before issuing arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant, Khan faced harassment accusations. Attacking Israel and its Prime Minister was a way to distract from his own misconduct." The official warned that Khan is considering issuing further arrest warrants against Israeli officials, calling the ICC "a distortion of justice and a threat to our right to self-defense."

Finally, the official highlighted Israel's efforts to increase ammunition production, particularly for 120mm tank shells and 155mm artillery. "We're working with other countries and Israeli companies to expand production and rebuild our stockpiles," he said. The war in Ukraine has created global shortages, but Israel is determined to overcome these challenges. "This ammunition isn't just about firepower—it saves soldiers' lives. It allows us to warn civilians before attacks and then strike effectively," he explained, emphasizing the importance of preparing for future conflicts.

04.04.25 – Fr

Chief warns push for dismissal turns Shin Bet into Netanyahu's Secret Police

04.04.25 – Fr

Shin Bet Chief warns of 'Secret Police' risk amid Netanyahu's push for dismissal. Set to be relieved of duty by Netanyahu, Ronen Bar warns the Supreme Court his dismissal threatens the agency's independence, possibly turning it into a 'secret police'; AG calls the move 'flawed' and claims it's tainted by Netanyahu's personal conflicts of interest.

Netael Bandel, Itamar Eichner|11:48

On Friday, embattled Shin Bet Chief Ronen Bar responded to the Supreme Court regarding petitions against his dismissal. He warned that removing him under current circumstances could undermine the Shin Bet's independence, stating, "A dangerous but possible outcome of such harm could be turning the service into a 'secret police.'"

Bar argued that rushing the dismissal process during a sensitive period, amid ongoing criminal investigations involving close associates of the Prime Minister, sends a worrying message to Shin Bet leadership: that political disagreements could lead to immediate dismissal. He emphasized, "The Shin Bet Chief is not a 'personal loyalist' or 'trustee' of the Prime Minister or any other political figure."

Bar also addressed his professional independence, noting his duty to maintain objectivity even in cases involving Israeli citizens. He referenced the "Qatar-Gate" investigation, stating his obligation to uncover the truth in this sensitive and complex matter. He requested to present relevant details to the court in a closed session.

Bar revealed that tensions with Prime Minister Netanyahu began in November 2024, when he resisted demands to provide a security opinion suggesting that the trial against Netanyahu posed risks justifying delays. He also highlighted his recommendation for a state commission to investigate failures, including those related to the Shin Bet's performance during the October 7 attack. He said these actions contributed to the claims of "lack of trust" against him.

He concluded that the court's decision will impact whether the Shin Bet operates independently or becomes subject to political expectations. He warned that dismissing the Shin Bet Chief mid-tenure without proper procedure risks setting a dangerous precedent.

The Prime Minister's Office responded, stating the decision to dismiss Bar was not about personal loyalty but stemmed from a "lack of confidence" in his performance. They accused Bar of failing to update the political leadership during the October 7 attack and claimed his actions "undermined trust" in his performance.

The statement also refuted Bar's allegations, asserting that Netanyahu never requested misuse of Shin Bet powers against Israeli citizens. They clarified that "discussions with Bar concerned finding a secure location" for Netanyahu's trial testimony amid missile threats, not its postponement.

Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara opposed Bar's dismissal, calling it "fundamentally flawed" and tainted by Netanyahu's personal conflict of interest due to criminal investigations involving his associates. She warned the decision could "politicize the role of Shin Bet Chief", additionally recommending that any decision to dismiss the Shin Bet Chief should involve an independent advisory committee for senior appointments. She also criticized the rushed dismissal process, arguing "it failed to meet legal and procedural requirements". Additionally, she raised concerns that extraneous considerations, such as influencing Shin Bet investigations into Netanyahu's associates, may have played a role.

04.04.25 – Fr

Qatargate: Court orders Feldstein under house arrest, Urich to remain in custody

04.04.25 – Fr

Qatargate: Court orders Feldstein under house arrest, Urich to remain in custody
Judge partially accepts appeal, says Eli Feldstein will be under house arrest, but Jonathan Urich will remain in custody until Monday morning, pending further developments;
lawyer accuses police of entrapment, says Urich fainted during interrogation
Netael Bandel|Updated:10:16

The Petah Tikva Magistrate's Court on Friday originally ordered two close associates of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—Jonathan Urich, a senior adviser, and Eli Feldstein, a former spokesperson—to be released to house arrest until April 22, rejecting a police request to extend their detention by an additional seven days. Upon appeal, decision was partially amended, as Feldstein will be released as planned, while Urich will remain in custody.

The hearing was part of the ongoing investigation into the so-called "Qatargate" affair, in which the two are suspected of acting on behalf of the Qatari government while serving in senior advisory roles to the prime minister.

During the proceedings, attorney Amit Hadad accused the police of employing an unlawful interrogation tactic against the defendants. He claimed investigators deliberately orchestrated a meeting between Urich and Feldstein after their separate questioning sessions in order to prompt unauthorized contact and potential obstruction of justice.

Hadad further alleged that Urich lost consciousness during his interrogation after complaining of chest pains and was denied timely medical care. A police representative countered that Urich had declined to be taken to a hospital out of concern he would be exposed to the media.

Judge Menachem Mizrahi issued a sharp rebuke to law enforcement, expressing skepticism over a last-minute security opinion presented by police to justify extending detention based on public danger. "This is not a legal opinion—it's a draft. Who signed it? It contradicts the very claim of complexity," the judge said. "You initially based the arrest on suspicion of obstruction. Drafting an opinion like this doesn't take three days. If this is a security case and there was contact with a foreign agent, how can there not have been a danger to the public from the start?"

Until now, police had argued for keeping the suspects in custody solely over concerns of obstructing the investigation. The new claim of public endangerment, based on a preliminary opinion from the Shin Bet security agency, was introduced only at Friday's hearing—prompting the judge's criticism that it appeared inconsistent with the earlier framing of the case.

"I cannot give weight to a supposed threat that only surfaced today," Judge Mizrahi stated in his ruling. "Regrettably, there is concern that the investigators used the detention period to pursue a separate line of inquiry."

Police have requested a delay in the release in order to appeal the decision to the district court.

The police's Lahav 433 anti-corruption unit arrested Urich and Feldstein on suspicion of contact with a foreign agent, bribery, breach of trust and tax offenses. Urich is also suspected of disclosing classified information to American-Qatari lobbyist Jay Footlik, police later revealed.

On Tuesday, Menachem Mizrahi extended their detention by two days and lifted a gag order on the case. During the hearing, investigators disclosed suspicions that Urich and Feldstein had relayed messages to journalists on behalf of Qatar, allegedly under the guise of acting on behalf of Israeli officials. The court also heard that their efforts aimed to diminish Egypt's role as mediator during the war while promoting Qatar as a more favorable intermediary.

Mizrahi sharply criticized the widespread media leaks surrounding the case, which he said "trampled" the gag order, and disclosed that the suspected media campaign was part of a coordinated attempt to shape perceptions of regional diplomacy.

On Wednesday, police held a confrontation between Urich and Feldstein, who gave conflicting accounts during their interrogations. During the heated exchange, Feldstein accused Urich of lying and abandoning him in a parallel classified documents case involving Netanyahu's former security spokesperson, who is accused of leaking sensitive information. Urich denied any connection to payments Feldstein allegedly received from Israeli businessman Gil Birger—who was also questioned Monday—and from Footlik. Urich reportedly broke down in tears during the confrontation.

At a court session on Thursday, police agreed to keep both suspects in custody until Friday. A police investigator acknowledged that "Urich and Feldstein's statements contradict one another" and noted that the Shin Bet has not yet issued an assessment indicating harm to national security.

Meanwhile, several journalists were summoned to give open testimony as part of the investigation, including Nir Dvori, Suleiman Maswadeh and Shirit Avitan-Cohen, regarding media coverage linked to Qatar. The journalists are not considered suspects. Zvika Klein, editor-in-chief of The Jerusalem Post, who was questioned under caution, has been released from his restrictive conditions.

Also questioned under caution this week was another Israeli businessman with ties to Gulf states, suspected of contact with a foreign agent in connection with the same alleged messaging campaign. He handed over his cellphone to police, who are expected to summon additional business figures for questioning.

Police have also requested to question another Netanyahu adviser, Israel Einhorn, who is currently residing in Serbia. Einhorn denies any involvement. A senior legal official said that because Israel lacks a mutual legal assistance treaty with Serbia, no formal extradition proceedings have been launched. However, authorities have contacted Einhorn through his attorney to inform him that he is expected to present himself for questioning. So far, he has not complied.

Late Thursday, Qatar issued a rare and sharply worded denial, rejecting allegations that it had financed a media campaign aimed at discrediting Egypt's role in Gaza ceasefire negotiations. The Qatari government made no reference to the Israeli investigation or the suspects involved but praised Cairo's mediation efforts and warned against "spreading falsehoods." The Qatari denial made front-page headlines in local newspapers.

First published: 13:50, 04.04.25

04.04.25 – Fr

US sending Israel 20,000 assault rifles Biden delayed by Bernie Sanders resolutions

04.04.25 – Fr

US sending Israel 20,000 assault rifles Biden had delayed, sources say
Trump administration approves \$24M rifle sale to Israeli police, a deal Biden had delayed over concerns they could reach extremist settlers; move comes as Israeli officials push to arm civilians amid rising terror threats

Ynetnews, news agencies|08:00

The Trump administration moved forward with the sale of more than 20,000 U.S.-made assault rifles to Israel last month, according to a document seen by Reuters and a source familiar with the matter, pushing ahead with a sale that the administration of former president Joe Biden had delayed over concerns they could be used by extremist Israeli settlers.

The State Department sent a notification to Congress on March 6 for the \$24 million sale, saying the end user would be the Israeli National Police, according to the document.

The rifle sale is a small transaction next to the billions of dollars worth of weapons that Washington supplies to Israel. But it drew attention when the Biden administration delayed the sale over concerns that the weapons could end up in the hands of Israeli settlers, some of whom have allegedly carried out attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank.

The Biden administration has imposed sanctions on individuals and entities accused of committing violence in the West Bank amid Palestinian claims of rising settler attacks.

On his first day in office on January 20, President Donald Trump issued an executive order rescinding U.S. sanctions on Israeli settlers in a reversal of U.S. policy. Since then, his administration has approved the sale of billions of dollars worth of weapons to Israel. The March 6 congressional notification said the U.S. government had taken into account "political, military, economic, human rights, and arms control considerations."

The State Department did not respond to a request for comment when asked if the administration sought assurances from Israel on the use of the weapons.

Close ties

Since the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel has been present in the West Bank, which Palestinians want as the core of an independent state, and has built settlements that most countries deem illegal. Israel disputes this, citing historical and biblical ties to the land. Trump has forged close ties to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, pledging to back Israel in its war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. His administration has in some cases pushed ahead with Israel arms sales despite requests from Democratic lawmakers that the sales be paused until they received more information.

The U.S. Senate on Thursday overwhelmingly rejected a bid to block \$8.8 billion in arms sales to Israel over human rights concerns, voting 82-15 and 83-15 to reject two resolutions of disapproval over sales of massive bombs and other offensive military equipment.

The resolutions were offered by Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, an independent who caucuses with Democrats.

The rifle sale had been put on hold after Democratic lawmakers objected and sought information on how Israel was going to use them. The congressional committees eventually cleared the sale but the Biden administration kept the hold in place.

The latest episode in the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict began with a Hamas attack on Israeli communities on October 7, 2023, with terrorists killing 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking more than 250 hostages.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, a far-right member of Netanyahu's government, oversees the Israeli police force and has moved to loosen firearm restrictions to arm the public and bolster civilian security squads—known as "alert squads"—in response to crime and rising terror threats.

04.04.25 – Fr

Turkey confrontation with Israel in Syria, join World Court halting all trade

04.04.25 – Fr

Turkey wants no confrontation with Israel in Syria, foreign minister says
Ankara's top diplomat warns Israeli actions in Syria risk fueling future regional instability, adding that if Syria's new administration seeks 'certain understandings' with Israel, that is its own affair
Reuters|07:35

Turkey wants no confrontation with Israel in Syria after repeated Israeli attacks on military sites there undermined the new government's ability to deter threats, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told Reuters on Friday.

In an interview on the sidelines of a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels, Fidan said Israel's actions in Syria - where the administration of President Ahmed al-Sharaa is a close Turkish ally - were paving the way for future regional instability.

If the new administration in Damascus wants to have "certain understandings" with Israel, which like Turkey is a neighbor of Syria, then that is their own business, he added.
NATO member Turkey has fiercely criticized Israel over its attacks on Gaza since 2023, saying they amount to a genocide against the Palestinians, and has applied to join a case at the World Court against Israel while also halting all trade.

The animosity between the regional powers has spilled over into Syria, with Israeli forces striking Syria for weeks since a new administration took control in Damascus. Turkey has called the Israeli strikes an encroachment on Syrian territories, while Israel has said it would not allow any hostile forces in Syria.

Asked about U.S. President Donald Trump's threats of military strikes against Iran, Fidan said diplomacy was needed to resolve the dispute and that Ankara did not want to see any attack taking place against its neighbor Iran.

04.04.25 – Fr

Turkey construction at Syria T4 airbase by Palmyra & Menagh near gas fields

04.04.25 – Fr

Turkey eyes strategic Syria airbase in deal with Islamist regime
Damascus and Ankara reportedly reach deal on Turkish base at T4, previously struck by Israeli jets; Katz warns Syrian leader of 'heavy price' for hosting hostile forces
Lior Ben Ari|03:09

Turkey and Syria's new government have reached an understanding to establish Turkish military bases inside Syrian territory, including at two key strategic airports, Qatari newspaper The New Arab reported Friday, citing Turkish sources.

The agreement includes bases at the T4 airbase near Palmyra and the Menagh airfield, where Turkish forces are already present. Construction is reportedly underway at T4.

The T4 airbase has long been a strategic site, located near Syria's gas fields. It was previously used by Iran-backed militias and fell under ISIS control before being retaken by the Assad regime with Russian military support. Turkish interest in the base reportedly grew after Assad's fall.

Meanwhile, tensions in Syria continue to escalate. Syrian media reported explosions near Damascus Thursday night and sightings of Israeli warplanes in the area. According to local reports, Israeli strikes targeted military positions in al-Kiswah, south of the capital. Two days earlier, a military airfield in Hama was bombed, with satellite images later revealing heavy damage, including to the runway.

Amid rising instability, some figures in southern Syria are calling for armed resistance against Israel. Imad al-Masalmeh, a prominent leader in Daraa, said that while "the Syrian people are exhausted after 14 years of war," there remains "a readiness to resist Israeli forces." He added that former anti-Assad fighters are now prepared to turn their weapons against Israel and called for urgent Arab and Islamic summits to "curb Israeli aggression in Syria."

In response to the escalating tensions, Defense Minister Israel Katz issued a warning Thursday to Syrian leader Ahmad al-Sharaa, formerly known by his nom de guerre Abu Mohammed al-Golani.

Speaking at a pre-Passover ceremony at the Defense Ministry, Katz said: "I warn Syria's ruler, al-Golani—if you allow hostile forces to enter Syria and threaten Israeli security interests, you will pay a heavy price."

His remarks came following Israeli airstrikes on T4, Hama and areas near Damascus, as well as after clashes between Israeli forces and locals in the al-Jubayliya area of Daraa province, where Syrian sources reported 10 deaths.

Katz reiterated that "Israel will not allow Syria to become a threat to its communities" and will continue operating in buffer and security zones—including Mount Hermon—to defend Israeli towns in the Golan Heights and Galilee.

04.04.25 – Fr

IDF widen security buffer on Gaza City's outskirts with heavy bombardments

04.04.25 – Fr

IDF expands operations on Gaza City's outskirts to widen security buffer

Troops launch new offensive in Shijaiyah neighborhood, killing terrorists and striking Hamas command centers as pressure grows over hostage stalemate; civilians urged to evacuate; Islamic Jihad claims rocket launch intercepted near Nahal Oz
Yoav Zitun, Einav Halabi|02:16

The IDF launched new ground operations early Friday in the outskirts of Gaza City's Shijaiyah neighborhood, amid growing pressure on Hamas to advance stalled negotiations over the release of 59 Israeli hostages still held in Gaza.

The IDF said the goal of the latest operation is to deepen control and expand the security buffer zone in the area.

According to Palestinian reports, Israeli artillery shelled the Shijaiyah and Zeitoun neighborhoods overnight. Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV also reported the entry of IDF vehicles east of Shijaiyah, near Kibbutz Nahal Oz on the Israeli side of the border.

The IDF confirmed that troops have so far killed several Hamas operatives and destroyed terrorist infrastructure, including a command-and-control compound used to plan and direct attacks. The military added that it is facilitating civilian evacuation from the combat zone through designated routes.

Hamas' radio station reported Thursday that at least 29 people were killed and over 100 wounded in an Israeli airstrike on the Tuffah neighborhood, northeast of Gaza City. Local sources described heavy bombardments in the area. Hours earlier, the IDF had dropped evacuation leaflets warning residents to leave immediately due to intense combat.

The IDF and Shin Bet said the Tuffah airstrike targeted key Hamas operatives inside a command-and-control center used to coordinate attacks against both Israeli civilians and military forces. They emphasized that prior to the strike, extensive measures were taken to minimize civilian casualties, including the use of precision weaponry, advance warnings, aerial surveillance and intelligence gathering. Meanwhile, around 8 p.m. Thursday, rocket sirens sounded in Kibbutz Nahal Oz. A rocket launched from Gaza was intercepted by the Iron Dome air defense system, with no injuries or damage reported. Palestinian Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the launch.

04.04.25 – Fr

Hamas internal chaos and 60% pay, leaders consists of only 5 to 7 individuals

04.04.25 – Fr

Hamas grapples with internal chaos and pay delays after wave of Israeli assassinations
Terror group reportedly struggling with deep organizational crisis in Gaza following series of high-profile targeted killings by IDF since collapse of ceasefire; leadership vacuum has delayed salary payments and disrupted internal communications

Einav Halabi|01:10

Hamas is facing major internal turmoil and operational difficulties in Gaza following the assassination of numerous senior figures in its political bureau by Israel, London-based Arabic-language daily Asharq Al-Awsat reported on Thursday.

The report suggests that Israel's targeted killings of key figures across the terrorist group's military, political and governmental wings have significantly disrupted its chain of command and altered the decision-making structure within the organization.

During the nearly two-month ceasefire period, Hamas restructured its leadership, appointing new figures and quickly holding internal elections. This process solidified the leadership of Khalil al-Hayya, who reportedly replaced Yahya Sinwar after his elimination in October 2024.

