

Ynet-News, May 02, 2025 – Friday Iyar 2<sup>nd</sup> Month  
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05.02.25 – Fr - - News Placed in May 02 spot – Friday - Omer 14

Israel strikes near Syrian presidential palace amid violence against Druze

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Missile debris falls on kindergarten in north Israel from Houthi launch intercept

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

Druze IDF soldiers urge action amid Syria sectarian violence; We will go ourselves

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

Jerusalem hills wild fire brought under control after 30 hours of firefighting

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

Netanyahu: Will bring back hostages, but ultimate goal is defeating our enemies

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

IDF chief Zamir; military prepared to expand war to bring hostages home very soon

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

Ben-Gvir using Greece & Italy help rather than Israel resources to battle wild fires

05.01.25 – Th - - News Placed in May 01 spot – Thursday - Omer 13  
220 yards of cars abandoned in Jerusalem hills wildfire, 18 suffered smoke injuries

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12  
Arson suspected in Memorial Day fires sweeping Israel

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12  
IDF strikes extremists near Damascus to thwart attack on Druze community

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12  
US backs Israel's ban on UNRWA Gaza aid operations at World Court

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12  
Due to high winds, torch lighting ceremony canceled, will broadcast recorded rehearsal

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12  
Druze leader calls on Israel to intervene in sectarian fighting in Syria

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12  
Netanyahu Memorial Day speech praised Israel's fallen heroes in defense of their home

04.30.25 – We - - News Placed in April 30 spot – Wednesday - Omer 12  
50 firefighting teams deployed on forest fires in Jerusalem hills; evacuations for caution

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12  
Trump purged Kamala Harris's husband & others from Holocaust Memorial Council

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11  
Netanyahu to visit Azerbaijan 10 days after Iranian president

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11  
President Isaac Herzog Memorial Day speech beside the Wall of Tears

04.29.25 – Tu - - News Placed in April 29 spot – Tuesday - Omer 11  
On Israel's 77th Independence Day population 10,094,000: One-third are under 20

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11  
Government scraps plan to dismiss Shin Bet chief after resignation announcement

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11  
 Hamas emerging from undiscovered tunnels, in fatal Gaza battle, killing two IDF

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11  
IDF targets Hezbollah missiles stored in Beirut; Lebanon asks Embassy to stop attacks

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Israeli defense expanding Gaza operation to full force, with major reserve call-up

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar to step down June 15; begins appointing a replacement

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

IDF conducts first use of quick response, Bar rocket, in Gaza Strip

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Israel refuses 5-year Gaza truce that enables Hamas to rebuild and continue war

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Demonstrators block roads as 70 active & 110 reserve Haredi enlist in IDF

04.28.25 – Mo - - News Placed in April 28 spot – Monday - Omer 10

ICJ begins debate on Gaza aid; 40 nations discuss Israel in five days of hearings

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Iran fended off extensive cyber-attack against its infrastructure Sunday

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Normalize with Israel put Egypt in criticism defense from its own people & Arabs

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Israel hasn't attacked Yemen for 3 months, but the US has hit over 800 Houthi targets

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Trump announces US very close to reaching nuclear agreement with Iran

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

PM meets Ambassadors of EU, Asia, Africa & Latin America in Jerusalem

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Air Force jet accidentally drops bomb over north Israel kibbutz for second time

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

PM submits affidavit, Shin Bet chief did not warn of imminent October massacre

04.27.25 – Su - - News Placed in April 27 spot – Sunday - Omer 09 New Moon

IDF targets Hezbollah weapons warehouse in Beirut; warned residents of strike

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Iran accuses Israel of Saturday 12:00 pm port explosion, as death toll rises to 36

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Fires break out in Wadi Qelt and near Ramat Gan Safari; rescue efforts underway

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Egypt demands Hamas provide full report on hostages' condition by early May

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

IDF bill to extend compulsory military service for men amid growing troop shortage

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

IDF aerial defenses intercept Houthi missile strike on southern city of Beer sheva

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

Israel skips Pope Francis funeral, angering president of Humanitarian Coalition

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

Freelance journalist for BBC Arabs praises attacks on Jews: burn Jews like Hitler did

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

Border Police officer, IDF captain killed in clashes with terrorists in Gaza

04.26.25 – Sa - - News Placed in April 26 spot – Saturday - Omer 08

Hamas negotiating for 5-year truce and all hostage release for IDF withdraw

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Israeli strike on Syria countryside, will not allow forces south of Damascus

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Israeli strike hits countryside in Syria's Hama province, Syrian state media says  
Syrian state media says Israeli jets struck near Shtaha in Hama; air defense base linked to  
Assad targeted; later strikes reported in Damascus and Latakia

Lior Ben Ari|00:01

The Syrian state news agency SANA reported Friday that Israeli fighter jets struck the village of Shtaha in the Hama province of northwestern Syria.

According to the Saudi-owned Al-Hadath channel, the target was an air defense base that previously served the regime of former Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Meanwhile, the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese outlet Al-Mayadeen reported that Israel also carried out strikes in the Al-Sha'ara area in the Latakia countryside, as well as in the city of Harasta, near Damascus.

Thursday overnight, Israel reportedly targeted a site near the Syrian presidential palace as a warning to Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa following clashes involving members of the Druze community. Officials in Damascus labeled the strike a “dangerous escalation.”

Hussein al-Sharaa, the father of President Ahmad al-Sharaa, strongly condemned the attack in a Facebook post. “The Zionist enemy state is threatening and attacking Syria. The latest strike targeted the palace, under the pretext of defending Syrian Druze—as if it cares more about them than the Syrian state or people,” he wrote. “They think the new Syrian state will remain silent, as it did in the past.”

He continued: “Israel has been oppressing the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank for two years—destroying, displacing, while all regional actors stand by. But when it comes to Syria, we will not stay silent. We may not have anti-aircraft missiles, planes, or long-range artillery, but we have a resilient people who have endured war and hardship for 14 years. We don’t need those weapons—our people are our strength. We will fight with our bare hands, and even call on those exiled from our land to join us. The retaliation will come from where Israel least expects. Israel is interfering in Syria’s national fabric. But we know when the time comes to put an end to this aggression.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz issued a joint statement overnight confirming that “Israel struck near the presidential palace in Damascus.” The statement added: “This is a clear message to the Syrian regime—we will not allow forces to move south of Damascus or any threat to the Druze community.”

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Foreign hostages forgotten in Gaza: 6 beaten for not understanding Hamas, others killed

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Foreign hostages forgotten in Gaza: ‘They were beaten for not understanding Hamas’  
Five foreign hostages remain in captivity, as their families facing language barriers and isolation; ‘To speak with them, we send a cousin on a two-hour journey into the mountains just to translate,’ says Lt. Col. A. ‘But I’ve never felt anger from their side’  
Rotem Izak|23:49

Padma Joshi appears in a photo posted on Instagram by her 24-year-old son, Bipin. Above her sorrowful eyes, the message in English reads: “Save my son.” The Nepalese mother’s plea speaks volumes. Her son came to Israel to study agriculture.

He was abducted by Hamas on October 7 from Kibbutz Alumim and has been held in Gaza ever since. From nearly 5,000 kilometers away, it's difficult to fight for his release—but the family is doing what it can, even if that means posing with signs. Support has poured in from around the world. “Sorry he got caught in this terrible war,” reads one comment.

Bipin Joshi found himself in one of the most horrific scenarios imaginable. Just three weeks after arriving in Israel under an agricultural study program that brings hundreds of Nepalese and Tanzanian students annually, he was sheltering in a bombproof room at Alumim. Before that, his friend—who had raised his hands and identified himself as Nepalese—was shot dead by terrorists. The attackers then began throwing grenades into the shelter. Bipin managed to throw one back, saving lives. For over a year and a half now, he's been held in Hamas tunnels—a Hindu man praying to gods who have nothing to do with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Bipin is one of five foreign nationals still held by Hamas. Each has a name, a story, and a family. Three are believed to have been murdered: Joshua Luaito Mollel from Tanzania, who was also in Israel for agricultural studies and was kidnapped from the dairy farm at Kibbutz Nahal Oz. A video showing his abduction and murder circulated online about two months after October 7, reportedly without informing his family first. Two Thai nationals—Sutsak Rintarak from northeast Thailand and Sontaya Ukkharsri, a married father of a nine-year-old girl—were also kidnapped while working in the fields near Kibbutz Be'eri. The fifth is Nattapong Pinta, a Thai father of a seven-year-old, who was abducted from Nir Oz and is feared dead.

On October 7, 35 foreign nationals were abducted: 31 Thais, one Nepalese, one Tanzanian, one Filipino, and Orion Hernandez, whose body has since been recovered. Of the 35, 25 were released in hostage deals. Five remain in captivity. For foreign hostages, the tragedy is twofold—they are far from home and family, and now, often forgotten. Israel, to them, was a promise of education, work, and a better future for their families. Now those families are left to cope with a war that isn't theirs, in a distant country surrounded by enemies.

With no relatives in Israel—aside from a distant aunt of Bipin who once stood at a Tel Aviv protest with his photo—Israelis have stepped in. Kibbutzim from which foreigners were kidnapped assigned coordinators to maintain contact with the families abroad, ensuring they didn't become invisible within a country still struggling to bring back its own.

The state has also taken responsibility. Lt. Col. A., head of the foreign hostage team at Israel's Hostages and Missing Persons Task Force, coordinates efforts involving the Foreign Ministry, police, Interpol, and the Population and Immigration Authority.

“They've been looked after from day one,” he said. “We're in constant contact with Gal Hirsch, ambassadors, the IDF, and the task force. I represent the state on this.”

The process is culturally complex. With Thai families, all communication must go through an official Thai liaison. “That means if, for example, a video of Israeli hostage Rom Breslavsky is released, they're updated in the same way as Israeli families. They're very involved,” said A.

He personally informed Nattapong's wife that her husband was not among five Thai citizens released in a January 2025 deal. "It was a very difficult, very sad conversation." A. also keeps in touch with Joshua Molle's father, Lulito. "They're farmers from a remote region of Tanzania. The son went to study agriculture and planned to open a dairy farm. I speak with the father every two or three weeks. I feel a personal, moral, and national obligation to update him—'We're back to fighting. We've recovered bodies.'" How did he react?

"The first conversation was very hard. He visited Israel in December 2023. I took him to Nahal Oz to see Joshua's room and the spot where he was kidnapped. He's frustrated and doesn't understand why this hasn't been resolved. He sees Israel as fully responsible."

Nattapong

Joshi's family, too, is hard to reach. "To speak with them, a cousin must travel two hours to an area with phone reception, open the phone, and translate."

Sudthisak Rinthalak, Thai hostage murdered by Hamas

What are those calls like?

"Short. We don't always have updates. But it's important to show that they're still on our minds."

Sonthaya Oakkharasri, Thai hostage murdered by Hamas

Did you inform the families of the deaths?

"Yes."

Were they angry?

"No. Not at all. I think they appreciated that a state representative spoke to them honestly—even when there were no signs of life."

Some families have visited Israel. Joshua's father did. Thai families of those released in February 2025 also came. "Most are rural people, without passports. Some had never flown. We offered and funded the trips, but cultural sensitivities matter. Every country has its own policy."

Why are they still in captivity?