Al-Hayya made frequent trips between Egypt, Turkey and other countries to coordinate with the group's negotiating delegation, members of which—including Muhammad al-Jamasi, Yasser Harb, Ismail Barhoum and Essam al-Da'alis—were also later killed in Israeli airstrikes.

According to the report, Hamas now faces a severe organizational vacuum. Israeli strikes have disrupted salary payments to Hamas government employees in Gaza, with political and military ranks receiving only about 60% of their pay during Eid al-Fitr. Hamas sources blamed the internal disarray and Israeli surveillance of financial officials for the delays.

The cumulative impact of the assassinations since the resumption of hostilities has deeply affected Hamas' operations in Gaza. Decision-making has shifted to a smaller "leadership council" composed of regional leaders, who consult members of the broader political bureau only in urgent cases.

The current head of this council is Muhammad Darwish, who took over following the killing of Osama al-Mazini in the early days of the war in October 2023. While the political bureau reportedly has over 20 members, the current leadership council consists of only 5 to 7 individuals.

Apart from Ismail Haniyeh and Saleh al-Aroui, who were both assassinated abroad, approximately 15 members of the Hamas political bureau have been killed inside Gaza. Hamas sources told Asharq Al-Awsat that due to ongoing security concerns and Israeli pressure, decision-making has reverted to the leadership council, bypassing field commanders in Gaza unless absolutely necessary.

Still, red lines remain. According to Hamas sources, neither the council nor the negotiation team can make critical decisions without consulting the full political bureau—particularly members still inside Gaza and the Qassam Brigades' military command, led by Mohammed Sinwar, Yahya Sinwar's brother. Speaking to Reuters, Hamas officials insisted the group maintained an effective governance system throughout the war. Former Hamas Prime Minister Essam al-Da'alis

reportedly continued to oversee civil governance, moving discreetly between institutions and communicating largely via handwritten notes.

Despite recent setbacks, Hamas sources cited in Asharq Al-Awsat emphasized the group's long-standing resilience. "The movement has the human resources to rebuild," one official said. "Palestinian factions have taken hits for decades but always reemerge stronger."

Hamas may consider stepping away from civil governance in Gaza to relieve internal pressure, but it has no intention of relinquishing its weapons, the sources added. They also claimed the group holds additional "bargaining chips" beyond hostages, though they did not specify what those were.

04.03.25 – Th

IDF post housing 60 females on Gaza border was left unguarded for 12 hours

04.03.25 – Th

IDF lookout post on Gaza border was left unguarded for 12 hours

Military says the post, housing 60 lookouts, was entirely unguarded, with no soldier assigned even to the entrance gate, calling lapse 'a serious error'

Gal Ganot|14:28

An Israeli military post near the Gaza border was left without any security personnel for about 12 hours last week, even as 60 female lookouts were stationed inside, the Israel Defense Forces confirmed Wednesday.

The post, located at the Urim base just 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the Gaza Strip, was entirely unguarded, with no soldier assigned even to the entrance gate. The IDF called the lapse "a serious error" and said a full investigation was underway.

"A dedicated security force composed of combat soldiers was dispatched to the base as soon as the situation became known and remained on-site until the regular security detail arrived," the IDF said in a statement.

The incident comes over a year after the Hamas-led assault on Oct. 7, during which terrorists overran the Nahal Oz base, killing 15 female lookouts and abducting seven others to Gaza. In total, 53 Israeli soldiers were killed in the battle over the post.

Following last week's security failure, senior IDF officials met with the lookouts stationed at Urim, who reportedly expressed fear and frustration. The army acknowledged their concerns, saying the failure was a malfunction and adding, "The IDF regrets the distress caused by the incident."

In the aftermath of the Oct. 7 massacre, the military has debated changes to the deployment of lookouts. Proposals include arming them or relocating them to more protected command centers away from the front lines in Gaza and the West Bank.

Among the seven lookouts abducted from Nahal Oz, one—Noa Marciano—was killed in captivity and her body later returned to Israel. Another, Ori Megidish, was rescued in a special forces operation. Five others—Liri Elbag, Karina Arayev, Daniela Gilboa, Naama Levy and Agam Berger—were released in a recent hostage deal.

04.03.25 – Th

Hostages & families urge US action at Senate hearing

04.03.25 – Th

'It's not politics — it's saving lives': Hostages' families urge US action at Senate hearing
Emotional roundtable, co-chaired by Sens. Dave McCormick, R-Pa., and Jacky Rosen, D-Nev., included testimonies from Americans formerly held by Hamas and relatives of those still missing

Daniel Edelson, New York|13:07

Survivors of Hamas captivity and family members of hostages still held in Gaza appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Thursday, urging U.S. leaders to take urgent action to secure the release of the remaining 59 hostages.

The emotional roundtable, held in Washington and co-chaired by Sens. Dave McCormick, R-Pa., and Jacky Rosen, D-Nev., included testimonies from Americans formerly held by Hamas and relatives of those still missing. Senators Pete Ricketts, R-Neb.; Joni Ernst, R-Iowa; and Tim Kaine, D-Va., also participated.

“I am absolutely committed to doing everything possible to bring your families home,” McCormick said. “I am inspired by your courage.”

Among the participants were Keith and Aviva Siegel and Iair Horn, all of whom were freed from Gaza in a hostage deal. They were joined by Ilay David, whose brother Evyatar remains captive; Liran Berman, whose twin brothers Gali and Ziv are still in Gaza; and Orna and Ronen Neutra, whose son Omer was murdered and kidnapped during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

Keith Siegel urged continued U.S. involvement, including renewed negotiations to secure a deal. “I’m sharing my story because the world needs to understand what we as hostages went through — and what Gali, Ziv and all the remaining hostages in Gaza are enduring right now,” Siegel said. “I urge President Trump to continue his approach: apply pressure, restart negotiations, and secure a deal—before it’s too late.”

Aviva Siegel recounted the trauma of captivity. “I was afraid to look at Keith — I was terrified I’d see him dead,” she said. “The world cannot allow this to happen to anyone, ever again.”

Horn, whose brother Eitan is still held, said his freedom remains incomplete. “I cannot be truly free while Eitan is still being held in hell,” he said. “As long as he’s in captivity, my heart is not complete. I am here today because of President Trump. I ask you, Mr.

President, to keep pushing forward — and to make the release of Eitan and all the other hostages a top priority.”

Berman said his brothers’ return is vital to national healing. “Only when the last hostage comes back to Israel will we be able to heal as a nation,” he said. “They are not just hostages — they are human beings who have a future.”

David spoke of the anguish caused by a video Hamas released showing his brother and another hostage. “We saw the despair and pain in Evyatar’s and Guy’s eyes,” he said. “We are on a mission to save their lives and those of all the remaining hostages. This is not about politics — it’s about saving lives.”

As the Jewish holiday of Passover approaches, David added: “we believe that together, we can help bring them home.”

The Neutras called for urgency not only in returning the hostages, but also the remains of the deceased. “Time is running out to return the deceased, as well,” they said in a joint statement. “The longer this drags on, the harder it will be to locate and recover their remains, denying families such as ours closure and dignity — and the deceased, an honorable final resting place.”

Their son Omer, they said, “was a symbol of the devastation caused by the events of October 7th — a symbol for all the hostages. Unfortunately, we will not be able to hug our son, but Omer deserves a proper burial.”

The families said they will continue to advocate for international efforts to secure the release of their loved ones, warning that time is running out.

04.03.25 – Th

Doha in first response to Qatargate: We didn't pay to undermine Egypt's standing

04.03.25 – Th

Doha in first response to Qatargate: 'We didn't pay to undermine Egypt's standing'

Police say a second Israeli businessman, who works with the Gulf states, is suspected of being in contact with foreign agent; add that more individuals from the business sector are planned to be summoned

Netael Bandel|12:29

In its first response on the matter, Doha on Thursday released an official statement regarding the ongoing investigation into the so-called Qatargate affair, denying allegations that Gulf state tried to undermine Egypt's position in the Gaza cease-fire negotiations.

“The State of Qatar strongly condemns reports suggesting that Doha paid in order to undermine Egypt’s standing or that of any other mediator involved in the ongoing negotiations between Hamas and Israel,” the Qatari government said in the statement. “These claims are baseless and serve only those whose agenda is to harm the efforts of mediators and the relationship between Doha and Cairo.”

A second Israeli businessman who works with Gulf states was questioned under caution Wednesday as part of the expanding Qatargate investigation, Israeli police said. He is suspected of contact with a foreign agent. The man, whose name was not released, provided police with his cellphone and password. Investigators searched the device Thursday. Police said they plan to summon additional businesspeople for questioning. Attorney Uri Ben Asher, who represents the businessman, said his client "is a law-abiding citizen who has committed no offense and has no connection to the allegations being investigated."

Earlier this week, Israeli businessman Gil Birger, who is also active in the Gulf, was questioned under caution. In a recording aired two weeks ago by public broadcaster Kan Reshet Bet, Birger admitted transferring money from Jay Footlik, an American lobbyist representing the Qatari government, to Eli Feldstein, a spokesperson in the Prime Minister's Office.

Birger said the payment was related to value-added tax issues and that he had known Footlik for 25 years. He said Footlik employed Feldstein for several months and that the work was "related to the hostages."

The investigation has also drawn in journalists. Zvika Klein, editor-in-chief of The Jerusalem Post, was summoned Monday to the offices of Lahav 433, Israel's national police unit for international investigations. Klein later learned the summons was linked to a message found on Feldstein's phone. He was initially questioned as a witness in the case but was later questioned under caution after telling investigators that Israel Einhorn, a former adviser to Minister Israel Katz, had proposed that he travel to Qatar for a rare journalistic visit.

The trip, arranged by Footlik, included meetings with senior Qatari officials, including the prime minister. Klein told investigators he saw the assignment as a unique reporting opportunity. After he returned to Israel in March, Klein published a widely read article on the visit.

He said Einhorn encouraged him to promote the piece in Israeli media and later connected him with Feldstein to secure interviews. Klein recalled being told that Feldstein's compensation would come from "the American," a reference to Footlik. Messages found on Klein's and Feldstein's phones confirmed the coordination.

Investigators are examining whether these interactions constitute receipt of a benefit from a foreign agent or potential mediation of Qatari funds.

On Thursday, three other journalists — Nir Dvori of Channel 12, Suleiman Maswadeh of Kan News and Shirit Avitan Cohen of the free daily Israel Hayom — gave open testimony during a court hearing on the detention of Feldstein and Jonathan Urich, a senior adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Also Thursday, Klein was released from house arrest after being questioned for the second time the previous day. He remains a suspect in the case.

At the Rishon Lezion Magistrates' Court, Judge Menachem Mizrahi said Feldstein and Urich are suspected of conveying messages to journalists on behalf of Qatar and

presenting them as if they had come from official Israeli sources. Police believe the two sought to improve Qatar's image in connection with a proposed hostage deal and to downplay Egypt's role as mediator.

Mizrahi criticized leaks from the investigation, saying they had "trampled" a court-issued gag order, but said the gravity of the allegations warranted a comprehensive investigation. Urich and Feldstein were arrested on suspicion of contact with a foreign agent, bribery, breach of trust and tax offenses.

The broader investigation, known as Qatargate, focuses on suspicions that government spokespeople or individuals close to the prime minister — Feldstein, Urich and Einhorn — acted on behalf of Qatar. Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara has approved a criminal probe, which is being led by Lahav 433.

Feldstein's attorneys said he never worked for Qatar and received no payments from the Qatari government. They said the money he received from Birger was for strategic communications services he provided to the Prime Minister's Office, and that it was a "temporary and partial" solution to delays in salary payments from the government.

04.03.25 – Th

IDF strike northeast of Gaza City, Hamas control center, PA report at least 100 dead

04.03.25 – Th

IDF strikes senior Hamas terrorists, Palestinians report at least 100 dead

Military and Shin Bet target command and control center used by senior operatives to plan and direct attacks against Israeli civilians and soldiers

Yoav Zitun, Einav Halabi, Lior Ben Arij 11:49

The IDF continued its anti-terror operations in the Gaza Strip on Thursday, with the military conducting several attacks targeting senior Hamas operatives. Hamas and local media reported that more than 100 Palestinians were killed in the airstrikes.

Hamas Radio reported that at least 25 people were killed and 38 wounded in an airstrike on the Tuffah neighborhood northeast of Gaza City, just hours after the Israel Defense Forces dropped evacuation leaflets in the area. The leaflets warned residents to leave immediately, saying the neighborhood was an active combat zone and not safe.

Al Jazeera reported that at least 100 Palestinians had been killed since morning in multiple Israeli strikes, including 44 people killed earlier in the day—23 of them in Gaza City—amid intense artillery shelling in the Shuja'iyya area.

The IDF and Israel's internal security agency, the Shin Bet, said in a joint statement that the Tuffah strike targeted a Hamas command and control center used by senior operatives to plan and direct attacks against Israeli civilians and soldiers. The military said it took precautions to minimize civilian casualties, including advance warnings, precision weapons, aerial surveillance, and additional intelligence.

“ Hamas systematically violates international law by cynically and cruelly using civilian institutions and the population as human shields for its terrorist operations,” the statement said.

Among the sites struck was the Dar al-Arqam school in Tuffah, which Hamas claims was housing displaced people at the time of the attack.

The surge in strikes came as the IDF continued its broader military campaign, aimed at dismantling Hamas’ infrastructure and returning 59 hostages still held in Gaza following the Oct. 7 attacks.

“ We have moved into the next phase of the operation,” said incoming IDF spokesperson Brig. Gen. Efi Dafrin in his first public statement. “ Since fighting resumed, we have struck over 600 terrorist targets and eliminated more than 250 terrorists.”

04.03.25 – Th

Hungary began year-long process to withdraw from ICC as Netanyahu visits

04.03.25 – Th

Hungary says it is withdrawing from ICC as Netanyahu visits

Hungarian leader invited Israeli counterpart to Budapest in November, day after ICC arrest warrant issued over Gaza war crimes allegations; Orban called ruling 'brazen, cynical and completely unacceptable'

Reuters|03:26

Hungary's government has decided to withdraw from the International Criminal Court, it said on Thursday, shortly after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, sought under an ICC arrest warrant, arrived in the country for a state visit.

Right-wing Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban invited his Israeli counterpart to Budapest in November, a day after the ICC issued its arrest warrant over allegations of war crimes in Gaza, where Israel launched its offensive following an attack by Hamas-led terrorists on southern Israel.

Israel has rejected the accusations, which it says are politically motivated and fuelled by antisemitism. It says the International Criminal Court has lost all legitimacy by issuing the warrants against a democratically elected leader of a country exercising the right of self-defense.

As a founding member of the ICC, Hungary is theoretically obliged to arrest and hand over anyone subject to a warrant from the court but Orban made clear that Hungary would not respect the ruling which he called "brazen, cynical and completely unacceptable."

Hungary signed the ICC's founding document in 1999 and ratified it in 2001, but the law has not been promulgated.

Gergely Gulyas, Orban's chief of staff, said in November that although Hungary ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC, it "was never made part of Hungarian law," meaning that no measure of the court can be carried out within Hungary.

On Thursday, Gulyas told state news agency MTI that the government would launch the withdrawal process later in the day.

Orban had raised the prospect of Hungary's exit from the ICC after U.S. President Donald Trump imposed sanctions on the court's prosecutor Karim Khan in February.

The bill on starting the year-long process of withdrawing from the ICC is likely to be approved by Hungary's parliament which is dominated by Orban's Fidesz party.

Netanyahu has enjoyed strong support over the years from Hungary's Orban, an important ally who has been ready to block EU statements or actions critical of Israel in the past.

ICC judges said when they issued the warrant that there were reasonable grounds to believe Netanyahu and his former defense chief were criminally responsible for acts including murder, persecution and starvation as a weapon of war as part of a "widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population of Gaza."

The ICC also issued an arrest warrant against a Hamas leader in November. His death was confirmed after the warrant was issued.

04.03.25 – Th

South Syria mosques urged residents to confront Israel forces; 10 killed in airstrike

04.03.25 – Th

10 reported killed in southern Syria as Israeli forces respond to gunfire with airstrikes
Syrian media reports unusual clashes between Israeli forces and local residents in Daraa province; troops responded with ground and air fire after gunmen open fire; military reportedly strikes southern Lebanon

Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun|01:13

Syrian state media reported Thursday morning that 10 people were killed overnight in the al-Jabaliya area of Daraa province during what it described as unusually intense clashes between Israeli forces and local armed men.

The confrontation involved Israeli artillery shelling and airstrikes. According to reports, calls from local mosques urged residents to confront Israeli forces as air raids were carried out at several sites across Syria.

The IDF confirmed that its 474th Brigade operated overnight in the Tasil area of southern Syria, seizing weapons and destroying terrorist infrastructure. During the operation,

armed men opened fire on Israeli troops, who responded with ground fire and air support, killing several gunmen.

The IDF reported no casualties among its forces and stated that weapons stockpiles in southern Syria pose a direct threat to Israel's security. "The IDF will not allow the presence of a military threat in Syria and will act against it," the military said.

In a related development, Lebanon's Hezbollah-affiliated Al Mayadeen network reported that Israeli forces struck prefabricated structures overnight in Naqoura in southern Lebanon.

This latest escalation follows a string of Israeli operations across Syria. On Wednesday night, Israeli warplanes targeted Damascus International Airport, the T4 airbase near Homs and the military airfield in Hama, where massive explosions were reported. Syrian defense sources claimed at least 15 personnel were killed in the Hama strike. The targets reportedly included infrastructure and strategic weapons left behind by the Assad regime.

A previous cross-border incident occurred about a week ago, when Israeli aircraft struck a group of gunmen who had opened fire on Golani Brigade reconnaissance soldiers near the Yarmouk Valley in southern Syria, just 300 yards from the Israeli-held Golan Heights. According to Syrian reports, four gunmen were killed. Northern Command officials described the event as a "turning point" in the volatile sector.

Since the fall of the Assad regime last December, the IDF has entered parts of the demilitarized buffer zone in Syria and taken control of the Syrian side of Mount Hermon. Israeli airstrikes have become increasingly frequent as Defense Minister Israel Katz and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu continue to call for a full demilitarization of the region south of Damascus.

04.03.25 – Th

Israel's constraint of multiple wars could create strategic friction in US-Iran crisis

04.03.25 – Th

Israel's 'vulnerabilities' could create 'strategic friction' in US-Iran crisis, analysts warn
As the May deadline nears for a new nuclear deal, rising US-Iran tensions risk escalation; experts warn that military strikes on Iran's nuclear sites could trigger severe retaliation and environmental harm, urging diplomacy

Giorgia Valente/The Media Line|17:20

As the May 2025 deadline for a new nuclear deal with Iran approaches, the Middle East faces heightened tension, with the United States and Iran engaged in a high-stakes standoff over Tehran's nuclear program. However, Indian General Satish Dua said, "It's an oversimplification to view this as just the U.S. and Iran alone."

He noted that the Middle East is now a “very complex arena, especially since President Trump took office. Geopolitical and economic dynamics are shifting rapidly.”

Regarding the strong rhetoric from both sides, he cautioned, “Iran is pushing back with strong rhetoric. It’s not passively accepting this American pressure. This could easily spiral into a highly volatile situation.”

In the past few days, the U.S. has intensified its military presence, redeploying supplies and forces to key bases in the region as a strategic signal to Tehran. Gil Murciano, CEO of the think tank Mitvim, explained, “Decades of mistrust define U.S.-Iran relations. Each new American administration tries a different tactic, but the fundamental issues persist.”

He cited the recent U.S. airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen on March 15, 2025, which killed 31 people, as part of Washington’s broader efforts to increase pressure in the region.

“Sanctions have severely impacted Iran’s economy,” Murciano explained, “but they haven’t produced the political shift Washington hoped for. Instead, they’ve emboldened hard-liners,” he added.

One critical hub in this buildup is the U.S. military base on Diego Garcia, a remote Indian Ocean outpost now bristling with activity. Online reports detail the arrival of B-2 stealth bombers, C-17 transport planes and KC-135 refuelers, positioning it as a potential launchpad for strikes against Iran. Diego Garcia has long served as a staging ground for past U.S. operations, from Afghanistan to Iraq. For this reason, Iranian officials have issued sharp warnings: “We will target any American base used against us.”

General Dua downplayed these threats: “Iran’s claims about striking in the Indian Ocean seem exaggerated to me. They’re more about posturing, targeting areas where their adversaries have interests,” he said. However, he raised concerns about a “growing alliance between Iran, China and Russia,” which he sees as a significant counterweight to U.S. and allied strategies, particularly in the Indo-Pacific. On Iran’s nuclear progress, Dua remained cautious: “No one can definitively say yes or no. Sometimes, the mere threat of capability is as powerful as the capability itself.”

Nima Baheli, an Iranian political analyst based in Italy, said that direct confrontation could be avoided. “Diplomacy is essential,” he stressed, “but both sides must be ready to compromise. The challenge is that neither wants to appear weak,” then underlined Iran’s nuclear stance: “Iran’s supreme leader issued a fatwa against the use of weapons of mass destruction, which suggests they may have not pursued nuclear weapons at all. But this posture could change in the long run if external pressures intensify or internal politics shift.”

Baheli noted that Tehran’s recent overtures through intermediaries like Oman, under President Masoud Pezeshkian, reflect a preference for indirect talks, avoiding confrontation after feeling betrayed by the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018. “This Iranian strategy to push for indirect talks is only temporary to establish trust between the parties before really engaging in direct talks. This is a matter of tactics,” Baheli stressed.

For Israel, the stakes are equally high. Steven Turner, an American political analyst, explained: “Israel simply cannot sustain another war right now.” “There’s no public or political appetite for it, given the strain from ongoing battles with Hamas and Hezbollah,” he added. “This limitation could lead to divergent positions between the U.S. and Israel. Washington might push for aggressive action against Iran, but Jerusalem’s current vulnerabilities mean it may resist or delay involvement, creating strategic friction.”

This dynamic influences U.S. strategy, as Turner explained: “The U.S. has escalated its campaign against the Houthis unilaterally, but it would prefer broader support here. Israel would likely be involved, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE offering backing. However, Europe’s support is uncertain, marking a decline from past U.S.-led interventions.” On Iran’s military threat, Turner added, “Iran’s military capabilities are far inferior to America’s, but their rhetoric keeps the pressure on. They don’t want a war—they can’t afford one, and they can’t win one.”

The prospect of striking Iran’s nuclear sites carries grave risks. Turner described the operation as daunting: “Hitting Iran’s nuclear facilities wouldn’t be a quick strike—it would require a major military campaign, targeting dozens of sites with bunker-busting bombs and neutralizing Iran’s defenses,” he explained. He warned of the fallout: “Such an action would trigger immediate retaliation. You can’t just bomb a few labs and call it done,” he added.

General Dua elaborated on the technical challenges: “Targeting hidden nuclear facilities is not an easy task at all, so the States should think this through carefully.”

Beyond worsening regional conflict, targeting nuclear facilities could also cause severe environmental damage. A strike in Iran could release radioactive material across neighboring countries, including the Gulf states, posing long-term threats to public health. Despite these dangers, diplomacy offers a lifeline. General Dua underlined the importance of dialogue to avoid catastrophe. “Recent diplomatic efforts between India and China show promise. If we can resolve tensions through talks, we can avoid bloodshed and loss of innocent lives,” he said.

Yet, with U.S. President Donald Trump’s maximum pressure policy, Iran’s strategic adaptability and the unresolved question of its nuclear status, the path to de-escalation remains uncertain.

When asked if Israel’s involvement seems inevitable, Murciano noted that it is, “but its current constraints could create friction with the U.S.” He added: “We need a coordinated strategy, or the region risks further instability that we cannot afford.”

As the deadline for a new nuclear deal to take shape nears, Baheli warns that “the international community must engage seriously to avoid direct confrontation.”

Some argue that diplomacy is the best route for all parties to take. “The risk of escalation is real, but diplomacy must prevail,” General Dua told said. “Iran’s rhetoric is dangerous, but so is military action without a clear endgame.”

However, Turner paints a picture that an Iranian offensive may be “imminent, but it is not predictable” which sort.”

“The American previous failures in the region such as in Iraq and Afghanistan may be mirrored once more in this new scenario, so the States should think twice about this.”
The story is written by Giorgia and reprinted with permission from The Media Line.

04.03.25 – Th

Hamas will not respond to Israel's rigid counter proposal, without a ceasefire

04.03.25 – Th

Hamas will not respond to Israel's counter Gaza ceasefire proposal, official says
Terror group says won't engage with Israeli counterproposal; Al Jazeera reports plan includes demand to disarm Hamas, no full Gaza withdrawal and release of Israeli-American Edan Alexander without return conditions
Einav Halabi 16:15

Hamas decided not to respond or engage with Israel's counterproposal for a ceasefire in Gaza, an official told Reuters on Wednesday, affirming it is committed to the mediators' plan instead.

Israel said on March 29 that it conveyed to the mediators a counterproposal in full coordination with the U.S. after Hamas agreed to a proposal it received from mediators Egypt and Qatar, which included the release of five Israeli hostages in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

Qatar-based broadcaster Al Jazeera, which aligns with Qatari mediation efforts, reported that Hamas accused Israel of undermining a proposal it had previously accepted. According to the network, Hamas agreed to a draft plan presented on March 27 that called for the release of five Israeli soldiers, including dual U.S.-Israeli citizen Edan Alexander, within 50 days, in exchange for 250 Palestinian prisoners—150 serving life sentences and 2,000 detainees from Gaza arrested after October 7. The mediated framework also stipulated that the humanitarian situation would return to pre-March 2 conditions, including reopening border crossings and reinstating aid protocols. On the tenth day of the proposed ceasefire, both sides would exchange information on living and deceased hostages and detainees. The mediators committed to initiating talks within 50 days on a permanent ceasefire, full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a post-war governance arrangement.

Al Jazeera also published details of Israel's counterproposal. It reportedly demanded that Hamas first release Alexander as a goodwill gesture with no reciprocal concession. On the first day of the agreement, Hamas would release 10 hostages in exchange for 120 life-sentence prisoners and 1,111 detainees from Gaza. Additionally, Israel requested the return of 16 deceased hostages in exchange for 160 Palestinian bodies.

The Israeli offer limited the deal to 40 days, with negotiations on new terms to begin on the second day of the ceasefire. According to the report, Israel made the dismantling of

Hamas' military capabilities and refusal to withdraw its forces from Gaza preconditions for any further negotiations. It also called for an international mechanism to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches civilians only.

Meanwhile, amid criticism over his lack of direct engagement with all hostage families, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Wednesday that he spoke by phone with Tala Herkin, mother of hostage Maxim Herkin.

According to the statement, Netanyahu congratulated Maxim's younger brother, Pete, who marked his bar mitzvah this week, and reiterated his personal and national commitment to bringing all the hostages home.

04.02.25 – We

Massive explosions reported in Syria strikes; 2 airbase runways wiped out

04.02.25 – We

Massive explosions reported in Syria strikes; airbase runway wiped out

Officials warn al-Sharaa regime Israel would continue to act to protect its security interests amid Turkish-backed military buildup; for second day in a row, rockets fired at Sderot from northern Gaza; both intercepted by air defenses

Ynet correspondents|15:18

The Israeli Air Force carried out extensive airstrikes Wednesday evening on multiple military targets in Syria, including sites near Damascus, the T4 airbase near Homs, and the military airport in Hama, where large explosions were reported.

The strikes targeted strategic infrastructure and weapon stockpiles left behind by Syrian President Bashar Assad's military, including runways, fuel depots and radar systems.

According to a military statement, Israel attacked military compounds in Hama and T4, as well as additional infrastructure in the Damascus area, as part of efforts to maintain Israeli air superiority in the region.

Israeli intelligence had been monitoring weapons and strategic capabilities at Syrian military bases in Tadmor and T4 in recent weeks. Security officials also claimed that Turkish elements were involved in attempts by Syrian rebel groups to establish weapons production infrastructure at the T4 base. Israeli officials conveyed direct warnings to the regime of Syrian leader Ahmad al-Sharaa, affirming that Israel would continue to act to protect its security interests across the Golan border.

The pro-Iranian Iraqi news agency Sabereen reported that several aircraft were damaged at the Hama airbase and that its runway was completely destroyed. Saudi outlet Al Hadath reported nine separate strikes and casualties at the scene, while Syrian site Voice of the Capital cited sources saying weapons depots, fighter jets and hangars were targeted in the Hama attack.

Meanwhile, tensions continued on Israel's southern front as two rockets were launched from Jabaliya in northern Gaza—the second such incident of the day—and were intercepted by the air defenses. Rocket sirens sounded in Sderot and nearby communities. Magen David Adom reported no injuries, aside from one young man who was hurt while running to a shelter.

Earlier, sirens were triggered in Kibbutz Kissufim due to concerns about a possible drone infiltration from Gaza, though the IDF later said the incident had ended without confirming any intrusion.

On Tuesday morning, another rocket was fired from northern Gaza and intercepted over Sderot during school hours. City officials quickly assured the public that children were safely sheltered with education staff.

Ohad Cohen, director of a lobby of Gaza border residents, speaking from Sderot, criticized the normalization of rocket fire. “They say there are no casualties, but every red alert causes harm—kids wet the bed again. It’s unacceptable that we treat this as routine,” he said. “Drizzles are for weather reports, not our lives.”

04.02.25 – We

IDF advance in southern Gaza, clear new corridor between Rafah and Khan Younis

04.02.25 – We

IDF advances in southern Gaza, targets key corridor between Rafah and Khan Younis
Military shifts focus to Morag Corridor to cut off Hamas’ Rafah Brigade and pressure terror group to free hostages; troops encircle Tel al-Sultan neighborhood, strike dozens of targets and describe push as strategic move to establish control over key terrain
Yoav Zitun, Einav Halabi|12:34

The IDF intensified its ground operation in southern Gaza Wednesday, targeting the corridor between the cities of Rafah and Khan Younis in what officials described as a significant escalation aimed at pressuring Hamas and securing the release of hostages.

The operation, part of the military's broader offensive, included renewed maneuvers around the so-called “Morag Corridor,” a route Israeli forces have previously operated along. According to the IDF, the goal is to bisect Hamas’ Rafah Brigade and gain control of areas where troops have not yet operated.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the push as the creation of a “second Philadelphi Corridor,” referring to a thin strip of land stretching along the Egypt-Gaza border, signaling its strategic importance. “We are now slicing through the Strip,” he said in a recorded statement.

Since midnight, the Air Force has struck roughly 60 locations across Gaza from the air, including weapons depots and terrorist compounds. The military says it is maintaining operational ambiguity to avoid compromising the mission or endangering troops.

In recent days, the 14th Brigade combat team under the 143rd Division completed the encirclement of the Tel al-Sultan neighborhood in Rafah. The IDF reported that forces discovered and destroyed dozens of weapons caches and terrorist sites, eliminated dozens of terrorists, and seized two rockets and a launcher aimed at Israeli territory. Several suspects were also detained.

Three IDF divisions — Gaza Division, 252nd Division and elements of the 36th Division — are now operating in the seaside enclave, though in more limited deployments compared to earlier phases of the war.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir and Shin Bet head Ronen Bar visited Gaza Wednesday. Zamir emphasized the need for disciplined, professional conduct by Israeli forces and said hostage safety remains a top priority. “Every soldier is operating under strict directives to avoid harming hostages,” the IDF said.

Shin Bet chief Bar added that targeted killings of top terror officials in Gaza, which began two weeks ago, would intensify, and linked them to the assassination early Tuesday of a senior Hezbollah official in Beirut who Israel claimed was plotting to carry out an “imminent attack” on Israelis overseas that could have resulted in hundreds of casualties.

Bar added that Hamas would face attacks wherever it operates. “The aim of the ground maneuver is to show Hamas that it will continue to pay a price until the 59 hostages are returned,” he noted.

Defense Minister Israel Katz had earlier declared an expansion of military activity in the south, though the army initially sought to keep details of the Morag Corridor operation under wraps to preserve the element of surprise.

While the stated goal is increasing pressure on Hamas, Israeli statements also suggest a strategic aim of holding territory in southern Gaza. Military officials characterized the current actions as the next stage of the ongoing campaign.

The fighting comes amid deteriorating humanitarian conditions. Crowds were seen looting UNRWA food warehouses in Gaza City, where Hamas had reportedly stored supplies. Meanwhile, residents described widespread hunger during the Eid al-Fitr holiday. “Even if I had money, there’s nothing left in the markets,” said Mahmoud Omar, a resident of Gaza City’s al-Nasr neighborhood.

Protests against Hamas have also resumed in the north, days after the terrorist group reportedly executed six Gazans, including a 22-year-old who had called for demonstrations. According to local sources, he was abducted, tortured for hours and returned to his family near death.

As the war enters a new phase, Israeli officials say the military will continue to expand its operations while adapting to on-the-ground realities. Negotiations for hostage releases remain stalled.

West Bank terror attacks down 80% compared to last year's Ramadan

04.02.25 – We

West Bank terror attacks down 80% during Ramadan; Israeli forces eliminate 13 terrorists

Intensified counterterrorism operations by Israeli security forces, particularly in northern West Bank, lead to major decline in attacks compared to last year's Ramadan

Yoav Zitun, Elisha Ben Kimon|12:02

The IDF and Shin Bet released data Wednesday summarizing West Bank operations during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan according to which Israeli security forces—including Border Police units—killed 13 terrorists, arrested 401 wanted individuals and seized 105 weapons.

Last year, 27 terror attacks originating from the West Bank took place during Ramadan. This year saw a significant decline in such attacks, with only three major attacks occurring during the period—an 80% drop—following intensified counterterror efforts, particularly in the northern West Bank.

“Security forces continue their operations to prevent terrorism across the West Bank in order to protect Israeli citizens,” the IDF and Shin Bet said in a joint statement.

Military officials were aware that the release of Palestinian prisoners as part of the recent hostage deal during Ramadan could pose security challenges. Nevertheless, the Central Command recorded a sharp decline in terror attacks compared to the previous year.

Counterterrorism operations in the northern West Bank remain ongoing, with two deep-penetration battalions conducting raids in the area. Meanwhile, even after Ramadan, the IDF continues drills simulating potential terror attacks during the upcoming Jewish holidays in April, with involvement from the Israeli Air Force and other security branches.

Israeli forces are also continuing efforts to locate and confiscate weapons in the West Bank, including in refugee camps. A key indicator of the success of these operations is the rising cost of illegal firearms in the region.

04.02.25 – We

IDF struck Gaza command base, Hamas claimed it was UNRWA clinic

04.02.25 – We

IDF strikes Gaza terror command base, Hamas claims it's 'UNRWA clinic'

Gaza media outlets report bodies pulled from the rubble of an UNRWA clinic in the refugee camp after it was hit adding that children were among the dead; military says steps were taken to mitigate the risk of harming civilians in building used for coordinating terror activity

Einav Halabi, Yoav Zitun|06:22

The IDF on Wednesday said it had attacked a terror command and control base in the Jabaliya refugee camp inside what Palestinian media claims was a UNRWA clinic. "The terrorists were hiding inside a command and control center that was being used for coordinating terrorist activity and served as a central meeting point for the terrorist organization," the IDF said in a statement.

"Additionally, the compound was used by the Hamas' Jabaliya Battalion to plan terror attacks against Israeli civilians and IDF troops. Prior to the strike, numerous steps were taken to mitigate the risk of harming civilians, including the use of aerial surveillance and additional intelligence."

After Israel said it was expanding its offensive against Hamas terrorists in Gaza, Palestinian media outlets reported on Wednesday that at least 19 people were killed in the Jabaliya refugee camp in Gaza in an Israeli strike on an UNRWA clinic. The reports claimed that at least nine children were among the dead and that bodies were being pulled from the rubble.

"Hamas terrorist organization systematically violates international law while taking over civilian infrastructure, and while brutally exploiting the civilian population as a human shield for its terror attacks against the State of Israel," the IDF said in a statement.

The military expansion in Gaza comes amid widespread evacuations from combat zones. The IDF warned Gazan civilians on Tuesday to leave Rafah and nearby towns to avoid harm. The IDF Arabic spokesperson, Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee, said in a statement that the army was "resuming intense combat to eliminate the capabilities of terrorist organizations" in the area and advised residents to move to the al-Mawasi humanitarian zone. Similar warnings were also issued to residents of the northern Gaza Strip. The operation also follows two incidents of rocket fire from Gaza, targeting border communities including one launch from the area of Khan Younis in the south and another from the northern parts of the Strip. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Defense Minister Israel Katz said earlier that the IDF was expanding its offensive on Hamas terrorists in Gaza. In a statement he said the troops were instructed to "crush and cleanse the area of terrorists and terror infrastructure and to seize wide areas that will be annexed to Israel's security zones."

His comments prompted an angry response from families of hostages held in Gaza who asked whether the government had decided to sacrifice the lives of the remaining 59 captives held by Hamas. Katz then released a second post saying the military operation was meant to put pressure on Hamas to agree to release all of the hostages.

Talks to advance a ceasefire and hostage exchange deal have been stalled after Hamas rejected proposals for further hostages' release unless Israel was prepared to move to the second phase of the ceasefire deal agreed in January, that would bring an end to the war.