"The million-dollar question. I try to believe it's due to logistical complexity. I had no explanation for why they were taken. They told the terrorists they weren't Israeli. They even tried to offer money. People don't realize this, but the largest group of civilians killed on October 7, after Israelis, were Thais."

Publicly, it feels like they're being forgotten.

"We're not in the spotlight, but that doesn't mean nothing is happening. It's important they're not lost in the shuffle. Even during the releases, we considered cultural details—bringing Thai mental health professionals and doctors to help translate and accompany them home. That initiative came from the Israeli side."

"The language barrier is real. You can't speak to them in Hebrew or English. It's a big challenge. Some were brutally beaten in captivity simply because they didn't understand what Hamas wanted. It's unimaginable."

There's another layer—one Israeli officials are reluctant to discuss. Not all countries want their hostages' photos turned into public symbols. Of the foreign hostage signs at protests, only Joshua and Bipin's images appear. Thai authorities have refused. "It's a

gap,” A. admits. “But that’s more of a civilian issue than military. There’s sensitivity. Every request requires approval, and when they say no, it’s no.”

Why? Diplomacy. Some nations pursue separate negotiations—sometimes through other countries or directly with terror groups. Thailand, for example, reportedly held direct talks with Iran. Going public might embarrass those efforts or hinder their success.

“Their interest is to keep their involvement quiet because their release efforts run parallel to ours,” said Likud MK Eliyahu Revivo, who formerly chaired the Knesset committee on foreign workers. “None of the foreigners were released through Israeli negotiations with Hamas or Islamic Jihad. They were released as gestures to their countries, always alongside our deals. If we’d gone public, it could have embarrassed them and reduced the chances of release.”

Revivo, who remains in contact with Thailand’s ambassador, said, “I ensured the National Insurance Institute treated the foreign hostages like Israeli citizens from day one.”

What does that mean?

“They and their families receive full compensation and support. I held discussions to ensure their rights are protected. They receive medical, psychological, and financial aid—often beyond anything they could’ve imagined in their home countries. Tragically, their financial situation has improved for generations because of Israeli compensation.”

What about those still in captivity?

“National Insurance stays in contact with their families and provides monthly stipends. A single Israeli shekel is worth many times more in their home currencies. Each receives a monthly allowance and a grant. If they’re declared dead, their families are treated accordingly.”

The Foreign Ministry added, “Our embassies help families claim their legal rights and cope with the aftermath of October 7. For example, we ensured a Thai citizen killed by an IDF shell was recognized as a terror victim, granting his family full compensation.”

A Matter of empathy

Five men who came seeking a better future for their families are still trapped in hell. Three are confirmed dead—Joshua, Sutsak, and Sontaya. It’s hard for the public to relate to them. That’s not necessarily the public’s fault. Foreign workers are out of sight, even in everyday life. Their culture is unfamiliar. Their families are too far to shout in the streets. If they were here, they might not even feel comfortable doing so. A photo alone doesn’t generate empathy—it doesn’t tell you that this was someone’s son, someone’s father, a man with dreams.

“We continue to work for their release,” the Red Cross told us. “Our team in Gaza is ready to assist with any future release agreement. We’re in ongoing contact with Hamas, Israeli authorities, and international actors to obtain information about the hostages and gain access to them.”

Meanwhile, on Bipin Joshi’s Instagram page, the call to free him tags U.S. President Donald Trump. “These people are not just posters—Bipin is still waiting for us to save him,” the caption reads.

At the same time, Trump posted a cheerful video of himself dancing with a person in a bunny costume on the White House lawn for Easter. In today’s climate, one can only hope those Easter eggs include a miracle for Bipin too.



05.02.25 – Fr - Omer 14

Israel approves plans to expand Gaza operation

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Israel approves plans to expand Gaza operation

Israeli officials say as long as Hamas doesn't release the hostages, Israel will deepen military action in Gaza

Itamar Eichner|20:35

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu concluded a multi-hour security meeting Friday evening on the continuation of fighting in Gaza, during which it was decided to expand the IDF's operations in the strip.

An Israeli official said after the meeting, "As long as Hamas does not release our hostages, we will significantly deepen our military action. That is what will happen—unless Hamas agrees at the last moment to a deal and releases the hostages."

On Sunday, the security cabinet is expected to approve the operational plans, which include a broader mobilization of reservists. In recent days, many reserve commanders have instructed their units to prepare for unexpected call-ups.

The reservists will be divided into two main groups: battalions designated for offensive and frontline missions deep inside Gaza, and brigades that will replace regular army units redeployed into the Strip to spearhead the new phase of operations.

The cabinet plans, which are not expected to involve a full-scale ground invasion or reoccupation of Gaza, are seen as another significant step in the ongoing campaign. Friday's meeting came after Defense Minister Israel Katz and IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir approved the expansion plans, which Netanyahu has now personally authorized ahead of Sunday's vote.

Israeli officials said Thursday that negotiations over a potential hostage deal are nearing exhaustion, and the likelihood of a breakthrough appears to be diminishing. If Hamas continues to reject the terms, officials warned, Israel will escalate its military offensive.

05.02.25 – Fr - Omer 14

Saudi citing Egyptian; cease-fire talks on the Gaza Strip have definitively failed

05.02.25 – Fr - Omer 14

Netanyahu to discuss Gaza war continuation; Egypt says cease-fire talk failed

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu weighs Gaza offensive expansion as Egypt claims Israel rejected cease-fire; PM blames Hamas for stalled talks

Itamar Eichner, Lior Ben Ari | 19:14

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held discussions Friday on the continuation of military operations in Gaza. Meanwhile, reports from Saudi Arabia, citing Egyptian sources, say that negotiations for a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip have definitively failed.

The meeting followed Defense Minister Israel Katz and IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir's approval of plans to expand the military campaign in Gaza. Netanyahu is expected to give his own approval before the plan is presented to the security cabinet on Sunday evening.

Israeli officials said Thursday that negotiations for a hostage deal are nearing exhaustion, and the chances of reaching an agreement appear to be fading. They warned that if Hamas continues to reject the proposed deal, Israel will intensify its military operations. According to the Saudi news channel Al-Hadath, Egyptian sources claimed that "the attempt to reach a cease-fire has failed." The sources said Israel had notified mediators that it was rejecting a proposed temporary cease-fire — reportedly a five-year arrangement. They added that Israel has backtracked on several clauses agreed upon in recent days and is insisting on expanding its military operation in Gaza. According to the report, Israel wants its forces to remain in the Strip until the end of the year.

However, the Prime Minister's Office issued a statement Friday evening denying the reports circulating in the Arab media: "The claims that Israel has supposedly rejected the Egyptian proposal presented to it are unfounded. Hamas was and remains the obstacle to a deal." The statement suggests that Israel has not officially informed Egypt that it is rejecting the proposal. In practice, however, Israel opposes any long-term or permanent cease-fire as long as Hamas remains armed.

The IDF is expected to begin initial phases of the expanded operation in Gaza next week if there is no breakthrough in the talks. In recent days, several reserve commanders have told their units to prepare for an unplanned call-up.

The reservists are expected to be divided into two groups: battalions that will take part in offensive operations deep inside Gaza, and brigades that will replace regular army units being reassigned to lead the new phase of the operation.

The IDF has aimed to limit reserve duty in 2025 to two and a half months per soldier, but this target was already breached about three weeks ago, as first reported by Ynet, when two reserve battalions were summoned for a second round of service this year due to high operational demands. The military stressed this weekend that "the deployment of reservists will be done responsibly and with careful consideration, based solely on professional and operational needs."

05.02.25 – Fr - Omer 14

2,000 km from Israel: two drones attacked Gaza aid ship near Malta

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2,000 km from Israel: Who attacked the Gaza aid ship near Malta?

Organizers of 'Freedom Flotilla', aimed at 'breaking Gaza siege', say two drones attacked their ship but stopped short of blaming any specific party, with Maltese authorities confirming sequence of events

Lior Ben Ari, Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi|Updated:11:57

Organizers of the "Freedom Flotilla" to Gaza, which aimed to "break the siege" on the enclave, claimed two drones attacked their ship near Malta—but stopped short of blaming any specific party. Israeli authorities have not commented on the attack, while a statement from Maltese authorities revealed the sequence of events that followed.

According to the Maltese announcement, shortly after midnight, the ship issued a distress call: "Mayday." The flotilla's organizers said the vessel was attacked twice by a drone. "There's a hole in the ship and it's sinking," said spokesperson Yasmine Asar. She said the generators in the ship's bow were targeted. Videos published by the organizers showed flames and smoke rising from the ship, accompanied by loud explosions.

According to Maltese authorities, "At 12:23 a.m., the crew reported that the fire was out of control and requested immediate assistance. A tugboat arrived and began extinguishing the fire. By 1:28 a.m., the blaze was under control. Another vessel was dispatched to provide additional support. At 2:13 a.m., it was confirmed that there were no injuries among the crew, although they refused to board the tug. At 3:45 a.m., the vessel was declared safe."

Reports from some Arabic-language outlets claimed Israel was behind the attack. However, the organizers, speaking with CNN, did not blame Israel or any other entity. They told the U.S. network that 30 people were aboard the ship, along with humanitarian aid. However, Malta's official statement said the vessel carried 12 crew members and four civilians. The organizers said only southern Cyprus authorities responded by sending a rescue and support ship.

The vessel was flying the flag of Palau. According to international tracking websites, it was located Friday morning off Malta's eastern coast. The island nation sits in the central Mediterranean, about 1,200 miles from Israel.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross warned that "after two months of total blockage of humanitarian aid, the situation in Gaza is on the verge of total collapse." Pascal Hundt, operations director for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), said, "This must not be accepted and the situation cannot be allowed to deteriorate further. Israel has a responsibility to do everything possible to ensure that civilians under its control receive the basic conditions they need."

According to the ICRC, supplies of food and medical equipment at its field hospital in Gaza are running out, with some items completely depleted. Water, sanitation and hygiene conditions have also deteriorated drastically. Damage to water systems, including the closure of pipelines and the destruction of sewage trucks, has created an "unacceptable and high risk" of waterborne disease.

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05.02.25 – Fr - Omer 14

Shin Bet introduces new security measures for Netanyahu amid growing tensions

05.02.25 – Fr - Omer 14

Shin Bet introduces new security measures for Netanyahu amid growing political tensions

Agency introduces full-body scanners, advanced surveillance cameras and manual pat-downs at events attended by PM, marking most extensive upgrade to his personal security  
Itamar Eichner|11:47

Israel's Shin Bet internal security agency has implemented unprecedented protective measures for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, deploying advanced scanning equipment, sophisticated surveillance technology and enhanced screening protocols at public events.

The new security protocols include the use of a high-tech body scanner similar to those found in airports abroad, particularly in the United States. The machine, which has faced privacy-related criticism in other countries, requires individuals to raise their arms while being scanned. Security officers then review the images on monitors. Additional equipment for scanning footwear was also introduced.

The upgraded procedures were first used this week during the official memorial ceremony for victims of terror at Mount Herzl in Jerusalem and at the annual Bible quiz competition held the next day at the Jerusalem Theater. Netanyahu attended both events. The Israel Prize ceremony, where Netanyahu canceled his appearance at the last minute, did not feature the new scanners but did include special security cameras. Security checks at these events were significantly intensified. Attendees were subjected to verbal questioning, including inquiries about how they received their invitations and their relationship to the host. Shin Bet agents also conducted manual pat-downs, aiming to prevent individuals from bringing protest signs into the venues. Some agents were seen wearing face masks during the screenings.

Due to the strict measures, the Bible quiz began before many audience members could enter the theater, with long lines reported outside. Some participants said they were asked to remove their kippahs, and even individuals holding high-level security credentials were subjected to searches that typically do not apply to them.

At the Israel Prize ceremony, where the new scanner was not in use, attendees reported being questioned at length. Those deemed suspicious were held aside, contributing to lengthy delays.

"The security was unprecedented," one individual told Ynet. "It seemed like the alert level was raised to the highest possible. Whether it's due to threats or the ongoing

protests, it felt unusual and everyone noticed.” Another described the pat-downs as intrusive and distressing.

Additional changes to the Shin Bet’s VIP Protection Unit, known as Unit 730, were also observed. For the first time, all agents wore black face masks—not for health reasons, but to conceal their identities for potential overseas deployments. Body cameras, previously not used by the unit, were also introduced at these events. In response to inquiries, the Shin Bet declined to comment, saying only: “We do not comment on security arrangements.”

05.02.25 – Fr - Omer 14

IDF set for 24,000 reserve call-up prepares to expand Gaza military operations

05.02.25 – Fr - Omer 14

IDF set for mass reservists call-up as it prepares to expand Gaza military operations  
Decision to escalate, barring breakthrough in talks, comes amid increasing concern from families of hostages about the fate of their loved ones held in captivity  
Yoav Zitun|08:52

As the 36th Division continues its operation in Rafah, the IDF is set to begin expanding its military efforts in the Gaza Strip next week, barring a breakthrough in negotiations for a potential deal. The decision to escalate comes amid increasing concern from families of hostages about the fate of their loved ones held in captivity, with growing pressure from military operations.

In recent days, many reserve officers have informed their troops to prepare for an unexpected call-up. The reserve forces will be divided into two main groups: battalions tasked with offensive and frontline operations deep within Gaza, and brigades that will replace regular forces, which will shift to serve as the spearhead in the upcoming operation.

The IDF had aimed to limit reserve duty to two and a half months per soldier in 2025. However, this goal was surpassed about three weeks ago when two reserve battalions were called up for a second round of service due to unprecedented strain on personnel and the increasing volume of tasks.

Over the weekend, the IDF issued a statement clarifying that "the deployment of reserve soldiers will be conducted thoughtfully and responsibly, based on objective and professional considerations." According to IDF Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, and in light of significant troop depletion and a shortage of fighters necessary for the war's objectives, the IDF will not be able to complete its mission alone. He stressed that political backing and civilian sanctions against draft evaders would be crucial for success.

By the end of June, the IDF is expected to issue around 24,000 initial conscription orders for Haredi youths, including those already sent out. However, only approximately 300 of

these orders have led to actual enlistments. The IDF, along with enforcement agencies, has refrained from actively enforcing these orders in accordance with government policy.

Lt. Gen. Zamir has reiterated that 2025 will be a year focused on war, specifically targeting Gaza and Iran. He has stressed, in discussions with political leaders, the necessity for the IDF to grow in response to security needs. Zamir has outlined that the IDF's top priority is the moral obligation to bring back hostages, followed by the goal of defeating Hamas.

In remarks that sparked backlash from hostage families, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the nation, saying, "We have many goals, we want to bring back the 59 hostages, but the supreme objective of the war is to defeat our enemies."

According to IDF data, since the beginning of the current operation in Gaza about a month ago, Israeli forces have killed around 400 terrorists and targeted approximately 1,800 sites in Gaza.

As for the resumption of humanitarian aid to Gaza, which is expected soon, Lt. Gen. Zamir has called for its efficient delivery, ensuring that it does not reach Hamas and that no starvation occurs in the strip. The IDF will follow political directives on the issue, while recommending the creation of distribution zones managed by international aid organizations and foreign civilian companies, with adequate security measures in place.

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Israel strikes near Syrian presidential palace amid violence against Druze

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Jerusalem says airstrike near Damascus was a 'clear message' to al-Sharaa regime as deadly attacks on Druze villages continue and protests erupt in Israel  
Yoav Zitun, Lior Ben Ari|08:24

Israel carried out an airstrike near the presidential palace in Damascus overnight, The IDF said Friday, describing the attack as a warning to the Syrian regime amid escalating violence against Syria's Druze minority.

The strike came in response to what Israeli officials described as a massacre of Druze civilians in Syria's southern Sweida province, where extremist groups reportedly attacked several villages. The Israeli leaders said the strike was intended to prevent the deployment of hostile forces south of Damascus and to send a "clear message" that threats to the Druze community would not be tolerated.

The Israeli military confirmed the strike after the prime minister's office released its statement. The Israel Defense Forces said fighter jets targeted an area near the residence of Ahmad Hussein al-Sharaa in Damascus. Military officials described it as a non-lethal

“knock on the roof” — a warning strike aimed at an area not designated as a military target, such as an open field.

Lebanon-based Al-Manar TV, affiliated with Hezbollah, aired footage purportedly showing the strike's aftermath, including smoke rising near the presidential palace and the sound of sirens. Hezbollah-aligned Al Mayadeen also reported smoke in the area.

Syrian opposition media and local sources reported that several Druze-populated villages in Sweida — including Lubin, Haran, and Jareen — came under sustained attack Thursday night. Residents said they returned fire at the attackers. SyriaTV reported that local Druze factions repelled a broad assault by extremist groups using mortar shells. The Syrian government has denied involvement, blaming “outlaw groups not affiliated with the Ministry of Defense or the security apparatus” for the violence.

As international condemnation of the attacks mounted, Syrian Information Minister Hamzah al-Mustafa wrote on Facebook that Syria remains “a homeland for all,” calling for inclusive national dialogue and rejecting incitement and misinformation.

The events sparked protests across northern Israel on Thursday, as hundreds of Druze citizens blocked major highways and lit bonfires at key intersections. Demonstrators demanded Israeli intervention to protect their relatives in Syria, chanting, “We will sacrifice our lives for Sweida.”

Traffic came to a standstill on roads including Highways 6, 85, 65, and 90, with blockages reported at intersections such as Elyakim, Amiad, Kfar Vradim, Eilabun, Kabri, Rama, Tzalmon, and Ein Tut. Police reopened Highway 6 at the Elyakim interchange shortly before midnight.

Around the same time, hundreds of protesters gathered near Netanyahu’s residence in Caesarea, urging him to “honor his promise and act.”

Druze reservists also organized in response. In closed forums, many expressed anger over what they viewed as Israel’s inadequate response to jihadist threats in Syria. In a letter sent to Netanyahu, Katz, Knesset members, and Druze spiritual leader Sheikh Mowafaq Tarif, the Association of Druze Veterans wrote that “hundreds of Druze fighters are ready to immediately volunteer and fight alongside our brethren to save them, even at the cost of assuming all risks to our safety and lives.”

05.02.25 – Fr - Omer 14

Missile debris falls on kindergarten in north Israel from Houthi launch intercept

05.02.25 – Fr - Omer 14

Missile debris falls on kindergarten in northern Israel after interception of Houthi launch  
Launch triggers sirens across the north and temporarily halts air traffic at Ben-Gurion  
Airport; IDF says missile was intercepted before crossing into Israeli airspace  
ynet|Updated:08:11

Debris from an intercepted missile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels landed on a kindergarten in northern Israel on Thursday, piercing the building's roof and ceiling. No children were present at the time, and no injuries were reported.

The incident occurred shortly after Israel's military detected a ballistic missile launch from Yemen and successfully intercepted it before it entered Israeli airspace. Sirens warning of incoming missiles sounded across wide areas of northern Israel, including the Jezreel Valley, Binyamina, the Gilboa region, the Upper and Lower Galilee, Haifa and surrounding towns.

Shai Regev, head of education at Kibbutz Mishmar HaEmek, said the kindergarten, named Zayit, serves 32 children between the ages of four and six. "It's a huge miracle," she said. "If this had happened while the kindergarten was open, children could have been injured. The fragments broke through the roof and ceiling—it was a terrifying scene that shows just how close the danger is."

Israel's emergency medical service, Magen David Adom, reported no injuries from the incident, aside from one man who was hurt while rushing to a shelter.

Thursday's launch marked the second time in 10 days that a missile from Yemen was fired toward northern Israel. Explosions from the interception were heard as far south as central Israel.

In response to the missile alert, takeoffs and landings at Ben-Gurion Airport were temporarily halted, delaying several international flights, including an Israir flight from Hungary and a departure to Rhodes.

The Israeli military said the missile was launched from Yemen and did not breach Israeli airspace. Similar alerts had been triggered earlier this week in the southern Arava region and around the Dead Sea. Sirens also sounded last week in the Haifa area and western Galilee—the first such alarms there since the end of recent hostilities with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Israel has so far not responded militarily to the launches from Yemen, reportedly at the request of the United States, which began a regional military operation a month and a half ago. Israel last carried out a strike in Yemen three months ago.

First published: 05:46, 05.02.25

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

Druze IDF soldiers urge action amid Syria sectarian violence; We will go ourselves

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

'We will go ourselves': Druze IDF soldiers threaten action amid Syria sectarian violence  
Druze protesters across Israel demand urgent action after dozens of relatives killed; as outrage grows, reservists warn they may cross the border to defend their communities, accusing the government of abandoning its moral duty



ynet correspondents|22:22

Hundreds of Druze citizens and reservists protested across Israel on Thursday, demanding stronger government action in response to ongoing sectarian violence in Syria. The demonstrations, which blocked major highways and interchanges, reflect growing anger within the community and the Israeli military over what they call the government's slow and inadequate response to atrocities committed by Syria's new ruling regime.

Protesters shut down parts of Highway 6 at the Elyakim Interchange, Highway 85 at Rameh Junction, and Highway 65 at Tzalmon Junction. The protests follow reports that at least 73 Druze civilians have been killed in Syria in recent days, with the violence blamed on forces loyal to Syria's interim president, Ahmad al-Sharaa.

Tensions are particularly high among Druze soldiers and officers within the IDF, with some accusing the government of turning its back on Syria's Druze minority. Reservists have reportedly coordinated protest plans in closed forums, and some are openly warning they may take matters into their own hands if Israel does not act.

"There is a historic alliance of life between Jews and Druze," one Druze IDF reservist said. "Just as we stood up to fight for this country and, if necessary, to die for it — especially after the horrors of October 7 — we must now rise and stop the current atrocities in Syria that are targeting our brothers."

He added: "This alliance knows no borders. And if necessary, we will go ourselves to protect our families in Syria."

The growing unrest comes as another wounded Druze victim of the violence in Syria was transferred into Israel on Thursday for treatment at Ziv Medical Center in Safed. It was the seventh such case in the past 24 hours, according to the IDF.

In recent days, Israel has conducted several warning airstrikes against jihadist groups operating near Damascus and in the Golan Heights region, including near the Druze village of Hader. These operations were carried out at the direction of the political leadership, following instructions from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz.

Katz issued a statement Thursday warning the Syrian regime that continued attacks on the Druze population would draw a strong Israeli response. "If the attacks on Druze in Syria do not stop, we will respond with severity," he said. "We are committed to defending the Druze and are closely monitoring developments."