04.02.25 – We

Qatar prolongs negotiations without resolution, as an actor of influence, not loyalty

04.02.25 – We

'Qatar is a country with no loyalty to either side,' ex-Mossad officer warns

Netanyahu testified in a scandal about aides' alleged ties to Qatar, which experts say uses 'charm and bribes' to gain influence, complicating hostage negotiations and raising security concerns for Israel

Keren Setton / The Media Line|05:07

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu abruptly left his trial on Monday to give testimony in the latest scandal involving his senior advisers and their ties to Qatar. The development is the latest twist in an investigation dubbed Qatargate, which has engulfed the veteran Israeli leader and his inner circle. On Tuesday morning, police requested to extend the suspects' remand by nine days. One of the advisers, Jonatan Urich, still holds a position in Netanyahu's office as one of his closest aides. A former aide, Eli Feldstein, was recently charged with harming national security in a separate case involving the theft and leak of classified Israeli military documents.

The latest investigation, led by Israel's Shin Bet security agency, focuses on Feldstein's work at an international firm contracted by Qatar to promote pro-Qatar stories to Israeli journalists while he was also employed in the Prime Minister's Office. Urich is suspected of involvement in a complex network of businesspeople and officials who allegedly facilitated payments from Doha while attempting to conceal their origin.

Israel and Qatar do not have formal diplomatic ties but have maintained discreet economic and political interactions for decades. Security cooperation began in the 1990s and has included intelligence-sharing between agencies. Trade relations have fluctuated, often influenced by Israel's ongoing conflict with the Hamas terrorist organization in Gaza. Qatar has played a central role in mediation between Israel and Hamas since the war began in October 2023. The Gulf state has hosted several Hamas leaders while simultaneously taking part in negotiations with Israel on sensitive issues such as hostage releases and ceasefires.

"Qatar confuses many countries, not only Israel," Dr. Ariel Admoni, an expert on Qatar's foreign and domestic policy at Bar-Ilan University, told The Media Line. "It plays on both sides. It funds terrorist organizations and organizations aimed at destabilizing regimes but also has ties with legitimate governments. It is a country with no loyalty to either side."

Admoni said he was not surprised by the latest allegations involving Israeli ties to Qatar, although many details remain under a gag order.

"Qatar understands that countries and people are looking to promote short-term interests, and that by helping them, it gains a foothold," he said. "This will allow them access to the

next foothold. Mediation leads to business ties, then to covert diplomatic ties, and so on—sometimes using bribes.”

Qatar has been implicated in similar efforts involving senior figures in other countries. In 2022, British authorities denied allegations that Prince Charles accepted millions of pounds from Qatar as alleged donations, describing them instead as charitable contributions to organizations sponsored by the monarchy.

“This method has been a known secret in many countries,” Admoni added. “It wouldn’t surprise me if the findings go deeper. In other countries, once investigations began, it was discovered that the initial allegations were just the tip of the iceberg.”

Israel, like many countries, finds itself troubled by Qatar as it struggles to balance the Gulf state’s ties with Hamas and other enemies of Israel against its growing global influence. Qatar’s foreign policy relies on soft power backed by its vast wealth, using financial resources to weave a broad web of influence.

“Qatar has adopted an extremely smart strategy based on the Muslim Brotherhood doctrine, which believes in gaining influence initially through financial means in order to create sympathy for them and alignment with their views,” Udi Levy, a former senior Mossad officer and senior researcher at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, said. “With Israel, the strategy was to develop economic, intelligence, and political relations without evolving into full diplomatic relations.”

According to Levy, Israel and other Western countries fail to fully grasp this strategy. “It is easy to be captivated by the money, the grandeur, and the charm,” he said, adding that many Israelis have become deeply involved with Qatar. “Israel has become increasingly dependent on Qatar.”

Qatar’s relationship with Israel has come under renewed scrutiny during the Israel-Hamas war and the subsequent hostage crisis. Hamas took 250 hostages during its surprise offensive against Israel on October 7, 2023. Since then, Qatar has played a leading role as a mediator between Israel and the terrorist group. Many Israelis have questioned the Gulf state’s ability to serve as an honest broker. Regardless, Israel has no alternative but to negotiate through Doha.

The alleged involvement of Netanyahu’s aides with Qatar has raised further questions and concerns. Netanyahu has been criticized by opponents for stalling negotiations and allegedly hindering talks for his own political survival. They claim he is delaying the release of all the hostages out of fear that a national inquiry will hold him responsible for the failures that led to the October 7 attack and Hamas’ rise over the past two decades. In 2018, Netanyahu became the first Israeli leader to approve the transfer of \$15 million in Qatari cash to Hamas-controlled Gaza. The funds were intended to pay civil servants and provide humanitarian relief in an effort to ease tensions and prevent escalation. Coined in Israel as the “conception,” the policy of improving Gaza’s economy to prevent conflict is now believed by many to have ultimately empowered Hamas. Much of the money is believed to have been diverted to Hamas’ military capabilities, even as civilians in Gaza remained in extreme poverty. Over the years, Qatar has sent up to \$1 billion in cash to Gaza.

“Without Qatari involvement, Israel will not be able to bring the hostages back,” said Levy. “The same goes for any future Israeli relations with other Arab countries. Qatar will also likely play a key role in any negotiations between the US and Iran.”

Now, Israel finds itself relying on Qatar to help secure the hostages’ release, even as it questions the Gulf state’s motives.

“Qatar’s motives often seem undefined, but it is looking for influence behind closed doors,” said Admoni. “In its goal to be an actor that is always on people’s minds, it would not surprise me if Qatar acts to prolong the hostage negotiations as much as possible without reaching a resolution.”

The latest allegations involving Netanyahu’s close aides come on top of the prime minister’s ongoing trial for corruption and breach of trust. They have added fuel to the opposition, which has long questioned his motives.

The story is written by Keren Setton and reprinted with permission from The Media Line.

04.02.25 – We

IDF postpones some soldiers leave by four months, over manpower shortage

04.02.25 – We

IDF cancels discharge leave for some soldiers over manpower shortages: ‘We’ve given enough’

Soldiers from Nahal Brigade, exhausted after over a year of wartime service, say burden shouldn’t fall on those who have already risked their lives on the front lines and that they were denied leave to which they are entitled under military regulations

Yoav Zitun|04:34

The IDF is canceling discharge leave for some combat troops in response to persistent manpower shortages, sparking complaints from soldiers who say they are being treated unfairly compared to other units.

Soldiers from the Nahal Brigade, currently deployed in the West Bank, said they were denied leave to which they are entitled under military regulations, while other regular army brigades have resumed granting it. The affected troops had expected to receive their discharge leave, a short break at the end of mandatory service that allows soldiers to rest and transition to civilian life. While technically still enlisted during this period, soldiers on discharge leave can be called back to duty at any time by the military.

“This solution shouldn’t come at the expense of those who’ve already risked their lives for over a year,” said a soldier from Nahal’s 931st Battalion. “Other brigades are sending their soldiers home for a week or two, as they should. Why are we different?”

Since major ground combat in Gaza ended last August and gave way to smaller-scale raids, the IDF has reduced its use of “Code 77” — a wartime directive allowing commanders to postpone discharge leave and extend mandatory service by four months in a reservist framework. Senior officers began easing restrictions on discharge to allow

soldiers nearing the end of their service some reprieve. But in the Nahal Brigade, that policy has not been applied.

“At the start of the war, it was understood that regular troops wouldn’t be discharged. They continued with their units as reservists, and the use of Code 77 was minimal,” said a commander in a regular infantry brigade. “But in the last six months, the situation changed. The fighting scaled down, and discharge leave was gradually restored because it gives soldiers some oxygen at the end of a long and intense service.”

Nahal soldiers say their brigade spent more time in combat in Gaza than any other infantry unit, and many of them are now exhausted—both mentally and physically—from over a year of extended, high-intensity service. They argue that the continued denial of their discharge leave violates IDF policy and places an undue burden on a group of soldiers who have already given more than most.

The IDF initially denied that other units had stopped using Code 77. But after Ynet inquiries, officials confirmed that traditional discharge leave has been reinstated in several regular units in recent weeks. The army emphasized that it still retains the authority to call up discharged soldiers immediately for reserve duty, even after they go home.

An IDF spokesperson said that the leave policy had been handled differently in the Paratroopers Brigade, which decided to continue with the old guidelines for one cohort due to pre-approved vacations. Starting with the next intake of soldiers, the brigade will align with the updated military order issued in February 2025.

While the IDF says the cancellation of discharge leave is offset by four months of reserve duty followed by a post-service organizational leave, some soldiers argue that the extra time comes at minimum wage and doesn’t make up for the loss of rest and personal freedom. “People are burned out,” said one Nahal soldier. “It’s not about the money. They just need a break.”

The cancellation comes as the IDF continues limited operations in Rafah and other parts of Gaza, searching for weapons, rocket launchers, tunnels and other infrastructure. These raids have expanded over the past week but have not led to major clashes or signaled the start of a broader ground offensive, which remains under planning and has yet to be approved by senior government and military officials.

04.02.25 – We

PM set Shin Bet deputy as acting head until a permanent replacement is appointed

04.02.25 – We

Netanyahu announces appointment of Ronen Bar's deputy as acting head of Shin Bet
Prime minister continues to interview candidates for the position, but announced that he will assign S., who has been serving as deputy head of the Shin Bet for the past three months, to the role of acting chief starting next week

Itamar Eichner|01:34

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday morning that he is continuing to interview candidates for the head of the Shin Bet, but announced that in the meantime he will assign S., who has been serving as Ronen Bar's deputy for the past three months, the role of acting head of the intelligence organization until a permanent replacement is appointed.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office says that Netanyahu "continues to interview candidates for the position of head of the Shin Bet, including candidates he has already interviewed."

The announcement comes after his about-face on Tuesday regarding the appointment of former Navy Admiral Eli Sharvit to the position. Bar's deputy at Shin Bet was considered the best option to head the security organization, with the necessary knowledge and experience to assume the leadership amid war.

Netanyahu explained the decision to appoint an acting head for the time being, in light of the hearing on the matter of Ronen Bar's removal that will be held in the High Court of Justice next week.

"In accordance with the schedule set by the government for the end of Ronen Bar's term by April 10, it will not be possible for the Grunis Committee to appoint a permanent Shin Bet head on time," the statement from the Prime Minister's Office said, referring to the advisory committee for the appointment of senior civil servants.

Netanyahu's announcement follows his abrupt reversal on appointing Vice Admiral (res.) Eli Sharvit, former Israeli Navy commander, as head of the Shin Bet—a decision he had made just one day earlier.

On Tuesday morning, Netanyahu's office issued a statement saying that, after further deliberation, he had decided to reconsider other candidates. This came less than 24 hours after he met with Sharvit, thanked him for his willingness to serve, but ultimately informed him that he would not be selected.

The reversal followed pressure from Netanyahu's associates and criticism from right-wing figures, partly due to Sharvit's participation in anti-government protests. Some also pointed to his support for the Israeli-Lebanese maritime border agreement, signed under former Prime Minister Yair Lapid. In an apparent attempt to justify the decision, sources close to Netanyahu also cited an opinion piece Sharvit had written in Calcalist, in which he criticized former U.S. President Donald Trump's climate policies—though other political and ideological factors also played a role.

Following Netanyahu's decision, Sharvit released a statement saying: "The Prime Minister asked me to take on the role of Shin Bet chief and continue serving the State of Israel in this difficult time—and I accepted. I have full confidence in the Shin Bet's ability to meet the complex challenges it faces today, and a humble belief in my own ability to lead it. The security of Israel and its citizens has always been my top priority." Last week, Netanyahu reportedly interviewed four candidates for the position: "M" – the Shin Bet Deputy Director, who was personally appointed by Netanyahu to lead Israel's negotiating team in a series of international talks; Yair Sagi – a former deputy Shin Bet

director, who previously lost the race for agency chief to Ronen Bar; Shalom Ben Hanan – a former department head, now a security analyst and commentator. Eyal Tsir Cohen – a former senior Mossad official, currently a researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). Netanyahu is expected to meet with Tzur Cohen upon his return from an overseas trip.

Notably, S, the current deputy Shin Bet chief, was not initially interviewed, despite being considered a natural candidate for the position. His limited experience—having only assumed the role three months ago—was reportedly a factor in the decision.

04.02.25 – We

Israel expands Gaza operations to seize wide areas as ceasefire talks stall

04.02.25 – We

Israel expands Gaza military operations as ceasefire talks stall

Overnight airstrikes and artillery fire follow statement by IDF calling on residents of Rafah to evacuate; defense minister says move is intended to 'cleanse the area of terrorists' and also to 'seize wide areas that will be annexed to Israel's security zones' Einav Halabi, Yoav Zitun|00:45

Israel's military operation in Gaza expanded early Wednesday, following overnight reports of heavy airstrikes and ground troop movement under intense artillery cover. Defense Minister Israel Katz confirmed the development, saying the campaign aims to dismantle Hamas infrastructure and secure broader buffer zones to protect Israeli forces and nearby communities.

“Operation Strength and Sword in Gaza is expanding,” Katz announced. “Its goal is to crush and cleanse the area of terrorists and terror infrastructure and to seize wide areas that will be annexed to Israel's security zones.” He called on Gaza residents to “act now to expel Hamas and return all hostages. This is the only way to end the war.”

The expansion comes amid widespread evacuations from combat zones. The IDF issued new evacuation directives this week, urging civilians to leave Rafah and several nearby towns. The IDF Arabic spokesperson, Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee, said in a statement that the army is "resuming intense combat to eliminate the capabilities of terrorist organizations" in the area and advised residents to move to the al-Mawasi humanitarian zone.

Arab media reported overnight Israeli strikes across Rafah, Khan Younis, Nuseirat and Deir al-Balah. Palestinian news agency Shehab said Israeli military vehicles entered central and eastern Rafah under cover of heavy fire. According to the reports, the IDF operation in Rafah has expanded to additional neighborhoods, following last week's activity in the Shaboura and Tel Sultan areas. Israeli forces were said to be searching for weapons, rocket launchers, tunnels and militants.

As of 5 a.m. Wednesday, medical sources in Gaza reported 21 fatalities. Al Jazeera reported that one Palestinian was killed and several injured in Rafah, and that a child died in an airstrike on a home in central Khan Younis.

Negotiations for the release of more hostages are ongoing, but major gaps remain. Israel publicly supports the original U.S.-brokered framework, which calls for the return of 11 living hostages and half the bodies of the dead. Hamas is offering to release five hostages in exchange for a 50-day ceasefire—one hostage per 10 days—without returning bodies.

04.01.25 – Tu

Iran tensions build as US military moves planes & ships to reinforce Middle East

04.01.25 – Tu

As Iran tensions build, US military moves warplanes to reinforce Middle East

In a statement Pentagon says there would be decisive action taken if Iran or its proxies threaten American personnel and interests in the region;

News Agencies | 23:52

U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has reinforced U.S. military capability in the Middle East with more warplanes, the Pentagon said on Tuesday, amid a more than two-week-old U.S. bombing campaign in Yemen and mounting tensions with Iran. The Pentagon's brief statement did not specify which aircraft were being deployed or where precisely they were sent.

"Should Iran or its proxies threaten American personnel and interests in the region, the United States will take decisive action to defend our people," Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell said in a statement.

Revolutionary Guards Aerospace Commander Amirali Hajizadeh threatened U.S. forces in the Middle East, noting American bases in the Middle East and adding: "They are in a glass house and should not throw stones."

Just one hour after the Pentagon announcement, the Houthi rebels said they attacked the USS Harry Truman for the third time in 24 hours. Earlier claims of attack on the carrier were not confirmed by the Pentagon.

As many as six B-2 bombers have relocated in the past week or so to a U.S.-British military base on the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, according to U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity. Experts say that puts the B-2s, which have stealth technology and are equipped to carry the heaviest U.S. bombs and nuclear weapons, in an ideal position to operate in the Middle East.

The U.S. military's Strategic Command has declined to say how many B-2s have reached Diego Garcia and noted that it does not comment on exercises or operations involving the B-2.

There is already considerable firepower in the Middle East and the U.S. military will soon have two aircraft carriers in the region after USS Carl Vinson was ordered to deploy to the CENTCOM earlier in the week.

The Pentagon did not specify where the carriers would be located but in the mean time Hegseth ordered to increase the deployment of U.S. forces in the area.

U.S. President Donald Trump threatened Iran on Sunday with bombing and secondary tariffs if Tehran did not come to an agreement with Washington over its nuclear program. "If they don't make a deal, there will be bombing," Trump said in a telephone interview with NBC. "There will be bombs like they've never seen before."

While B-2 bombers have been employed to strike buried Houthi targets in Yemen, most experts say use of the stealthy bomber is overkill there and the targets aren't buried so deeply.

However, the B-2 is equipped to carry America's most potent bomb -- the 30,000-pound GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator. That is the weapon that experts say could be used to strike Iran's nuclear program.

There are only 20 B-2 bombers in the Air Force's inventory so they are usually used sparingly.

One official told Reuters that the U.S. military was also moving some air defense capabilities from Asia to the Middle East.

04.01.25 – Tu

Could a secret chat mishap like Trump's happen in Israel?

04.01.25 – Tu

Could a secret chat mishap like Trump's happen in Israel?

After a journalist was mistakenly added to a Trump administration secret chat, questions arise if Israel could face similar breaches; while classified info is officially shared via encrypted phones, aides admit ministers often receive it through other channels too
Itamar Eichner|Updated:15:37

A major security breach like the one that occurred involving Trump administration staffers — when a journalist was accidentally added to a Signal group where highly classified information about a U.S. strike on the Houthis was shared — is unlikely to happen in Israel. However, that does not mean classified information cannot be leaked through digital communication platforms.

In Israel, classified materials are provided to Cabinet ministers only via a military-issued encrypted phone or through a courier. Officially, no classified material is transmitted via other media, such as WhatsApp, Signal or email.

The National Security Council (NSC) is solely responsible for updating Cabinet ministers. It is not involved in the dissemination of classified information to other security agencies,

where there are thousands—if not tens of thousands—of personnel receiving such updates.

The transmission of the vast majority (99.99%) of classified materials within security organizations is managed and supervised by the Director of Security for the Defense Establishment (Malmab) at the Defense Ministry.

Encrypted military phones and secure "red phones" in the homes and offices of security officials remain operational on Shabbat and holidays, ensuring continuous communication without the need for alternative, unregulated channels. While ministers receive non-classified updates in a Cabinet group chat, any critical update is flagged with a notification instructing them to check their encrypted military phone.

At government meetings, ministers are prohibited from bringing phones into the room. However, their aides acknowledge that, in practice, ministers and military officers sometimes receive classified information through other channels.