Some Druze officers currently serve along the Israeli-Syrian border and have been involved in coordination efforts with civilians in the buffer zone. Earlier this week, about 60 Syrian Druze religious leaders were allowed into Israel via the Quneitra Crossing, controlled by the IDF, to visit relatives during the Druze holiday of Nabi Shu'ayb.

The White House also weighed in Thursday. Spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said the U.S. is "closely monitoring" the situation and is "fully aware—putting it mildly—of the recent

violence against the Druze minority.” She urged Syria’s interim authorities to hold those responsible accountable and to ensure the safety of all civilians.

The Syrian regime denies involvement in the violence, which erupted earlier this week in the town of Jaramana near Damascus. The unrest was sparked by a voice recording — of questionable authenticity — allegedly insulting the Prophet Muhammad and attributed to a Druze cleric. The sheikh denied involvement, but that failed to stop a wave of violent reprisals that left dozens dead and wounded.

Druze religious leader Sheikh Hikmat al-Hijri condemned the attacks and called for international intervention. “This massacre, which we never expected, was meant to sow terror,” he said. “We no longer trust a regime that claims to be a government while unleashing affiliated armed groups on civilians.”

He added: “We ask the international community to stop ignoring this and to intervene immediately to end the bloodshed.”

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

Jerusalem hills wildfire brought under control after 30 hours of firefighting

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

Jerusalem hills wildfire brought under control after 30 hours of firefighting

Fire Commissioner orders gradual drawdown of forces as firefighters remain on alert; 21 injured in blaze that scorched 5,000 acres; investigation launched amid conflicting claims by Netanyahu and police over suspected arson arrests

Itamar Eichner, Meir Turgeman, Liran Tamari|Updated:19:02

Israeli fire officials said Thursday that a massive wildfire in the hills west of Jerusalem has been brought under control after more than 30 hours of firefighting operations.

Fire and Rescue Commissioner Eyal Caspi announced Wednesday evening at approximately 6:30 p.m. local time that containment had been achieved following a round-the-clock effort by emergency services.

“The Fire Commissioner has directed that forces begin a gradual withdrawal,” the Fire and Rescue Authority said in a statement. “Firefighters will continue to operate at low intensity but will maintain a strong presence on the ground to prevent any resurgence of flames.” Caspi expressed gratitude to all personnel and agencies involved in what he called a national firefighting effort.

The blaze, which began early Wednesday morning, consumed an estimated 20,000 dunams (nearly 5,000 acres) of forest and open land. Significant damage was reported in Canada Park and other wooded areas. Authorities said 21 firefighters sustained minor injuries.

Key areas affected included Latrun, Burma Road, Eshtaol, Mesilat Zion, Taoz, Canada Park, Sha’ar HaGai, the Forest of the Martyrs, and Shores. Drone footage released by police showed extensive damage throughout the affected region.

A special investigative team has been established to examine the cause of the fire. Fire officials said a comprehensive inquiry is underway. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had claimed that 18 individuals were arrested on suspicion of arson, but police later denied the assertion, saying no arrests had been made. Caspi stated the cause remains undetermined and it is unclear whether the fire was set intentionally. The incident has renewed scrutiny over Israel's firefighting preparedness. A previously approved plan to purchase four Black Hawk helicopters — capable of carrying four times more water than the aircraft currently in use — was canceled in 2022 by National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir. The plan had been advanced during the Bennett-Lapid government. Upon entering office, Ben Gvir said he would end "the police commissioner's wastefulness," alleging that then-Commissioner Kobi Shabtai had ordered the \$50 million helicopters partly for his own use. The investigation into the blaze is ongoing.

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

Netanyahu: Will bring back hostages, but ultimate goal is defeating our enemies

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

Netanyahu: We will bring back the hostages, but ultimate goal is 'defeating our enemies' Prime minister's comments prompt strong backlash from families of captives, while military plans to expand operations in Gaza move forward amid diminishing hopes for a hostage deal

Itamar Eichner|16:53

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that the return of hostages is not the primary goal of Israel's ongoing war. Instead, he emphasized that the ultimate objective is defeating Hamas and Israel's enemies.

Speaking at the conclusion of the World Bible Quiz for Jewish Youth, Netanyahu explained: "We continue to build our homeland, through fire and water. We have many objectives; we have brought back 147 lives, totaling 196, and there are still up to 24 alive. We want to bring back the remaining 59, but the ultimate goal of the war is the victory over our enemies."

Einav Zangauker, the mother of Matan Zangauker, a hostage held in Gaza, responded to Netanyahu's comments, saying: "I understand that Netanyahu has more important goals than bringing back my sick son, who has been chained and drinking water from a toilet in Hamas tunnels in Gaza for a year and a half. Given that, it is clear to me that in order to bring my son back, my goal from this moment on is to remove Netanyahu from power." The Hostages and Missing Families Forum, which represents families of those kidnapped by Hamas, also responded, criticizing Netanyahu's statement. "Prime Minister, the goal of returning the hostages is not 'less' important—it is the top priority that should guide the Israeli government," the committee said. "Hostage families are concerned: Netanyahu is

aligning himself with Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich, in contrast to the overwhelming majority of the Israeli public who want all hostages returned first. Today, we will remember and remind: there is no full independence for the State of Israel or the Jewish people without the return of our brothers and sisters."

Meanwhile, Netanyahu is expected to convene a discussion on the continuation of military operations in Gaza after Defense Minister Israel Katz and IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir approved plans for an expansion of the conflict. Netanyahu is also expected to approve these plans, which will be discussed at the security cabinet meeting on Sunday evening.

In Israel, officials indicate that negotiations for a hostage deal are nearing their final stages, although the likelihood of an agreement is diminishing. If Hamas continues to reject a deal, Israeli officials warn that the military campaign will intensify. The security cabinet is also set to discuss the escalating situation in Syria, particularly concerning the Druze population.

Earlier, in a speech at the President's Residence honoring outstanding soldiers, Zamir addressed the ongoing challenges of the war. "This year, the ceremony has special significance. You are receiving recognition during a long and complex war, multi-theater in nature, which is still ongoing," he said. "Alongside significant achievements, we are still faced with challenges, foremost of which is returning our kidnapped brothers and sisters to their homes. At the same time, we are tasked with defeating Hamas, returning displaced persons to their homes, and establishing a stable and secure security reality for future generations."

Zamir added: "Hamas terrorists still hold 59 of our brothers and sisters, but they too know: this will not last forever! The IDF is ready and prepared to strike them a decisive blow. We will use all the power at our disposal, increase the pace and intensity of our actions. If needed, we will do so soon, with determination and righteousness in our cause."

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

IDF chief Zamir; military prepared to expand war to bring hostages home very soon

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

IDF chief says military prepared to expand war to bring hostages home

Speaking at a ceremony honoring outstanding service of soldiers Zamir highlights importance of unity among troops at a time of societal divisions

Itamar Eichner|13:34

Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir said that the IDF was prepared to use more lethal force in the fighting against Hamas terrorists in Gaza. Speaking at a ceremony honoring members of the military for outstanding service, Zamir said Israel's independence was bought in blood and struggle and commands Israelis to defend it at all costs.

" Hamas terrorists still hold 59 of our brothers and sisters. But they know they cannot do so forever. The IDF is prepared to deal them a final blow. We will deploy the full force at our disposal very soon, if necessary."

Zamir then addressed the societal rift plaguing Israel, which has intensified and expanded over the failure of the government to agree to a deal in Gaza that would see the hostages returned.

"The anchor of unity among all sectors of Israeli society stands above any division. The IDF is a living reminder that there is more that unites us than any division. In uniform, there is no right-wing and left-wing, there is one people with one goal, one hope, one aspiration for security, unity and peace.

The ceremony, on the occasion of Israel's 77th Independence Day, was held at the President's Residence in Jerusalem and was hosted by President Issac Herzog. The identity of the soldiers who received the honor was protected after concerns that they could be targeted for legal action abroad by pro-Palestinian advocacy groups. Herzog in his speech also spoke about the need to bring all of the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza since the Oct. 7 massacre, home.

"We cannot wholeheartedly celebrate independence while our brothers and sisters are still in captivity," Herzog said. "This uniquely Israeli courage is also the source of our strength – in our steadfast national commitment: to bring all the hostages home. All of them."

"Solidarity is the oh so Israeli foundation that our country is built on and demands of us to work in any way possible and with all our might to bring

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

Ben-Gvir using Greece & Italy help rather than Israel resources to battle wildfires

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

Despite repeated warnings, Israel fails to prepare for spread of wildfires  
Air Force offers help and is turned down, private aircraft operators overlooked despite proximity and availability, as the government turns to other countries for help; PM's son insinuates fires caused by left-wing, Arab arsonists to disrupt celebrations  
Itamar Eichner, Ilana Curiel, Liran Tamari, Yoav Zitun |09:16

Despite repeated warnings from the Israel Meteorological Service in the days leading up to the devastating wildfire that is still raging in the hills around Jerusalem, the Fire and Rescue Authorities and the government did not take measures to prevent the crisis. Dry weather conditions and strong winds were forecast for Wednesday, when Israel marked its Memorial Day for the fallen IDF soldiers and the victims of terror.

The meteorological service said that the first warnings were issued five days ago and repeated on Monday. In contrast, across the border in Egypt, schools were shut in advance in anticipation of dangerous fires.

The Authorities turned down the offer of assistance from the Air Force, which has among its squadrons large cargo aircraft, most suitable to respond to the massive fires. The Air Force took it upon itself to begin preparing its planes, cutting the necessary preparation time from 12 to six hours, but was told that they should not be put into operation during daylight hours since other options were available. Only at 3 PM did the Fire and Rescue Authority ask the Air Force to activate the planes.

Lighter aircraft also operated by the Air Force could not be put into operation because of the strong winds and privately owned aircraft able to fight fires were not activated because of political infighting, despite their proximity to the fires and their much-needed equipment.

"It's heartbreaking. The country is on fire and we have 10 aircraft sitting here," a pilot at Chim-Nir Aviation, a private company, said. "It's about power struggles, internal politics and money. We offered our services, but the government preferred to bring in help from Greece and Italy rather than using the resources that were available right here."

The Shin Bet was involved in investigating the cause of the flames, but preliminary findings did not provide conclusive evidence of arson.

That did not prevent conspiracy theorists from spreading rumors online, including Yair Netanyahu, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's son, who said in a post that he hoped Arab arsonists were not assisted by 'our own people, from the left,' whom he claimed had wanted to disrupt Independence Day celebrations that were to begin in the evening hours on Wednesday.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who is responsible for the Fire and Rescue Authority, came under attack, even from inside the ruling coalition. 'Do we have a minister responsible for national security?' some ministers asked.

A previous wildfire last week destroyed some 4,500 acres of forests and in the current flames, thus far, nearly 5,000 acres have been burned. Thousands of people were evacuated from their homes in over a dozen communities, and about 100 cars were abandoned on the main highway connecting Jerusalem to the coast.

More than a dozen people were taken to the hospital, most suffering from smoke inhalation, after they were stranded on the road as it was engulfed in flames. Authorities said that due to the wind, the fire was erratic and unpredictable.

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

220 yards of cars abandoned in Jerusalem hills wildfire, 18 suffered smoke injuries

05.01.25 – Th - Omer 13

‘The bus driver told us to run, I grabbed my baby and ran down the highway’: Survivors recount Jerusalem fires

Eighteen people evacuated to hospitals from Jerusalem Hills fire, including infants and pregnant woman; most injuries caused by smoke inhalation, all non-life threatening; survivors and responders describe terrifying moments amid the blaze  
Or Hadar|00:16

Eighteen wounded were evacuated to hospitals since the morning due to the massive wildfire raging in the Jerusalem hills. Ten were taken to Shamir Medical Center, and the rest to Kaplan Medical Center.

“I need to recover. It wasn’t simple at all,” said Adele Kedmi from Jerusalem, who was injured in the fire. Kedmi and her one-month-old daughter were caught in the blaze on their way back from visiting her sister in Safed. “We were on a bus. I recently gave birth, and it was my first time traveling alone with a baby. Before we even got stuck in the traffic jam, we saw the smoke, but we didn’t know it would reach us too.”

Ten minutes later, while stuck in traffic, they could only see smoke. “We didn’t know what was happening. Suddenly, all the drivers ahead of us got out of their cars, and the bus driver told us to run. I immediately had a panic attack. I couldn’t move. All I could think about was my little baby. I just froze and didn’t know what to do. A kind woman took my baby, and someone else carried my bags and stroller, but we didn’t know where to go—all we could see was smoke and fire, and she couldn’t breathe.”

According to Kedmi, a police officer in a private car who was also stuck in the traffic offered to help them. “He told me, ‘Get in the car quickly.’ We got in, but he couldn’t drive either because everything was blocked, and the fire was already right next to us. I felt like I was losing it.” At this point, the officer told her to grab her baby and run. “He said, ‘Run, there’s nothing else to do.’ I couldn’t hold her, so someone helped me. The stroller was left inside the car, and everything burned.”

For about 15 minutes, Adele Kedmi ran with her baby along Highway 1. “I just ran, in a panic attack, crying, and all I cared about was my baby. We ran for about 15 minutes, running and jumping over fences. I’m recovering from surgery, so it wasn’t easy for me at all.” Eventually, police officers in the area spotted them and assisted. She and her daughter were evacuated by Magen David Adom teams to Shamir Medical Center. They arrived suffering from smoke inhalation. “They gave her oxygen and examined her. She’s okay,” she said.

“This was a very unpleasant experience. The people who were there will need psychological help afterward because it wasn’t simple at all. Hearing the explosions as cars blew up—it was terrifying,” Kedmi added.

First Sergeant Major Imri, from the Fire and Rescue Services, was injured in his eye and evacuated to Shamir Medical Center. He recounted: “We arrived at the Latrun area on Highway 1. We evacuated people from their cars, and it was an apocalyptic scene—220 yards of cars, one after the other, abandoned with no people inside, like in movies, with the red coloring of fire retardants from the planes covering them.”

"In the Latrun area, near the Emmaus Nicopolis Monastery, parts of the monastery burned, and a spark got into my eye while we were working. I kept working, and when other teams arrived, an ambulance evacuated me to the hospital. We worked, and there's still work to do there—it depends on the direction of the winds."

Dr. Gal Pachis, head of the Emergency Medicine Department at Shamir Medical Center, told Ynet that two infants, one month old and six months old, were evacuated to the hospital, as well as a pregnant woman in advanced stages of pregnancy. "Their condition is not life threatening. I hope we will be able to release them in the coming hours," he said.

According to Dr. Pachis, most of the injured arrived suffering from smoke inhalation. "We have a small number of people who suffered from mild burns," he said. He added, "The stories we're hearing are very significant. It seems that most of the injured came from the Latrun area after being stuck in the traffic jam there. The fire came very close to their vehicles. One of the patients who came to us said they escaped their car at the very last moment. The air there was already extremely hot, and they barely managed to escape before their car was completely engulfed in flames."

Dr. Pachis emphasized that the hospital was prepared with reinforced teams, including social workers, to help and support the injured. "We understand that the fire is still growing and spreading, so the overall situation is still unclear to all of us," he said.

Magen David Adom teams are stationed across all sectors to assist and provide medical care to the injured from the events. Gili Liberty, a paramedic with Magen David Adom, told Ynet, "Magen David Adom deployed to several points in the area, some near Modi'in and others near Highway 1. We received injured people who were evacuated on foot. My team and I were at a Magen David Adom station, waiting for a call, and as soon as we received one, we went to treat the injured."

"This is a very stressful situation. Most of the injured we evacuated suffered from smoke inhalation and dizziness, and we transported them to hospitals where they are continuing to receive treatment," she added.

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

Arson suspected in Memorial Day fires sweeping Israel

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

Terrorism suspected in massive fires sweeping Israel, security source says

Suspected arson behind Memorial Day infernos; arrests made as wind-fueled wildfires force evacuations, trigger national emergency across Israel

The Media Line|18:03

Terrorism is suspected in the wave of massive fires that have triggered a national emergency across parts of Israel, according to an unnamed Israeli security source speaking to The Media Line.



The fires erupted on Tuesday, as the country marked Memorial Day for Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism and prepared to transition into celebrations for its 77th Independence Day.

The source confirmed that several arrests have been made in connection with the suspected arson attacks, but declined to provide further details due to the sensitivity of the ongoing investigation.

The fires, intensified by strong winds and dry conditions, have led to the evacuation of numerous communities. Emergency services are battling to contain the blazes, which have already caused widespread property damage and forced road closures. No fatalities have been reported so far, but officials have warned that the situation remains dangerous and unpredictable.

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

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

IDF strikes extremists near Damascus to thwart attack on Druze community

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

IDF strikes regime-aligned extremists near Damascus to thwart attack on Druze community

As deadly sectarian clashes grip Druze suburbs of Syrian capital, Israel warns it may hit regime targets if violence doesn't stop

Ynetnews|17:11

The IDF carried out an airstrike near Damascus on Wednesday, targeting what it described as an extremist group preparing to attack the Druze community in Syria. The strike, which Israel called a "warning operation," came amid escalating sectarian violence in the region.

The military said the operation took place in Sahnaya, a town on the outskirts of the Syrian capital, and was intended to prevent further attacks on the Druze minority. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz stated that Israel expects the Syrian regime to act to prevent harm to the Druze.

The military said in a statement that following a situation assessment, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir instructed the military to prepare for strikes on regime targets in Syria should the violence against the Druze continue.

The airstrike followed deadly clashes in the predominantly Druze suburb of Jaramana, where at least 13 people were killed, including members of Syria's General Security Service. The violence was reportedly sparked by a recording of a Druze man insulting the Prophet Muhammad, which incited anger among Sunni gunmen.

In Israel, Druze protesters blocked roads in the Galilee earlier on Wednesday, expressing solidarity with their brethren in Syria and calling on the Israeli government to intervene. Sheikh Mowafaq Tarif, the spiritual leader of the Druze community in Israel, urged immediate action to prevent a massacre, stating, "Israel must not stand by in the face of events unfolding as we speak."

The Druze, a religious minority with communities in Syria, Lebanon and Israel, have been increasingly vulnerable amid the sectarian strife following the fall of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Israel has emphasized its commitment to protecting the Druze, citing historical and familial ties.

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

US backs Israel's ban on UNRWA Gaza aid operations at World Court

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

US backs Israel's ban on UNRWA Gaza aid operations at World Court

At the opening of hearings U.N. and Palestinian representatives accuse Israel of breaking international law by refusing to let aid into Gaza

Reuters|15:49

Israel cannot be forced to allow the U.N. Palestinian refugee agency, UNRWA, to operate in Gaza, the United States said on Wednesday at a World Court hearing in The Hague. Israel last year passed a law that banned UNRWA from operating in the country, as it said the organization had employed members of Hamas who took part in the massacre on October 7, 2023.

The U.N. said in August that nine UNRWA staffers might have been involved in the assault and had been fired. Another Hamas commander, confirmed by UNRWA as one of its employees, was killed in Gaza in October, according to Israel.

The United Nations General Assembly in December asked the U.N.'s top court to give an advisory opinion on Israel's obligations to facilitate aid to Palestinians that is delivered by states and international groups, including the United Nations.

At the third day of hearings on the matter, the U.S. said Israel had the right to determine which organizations could provide basic needs to the population of the occupied Palestinian territories. "An occupational power retains a margin of appreciation concerning which relief schemes to permit," U.S. State Department legal adviser Joshua Simmons said.

"Even if an organization offering relief is an impartial humanitarian organization, and even if it is a major actor, occupation law does not compel an occupational power to allow and facilitate that specific actor's relief operations." Simmons also stressed the "serious concerns" Israel has about UNRWA's impartiality.

Since March 2, Israel has completely cut off humanitarian aid to the 2.3 million residents of the Gaza Strip, and food stockpiled during a ceasefire at the start of the year has all but run out.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said in Jerusalem on Monday that Israel had submitted its position in writing to the hearings, which he described as a "circus".

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

Due to high winds, torch lighting ceremony canceled, will broadcast recorded rehearsal

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

Due to high winds, government cancels torch lighting ceremony, will broadcast recorded rehearsal

Ynetnews will air recorded ceremony with English voiceover; production warns not all of the people chosen to light a torch in the ceremony were present during the filming of the rehearsal including Eli Sharabi who was released from captivity in Gaza

Ran Boker|13:53

The government decided on Wednesday not to hold the traditional torch lighting ceremony marking the transition from Memorial Day to Independence Day after weather conditions pose a danger to public safety. A recording of the dress rehearsal will be broadcast instead.

Dry conditions and high winds have already caused massive forest fires in the hills of Jerusalem, prompting evacuations of residents from area communities and the closing of major highways.

The decision to cancel the ceremony came after Transportation Minister Miri Regev, who was in charge of the event, consulted with the head of Israel's Meteorological Service.

However not all of the people chosen to light a torch in the ceremony were present during the filming of the rehearsal including Eli Sharabi who was released from captivity in Gaza after he was abducted during the massacre of October 7 and whose wife and two daughters were murdered by the terrorists.

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

Druze leader calls on Israel to intervene in sectarian fighting in Syria

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

Druze spiritual leader calls on Israel to intervene in sectarian fighting in Syria  
Protesters block roads in the Galilee with burning tires after dozens of Syrian Druze killed in clashes with Sunni Islamists; Police forces pulled away from Memorial Day ceremonies at local cemeteries to clear roads for bereaved families heading to memorials

Yair Kraus, Reuters, Lior Ben Ari|12:20

Druze protesters blocked roads in the Galilee on Wednesday, protesting the violent clashes between Druze groups and armed factions in the city of Jaramana, near Damascus, Syria.

The Druze spiritual leader in Israel Sheikh Mowafaq Tarif said the eyes and hearts of the community in Israel are in the Druze victims in Syria. "I call on Israel, the Jews around the world and the international community to act now, immediately, to prevent a massacre. Israel must not stand by in the face of events unfolding as we speak," he said. "Israeli leaders, you must take on the burden of proof and action."

The demonstrators set tires on fire, and the disruption caused major traffic jams in the area, blocking access to nearby military cemeteries for the Memorial Day ceremonies.

Police officers in the northern district were ordered to leave military cemeteries and the gravesites of their fallen comrades to secure key intersections and ensure that bereaved families and visitors could reach cemeteries on this sensitive day.

"A short time ago, several illegal protests began at multiple locations in the north. Northern District officers are deployed at the scenes to maintain public order and help participants in various ceremonies reach their destinations safely on this sensitive day," the police said in a statement.