"People rely too much on digital encryption, which is not as secure as they believe," said one source. Moreover, many ministers—like many Israelis—regularly use WhatsApp for phone calls and assume it is secure, leading to a situation where security updates may be exchanged in unofficial chat groups.

"I have never received an unclassified document from a government office or fellow minister via an online app. It just doesn't happen, because there is strict adherence to ensuring that printed classified materials do not leave meetings," a government minister commented. "Updates are shared on WhatsApp, but nothing officially classified."

First published: 23:34, 04.01.25

04.01.25 – Tu

What the Shin Bet does—and why its leadership matters

04.01.25 – Tu

What the Shin Bet does—and why its leadership matters

Explainer: Israel's internal security agency plays a central role in counterterrorism and state protection, and the fight over its next chief reveals deep political tensions

Steven Ganot/The Media Line|15:31

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Monday that he had selected Eli Sharvit, a retired major general and former commander of the Israeli Navy, to be the next head of the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security agency.

The nomination of Sharvit—who lacks experience in domestic intelligence work—drew immediate backlash from within the agency and from Netanyahu's political allies. Within hours, reports emerged that Netanyahu was considering withdrawing the nomination due to pressure from members of his coalition.

Sharvit's political affiliations are not widely publicized. However, his involvement in 2023 protests suggests a commitment to judicial independence. Additionally, he has expressed environmental concerns, notably criticizing U.S. climate policies in a recent opinion piece.

Sharvit served in the Israeli Navy for 36 years and commanded the branch from 2016 to 2021. He helped shape Israel's maritime defense strategy and oversaw operations targeting Iranian arms smuggling and threats from Hezbollah and Hamas.

Although widely respected in the military, he has no background in internal security or counterterrorism—traditionally considered prerequisites for leading the Shin Bet. Some critics, including senior figures inside the agency, have argued that the position should go to someone with long-standing operational experience within the organization.

The Shin Bet is Israel's internal security service, officially known in English as the Israel Security Agency. The Hebrew name is Sherut Bitachon Klali ("General Security Service"), often abbreviated as Shabak or Shin Bet. The agency is responsible for counterterrorism, counterintelligence and protecting state secrets. Established in 1948, shortly after the founding of the state, it plays a central role in preserving internal security and thwarting terror plots, particularly from the Palestinian territories. It operates under the prime minister's authority and reports to the Knesset's Subcommittee for Intelligence and Secret Services.

Over the years, the Shin Bet has been directed by a series of high-ranking security professionals, many of whom went on to hold influential political or public positions.

The agency's first director, Isser Harel, led from 1948 to 1952 and later headed the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence agency. He is perhaps best known for overseeing the capture of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. After his tenure as director of the Mossad, Harel entered politics in 1969 by joining the National List, a party founded by David Ben-Gurion following his split from the Labor Alignment. Harel was elected to the Knesset and served as a member of the seventh Knesset until 1974, focusing on security issues during his term.

Harel's successor, Izi Dorot, served only briefly. From 1953 to 1963, Amos Manor served as director. A Holocaust survivor who immigrated from Transylvania, Manor focused on internal surveillance and counterintelligence, particularly against Soviet espionage.

Yossef Harmelin held the position twice, from 1964 to 1974 and again from 1986 to 1988. Between his terms, he served as Israel's ambassador to Iran. Avraham Ahituv directed the agency from 1974 to 1981, known for advocating limited contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization, a controversial stance at the time.

Avraham Shalom led from 1981 to 1986, resigning after the Bus 300 affair in which two captured Palestinian hijackers were killed after being taken into custody. Shalom was later pardoned by President Chaim Herzog. He was not affiliated with a political party.

Yaakov Peri, the first non-immigrant to hold the position of Shin Bet director, headed the agency from 1988 to 1994. After retiring, he entered politics with the centrist Yesh Atid party and served as minister of science, technology and space. His tenure at Shin Bet coincided with the First Intifada and saw a major ramp-up in intelligence-gathering operations.

Carmi Gillon, who served from 1995 to 1996, resigned following the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. He later became an advocate for dialogue with Palestinians and took part in public diplomacy efforts. He was affiliated with the left-leaning Meretz party and served as Israel's ambassador to Denmark.

Ami Ayalon, like Sharvit a former Navy commander, led the Shin Bet from 1996 to 2000. Ayalon later entered politics as part of the Labor party and became a vocal advocate for a two-state solution, co-founding the peace initiative The People's Voice.

Avi Dichter, director from 2000 to 2005, was appointed during the Second Intifada and led the agency during one of its most active periods. After leaving Shin Bet, he joined the Kadima party and later became a Likud Knesset member, serving in several ministerial posts, including minister of internal security.

Yuval Diskin served from 2005 to 2011 and was noted for his hawkish positions on Hamas and Iran. Though not a politician, he became publicly critical of Prime Minister Netanyahu after his retirement, particularly regarding Iran policy and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Yoram Cohen, who served from 2011 to 2016, was the agency's first religiously observant director and, as a son of immigrants from Afghanistan, the first non-Ashkenazi to head the agency. Though not affiliated with any political party, his tenure focused on Jewish extremism as well as Palestinian terrorism.

Nadav Argaman, director from 2016 to 2021, invested heavily in cyber capabilities and intelligence technology. He generally kept a low public profile and did not enter politics after his term ended.

Ronen Bar, who led the agency from 2021 until early 2025, was dismissed by Netanyahu in a highly politicized move after internal disputes and criticism over the handling of intelligence ahead of the October 7 Hamas attacks. He was not publicly affiliated with any political party.

In addition to the controversy surrounding Sharvit's nomination, Netanyahu's attempt to dismiss Ronen Bar has encountered serious legal obstacles. Critics allege that Bar's firing is politically motivated, linked to the Shin Bet's investigation into allegations that Netanyahu's aides received illicit payments from Qatar—an affair that has come to be known as “Qatargate.” Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara has warned that firing Bar could be unlawful and may be tainted by conflicts of interest.

A petition to the High Court of Justice prompted an injunction temporarily blocking Bar's removal, citing concerns about interference in an active corruption investigation involving the prime minister's close associates. Former security officials and civil society groups have also raised alarms, arguing that the dismissal is part of a broader campaign to weaken Israel's independent institutions.

The position of Shin Bet director carries enormous influence in Israel's security establishment. The evolving political context, security threats and pressure from both domestic and international actors make the choice of leader deeply consequential. Whether Sharvit is confirmed or replaced, the appointment will reflect broader tensions in Israeli politics over the role of the security services and the future of national defense. The story is written by Steven Ganot and reprinted with permission from The Media Line.

04.01.25 – Tu

Beirut strike foiled joint Hezbollah-Hamas plot to kill hundreds of Israelis overseas

04.01.25 – Tu

Beirut strike foiled joint Hezbollah-Hamas plot to kill hundreds of Israelis overseas, authorities say

Airstrike targeted top Hezbollah operative planning imminent overseas attack with Hamas that could have killed hundreds; intel gathered by Shin Bet unit focused on dismantling overseas Hamas networks

Avi Issacharoff 13:01

Israeli authorities said Tuesday they thwarted a major terrorist attack being planned against Israeli targets abroad, in what they described as one of the most serious plots in recent years.

The IDF and Shin Bet security agency confirmed that the overnight airstrike in Beirut's Dahieh district, a Hezbollah stronghold, targeted and killed Hassan Ali Mahmoud Bdeir, a senior operative in Hezbollah's Unit 3900 and the Iranian Quds Force.

Aftermath of Israeli airstrike on Beirut's Dahieh suburb

According to Israeli intelligence, Bdeir played a central role in a joint terror network involving both Hezbollah and Hamas operatives—a rare instance of cooperation between the Shiite and Sunni terrorist groups. The network was reportedly planning an imminent large-scale attack abroad, which officials said could have killed hundreds of Israelis had it been carried out.

According to French news agency AFP, Bdeir served as deputy to Hezbollah's chief coordinator for Palestinian affairs. Lebanese newspaper An-Nahar published a photograph of Bdeir aboard a plane with former Quds Force commander Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the senior Iraqi militia leader who was killed alongside Soleimani in a U.S. airstrike in 2020.

The strike was the result of an extended intelligence operation led by a specialized Shin Bet unit tasked with dismantling overseas Hamas networks. The unit has been especially active since the terrorist group was previously headed by senior Hamas figure Saleh al-Arouri, who was eliminated in an Israeli strike in Beirut early last year.

The intelligence for the operation was gathered by both Shin Bet and Military Intelligence, while the precision strike was executed by the Israeli Air Force. Lebanon's Health Ministry reported four people were killed and seven injured in the strike. Shin Bet and IDF officials said the operation prevented a potentially catastrophic attack and marked a significant blow to the collaboration between Hezbollah and Hamas beyond

Israel's borders. Israeli authorities noted that Hamas' overseas network operates from countries including Turkey and is attempting to expand into parts of Europe.

04.01.25 – Tu

Bennett 2026: Former PM Naftali Bennett registers new political party of chaos

04.01.25 – Tu

'Bennett 2026': Former PM Naftali Bennett registers new political party

Sources close to Bennett say hopes to tap into growing pool of undecided voters post-October 7, 40% of whom leaning right

Moran Azulay|10:48

Former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett announced Tuesday that he has registered a new political party under the provisional name "Bennett 2026," signaling a possible return to politics.

Bennett, who stepped away from public life after leaving office in 2022, confirmed the party's registration but emphasized that an official decision on whether to run in the next election has yet to be made. "If and when a decision is made to contest the elections, an announcement will follow," he said.

Sources close to Bennett say he believes there is significant potential among undecided voters, which they claim about 40% of whom lean to the political right. Since the October 7 Hamas-led attack, which some view as a turning point, Bennett has accelerated his return to the political arena.

In preparation, Bennett has hired two political consultants to conduct detailed research on both sides of the political map. A U.S.-based strategist studied the center-left bloc and its potential support for Bennett, while Nevo Cohen, a former adviser to National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, focused on right-wing, Likud-aligned, traditional and religious Zionist voters.

Bennett has faced lasting criticism from right-wing voters over his decision to form a unity government, popularly dubbed "Government for Change," with opposition leader Yair Lapid and Mansour Abbas, head of the Islamist Ra'am party—contrary to a key campaign promise. He also carries political scars from the breakup of his own coalition, triggered by party members Amichai Chikli and Idit Silman.

A former associate described the formation of the new party as a complex process, with Bennett determined to avoid past mistakes. He has hired an advisor with human resources expertise to screen all applicants seeking to join the party. Those who pass an initial review are given additional assignments as part of a multi-stage vetting process.

Over the past 18 months, Bennett has conducted dozens of field visits in Israel's north and south, meeting privately with local council leaders and pre-military academy students. He has delivered lectures at universities abroad but has largely avoided Israeli media. His

silence on major national issues, including the fate of Israeli hostages in Gaza, has sparked criticism.

In a recent interview with Ynetnews, Coalition Whip Ofir Katz accused Bennett of trying to recruit defectors from the current government ahead of the state budget vote. "We identified the move in time and stopped it," Katz said. "Those he approached are still with us. Fortunately, we received the information early."

Bennett previously led the short-lived "government of change," a broad coalition that collapsed in mid-2022. His reentry into politics could reshape the evolving political landscape ahead of Israel's next national election.

04.01.25 – Tu

Gaza claims food supplies scarce as fighting resumes, Israel says 50 days available

04.01.25 – Tu

Gazans claim food scarcity imminent as fighting resumes, Israel says supplies available
Israeli officials assert Gaza retains 50 days worth of food supplies amid ceasefire-era aid deliveries as residents warn of extreme shortages, closed bakeries and starvation
Einav Halabi|09:19

Following the resumption of fighting and the mass exodus of Gazans from Rafah toward Al-Mawasi, residents of the enclave on Tuesday reported worsening humanitarian conditions and dwindling food supplies, particularly during the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

"I don't have enough money for basic food, and even if I did, there's nothing in the markets," said Mahmoud Omar, a resident of Al-Nasr in western Gaza City.

The World Food Program (WFP) announced Tuesday that flour stocks in Gaza's stores have run out, raising the risk of severe hunger in the enclave. Gaza Bakeries Association head Abdul Nasser Al-Ajrami said bakeries are not only out of flour but also lack diesel to run their machines, forcing all bakeries to shut down. He added that operations will not resume until Israel reopens crossings and allows humanitarian aid into Gaza.

Amjad Shawa, head of Gaza's network of non-governmental organizations, warned that flour supplies in bakeries supported by the WFP are running out quickly. "About 30% of bakery production goes to shelter centers, while the rest is distributed to residents who depend mainly on aid," he said.

"The flour shortage is a precursor to broader shortages of goods and essential food supplies needed for community kitchens and soup kitchens across Gaza," he added.

"With bakeries closing, Gaza will enter a state of hunger, especially since the population relies on them," he also said. "The already dire humanitarian situation will deteriorate even faster as people lose access to bread."

Gaza's government media office said that "Gaza is gradually dying of starvation" and called on the international community to intervene.

Israeli officials, however, estimate that Gaza has enough food supplies to last up to 50 days. A security official noted that during the ceasefire four times more food and medical supplies were delivered to the enclave.

According to the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, over 25,000 humanitarian aid trucks carrying food, water, fuel, gas, medicine, tents and shelter equipment entered Gaza. Despite this, the WFP warned that food stocks could run out in less than two weeks and that bakery and food distribution centers have "unprecedentedly low" supplies.

04.01.25 – Tu

PM reconsiders Shin Bet chief choice after criticism exposed anti-Trump article

04.01.25 – Tu

Netanyahu backtracks on Shin Bet chief choice after criticism

PM tells Sharvit he decided to consider other candidates just 24 hours after naming him the new designated head of the security agency; allies speak out against appointment after the decorated admiral takes part in anti-government protests

Itamar Eichner, Moran Azulay|03:12

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on Tuesday that he is reversing his decision to appoint former Navy commander, Admiral Eli Sharvit as the head of Shin Bet, just 24 hours after naming him the designated replacement to Ronen Bar. The Prime Minister's office (PMO) said in a statement that Sharvit was informed of the decision on Monday. "Netanyahu met with Sharvit on Monday night, thanked him for his willingness to serve in the role but informed him that after further consideration, he intends to consider other candidates."

Netanyahu's decision followed pressure from political allies and criticism from the right-wing hardliners over Sharvit's participation in protests against the government. Some allies of the prime minister said the reason for the change was an article he wrote in ynet's sister publication Calcalist, criticizing U.S. President Donald Trump's climate policies.

Sharvit wrote that by ignoring the risks to posed by the climate crisis, Trump was sending the world into the abyss. On Monday, Trump ally Republican Senator Lindsey Graham said in a post that Sharvit's appointment to head the Shin Bet was "beyond problematic." "The statements made by Eli Sharvit about President Trump and his polices [sic] will create unnecessary stress at a critical time. My advice to my Israeli friends is change course and do better vetting," Graham wrote.

Sharvit said he had agreed to accept the offer from the prime minister to continue serving the State of Israel. "This decision came with full confidence in the ability of Shin Bet to

face the complex challenges it currently faces and with a humble belief in my ability to lead it in doing so. Serving the interests of the state, its security, and the safety of its citizens will always be my top priority.”

Netanyahu named Sharvit despite an injunction from the Supreme Court preventing him from firing the current chief, Ronen Bar pending a hearing later this month.

Petitioners to the court claimed Netanyahu's motivation for removing Bar was the ongoing investigation into the involvement of senior members of his close circle, with Qatar. On Monday, two of Netanyahu's advisors were arrested as part of the investigation dubbed Qatargate, on suspicion of contact with foreign agents and money laundering.

Netanyahu said the probe was Bar's attempt to remove a democratically elected right-wing prime minister and government and that his aid's arrest was an attempt to prevent the firing of the Shin Bet chief. He also said his aids were being held hostage by his political opponents, a statement that sparked outrage among families of Israeli hostages held captive by Hamas in Gaza since the Oct. 7 massacre.

According to a source close to Netanyahu, the prime minister was aware that Sharvit had attended a protest but decided to appoint him anyway because he was not a regular participant and did not address the protesters. But others in his camp cited the article slamming Trump, which the sources said Netanyahu was unaware of.

04.01.25 – Tu

Israel strikes Hezbollah terrorist & damaged upper three floors in southern Beirut

04.01.25 – Tu

Israel strikes Hezbollah terrorist in Beirut's Dahieh, IDF says

Air Force jets strike Hezbollah stronghold for second time since ceasefire in war against Iran-backed terror group taking effect; military says operative 'directed Hamas operatives in planning a significant and imminent terror attack against Israeli civilians'

Lior Ben Ari | Yesterday | 23:18

The IDF eliminated a Hezbollah terrorist in an overnight strike on the Dahieh, a Hezbollah stronghold on the southern outskirts of Beirut, the military said on Tuesday.

"A short while ago, with the direction of the [Shin Bet], the [Israeli Air Force] conducted a strike in the Dahieh area, a key Hezbollah terrorist stronghold," a statement read.

"The strike targeted a Hezbollah terrorist who had recently directed Hamas operatives and assisted them in planning a significant and imminent terror attack against Israeli civilians.

"Due to the immediate threat the terrorist posed, the IDF and [Shin Bet] acted to eliminate him and removed the threat."

Lebanon health officials said at least three people were killed in the strike and seven others were wounded. The strike appeared to have damaged the upper three floors of a building in Beirut's southern suburbs.

The Hezbollah-affiliated Al Mayadeen network reported that the operative eliminated in the strike did not hold a senior position within the Iran-backed terrorist group.

Eyewitnesses told Reuters that explosions were heard throughout Beirut as Israeli fighter jets were spotted overhead.

The overnight attack marks Israel's second strike on the Hezbollah stronghold since the parties agreed to a ceasefire last November. On Friday, the Israeli Air Force struck a building in Dahieh used as a drone storage facility by Hezbollah's aerial unit following rocket fire toward northern Israel. The IDF said the Lebanese government was responsible for any attack on Israel from its territory.

04.01.25 – Tu

Israel spy jet in Greek NATO drill, with Arabs; Qatar, UAE & Turkey

04.01.25 – Tu

Israel joins Qatar in major international air force drill with high-tech spy jet

In major air drill in Greece, Israeli Air Force is participating alongside Gulf state, widely regarded as a key financial backer of Hamas; Israel deploys its advanced Oron intelligence aircraft, while Qatar joins with F-15 fighter jets

Yoav Zitun|16:53

The Israeli Air Force is taking part in Greece's annual multinational Iniochos 25 air drill, which this year includes an unusual participant: Qatar, widely regarded as a key financial backer of Hamas.

Israel dispatched just one aircraft to the exercise — the Oron (based on Gulfstream's G550 business jet airframe), its newest and most advanced intelligence-gathering jet, operated by the Nachshon Squadron.