More than a dozen people were killed in a predominantly Druze town near the Syrian capital on Tuesday in clashes sparked by a purported recording of a Druze man cursing the Prophet Mohammad which angered Sunni gunmen, rescuers and security sources said.

The clashes began overnight when gunmen from the nearby town of Maliha and other predominantly Sunni areas converged on the mostly Druze town of Jaramana, southeast of Damascus, security sources said.

The fighting, with small and medium arms fire, left 13 people dead, according to local rescue workers.

Among the dead were two members of Syria's General Security Service, a new security force comprised mostly of former rebels, according to the interior ministry spokesperson Mustafa al-Abdo.

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

Netanyahu Memorial Day speech praised Israel's fallen heroes in defense of their home

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

Netanyahu in Memorial Day speech: 'This generation understands all too well what is at stake'

Speaking at the state memorial ceremony at Mount Herzl, PM honors fallen soldiers and says, 'Our sons and daughters are determined to hold the perpetrators of atrocities to account and are doing everything possible to bring our hostages home' Ynetnews|09:40

Israel held its official state Memorial Day ceremony on Wednesday morning at Mount Herzl in Jerusalem, honoring the nation's fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism.

The ceremony commenced at 11 a.m. local time with a two-minute nationwide siren, bringing the country to a standstill in remembrance. Ynetnews broadcast the ceremony live.

The event, a central part of Memorial Day commemorations, was attended by President Isaac Herzog, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana, Supreme Court Chief Justice Yitzhak Amit, Defense Minister Israel Katz and senior military and security officials.

Following the siren, the Air Force conducted a missing man formation flyover above the military cemetery at Mount Herzl.

Speaking at the ceremony, Prime Minister Netanyahu praised Israel's fallen heroes in defending their home since the October 7 attack and throughout the war.

"This generation understands all too well what is at stake. Our sons and daughters are determined to hold the perpetrators of the massacre and atrocities to account—and even at this very moment, are doing everything possible to bring our hostages home," he said.

"This is the light of victory that will shine from the battlefield—the light of sacrifice and spirit. The light of victory carried by the fallen heroes of Israel who gave their lives for our people. Their memory will forever be engraved in our hearts.

“As one bereaved family so poignantly put it: the phrase ‘grief-stricken’ is no mere figure of speech—we feel it in every cell of our bodies. So too did King David say, three thousand years ago.”

Meanwhile, protests erupted at several Memorial Day ceremonies across the country, as bereaved families and attendees voiced anger over the government’s handling of the war and the fate of hostages held in Gaza.

At military cemeteries in Tel Aviv, Ramla, Holon and Rosh Ha’ayin, ministers’ speeches were interrupted by chants and signs demanding action, particularly the return of 59 hostages. Clashes broke out between grieving families, and some mourners walked out during speeches.

Housing Minister Yitzhak Goldknopf canceled his appearance in Kiryat Gat due to planned protests and instead visited the Western Wall. Police and stewards had been stationed at cemeteries in anticipation of tensions.

At 1 p.m., a state ceremony in memory of terror victims in Israel and abroad will also take place at Mount Herzl.

Since last Memorial Day, 319 soldiers have fallen in battle, bringing the total number of deaths to 25,420 since 1860.

The day's events will conclude with the traditional torch-lighting ceremony at 7:45 p.m. at Mount Herzl, marking the transition from Memorial Day to Israel's 77th Independence Day. Ynetnews will also broadcast this ceremony live with an English voiceover.

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

50 firefighting teams deployed on forest fires in Jerusalem hills; evacuations for caution

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

Forest fire spreads in Jerusalem hills; evacuations underway

Some 50 firefighting teams are dispatched, planes are deployed to extinguish flames as dry weather conditions and high winds increase the risk of fire spreading to more populated areas

Liran Tamari, Meir Turgeman|11:08

Fire and Rescue authorities were put on high alert after a brush fire broke out in the woodlands in the Jerusalem hills, just one week after a massive forest fire destroyed vast areas and prompted evacuations and road closures.

Residents of several communities have been told to evacuate in an abundance of caution and parts of the main highway connecting Jerusalem to the coast have also been closed.

At least 50 firefighting teams have been rushed to the area and aircraft have been deployed to extinguish the flames. Dry weather conditions, including high winds, have caused concerns that the fires will spread to more populated areas.

A general call-up of firefighting reserves has been issued as well.

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

Trump purged Kamala Harris's husband & others from Holocaust Memorial Council

04.30.25 – We - Omer 12

Trump ousted Kamala Harris's Jewish husband from Holocaust Memorial Council

The president removed several members appointed by Biden from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. Emhoff led the Biden administration's efforts to combat antisemitism — and criticized Trump after the dismissal

Associated Press|03:32

President Donald Trump has dismissed many of former President Joe Biden's nominees to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, including Doug Emhoff, the husband of former Vice President Kamala Harris.

Emhoff, who is Jewish and who led the Biden administration's efforts to combat antisemitism, criticized Trump's action, saying, "Let me be clear: Holocaust remembrance and education should never be politicized."

He added, "To turn one of the worst atrocities in history into a wedge issue is dangerous, and it dishonors the memory of six million Jews murdered by Nazis that this museum was created to preserve."

Others dismissed alongside Emhoff include former Biden chief of staff Ron Klain and former domestic policy adviser Susan Rice, who was the principal author of and the impetus behind the first-ever comprehensive National Strategy to Combat Antisemitism in 2023.

Anthony Bernal, a senior adviser to former first lady Jill Biden, confirmed he was also dismissed.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Since taking office in January, Trump has moved to fire many Biden appointees across government, including ostensibly apolitical roles. Biden, too, dismissed some Trump carryover appointees after he entered the White House in 2021, most notably 18 appointees named to U.S. military academy boards, but at a far smaller scale.

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

Netanyahu to visit Azerbaijan 10 days after Iranian president

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

Netanyahu to visit Azerbaijan 10 days after Iranian president

PM will return to Baku for the first time since his 2016 visit, amid growing tensions over Turkey's entrenchment in Syria and efforts to prevent clashes there

Itamar Eichner 21:31

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to depart next Wednesday for a planned visit to Baku, Azerbaijan, where he will meet with President Ilham Aliyev and remain for five days, including the weekend.

The trip comes just 10 days after Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian visited the country, against the backdrop of renewed nuclear talks between Washington and Tehran.

Netanyahu will be joined in Baku by his wife Sara, at the invitation of President Aliyev. The visit will be funded by the Azeri government. The prime minister previously visited Azerbaijan in 2016. During his upcoming talks with Aliyev, Netanyahu is expected to discuss Turkey's presence in Syria and the recent Israeli-Turkish dialogue hosted in Baku, aimed at avoiding clashes on Syrian soil. Azerbaijan has effectively positioned itself as a mediator working to stabilize regional tensions, particularly following a visit by U.S. President Donald Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff.

Aliyev has also recently met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Syria's new president, Ahmad al-Sharaa—better known as Abu Mohammad al-Jolani—further cementing his role as a major diplomatic player in the region. Officials in both Israel and the U.S. view Aliyev as a rare figure capable of bridging divides among key regional actors.

Azerbaijan shares a border with Iran, and the two countries have long had strained relations. Contributing factors include Tehran's treatment of its large Azeri minority in northwestern Iran, its support for Armenia—Azerbaijan's bitter rival—and the strategic partnership between Israel and Azerbaijan, which includes extensive Israeli arms sales to Baku.

In early 2023, Azerbaijan closed its embassy in Tehran following an incident it labeled a terrorist attack, in which the head of the embassy's security detail was killed and two guards were injured. Iran claimed the attacker was motivated by "personal and family issues." Amid the diplomatic fallout, both countries expelled each other's diplomats. After months of negotiations aimed at deescalating tensions, Azerbaijan reopened its embassy in Iran in July of last year.

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

President Isaac Herzog Memorial Day speech beside the Wall of Tears

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

Our generation bears a historic responsibility: to safeguard, at all costs, our homeland—this precious miracle

'Just steps from where the smoke of the burning Temple mixed with the smoke of burning granaries two thousand years ago, I cry out against the inciters, the dividers, the arsonists: Enough!' | President Isaac Herzog Memorial Day speech

President Isaac Herzog|20:49

Each year, the sound of this siren—here, beside the Wall of Tears, and throughout the land—shakes and stirs the heart. The sound of heroism and inner strength. Our sound, all of us. Every walk of life of our people. The sound that always reminds us where we came from—and where we are going. The sound of the righteousness of our path.

This year, perhaps more than ever, the siren's sound is also a true alarm, commanding us: unite and come together. Do not tear apart from within. Do not destroy our home. It rises further and further, like a terrible cry, a wail, a scream that pierces the gates of Heaven. For the fallen men and women, the murdered; for the many wounded in body and soul; for our kidnapped brothers and sisters—the beloved, the tormented—held in captivity and distress for more than a year and a half.



From here, I call out to our brothers and sisters in the hands of murderers: A whole nation is missing you, worrying for you, crying your cry. A nation tormented beyond measure. A nation that knows—deep in its soul, burned with longing and anxiety—that the wound cannot heal until you return. Until you return to us. Here, at the place where our soldiers swear to defend the homeland and the freedom of Israel—we too swear, I swear: not to rest and not to be still. Not to rest and not to be still. Not even for a moment. To act with all our might, by every means, to take one more step, and another, until all of you come home. Every single one.

My sisters and brothers, exactly a year ago, I lit this memorial torch here, at the foot of the remnant of our Temple, together with Sarah Vespi—an IDF widow, a bereaved mother, and a bereaved grandmother. Ten years after Sarah lost her husband, Yoav, in the Yom Kippur War, her son Arnon fell in Lebanon.

Eulogizing him, Sarah said: "The rain trickles down my window, together with my silent tears. For my son—who did not return. For my husband—who did not come back."

Years later, when a grandson was born and named after his uncle—Arnon—Sarah said: "I will have two Arnons: a living Arnon and an Arnon in my heart."

That grandson, Captain Arnon Benvansti Vespi, a 26-year-old Givati reservist officer, fell in battle in Gaza a year and a half ago. He is buried in Rosh Pina, alongside his grandfather and uncle. Three generations. Three wars. One family. Sarah Vespi passed away three months ago. May her memory, and that of her loved ones, be blessed.

Throughout our existence here, we have come to understand deeply the words of the bereaved poet Nahan Yonatan: "A land whose lovers gave her all they could give."

We have seen how the two words "cleared for publication" can destroy an entire world.

And, horrifyingly, how sometimes, within the very same home, yet another world is destroyed—how one family must endure loss upon loss, live life upon life layered with longing. Families struck by generational, multi-generational bereavement. Double bereavement, sometimes triple. Families who gave everything—and then gave everything again.

Today, I wish to speak of some of those families, while holding all bereaved families in my heart.

All the fallen, all the families. From every campaign. From every part of the people.

Across the entire land. Families who are the very silver platter upon which our state was served.

Thanks to them, we exist. Thanks to them, we endure. Thanks to them, we shall be.

Sergeant Omri Tamari, a proud Golani soldier, was killed last October. He was not the first in his family to fall. Nor the second. His grandfather, Avraham, lost his father, Yaakov Zvi, in the War of Independence, and two decades later, his brother Shmuel during the War of Attrition.

Standing over Omri's fresh grave in Mazkeret Batya, Avraham—the orphan, the brother, and the bereaved grandfather—said: "It is very hard to bear, but we have no choice."