Qatar is participating with F-15 fighter jets, while the United Arab Emirates deployed Mirage 2000 aircraft.

Though host country Greece typically avoids publicizing the involvement of Arab nations in such drills, this year it made a rare move by openly naming both Qatar and the UAE among the participants.

Other countries taking part in Iniochos 25 include the United States with F-16 fighters and KC-135 and KC-46 refueling aircraft, France with Mirage 2000 fighters, India with Su-30 fighters, Italy with Tornado fighters, Slovenia with PC-9 fighters, Spain with F-18 fighters and Greece with various aircraft as host nation.

Israel had skipped the last two editions of the drill — in 2023 reportedly due to tensions with Turkey, and in 2024 because of the ongoing war in Gaza. Prior to that, Israeli participation was consistent, including the deployment of F-16I fighter jets in both 2021 and 2022.

The Israeli Air Force's presence in a drill alongside Qatari forces is notable given the political backdrop. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave his first testimony on Monday in the "Qatargate" investigation, which centers on allegations that two of his close aides — Jonathan Urich and former spokesperson Eli Feldstein — covertly promoted Qatari interests while serving in the Prime Minister's Office. Both men remain in custody and are expected to appear before a Rishon Lezion court on Tuesday for a remand hearing.

03.31.25 – Mo

Smotrich resigns Finance & Defense cabinet in coalition rift, to force MK Succot out

03.31.25 – Mo

Bezael Smotrich temporarily resigns from Cabinet posts amid coalition rift
Religious Zionist Party leader cites breach of agreements between his faction, Ben-Gvir and Netanyahu over the return and firing of certain parliamentarians following national security minister's government comeback
Moran Azulay, Itamar Eichner|14:01

Religious Zionist Party leader Bezael Smotrich resigned on Monday from his posts as finance minister and minister in the Defense Ministry, citing "a breach of agreements" between his party, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's Otzma Yehudit Party and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Smotrich's resignation is considered a procedural step, as he intends to return to serve as a Knesset member and has formally requested reappointment to his ministerial roles once his parliamentary status is restored.

This maneuver is facilitated by the so-called "Norwegian Law" which allows ministers or deputy ministers to resign from the Knesset to focus on their executive duties, enabling the next candidate on their party's list to enter parliament. If the minister later leaves the Cabinet, they can reclaim their Knesset seat, and the substitute member steps down. Following Smotrich's resignation, MK Yitzhak Kroizer of Otzma Yehudit will leave the Knesset, making room for Smotrich's return to parliamentary service. The shuffle has reignited tensions between the two far-right coalition partners over earlier commitments concerning MK Zvi Succot from Smotrich's party.

Succot had entered the Knesset after Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu (Otzma Yehudit) resigned his parliamentary seat to focus solely on his ministerial role. However, when Otzma Yehudit rejoined the coalition earlier in March, Eliyahu returned to the Knesset,

forcing Succot out. Under the Norwegian Law, Eliyahu cannot resign from the Knesset a second time to allow Succot's return, leaving the responsibility to one of Otzma Yehudit's two other ministers — Ben-Gvir or Negev and Galilee Development Minister Yitzhak Wasserlauf. Ben-Gvir has refused to vacate his seat and is reportedly leveraging the situation for political gain.

A source from Smotrich's party criticized Otzma Yehudit, saying, "Their conduct is baffling. It's unfortunate they failed to honor their commitment to return MK Tzvi Succot to the Knesset, especially since, at their request, the coalition allowed MK Kroizer to remain in place during their party's resignation. Itamar Ben-Gvir's refusal to fulfill this commitment, and the removal of these two players from the coalition, is unnecessary and inappropriate."

03.31.25 – Mo

Israel awaits Hamas answer to proposal as military weakens targets

03.31.25 – Mo

Israel awaits Hamas answer to counterproposal as military pressure mounts

Officials say terror group signaled willingness to release five living hostages, including American-Israeli dual citizen Edan Alexander, in exchange for 50-day cease-fire; Jerusalem, however, is demanding release of 11 captives in return for 40-day truce

Itamar Eichner|13:41

Israel is awaiting Hamas' response to a counterproposal for a cease-fire and hostage release, as it increases military pressure in the Gaza Strip to push toward an agreement that could be reached before the upcoming Passover holiday.

According to Israeli officials, Hamas has signaled willingness to release five living hostages, including American-Israeli dual citizen Edan Alexander, in exchange for a 50-day cease-fire. Israel, however, is demanding the release of 11 hostages—among them Alexander—in return for a 40-day cease-fire. Jerusalem has rejected the idea of phased releases and is insisting that all 11 hostages be freed on the first day of the truce.

Under Israel's proposal, Hamas would be required to submit a full list of hostages—both living and deceased—by the fifth day of the cease-fire. On the tenth day, it would release the remains of 16 hostages believed to have died in captivity, which Israeli officials estimate as half of the total deceased. During the truce period, talks would begin on a second stage of the agreement, focusing on a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a potential end to the war.

A senior Israeli security official said that if progress is made, Hamas would eventually release all remaining hostages—living and deceased. However, the official stressed that Israel is setting clear conditions: maintaining a security buffer zone inside Gaza, demilitarizing the Strip, and ensuring robust security arrangements. While Israel has not agreed to end the war as a precondition, officials say that if all hostages are returned,

Hamas leaders go into exile, and Gaza is demilitarized, it would mark the conflict's conclusion.

As diplomatic efforts continue, the Israel Defense Forces have intensified operations across the Gaza Strip under a plan approved by Defense Minister Israel Katz. The campaign includes seizing key areas to serve as security zones, issuing evacuation notices to civilians, and restricting humanitarian aid to Hamas-controlled territories. Forces have expanded control in the south beyond the Philadelphi Route and are operating with increased intensity from both the air and ground. Officials say these actions are intended both to weaken Hamas and ensure that no hostages remain in the targeted areas. "This is the peak of military pressure on Hamas, just before a wide-scale ground operation," a senior security official said. "Hamas is taking a serious hit." Israeli intelligence assessments suggest Hamas is unlikely to voluntarily release all hostages at once. Officials believe that sustained military pressure is crucial for creating the leverage needed to secure a broader agreement.

03.31.25 – Mo

Problem in Shin Bet choice; Sharvit penned article in January, critical of Trump policies

03.31.25 – Mo

Lindsey Graham slams Netanyahu's 'beyond problematic' pick for Shin Bet chief over anti-Trump comments

Pro-Israel US senator and Trump ally urges PM to better vet candidates and select different replacement for Ronen Bar, following revelations that Eli Sharvit had criticized President Trump's climate policies

Moran Azulay, Daniel Edelson, New York, Itamar Eichner|12:57

U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham sharply criticized on Monday the potential appointment of former Israeli Navy chief Eli Sharvit as the next head of the Shin Bet security agency, calling it "beyond problematic" due to Sharvit's past remarks about President Donald Trump.

In a post on X, the Republican senator from South Carolina wrote, "While it is undeniably true that America has no better friend than Israel, the appointment of Eli Sharvit to be the new leader of the Shin Bet is beyond problematic. There has never been a better supporter for the State of Israel than President Trump. The statements made by Eli Sharvit about President Trump and his policies [sic] will create unnecessary stress at a critical time. My advice to my Israeli friends is change course and do better vetting."

The criticism came just hours after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Sharvit as his pick to lead the Shin Bet, even before the High Court was set to deliberate on the dismissal of current agency chief Ronen Bar. Despite the official announcement, Israeli political sources indicated the nomination may already be in jeopardy.

While Sharvit had previously taken part in protests against the government's judicial reform, sources close to Netanyahu insisted that was not the reason for the apparent reversal. They said the prime minister was aware of Sharvit's limited participation in a protest but saw no disqualifying issue — noting that Sharvit neither took the stage nor gave a speech.

However, a column Sharvit penned in January in Ynet's sister publication Calcalist, criticizing Trump and his policies, reportedly caught Netanyahu's team by surprise and was cited as the turning point in reconsidering the appointment. The timing of Graham's post has fueled speculation that there may have been coordination between the senator and Netanyahu's office.

03.31.25 – Mo

Flight of 150 Israel students on Poland trip, land in Turkey over engine issue

03.31.25 – Mo

Flight carrying Israel students diverted to Turkey after engine malfunction

Over 150 Israeli high school students safely evacuated to Antalya's secure airport terminal after Enter Air flight aborts Poland trip due to engine issues; 'Students are in a safe and protected area'

Tamar Trabelsi-Hadad|04:34

A plane carrying two Israeli student delegations to Poland, including about 150 high school seniors, was forced to land in Antalya, Turkey, on Monday morning due to an engine malfunction.

The students were transported by bus to a secure terminal area within the airport and did not leave the premises. The Education Ministry reported that all students "are feeling well."

The landing took place around 8:00 a.m. A replacement aircraft is en route and the students are expected to depart for Krakow, Poland, at approximately 3:00 p.m. local time.

The plane belongs to the Polish airline Enter Air. "The students are in a safe and protected area inside the airport, under the constant supervision of their teachers," the Education Ministry said in a statement.

"The landing was carried out due to concerns over a technical issue and as a precaution it was decided to land the flight in accordance with aviation regulations."

The Education Ministry is in contact with security and education officials and remains in continuous coordination with school administrations and parents.

03.31.25 – Mo

Former Navy commander Eli Sharvit appointed as next Shin Bet chief

03.31.25 – Mo

Netanyahu names retired admiral Eli Sharvit as next Shin Bet chief

Announcement made without waiting for Supreme Court to rule on petitions trying to stop firing of current chief Ronen Bar; The last time a Navy commander was appointed to the position was after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin

Nina Fox, Itamar Eichner, Yoav Zitun|00:07

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Monday morning that he has decided to appoint retired Vice Admiral Eli Sharvit, a former commander of the Israeli Navy, as the next head of the Shin Bet security agency.

In a statement from his office, Netanyahu said he had "thoroughly interviewed seven qualified candidates for the position." His surprise announcement comes more than a week before a Supreme Court hearing on the dismissal of the agency's current director, Ronen Bar. Netanyahu's plan to announce his nominee ahead of the court ruling was first reported Sunday by Ynet.

Sharvit served in the Israel Defense Forces for 36 years, including five years as Navy commander from 2016 to 2021. "In that role, he led the development of maritime defense capabilities for Israel's exclusive economic zone and managed complex operations against Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran," Netanyahu's office said.

The statement also addressed the significance of the appointment, saying: "The Shin Bet is a distinguished organization that went through a severe shock on October 7. The prime minister is confident that Vice Admiral Sharvit is the right person to lead the agency forward while preserving its proud legacy."

Sharvit's selection is considered unexpected, as four other candidates were previously seen as frontrunners: Eyal Tsir Cohen, Yair Sagi, Deputy Shin Bet Chief "M," and Shalom Ben Hanan. Unlike these candidates, Sharvit has never served in the Shin Bet. However, he was recently appointed to a team established by IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir to review the military's investigations into the October 7 Hamas attack.

The last time a former Navy commander was appointed to lead the Shin Bet was after the 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, when Ami Ayalon took the position. From the Navy to intelligence

Sharvit, 57, is married with three children. He was born in Sde Boker in southern Israel, the youngest of three siblings. His family later moved to Be'er Sheva, where he spent his childhood. In a 2021 exit interview at the end of his tenure as navy commander, he told Ynet and Yedioth Ahronoth that his enlistment in the Navy was purely coincidental.

"I got a notice in the mail saying, 'Volunteer for the Naval Officer Course,' so I went. I wasn't in a maritime scouting program or anything. I enlisted in 1985, joined the missile boat fleet, and completed the 18-month officer training course," he recalled.

Sharvit spent his entire career in the IDF's naval forces, alternating between operational and staff roles. In 2006, he was deputy commander of the missile boat flotilla (3rd Fleet) before later becoming its commander. He then served as the navy's Haifa base commander, deputy navy chief, and finally, in 2016, was appointed to lead the navy, succeeding Ram Rothberg.

After leaving the IDF in 2021, Sharvit transitioned to the private sector, initially leading the renewable energy division at Tadiran. He later became president of a Rafael subsidiary specializing in maritime defense systems. He was also previously considered a candidate for CEO of Rafael but told Calcalist that he declined the offer to focus on a renewable energy venture in the private sector.

Sharvit has previously participated in protests against the government's judicial overhaul at Tel Aviv's Kaplan Street but has not called for reservists to refuse service.

Throughout his tenure as commander of the Israeli Navy, Sharvit expressed professional support for the purchase of missile ships and submarines from Germany and the Thyssenkrupp shipyard. His statements—while in uniform—arguably weakened claims of criticism and corruption surrounding Netanyahu's push to procure the vessels from the German conglomerate.

In one of his interviews, Sharvit conveyed the message that no one dictates to the IDF which naval vessels to purchase. "We really like this shipyard; it produces fantastic vessels. We have been buying submarines from them for decades. I am not aware of any situation where something is forced on the IDF. If we don't want it, we don't take it," he said. "We wanted this, we defined its specifications, we refined it to our exact needs—this is what we wanted."

While Israel's submarine inquiry committee issued warning letters—including to Sharvit's predecessor—stating that national security risks had been created, Sharvit dismissed claims that the navy was pressured into unnecessary purchases. "The portrayal of these vessels, both submarines and ships, as something imposed on us and unneeded is simply not true. These are vessels we selected and worked on for years."

Sharvit also supported the maritime border agreement with Lebanon signed by then-Prime Minister Yair Lapid. The deal delineated the maritime boundary between the two countries and allowed Lebanon to explore a specific gas field—where no discoveries were ultimately made. At the time, Sharvit stated that Israel had "an interest in Lebanon having a gas rig" and said the agreement aligned with Israel's strategic interests.

Another decision Sharvit made as navy chief was relocating naval observers from frontline positions in two areas. He moved the female surveillance operators monitoring Gaza from the Erez outpost—attacked on October 7—to the Israeli Navy base in Ashdod. Similarly, he transferred operators stationed in Rosh Hanikra, near the Lebanese border, to Haifa.

Operational philosophy: Doesn't believe in passivity

In his 2021 interview, Sharvit described his strategic outlook, saying, "I don't believe in a passive approach. When it comes to Iran, economic sanctions complicate their financial system, and they look for creative ways to transfer funds to terror organizations. We need to prevent them from using the maritime domain for financial and weapons transfers."

Reflecting on his experience, he emphasized the importance of deterrence. "Hassan Nasrallah is currently deeply deterred, but deterrence is fragile. If you don't respond to certain actions, it erodes. You need to maintain it constantly," he said. Sharvit traced this perspective back to the 2006 Second Lebanon War, when Hezbollah fired an anti-ship missile at the INS Hanit, killing four sailors. "That event was a major turning point for me. It fundamentally changed my outlook. It showed that to project strength at sea, you don't necessarily have to sail. Hezbollah had no navy, yet they nearly sank a missile boat and effectively imposed a maritime blockade on northern Israel." Supreme Court to review Shin Bet dismissal next week
The Supreme Court is set to hold a hearing on Tuesday, April 8, regarding the government's decision to dismiss current Shin Bet Chief Ronen Bar. The move has sparked controversy, with Bar opposing his removal, citing potential conflicts of interest related to the agency's investigation into the so-called "Qatar-Gate" affair.

The panel reviewing the petitions against Bar's dismissal will be composed of the court's three most senior justices: Supreme Court President Isaac Amit, whom Justice Minister Yariv Levin and other ministers refuse to recognize as legitimate; Deputy President Noam Sohlberg, a conservative jurist; and Justice Dafna Barak-Erez, one of the court's more liberal members. Last week, the Supreme Court rejected Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara's request to prevent Netanyahu from interviewing candidates for the position. Shortly after the ruling, Netanyahu began summoning candidates for interviews.

03.30.25 – Su

Hamas is starting to blink: Israel increases pressure amid stalled negotiations

03.30.25 – Su

"'Hamas is starting to blink': Israel increases military pressure amid stalled hostage negotiations

Israel demands release of 11 living hostages and return of killed hostages' bodies while intensifying military pressure on Hamas; Netanyahu claims progress in negotiations, as US and Egypt push Hamas to show flexibility

Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi | 16:26

The gaps between Israel and Hamas remain substantial, with the U.S. and Egypt applying significant pressure on Hamas behind the scenes to show flexibility. At the end of the Security Cabinet meeting, the government ministers decided to intensify military pressure on Hamas in the coming days to force acceptance of Israel's counteroffer.

While Hamas has expressed willingness to release five living hostages in exchange for a 50-day ceasefire, Israel is demanding an increase in the number of living hostages released to 11, along with the return of half the bodies of killed hostages. Israel is awaiting Hamas' response and, in the meantime, will escalate military pressure.

The Security Cabinet convened late Saturday night to discuss negotiations for a hostage deal and received briefings from the heads of the negotiation team, led by M from Shin Bet. The meeting was attended by IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir, while the heads of the Mossad and Shin Bet sent their deputies. Briefings concluded that Hamas appears to be stalling negotiations. Efforts are being made to reach agreements before Passover, but significant gaps remain. Minister Ron Dermer argued that Israel's military pressure is effective, stating that "Hamas is starting to blink."

A senior Israeli official revealed that a proposal from mediators was received over the weekend. Consultations were held in Israel, leading to the submission of a counteroffer.

"Negotiations are ongoing," the official said. "Even without delegations, there is continuous communication with mediators and the Americans. Military pressure and the logistical blockade are clearly having an impact on negotiations, leading to the exchange of proposals. We submitted a counteroffer and are now waiting for Hamas' response." Israel's proposal aligns with the original Witkoff framework: the release of 11 living hostages and half the bodies of the dead. Israel clarified that if this proposal is accepted it will enter negotiations for the second phase. Talks currently focus on key terms and, if progress is made, Israel is prepared to send a delegation to Cairo or Doha. Preparations for this are already underway.

Hamas' current offer proposes returning five living hostages over a 50-day period — one hostage every 10 days. Israel has rejected this offer. In the previous phase, three hostages were released each week. Israel is demanding the inclusion of dead hostages and a shorter timeline.

At a government meeting, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that military pressure on Hamas is proving effective. "It works because it simultaneously crushes Hamas' military and governmental capabilities while creating conditions for the release of our hostages. That's exactly what we're doing. Last night, the Security Cabinet decided to intensify the already significant pressure to further weaken Hamas and create optimal conditions for the release of our hostages," Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu counters 'false claims'

Netanyahu dismissed three "false claims" directed at the government: "First, that we are not conducting negotiations. That's false. We are negotiating under fire, which is why it's effective. We are beginning to see cracks appear. The second claim is that we are unwilling to discuss the final stage. That's also false. We are ready. Hamas will lay down its arms, its leaders will be allowed to leave, and we will ensure general security in Gaza while advancing Trump's plan for voluntary migration. We are not hiding this.