At the same time, the same spirit rose in Tuba-Zangaria, over the grave of Sergeant Yosef Hieb, who fell alongside Omri. More than three decades after his grandfather, Nayef

Hieb—a Bedouin Muslim tracker, father of seven—fell during an operational mission in southern Lebanon.

Two families—generation after generation—who see defending Israel's security not as a burden, Heaven forbid, but as an immense privilege. A sacred duty: to enlist, to serve, to wear the olive uniform.

"Saving Israel from the oppressor" is a sacred duty—written in blood; and all of us—every community of Israel—must take part and shoulder the burden.

Over the grave of Lieutenant Yochai Duchan, who fell on October 7, his brother Yehuda eulogized him in heart-wrenching words: "Father strokes your head," he said.

Alex, Yochai's father, born to Algerian immigrants, came to Israel from France and settled in Kiryat Arba. He was killed in a terror attack on the Worshippers' Way in 2002, near the Cave of the Patriarchs.

Upon completing Officer's School, Yochai said: "The love of Israel and contribution to the state are at the core of my family—and my father's."

Lieutenant Yochai Duchan fell in a heroic battle at Nahal Oz, fighting barehanded when ammunition ran out. And the ancient lament echoes: "The slaughterer came and killed fathers and sons."

Captain Wassem Mahmoud, a Druze deputy company commander in the Engineering Corps, fell alongside seven of his soldiers in Gaza just under a year ago; 72 years after his great-grandfather, Nur al-Din Mahmoud of Beit Jann, fell in battle at Qalqilya.

Wassem was already wounded on October 7—in his hand and neck—but insisted on returning to fight with his men. That is the way of the family—generation to generation—to do everything, selflessly, for our state. For all of us.

"Fathers and sons, grandmothers and grandchildren... A father cries for his son, cries for his father." So goes the song.

So many brave, extraordinary families who insist—generation after generation—on carrying the torch of service and devotion, rooted in deep belief in the justice of our path. Hundreds of innocent citizens, pure and blameless, have been murdered by vile terrorists in the past year and a half. And even among civilian bereavement—the victims of terror—the multi-generational grief is so painfully present, shaking every fiber of body and soul.

I will never forget comforting mourners at Kibbutz Lahav, with the family of Yagev Buchshtav—of Kibbutz Nir and the partner of Rimon—who was executed while held captive by Hamas murderers in Gaza. I will never forget the sorrow that pierced my heart when I heard Esther's story—Yagav's mother—about her uncle, Yosef Arbiv, who made Aliyah from Tripoli, Libya, and fell during the heroic rescue of the Hadassah Convoy in Jerusalem in 1948.

Bereavement upon bereavement. A family's world destroyed—and then destroyed again. Beloved and cherished bereaved families, my sisters and brothers:

The truth must be spoken: we have never sought to live by the sword. We are not war-loving people.

On the contrary: peace was, and remains, our greatest yearning. We will never give up on reaching out for peace. Never. At the same time, we will never renounce, even for a

moment, our duty to defend ourselves, and our historic and natural right to exist—like every nation—sovereign in our homeland.

Peace is not only an aspiration outward, toward our neighbors, but a supreme, binding duty inward, within our own home. Throughout this difficult war, I have met thousands of bereaved families. One message, one plea, one cry rose from every heart, from every soul, again and again: lower the flames. Mend the hearts. Keep us one people.

At this sacred moment, I recall the words of Dudi Naim—a bereaved brother—eulogizing his heroic daughter, Sergeant First Class Agam Naim, a combat medic who fell in battle at Rafah: "I want us, as a people, to be worthy of your death," her father cried.

Today I stand here, just steps from where the smoke of the burning Temple mixed with the smoke of burning granaries two thousand years ago, and cry out against the inciters, the dividers, the arsonists: Enough! Enough division! Enough polarization! Enough hatred! We must not, by our own hands, bring about the destruction of our national home—the home of all Israelis, the home of the entire Jewish people.

Our generation bears a historic responsibility: to safeguard, at all costs, our home—this precious miracle—our Jewish and democratic State of Israel.

A responsibility to uphold the supreme command bequeathed to us by our loved ones.

Let me be clear: I do not stand here as a prophet of doom, and my words are not a lamentation. Great nations are tested in their hardest hours, and indeed—our great nation—full of spirit and strength—has risen from its hardest hour.

There, in that dark hour, we saw stirring heroism, boundless love for Israel, deep devotion and determination, mutual responsibility, and unwavering faith in the justice of our cause. From the depths of destruction rose the clear, steadfast answer of our eternal people.

On this sacred day, in this sacred place, we also bear a sacred duty:

To recommit ourselves to the brave, shared Israeli covenant.

To listen to the impressive, courageous, resolute voices of bereaved Israeli families. To draw a thread of kindness from these national days—the Ten Days of Sanctity—throughout the year. To trust each other, to extend a hand, to rise above divisions, and to transform this moment of pain into a moment of shared rebuilding.

Beloved and cherished bereaved families—mothers and fathers, spouses, sisters and brothers, daughters and sons, grandmothers and grandfathers, loved ones—As President of the State of Israel, on behalf of the State of Israel, I bow my head before you in gratitude and reverence. I pray: for the immediate return of all the hostages—the living and the fallen—every last one of them; for the healing of all the wounded, in body and in soul; for the success and safety of the soldiers and commanders of the IDF.

I embrace and strengthen, on behalf of us all, the soldiers of the IDF, and the operatives of the Shin Bet, the Mossad, the police, the Border Police, the Prison Service, the emergency and rescue services, and all security and homeland security branches—and their commanders.

I thank, on behalf of the entire nation, and in particular, the families of the regular and reserve personnel in the IDF and all security forces.

Families who provide the support on the home front without which the missions on the frontlines could not be completed. The people of Israel are blessed by you.

At this pure national moment, I call: remove the IDF from political disputes. Place the Shin Bet, the Mossad, the police, and all security services above all disputes. Especially now—let us strengthen the defenders of our holy land, as the prayer says—not, Heaven forbid, the opposite.

May the words of the Prophets come true speedily in our days:

"For your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord, and they shall return from the land of the enemy. And there is hope for your future, says the Lord, and your children shall return to their own border." May the memory of our daughters and sons, our sisters and brothers—those fallen in Israel's wars and in acts of terror—be blessed and preserved in the heart of the nation—from generation to generation, forever and ever.

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

On Israel's 77th Independence Day population 10,094,000: One-third are under 20

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

On Israel's 77th Independence Day: One-third of Israelis are under 20

Israel's annual growth rate of 1.4 percent far exceeds global averages, according to CBS; population projected to reach 15.2 million by country's centennial in 2048

Yaron Drukman, Itamar Eichner|15:51

On the eve of Israel's 77th Independence Day, the country's population stood at 10,094,000, according to figures published Tuesday by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). By Israel's centennial in 23 years, the population is projected to reach 15.2 million.

The latest data shows that 7,732,000 residents (77.6%) are Jewish or classified as "others," such as non-Arab Christians or people without religious affiliation. The Arab population numbers 2,114,000 (20.9%), with 248,000 foreign workers (2.5%) living in the country.

Over the past year, Israel's population grew by 135,000 people (a 1.4% increase), including roughly 32,000 from the foreign resident population. During this period, approximately 174,000 babies were born, 28,000 olim arrived, 50,000 people died and the balance of Israelis abroad showed a net outflow of about 56,000.

Israel's annual growth rate of 1.4% far exceeds global averages. According to the CBS, the world's population is growing at 0.9% annually, OECD countries at 0.5%, and the EU at just 0.2%. The CBS attributes Israel's growth to a combination of high birth rates (nearly three children per woman on average), Jewish aliyah and high life expectancy.

Since Israel's founding in 1948, the number of residents has increased 12.5-fold from a population of 806,000. Today, 18.5% of Israelis are under age 10, and 16.5% are between

10 and 19, meaning over one-third of the population is under 20. In contrast, just 3% are aged 80 and older and 6% are in their 70s.

The CBS also noted that since 1948, nearly 3.5 million olim have arrived in Israel, with around 1.66 million (47.6%) coming since 1990. As of the end of 2023, roughly 45% of the world's Jewish population lives in Israel and about 80% of Israeli Jews were born in the country.

Globally, there are an estimated 15.8 million Jews, with more than 7 million living in Israel. In 1939, just before World War II, the global Jewish population numbered 16.6 million, including 449,000 (3%) in British Mandatory Palestine. By 1948, that number had dropped to 11.5 million, with 650,000 (6%) living in Israel.

Despite ongoing challenges, most Israelis report being satisfied with their lives. A 2024 social survey of adults aged 20 and over found that 91% are satisfied or very satisfied with their lives; 67% are content with their financial situation; 92% of working respondents are happy with their jobs and 83% rate their health as good or very good. The survey also found that 94% of Israelis feel they have someone to rely on in times of crisis, 96% are satisfied with family relationships, 92% are in regular contact with friends and 78% report never or rarely feeling lonely.

Additionally, 86% are satisfied with their local area overall, 58% with neighborhood cleanliness and 62% with green spaces and parks. Looking ahead, 57% of Israelis believe their lives will improve in the coming years, 25% expect no change, 9% foresee deterioration and 9% are unsure.

The Aliyah and Integration Ministry also published figures showing that 26,211 new olim arrived in Israel since last Independence Day. The largest group — 14,398 — came from Russia, followed by 3,185 from the U.S. and 2,253 from France.

Other olim came from Ukraine, the UK, Belarus, Canada, Georgia, Argentina, South Africa and dozens of other countries, including individuals from Zambia, Afghanistan, Iceland and Uganda.

By age group, the largest number of olim (4,355) were aged 25–34. Another 5,047 were children aged 0–18, while 237 were over 85. A total of 2,494 families comprised 3 to 5 people, with 65 families having six or more members. Among the new arrivals were 1,250 elderly individuals living alone. The gender split was nearly even: 12,380 males and 13,831 females.

Aliyah and Integration Minister Ofir Sofer said, “Even now, 77 years after the founding of the state and amid a complex security situation, we’re seeing continued aliyah and the desire of many Jews to come to Israel — right in the middle of a war — to be part of the Zionist story.”

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

Government scraps plan to dismiss Shin Bet chief after resignation announcement

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

Government scraps plan to dismiss Shin Bet chief after resignation announcement  
Bar's resignation negates need for dismissal, government says; move seen as effort to avoid High Court ruling on PM's alleged conflict of interest  
Itamar Eichner|15:28

The government said Tuesday it was canceling the dismissal of Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar after he announced he would step down next June.

Bar's planned ouster by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Cabinet had prompted accusations that the move was politically motivated. Critics claimed it followed the Shin Bet's launch of an investigation into the alleged ties between Netanyahu's close aides and the government of Qatar, including actions purportedly taken to advance Qatari interests. The investigation reportedly raised concerns about threats to national security and to the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza.

The cancellation of Bar's dismissal is seen as an effort to head off High Court deliberations on Netanyahu's conduct, which could highlight potential conflicts of interest.

"It was the government's position that Bar should resign as head of the Shin Bet, in a respectful manner," the government said in a statement. It added that although Bar's resignation was delayed, it made firing him unnecessary.

"As the head of the organization, I took responsibility — and now, on the evening that symbolizes memory, heroism and sacrifice, I chose to announce its fulfillment and decided to end my role as head of the Shin Bet," Bar said, using the agency's official name.