"The third false claim is that we don't care about the hostages. That's not true. Ministers and officials here meet with the hostages' families regularly, as do I and my wife. Over the past week, we met with four families and spoke with four others. We deeply feel and share their pain, which is immense." According to Netanyahu: "Until now, the combination of military and diplomatic pressure has been the only thing that has secured the return of hostages—not the empty slogans and criticisms I hear from so-called experts in the media."

Regarding Hezbollah, Netanyahu stated: "In Lebanon, we are enforcing strict measures without compromise. This is the directive given by myself, the Defense Minister, and the Cabinet to the IDF, and the IDF is carrying it out in the best way possible. We do not tolerate provocations or make exceptions. The state of Lebanon is responsible for what happens on its territory, and it must ensure no attacks are launched from there toward Israel."

The Cabinet ministers also received briefings on the American campaign against the Houthis, which highlighted more decisive and powerful actions compared to the Biden administration. Updates were also provided on the Iranian threat and the dramatic measures taken by Trump, who issued an ultimatum to the Iranians: agree to a deal or face military action.

Netanyahu praised U.S. actions against the Houthis. "They are addressing the situation with great force. Of course, we are acting to defend ourselves, as we did recently, but the fact that the U.S. is stepping up its efforts in such a decisive manner is a significant change. We always value alliances. We have an alliance with the greatest power in the world, which stands firmly behind us in this arena and others with no reservations."

Sources within Hamas leadership told the London-based Arabic-language newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat that the organization is facing difficulties managing certain issues, as all members are now targets for attacks. Those remaining in Gaza, including political and military leaders, and government officials, have been forced into hiding to evade Israeli security tracking until a ceasefire is reached.

The sources emphasized that, while Hamas remains strong and unified, the current circumstances are forcing it to retreat, particularly as Israeli bombardments target government centers, homes, individuals and other areas. They noted that a ceasefire would strengthen Hamas and allow it to continue governing Gaza until a clear political agreement is reached regarding the administration of the Strip by an agreed-upon body, primarily tied to the community support committee Hamas has already agreed to establish.

03.30.25 – Su

Hostage families demand urgent meeting with Israeli negotiator Ron Dermer

03.30.25 – Su

Hostage families demand urgent meeting with Israeli negotiator Ron Dermer

The families sent a letter to Dermer accusing him of ignoring their requests for a meeting: 'We feel forgotten in the dark. You were appointed to the role over a month ago, and it seems there is no progress in sight'

Yael Ciechanover|14:21

Families of more than 20 hostages sent a letter on Sunday evening to Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, head of the negotiation team for the release of hostages, accusing him of ignoring their repeated requests for a meeting.

"Acknowledge us, we feel forgotten in the dark. We are once again demanding that you meet with us," the families wrote.

The letter states that, despite over a month having passed since Dermer's appointment, there has been no significant progress in negotiations.

"More than a month has passed, and there seems to be no progress in sight," the families wrote, voicing frustration at the lack of response from Dermer. They also referred to promises made upon his appointment, which suggested his leadership would help break the deadlock in talks, yet no tangible changes have been seen.

The families made it clear that the proposed plan for the release of all hostages in one phase had been abandoned in favor of partial agreements that fail to meet their needs.

"The feasible and appropriate plan to guarantee the release of all hostages in one go has been discarded," the letter noted, expressing disappointment over the gap between promises and reality.

"Do not leave the negotiation room until you secure a comprehensive deal for everyone. As long as you're not in the negotiation room, we're once again demanding—meet with us, all the families of the hostages, immediately. Acknowledge us, our loved ones have no time, and neither do we."

The letter concludes by highlighting that families are not receiving timely updates. "Some of us receive no response at all, and others are promised meetings weeks from now," they wrote. "The hostages cannot wait another week! Minister Dermer, we expect an update and an invitation for the families to meet as soon as possible."

Lishay Miran-Lavi, whose husband Omri Miran is among the hostages in Gaza, harshly criticized Dermer two and a half weeks ago. "If they don't come back on their feet, but in coffins, or if hostages become the next Ron Arad, the blood and neglect will be on your hands," Miran-Lavi wrote in a message to the minister after, as she claimed, he ignored her requests for a meeting for six months.

She also wrote to the minister handling negotiations: "Minister Dermer, after six months of trying to arrange a meeting with you through the proper channels, I've given up and am writing here because Omri has no time left to wait. Omri is enduring torture, hunger and humiliation day after day, hour after hour. My daughters, Roni and Alma, can't go on without their father, and without knowing his fate. Every morning I wake up asking: When will Daddy Omri return from Gaza? I can't stay silent anymore."

03.30.25 – Su

Trump: If Iran doesn't make a deal; tariffs & bombs like they've never seen before

03.30.25 – Su

Trump: If Iran doesn't make a deal 'there will be bombing' with 'bombs like they've never seen before'

Iran rejected direct negotiations on a nuclear deal in response to a letter from the US president - but did not rule out indirect talks - and now Trump is escalating his threats
Lior Ben Ari|09:17

President Donald Trump escalated his threats against Iran Sunday afternoon, after the Islamic Republic announced that it refuses to hold direct negotiations with him on a new nuclear agreement, but has signaled that it will agree to indirect talks. Trump said Sunday in an interview with NBC News that if a new agreement is not reached, Iran will be attacked.

"If they don't make a deal, there will be bombing," Trump said in a telephone interview with NBC. "There will be bombs like they've never seen before."

Trump added that "there's a chance that if they don't make a deal, that I will do secondary tariffs on them like I did four years ago."

He also noted that US and Iranian officials are now "talking." It is not clear whether he meant direct talks, which Iran had previously denied.

Tehran announced over the weekend that Iran had responded to a letter Trump sent to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, and in a message sent via Oman, Iranian officials expressed agreement to indirect negotiations, but insisted that direct dialogue with the U.S. is not possible as long as it threatened Iran and imposed sanctions on it.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said earlier Sunday: "In response to Trump's announcement, we confirm that we are rejecting direct negotiations, but the path to indirect dialogue is open. The behavior of American officials will determine the course of the negotiations. We have never avoided dialogue, but violating agreements has led to problems," he said, referring to the fact that Trump withdrew from the previous nuclear deal in 2018, three years after it was signed during the Obama administration.

"Trust must be rebuilt," Pezeshkian added.

In the interview with NBC, Trump also addressed his efforts to bring an end to the war in Ukraine, and in light of Russia's refusal for now to comply with his demand for a comprehensive 30-day ceasefire, he was unusually critical of President Vladimir Putin. Trump said he was "furious" when Putin again questioned the legitimacy of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky over the weekend, and even suggested establishing an alternative government in Kiev under the auspices of the United Nations.

Trump said that Putin's remarks were "not going in the right direction," and threatened to impose additional tariffs on Russian oil if an agreement to end the war is not reached. He also said that he intended to speak with Putin this week, a conversation that would be the third known talk between them since his return to the White House.

More details soon.

03.30.25 – Su

Hamas began brutal crackdown on Gaza protests with torture & executions

03.30.25 – Su

Hamas begins brutal crackdown on Gaza protests with torture, executions

Residents in the enclave say terror group executed at least six organizers; Gaza City resident returned to his family after four hours of torture and died shortly afterward, while others reported missing

Einav Halabi|07:23

Hamas has begun cracking down on Gazans who participated in recent protests against the group's rule, executing six people and publicly beating others, according to Palestinian activists and residents.

Among those killed was Odai al-Rubai, 22, a resident of Gaza City's Tel al-Hawa neighborhood. Al-Rubai had called for public demonstrations and spoken out against Hamas on social media. He was abducted by Hamas operatives, tortured for four hours, and then returned to his family as he lay dying, witnesses said.

"He was dragged by a rope around his neck, beaten with clubs and metal rods in front of passersby," said one resident who asked not to be identified for fear of retribution. Another resident, Hussam al-Majdalawi, was reportedly kidnapped and beaten in Gaza's Nuseirat refugee camp. Al-Majdalawi, who had also spoken against Hamas, was shot in the legs and left wounded in a public square, according to eyewitnesses.

Hamza al-Masri, a Gaza-based social activist who lost an eye after being tortured by Hamas in the past, said the crackdown was part of a broader effort to silence dissent.

"Just for asking to live, a Hamas military unit kidnapped several young men, including helpless Odai," al-Masri wrote on social media. "Hours after he was taken, he was returned to his family without life."

He accused Hamas of maintaining tight control over local media, preventing journalists from reporting on abuses. "There isn't a single journalist in Gaza who can speak about the crimes being committed here," he said. "The world has no idea what's happening."

Despite the threats, mourners at al-Rubai's funeral shouted anti-Hamas slogans, including "Hamas out," and several relatives fired weapons into the air. Members of his family reportedly identified one of the men responsible for the torture and vowed revenge. "Don't come to offer condolences before we take revenge," one family member was quoted as saying.

Gazan influencer Mustafa Asfour wrote on X, formerly Twitter, that al-Rubai was "killed because he said aloud: We want to live. These are very sad moments, fueling hatred that could ignite a civil war."

Large protests erupted earlier this month across Gaza, with thousands of Palestinians demanding an end to the ongoing war with Israel and criticizing Hamas' governance. However, demonstrations subsided Friday, and no new calls for protest have emerged. Palestinian sources said other demonstrators have gone missing in recent days, as Hamas seeks to reassert control and deter further dissent.

03.30.25 – Su

Hamas turn down \$2B US offer to disarm & relocate top commanders from Gaza

03.30.25 – Su

Hamas said to turn down \$2B offer to disarm, relocate top commanders from Gaza
Sources say U.S.-backed proposal included additional financial incentives and protection from future attacks for senior figures, with funding for plan originating from undisclosed regional actors

Einav Halabi, Lior Ben Ari|07:01

Hamas recently rejected a U.S.-backed proposal that would have allowed its top military commanders to leave the Gaza Strip with their families in exchange for significant financial incentives and guarantees of safety abroad, according to a report published by the Qatari-owned newspaper Al-Araby Al-Jadeed.

The proposal included offers of nearly \$2 billion, to be distributed based on the military rank of each commander, as well as additional funds in return for disarming—both heavy and personal weapons. The report said the identities of those funding the offer were not disclosed, though signs pointed to regional actors.

According to unnamed sources cited in the report, the offer was extended to battalion commanders and senior leaders in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas. Among those named were Muhammad Sinwar, commander of the Rafah Brigade; Muhammad Shabaneh; and Az al-Din al-Haddad, commander of the Gaza City Brigade. Muhammad Sinwar is the brother of Yahya Sinwar, the Hamas leader in Gaza who was killed earlier in the war. He is believed to now lead the group in Gaza and is reportedly involved in efforts to rebuild its military infrastructure. He is also thought to be responsible for hostages still held in Hamas's tunnel network.

Sinwar played a central role in Hamas's Oct. 7 assault on southern Israel, which killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and triggered the ongoing war in Gaza.

In December, the Israeli military released rare footage showing him traveling in a jeep with bodyguards inside a large tunnel discovered near the Israeli community of Netiv HaAsara and the Erez border crossing. He was seen receiving a briefing from engineers and tunnel workers brought in from Khan Younis and touring the length of the tunnel.

Israel has repeatedly attempted to assassinate Sinwar. During the current conflict, the military distributed leaflets in Gaza offering a \$300,000 reward for information leading to his death—\$100,000 less than the amount offered for his brother. The leaflets also included bounties for other senior Hamas commanders, including Khan Younis Brigade chief Rafa Salameh and longtime operative Muhammad Deif, both of whom were killed in Israeli airstrikes in July. Salameh carried a \$200,000 bounty; Deif, \$100,000.

In February, Israeli forces raided Sinwar's office at the "al-Qadisiyyah" base in Khan Younis and destroyed it along with the surrounding compound.

Shabaneh assumed command of the Rafah Brigade during Israel's 2014 war with Hamas, after the killing of three senior Hamas commanders. He oversees four battalions, including the elite Nukhba unit that led the Oct. 7 attack. He has survived multiple assassination attempts and lost three sons during the current conflict. Unconfirmed reports circulated that he had also been killed, though neither Israeli nor Palestinian officials have verified those claims.

Al-Haddad, known in Gaza as the "ghost of al-Qassam," is among the highest-ranking commanders in Hamas's military wing. He leads at least six battalions, including the Nukhba unit. According to an investigation by Qatar's Al Jazeera network, al-Haddad convened his battalion commanders the day before the Oct. 7 attack and handed them written orders. One of the key objectives was to abduct a large number of Israeli soldiers in the early moments of the assault and transport them into Gaza. The plan emphasized documenting the attack and securing control over Israeli border communities. Al-Haddad has survived several Israeli assassination attempts, but both of his sons—who held command roles in the Nukhba unit—were killed during the war.

03.30.25 – Su

Families demand more efforts to bring hostages home; Trump has his own agenda

03.30.25 – Su

Netanyahu to weekend in Hungary as families demand more efforts to bring hostages home

Israel submits response to mediators for limited deal ahead of holiday; families of hostages protesting outside home of negotiation team head Ron Dermer say 'the only thing PM should do in Hungary is secure the release of hostages'

Itamar Eichner|06:07

As negotiations between Israel and Hamas resume over a potential hostage release deal, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will travel to Hungary at the invitation of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Netanyahu informed the Jerusalem District Court, where he is on trial for corruption, that he will leave for Budapest on Wednesday and plans to remain there through the weekend.

Major gaps remain in the negotiations to bring about the release of hostages held by Hamas, despite recent efforts by the mediating countries. Israel continues to support the framework proposed by U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff, which would see 11 living hostages and the remains of several others released, in exchange for a weeks-long truce in the fighting in Gaza and the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.

Hamas, in contrast, has agreed to release five living hostages but refuses to return any remains. In exchange, it is demanding a 50-day cease-fire—equivalent to one hostage for every 10 days, a demand Israel has rejected.

Israel is now demanding the return of remains over a significantly shorter timeframe. Talks are also focusing on broader conditions, and Israeli sources said that if the current offer was accepted, discussions would advance to the second phase of the cease-fire deal agreed to last January, potentially involving delegations to Cairo or Doha.

“The proposal reached us over the weekend, and we held consultations and discussions before sending a counteroffer,” an official said. “Negotiations are constant. Even when there are no delegations, contact with the mediators and the Americans is continuous.”

Families are frustrated with the government's response

While talks continue, many among the families of the hostages said they were still waiting for concrete results. They held a prayer service to mark the new month in the Jewish calendar, outside the Jerusalem home of Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, who leads the Israeli negotiating team. According to a senior defense official quoted by Ynet, Dermer “does not see the need to take an active part in most meetings with foreign officials and negotiators.”

“It’s unthinkable to celebrate another holiday without them,” Ilay David, brother of hostage Evyatar David, said. “My brother Evyatar, who was kidnapped from the Nova festival along with his friend Guy Gilboa, should have been home long ago. We are here to pray and to give strength to the negotiating team. We are here to remind Minister Dermer of his duty to save 59 souls.”

David said this must be Israel’s top national interest. “This is the most important thing for every Israeli and every Jew. Dermer’s mission is immense. You were chosen by the prime minister; you are the key figure to bring an agreement,” he said, addressing his message to the minister. “The public and the families demand answers—when will there be a deal? When will all the hostages return together?”

Levi Ben Baruch, uncle of American-Israeli hostage Edan Alexander, said the families were expressing the voices of the hostages crying out from the depths of the Hamas tunnels. “Mr. Dermer, today is the first of Nisan, the second year these hostages remain in captivity. I urge you to place your heart in the right place—just as the High Priest was commanded to wear the breastplate over his heart, bearing the names of the 12 tribes of Israel.”

Yehuda Cohen, father of hostage Nimrod Cohen, said the government should have already entered the second phase of negotiations. “This should be an Israeli interest—nationally, morally, and legally. The Netanyahu government has not done it,” he said.

Asked about hopes that a future Trump administration might help secure another deal, Cohen replied, “Only the Israeli government is obligated to free the hostages, not the U.S. administration. Let’s not be mistaken. The fact that the U.S. helps is one thing. Trump pushed for the first deal, and we were grateful, but in the end, he has his own agenda. He’s now focused on Ukraine, Russia, Canada, and Greenland.”

Cohen also said the family had received signs of life from Nimrod through Yarden Bibas, “who was with him from December to May last year, and later through Sagui Dekel-

Chen and Iair Horn, who were with him during the last eight months—up until about six weeks ago.”

03.30.25 – Su

Fabric of Life Road connects Jerusalem to West Bank annex & blocks PA access

03.30.25 – Su

Israel approves controversial route connecting Jerusalem to West Bank settlement. Road will divert Palestinian traffic and block access to key areas; critics say plan advances Israeli annexation efforts in the West Bank.

Elisha Ben Kimon 00:45

The Security Cabinet has approved the final phase of a long-delayed road project near Jerusalem that will reroute Palestinian traffic and restrict access to key areas for Palestinians, drawing sharp criticism from opponents who say the plan advances Israeli annexation efforts in the West Bank.

Ministers voted Saturday to approve construction of the third and final section of the so-called “Fabric of Life Road,” a route intended to divert Palestinian travel to routes connecting the northern and southern parts of the West Bank without passing through Israeli checkpoints.

Defense Minister Israel Katz, who led the initiative, said the project will enhance security by separating Palestinian and Israeli traffic near Jerusalem. Once completed, the road will divert Palestinian vehicles away from Route 1, the main highway connecting Jerusalem and the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, which will be reserved for Israeli use only. The move comes just over a year after a deadly shooting attack on Route 1. In February 2024, three Palestinian gunmen opened fire on Israeli vehicles in two locations, killing Matan Almaliach and injuring seven others.

Israeli officials said the project was also of strategic significance. The new route will physically isolate the area between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim — including the Khan al-Ahmar encampment, which Palestinians consider strategically important for maintaining territorial continuity in any future state. Once the road is completed, Palestinians will only be able to reach this area on foot.

The project carries political implications as well. Supporters say it removes another obstacle to extending Israeli sovereignty over Ma'ale Adumim, a settlement east of Jerusalem with more than 40,000 residents.

The road has been in planning for years but was repeatedly delayed due to international and political opposition. Katz held several consultations with defense and security officials before bringing the matter to the Cabinet.

The project is expected to cost 335 million shekels (about \$91 million) and will be funded through the Civil Administration's extra-budgetary Palestinian fund — money

collected from Palestinians and earmarked for services in the territories. It is not part of the Israeli state budget.

Ma'ale Adumim Mayor Guy Yifrah, who lobbied heavily for the project, called the decision a "historic moment" for his city. "This decision ends 25 years of waiting," he said. "It will significantly improve security and reduce traffic congestion for the residents of Ma'ale Adumim and the surrounding area."

Ministers also approved plans for a separate road connecting the village of Azariya to the Good Samaritan Interchange, with an initial planning budget of 10 million shekels.

Officials said the project remains in the planning phase, and it is unclear when — or if — construction will begin.

Peace Now, a left-wing Israeli advocacy group, condemned the cabinet's decision, calling it an "apartheid road" that will split the West Bank and block Palestinian access to large areas.

"This has nothing to do with improving Palestinian transportation," the group said in a statement. "It's about enabling the annexation of roughly 3% of the West Bank, while funding it with money collected through Israel's control over the territories — funds that by law are meant to serve Palestinian needs. This is very bad news for Israel and could spell the end of any viable two-state solution."

03.30.25 – Su

Hezbollah's chief Quds Day speech warns Israel after Beirut strike on drones

03.30.25 – Su

Hezbollah's chief warns Israel after Beirut strike but stops short of escalation

Naim Qassem says Lebanon remains responsible for addressing Israeli actions through diplomatic channels, but warns terror group would 'consider other options' if government fails to stop attacks

Lior Ben Ari|16:43

Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem responded Saturday to Israel's airstrike on the Dahieh district of Beirut—a Hezbollah stronghold—for the first time since the two sides agreed on a ceasefire, accusing Jerusalem of violating the agreement and warning that continued provocations could lead to renewed conflict.

"Israel has breached the ceasefire agreement. It carried out strikes in Dahieh and other areas in southern Lebanon. People were killed and injured. We will not accept this," Qassem said in a speech.

Despite the strong language, Qassem stopped short of announcing direct retaliation and said Lebanon remains responsible for addressing Israeli actions through diplomatic channels.

However, he warned that “if Israel does not comply with the conditions and the government fails to achieve the desired outcome, we will have no choice but to consider other options.”

Qassem rejected any normalization with Israel and emphasized that Hezbollah would not tolerate an arrangement allowing Israel to operate freely in Lebanon. “Israel must withdraw unconditionally,” he said, adding that Lebanon’s reconstruction should proceed without preconditions.

“Israel will not get what it wants through pressure, whether by occupying the five disputed areas or through repeated strikes. We will not allow anyone to rob us of our lives, our land, our pride, our dignity and our national identity.”

Qassem’s comments were delivered during a speech marking Iran’s Quds Day, which had been postponed from Friday due to the Israeli strike in Dahieh.

He also addressed domestic Lebanese issues and regional tensions along the Syria-Lebanon border, denying Hezbollah’s involvement in recent clashes there. “We are partners in rebuilding the state,” he said. “Lebanon will rise with all its people. As for recent events on the Syrian border and inside Syria, Hezbollah has no connection to them.”

His remarks followed an Israeli airstrike on Friday that targeted a building in Dahieh. The IDF said the site was used to store drones by Hezbollah’s Unit 127, which is responsible for the group’s aerial operations.

Ahead of the strike, the IDF’s Arabic-language spokesperson, Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee, issued evacuation warnings to residents, prompting panic in the area. Dramatic footage showed the building collapsing as missiles struck in sequence.

The United States voiced support for Israel’s actions. Morgan Ortagus, deputy to U.S. Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff, said, “The ceasefire was violated by Lebanon. The Lebanese government must rein in terrorist groups launching rockets.”

03.29.25 – Sa

Erdoğan’s ridiculous moral sermons: Israel, Turkey trade barbs over IDF strike on Beirut

03.29.25 – Sa

'Israel does not need Erdoğan’s ridiculous moral sermons': Israel, Turkey trade barbs over IDF strike on Beirut

Tensions flare as Anakra condemns Israel's strike in Lebanese capital, accusing it of fueling perpetual conflict; Jerusalem hits back, accusing Erdoğan of violently suppressing citizens and jailing political opponents en masse

Itamar Eichner|15:07

A sharp diplomatic clash erupted between Israel and Turkey over the weekend after Ankara condemned an Israeli airstrike in Beirut’s Dahieh district, a Hezbollah stronghold, which came in response to rocket fire toward the northern city of Kiryat Shmona.

Turkey's Foreign Ministry issued a strong rebuke, accusing Israel of violating the ceasefire agreement with Lebanon. "We condemn Israel's airstrikes against Lebanon in violation of the ceasefire agreement. We stand firmly by the people of Lebanon," the statement read.

Ankara added that the attacks "exposed Israel's flagrant disregard for international law and its ongoing threat to the region's security and stability," calling on the international community to unite against what it described as Israel's efforts to fuel perpetual conflict. In response, Israel's Foreign Ministry issued a scathing statement condemning Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, accusing him of hypocrisy. "While violently suppressing his own citizens and carrying out mass arrests of political opponents, Erdoğan presumes to preach lofty values to the international community," the statement said.

"In Erdoğan's Turkey, there is no justice, no law, and no freedom. Israel does not need Erdoğan's ridiculous moral sermons. Israel acts to defend itself and its citizens against real threats and actual attacks — and it will continue to do so." IDF strikes Hezbollah drone storage facility in Beirut's Dahieh district in response to rocket fire toward northern Israel

The Turkish condemnation came a day after the IDF struck a building in Beirut's Dahieh suburb. According to the IDF, the target was a drone storage facility operated by Hezbollah's Unit 127, responsible for aerial operations. Prior to the strike, Arabic-language IDF spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee issued a warning for residents to evacuate the building and its surroundings, prompting panic in the area. Footage shared after the attack showed the dramatic collapse of the building as the missiles struck in sequence.

03.29.25 – Sa

Israeli forces push deeper into Rafah as IDF expands Gaza buffer zone

03.29.25 – Sa

Israeli forces push deeper into Rafah as IDF expands Gaza buffer zone

Ground forces enter southern Gaza city's al-Janina neighborhood; Khan Younis residents told to evacuate after blast near IDF bulldozer in central Gaza followed by mortar fire at troops, no injuries reported; dozens of terror targets hit in airstrikes Gal Ganot|13:50

The IDF expanded its ground operation in southern Gaza over the weekend, targeting Hamas positions in the al-Janina neighborhood of Rafah, the military said Saturday.

The operation, aimed at widening Israel's security buffer in the south, came alongside a wave of airstrikes that hit dozens of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) targets

across the enclave, including weapons depots, rocket launchers, military compounds and infrastructure used by terrorists. Several operatives involved in mortar attacks on Israel were killed, the military added.

The announcement followed a rare incident earlier in the day when an explosion occurred near an Israeli D9 bulldozer operating in the central buffer zone of the territory. While no injuries were reported, initial assessments suggest the blast may have resulted from an old explosive device or possibly anti-tank fire.

In response to subsequent mortar fire from terrorists, Israeli forces shelled the area and later struck a launch site in the same vicinity near Khan Younis.

IDF Arabic-language spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee issued an evacuation warning for residents of the eastern Khan Younis neighborhoods of Abasan, al-Qarara and Khuza'a. "This is your final warning," Adraee wrote, urging civilians to move west toward shelters in the Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone. "Terror groups continue launching rockets near civilians."

According to Al Jazeera, citing medical sources, at least 14 Palestinians were killed and several others wounded in Israeli airstrikes throughout Gaza on Saturday.

The renewed fighting comes roughly ten days after the collapse of a ceasefire that had held for nearly two months. The Prime Minister's Office said military action resumed after Hamas "repeatedly refused to release hostages" and rejected proposals from U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and other mediators. The IDF has since named the new offensive "Operation Strength and Sword."

Since the ceasefire's breakdown, Hamas and PIJ have resumed rocket fire toward Israel. Last week, Hamas launched rockets at central Israel, including the Tel Aviv area, while PIJ—receiving increased backing from Iran—has so far limited its fire to Israeli communities near Gaza. Some of the rockets reportedly misfired and landed inside Gaza.

Inside Gaza, signs of public unrest have emerged. Mass protests broke out this past week—the largest since the war began—with demonstrators chanting slogans such as "Hamas out," reflecting widespread frustration over the renewed fighting. Notably, the protests were not suppressed as in the past, possibly indicating internal strain within Hamas.

According to Arab intelligence sources cited by The Wall Street Journal, Hamas has spent weeks trying to restore discipline among its ranks, hesitating to punish operatives out of fear it may need all available fighters in the event of a large-scale Israeli ground invasion.

03.29.25 – Sa

Amsterdam University alumni return diplomas in protest of anti-Israel decision

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Amsterdam University alumni return diplomas in protest of anti-Israel decision
50 alumni, including non-Jews, return diplomas to protest severing of ties with Hebrew University; Dutch-Iranian author Keyvan Shahbazi slams move, saying institution 'surrendered to terror' and praises Hebrew U's research
Itamar Eichner|11:15

Fifty alumni of the University of Amsterdam, both Jewish and non-Jewish, have returned their diplomas in protest of the university's recent decision to sever ties with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, citing alleged connections to the IDF and human rights violations.

The protest follows an announcement earlier this month by the University of Amsterdam's rector that student exchange and academic cooperation with the Israeli institution would be halted. The Dutch university claimed the Hebrew University maintains "close ties with the Israel Defense Forces," including cooperation with the military industry, and accused it of involvement in "systematic violations of human rights."

Critics of the move, including dozens of alumni, argue the decision was made under pressure from anti-Israel activists and pro-Palestinian demonstrators who caused an estimated €4 million in damage during protests at the Dutch university last year. The demonstrators had demanded an academic boycott of Israeli institutions.

Uri Rosenthal, a Jewish-Dutch politician who served as the Netherlands' foreign minister from 2010 to 2012, condemned the university's decision, saying, "They didn't even hold a hearing with the Hebrew University" and that the decision was made solely due to activist pressure. "Some of the protesters have no connection to the university at all," he added.

Author Keyvan Shahbazi, a Dutch-Iranian cultural figure and alumnus who fled Iran in 1983 after being tortured by the Islamist regime, was among those who returned his diploma. "The university has surrendered to terror," Shahbazi said, praising the Hebrew University's research quality as "exceptionally high and enviable."

Alumni opposing the severance argue that no other university worldwide is asked to cut ties with academic institutions involved in defense research, even in conflict zones.

Moran Zelikovich, a graduate of the university's research master's program and now an immigration advisor in the Netherlands, said, "This kind of protest is extremely rare in Dutch society. The Dutch avoid confrontation, but this decision has gone too far." She added that she witnessed antisemitism on campus during her studies a decade ago and was not surprised by the university's latest move.

A university spokesperson said the administration "regrets the initiative" by the alumni and would like to open dialogue with them. Responding to accusations that anti-Israel activists are dictating university policy, the spokesperson said consultations began in May 2024, when protests first erupted. A working group of experts was formed, and the decision was based on independent recommendations.

Ronny Naftaniel, a former leader of the Dutch Jewish community and one of the 50 alumni who returned their degrees, said: "I learned a core value at the university — that people should be judged by what they do and say. Canceling student exchanges with the Hebrew University, regardless of students' political views, based on a flimsy report — that is discrimination based on nationality. That's why I returned my economics degree." Naftaniel added that alumni later spoke with the university board, which "seemed to understand the pain we feel. Now it's time for action."

03.29.25 – Sa

Hamas offers to free 5 hostages, Israel demands 10 – no deal

03.29.25 – Sa

Hamas offers to free 5 hostages, Israel demands 10 amid tepid hopes for breakthrough. Mediators leading talks with Hamas to reach ceasefire framework acceptable to Israel, under which several hostages—out of 59 still held in Gaza—would be released in exchange for 50-day truce; Israel remains firm on Witkoff outline and hopes for deal by Passover.

Itamar Eichner, Lior Ben Arij 10:11

Israel is not actively participating in ongoing negotiations for a hostage deal taking place in Doha between Egypt, Qatar and Hamas, despite increasing efforts by regional mediators to reach an agreement ahead of the Muslim holiday Eid al-Fitr, which begins Sunday.

In recent days, multiple versions of potential agreements have been floated, with Hamas reportedly expressing willingness to release five live hostages in exchange for a 50-day ceasefire.

Israel, however, continues to insist—based on a framework proposed by U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff—that Hamas must release ten of the 24 hostages believed to still be alive. An additional 35 hostages are presumed dead, and Hamas is reportedly open to releasing the bodies of some of them.

According to sources familiar with the negotiations, no final deal is expected before Eid al-Fitr, but there is a significant push to reach an agreement before the Jewish holiday of Passover. "There's a chance something could materialize," a senior Israeli official said.

Qatari newspaper The New Arab reported Saturday, citing Egyptian officials, that Hamas has agreed to a new proposal that includes the release of Israeli-American IDF soldier Edan Alexander, along with four additional hostages—both living and deceased. "The ball is now in the court of the Israeli and U.S. governments," the sources said. However, Israeli officials maintain Hamas had already committed to releasing five living hostages, not including those who have died.

Saudi-owned channel Asharq News reported that Egyptian and Qatari delegations are currently engaged in talks with Hamas in Doha, discussing the possible exchange of five hostages for Palestinian prisoners and a 50-day ceasefire. The proposal reportedly includes the withdrawal of Israeli forces to pre-war positions, reopening the Rafah border crossing for medical evacuations and increased delivery of humanitarian aid and food to Gaza.

According to the report, mediators are also in contact with Israel and the United States to finalize the details, though Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not yet authorized the dispatch of a new Israeli delegation to the talks. Meanwhile, fighting continues in the Gaza Strip. On Saturday, an IDF D9 bulldozer operating in the central buffer zone was struck by an explosion—an unusual incident since the collapse of the recent ceasefire. No injuries were reported, and initial assessments suggest the blast may have been caused by an old explosive device. In a separate incident, terrorists fired mortar shells at Israeli forces, prompting retaliatory fire across the Gaza border. The IDF later confirmed that three mortars were launched toward its troops near Khan Younis, with no casualties reported.

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Ynet-News, March 29, 2025 – Friday

Ramadan Feb 28 to March 29 = Expect Arab Jihad frenzy at end of March
03.29.25 – Saturday New moon 6:00am, Nissan 1st Month

03.28.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday

US fully support Israel response; applies finance sanctions on Hezbollah companies

03.28.25 – Fr- - - News Placed in March 28 spot – Friday

IDF struck drone storage after rocket fire; US urged Israel to avoid striking Beirut

03.28.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Families of hostages, survivors to visit Washington as Gaza negotiations continue

03.28.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Two Lebanon rockets fired at north Israel, IDF fired artillery at targets and buildings

03.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

PM in Jerusalem conference on anti-Semitism; We refuse to surrender We fight back

03.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Jihad & Hamas resume rocket fire; both recruit fighters & improve production

03.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

US Republicans claim Biden used USAID funding to undermine Netanyahu policies

03.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Supreme Court unanimously confirms; Israel is not obligated to provide aid to Gaza

03.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Palestinians rise in protest throughout Gaza Strip: Hamas must withdraw

03.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

RAND report: Gaza reconstruction could be decades with \$50 billion price tag

03.27.25 – Th- - - News Placed in March 27 spot – Thursday

Israel passes 67-1 judicial reform bill, a committee to select the country's judges

03.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Quds Day speeches escalate anti-Israel rhetoric as Iran-aligned terror leaders vow action

03.27.25 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Thousands protest legal reform future; law shifting control of judicial appointments

03.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Second day of protests pose most serious challenge to Hamas authority in years

03.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Two rockets fired from Gaza; IDF hit launch structure & two additional sites

03.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

All Egypt proposals failed: Trump approves Gaza displacement as justified

03.26.25 – We- - - News Placed in March 26 spot – Wednesday

Israel-coordinated departures from Gaza rise with growing anti-Hamas protests

03.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Golan Heights soldiers fired on: considered to be ISIS faction from Jordan border

03.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Protests in Gaza against Hamas saying rockets provoke strikes that forced them to flee

03.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

IDF shape wide road sections in West Bank refugee camps to curb terrorism

03.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Trump's pick for Israel envoy, Huckabee, says PA should have a state, elsewhere

03.26.25 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Gaza hostage deadlock leads IDF to seize Gaza territory until its complete defeat

03.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Gaza war must be focused, effective, with limited timeframe, US officials say

03.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Hamas must go: Gazans demand an end to war, protest being governed at gunpoint

03.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Israeli court upholds freeze on firing Shin Bet chief; PM will interview replacement

03.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Israeli lawmakers approve 2025 state budget as protests continue outside Knesset

03.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Troops called air support to eliminate 5 gunmen in south Syrian Golan Heights

03.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Israeli lawmakers vote on budget as protests erupt outside Knesset

03.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

IDF unmasks eliminated Al Jazeera journalist as Hamas Battalion sniper terrorist

03.25.25 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

EU diplomat visit; preventing nuclear Iran is main objective, two-state for PA

03.25.25 – Tu- - - News Placed in March 25 spot – Tuesday

West Bank terror cells dismantled, streets deserted, as IDF alert to end of Ramadan

03.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Palestinian filmmaker throwing rocks at settlers, then at Israeli soldiers

03.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Gaza attack kills Al Jazeera journalist; evacuation & combat forced many to flee

03.24.25 – Mo- - - News Placed in March 24 spot – Monday

IDF, Shin Bet destroy 100+ Hamas trucks used in massacre & weapons transport

03.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Record-high budget; slashes social programs & war rebuilding, must pass by March 31

03.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Egypt pushes deal to release 5 living hostages for ceasefire and aid to Gaza

03.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Israel to switch to daylight saving time on Thursday March 27, 2:00 am

03.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

AG letter counters unanimous no-confidence vote: her duty to interpret the law

03.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Arab ramming, stabbing & shooting attack at bus stop, stopped by seven Police

03.24.25 – Mo- - - News – Monday

IDF expands rigid Gaza offensive, as Witkoff mediation seeks to appease Hamas

03.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Hamas acting prime minister killed in targeted strike, days after predecessor

03.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Israeli government unanimous vote to oust AG, in latest move against judicial branch

03.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Israel's Austria Ambassador says Gaza armed teens should face death sentence

03.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Nova music festival massacre memorial becomes Israel's most frequented site

03.23.25 – Su- - - News Placed in March 23 spot – Sunday

Cabinet approved voluntary departure plan for Gazans & divides West Bank settlements

03.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

IDF prepares to recapture Gaza Strip as concerns over insubordination rise

03.23.25 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Senior Hamas official among 23 killed in airstrike on Khan Younis

03.22.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday Q3 moon 6:33am

Netanyahu reveals letter, suggests Shin Bet head conspired with attorney general

03.22.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday Q3 moon 6:33am

Military pressure on Hamas is the only reason they negotiate hostages

03.22.25 – Sa- - - News – Saturday Q3 moon 6:33am

Tel Aviv protest Shin Bet head dismissal, back in Gaza for the fifth time

03.22.25 – Sa- - - News Placed in March 22 spot – Saturday Q3 moon 6:33am

Israel launches second wave of airstrikes in Lebanon after 6 rocket attack