He also appeared to address the political leadership, saying, "Carrying out responsibility in practice is an inseparable part of personal example and the legacy of our leaders, and we have no legitimacy to lead without it."

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

Hamas emerging from undiscovered tunnels, in fatal Gaza battle, killing two IDF

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

Soldiers fight Hamas terrorists emerging from tunnels, in fatal Gaza battle, new details revealed

Five squads of terrorists emerge from tunnels and shafts to attack troops during extraction of wounded on the outskirts of Gaza City's Shejaiya quarter

Yoav Zitun|11:54

The IDF was investigating the battles in Gaza on Friday that resulted in the death of two members of the military, Sgt. Neta Yitzhak Kahana and Capt. Ido Voloch. According to testimonies seen by ynet, the IDF faced serious dilemmas in the fighting in an urban area littered with underground tunnels.

The forces battled against Hamas terrorists just 1.5 kilometers (under one mile) from the border with Israel but beyond an elevation that provides a clear sight toward border area communities, leading the IDF to take control of the area and position observation points on the Gaza side of the border fence.

The deployment prevented Hamas from firing rockets and missiles into the Israeli communities.

The battle began when IDF troops set out to destroy terrorist infrastructure in the Shejaiya quarter of Gaza City, to remove threats to the forces and extend the security buffer zone. Terrorists who emerged from a tunnel then opened fire at a force, which engaged in a firefight, resulting in the killing of Kahana.

Reinforcements arrived within 12 minutes, including six tanks sent to secure the area. The investigation revealed that after forces began extracting the wounded, at least five squads of Hamas terrorists who lay in ambush, emerged from tunnels and shafts and opened fire and launched anti-tank missiles toward the extraction route.

In the fighting, the IDF said at least nine of the terrorists were killed. After the extraction was pinned down by fire, the wounded were transferred into an alternative vehicle and with the protection of tank fire, moved toward the border. Voloch was killed during the extraction efforts when his tank took a direct hit from a missile.

"None of those injured were killed in the battle," IDF officials said. "The fighting force exhibited calm and experience gathered in the war, many of them spending more time in uniform than not, since the war began."

The military said the probe would include the failure of intelligence after the area of the battle had been under IDF control but Hamas had underground tunnels that had not been discovered.

"Mistakes were made during the fighting and we will learn from them," the officials said.

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

IDF targets Hezbollah missiles stored in Beirut; Lebanon asks Embassy to stop attacks

04.29.25 – Tu - Omer 11

Lebanon seeks international pressure to stop Israeli attacks, report

The committee overseeing the ceasefire agreement is to convene on Thursday to discuss alleged Israeli violations; resident of the Dahiye report panic and chaos amid Israeli strike  
Lior Ben Ari|09:08

The Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar, affiliated with Hezbollah, reported that the IDF strike in Beirut's Dahieh district on Sunday prompted Lebanese officials to contact foreign nations to pressure Israel to halt its attacks.

According to the newspaper, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun contacted the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and the head of the ceasefire monitoring committee, Jasper Jeffers, who is expected to arrive in Beirut today to meet with the president, the prime minister and the Lebanese parliament speaker. The ceasefire monitoring committee is scheduled to convene on Thursday, after its activities were suspended by the United States.

France has urged the committee to respond to alleged Israeli violations of the deal, while the U.S. had backed Israel's actions. Residents of the Hezbollah stronghold in southern Beirut reported chaos and panic following Israel's strike, according to the UK-based Saudi Arabian Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper.

One resident said the fear and anxiety felt during the war were felt now. "I live near the area attacked and like most people here, I've been through difficult times. I was at home and shocked when I saw where the strike would take place, in a post by the IDF spokesperson, on X."

Another resident said he learned about the IDF call to residents to leave for safety from a friend. My house is next to the target area, so we left. On the way, we heard heavy fire and the roads were packed; it was like doomsday."

When he returned home, he found it had been damaged and that he would have to rebuild, for the third time. "The house is unfit for habitation," he said, adding that he would rent accommodations away from the Dahieh.

The IDF posted images of the attack, which, according to the military, targeted a building where Hezbollah stored precision missiles.

Israel said that in the past month, the IDF attacked over 50 terror targets throughout Lebanon following violations of the ceasefire agreement, which "posed a threat to Israel and its citizens."

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Israeli defense expanding Gaza operation to full force, with major reserve call-up

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Israeli defense officials preparing to expand Gaza operation, major reserve call-up  
After Israel rejected Hamas' proposal for a five-year ceasefire in exchange for the release of all hostages, Jerusalem preparing to step up pressure on the terror group, following ministers' calls to move to a 'decisive phase'

Moran Azulay|23:52

Israel is preparing to expand its military operation in Gaza and significantly increase its call-up of reservists, a defense official said Monday.



Due to the deadlock in hostage deal negotiations, Israeli leadership has decided to act on previous threats and escalate fighting.

Senior ministers have pushed for immediate approval of expanded IDF action in Gaza, but the decision was delayed due to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz's desire to exhaust diplomatic channels to reach a hostage deal before proceeding.

A political source on Monday morning said Israel had rejected Hamas' proposal for a five-year truce in exchange for the release of all hostages. Officials in Jerusalem ruled out the possibility that the proposed framework would move forward, saying that currently there is no realistic alternative plan to secure the hostages' return. As a result, Israel is preparing for an intensified military path.

"There are ideas being floated by some Arab states, like a five-year ceasefire," said the political source. "There is no chance we will agree to a hudna [truce] with Hamas that would allow it to rearm, recover, and continue its war against the State of Israel with even greater strength."

The source added: "The reason we didn't immediately launch intense fighting after the end of the last ceasefire — and instead proceeded gradually — was to allow space for negotiations over the hostages' release. We still want to exhaust every effort to bring the hostages home, but our patience is not unlimited."

Last week, ahead of the security cabinet meeting, ministers pressed to set a deadline: if no hostage deal is reached by then, Israel must move to what they termed the "decisive phase." This phase would involve a massive reserve call-up, the deployment of several divisions into Gaza, and the use of heavier firepower than the IDF has employed in recent weeks.

Such a move would require the emergency mobilization of thousands of troops. According to the latest scenarios discussed, several divisions would operate inside Gaza, including the seizure of significant parts of the Strip as leverage to pressure Hamas. The Hostages' Families Forum responded to the military's preparations, saying: "Why continue doing the same thing and expect a different result? Why sink even deeper into the Gaza quagmire? The time has come to show courage and act wisely — to reach a deal that brings all the hostages home and ends the war. The Israeli government could return all the hostages as soon as tomorrow morning — if it chooses to. The hostages would come home, our soldiers' lives would be saved, and a heavy toll on hundreds of thousands of reservists would be avoided."

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar to step down June 15; begins appointing a replacement

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar to step down on June 15

Bar's announcement comes amid high tensions between him and Netanyahu over ongoing Qatargate investigations and public scrutiny of the agency's failure to prevent the October 7 attacks  
Ynet|20:48

Shin Bet Chief Ronen Bar announced Monday evening, one day before Memorial Day events, that he would step down from his position on June 15.

"As the head of the organization, I took responsibility — and now, on the evening that symbolizes memory, heroism, and sacrifice, I chose to announce its fulfillment and decided to end my role as head of the Israel Security Agency," Bar said in a speech at an event honoring fallen Shin Bet officers at the agency's headquarters.

He also sent a message to the political leadership, stating that "carrying out responsibility in practice is an inseparable part of personal example and the legacy of our leaders, and we have no legitimacy to lead without it."

Bar, in light of ongoing discussions at the Supreme Court regarding his removal, added, "After 35 years of service, in order to allow a smooth process for appointing a permanent replacement and professional overlap, I will conclude my duties on June 15, 2025. My love for the homeland and my loyalty to the state are the foundation of every decision I have made in my professional life. This is also true this evening."

Bar's resignation announcement comes after high tensions between him and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, mainly centering on the ongoing Qatargate investigation, where suspected advisers in the PMO received benefits from Qatar for positive media coverage in Israel.

His retirement also follows heavy public scrutiny regarding the agency's apparent lack of ability to prevent the October 7 attacks.

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

IDF conducts first use of quick response, Bar rocket, in Gaza Strip

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

IDF conducts first use of 'Bar' rocket in the Gaza Strip

Military says the system features a navigation mechanism for challenging combat environments and can strike targets within a very short time

Yoav Zitun|18:46

Israeli forces have carried out the first operational use of the "Bar" rocket, developed by Elbit Systems, against Hamas terror targets in the Gaza Strip, the military said Monday.

According to the IDF, the system features a navigation mechanism adapted to challenging combat environments and is capable of striking targets "within a very short time."

The forces using the rocket are artillery troops from the 282nd Artillery Brigade, operating under the 36th Division. They have been active in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war, following intensive activity in various arenas.

So far, the troops have fired more than 5,000 shells at terror targets along the "Morag" Corridor, which divides the southern Gaza Strip between Rafah and Khan Younis, providing close support to maneuvering ground forces.

During their operations, the troops destroyed weapon storage facilities and launch compounds belonging to terror organizations in Gaza, and terrorists were eliminated under the direction of the brigade's Fire Control Center.

Since the beginning of the war, the IDF has also been using old armored personnel carriers (APCs) packed with tons of explosives to preemptively trigger and neutralize explosive devices in combat zones before troops enter. These APCs, developed within the military, are remotely detonated and can generate an explosive effect equivalent to that of four to five large "JDAM" bombs. During the war, the IDF upgraded the development and also used it against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon.

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Israel refuses 5-year Gaza truce that enables Hamas to rebuild and continue war

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Israel refuses 5-year truce with Gaza: 'Enables Hamas to rebuild and continue its war against Israel with greater force'

Senior Israeli official says current military approach preserves changes for hostage deal; dismisses any Israeli involvement in last week's massive explosion at an Iranian port  
Itamar Eichner|15:33

A senior Israeli official said Monday that Israel will not accept a five-year ceasefire deal proposed by Hamas, even if it includes the return of all hostages held in Gaza. The proposal, reportedly backed by some Arab states, was described by Israel as a dangerous "hudna" that would allow Hamas to rearm and regroup.

"There is no chance we will agree to a truce that enables Hamas to rebuild and continue its war against Israel with greater force," the official said.

Israel emphasized that its current gradual military approach in Gaza, rather than full-scale operations following the latest ceasefire, was intended to preserve chances for a hostage deal. "We are still trying to exhaust efforts to reach an agreement, but our patience is not unlimited," the official said.

The Hamas offer reportedly included the release of all hostages in a single phase in exchange for a long-term truce. However, Israel is maintaining its demand for Hamas' dismantlement and has criticized Qatari mediation efforts as "not helpful."

"The Qataris have had a negative influence in the negotiations now," according to the senior official. In addition, Israel admitted that, despite US President Donald Trump's plan to displace Gazans, "the departure is still not large. We have requests from Western countries that want to take their citizens out, for example, Canada contacted us and said that there are family members who want to come out. Our principles are to take out people who want to leave of their own free will, and on the other side, where there are countries that want to absorb them."

Israel denies involvement in setting off the explosions at Iran's Bandar Abbas port. On the Iranian front, the official affirmed close coordination with the U.S., noting alignment with Washington's goal to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. He dismissed any Israeli involvement in last week's massive explosion at the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas, which Tehran has partially blamed on Israel.

Domestically, families of the hostages expressed outrage at what they described as the government's lack of a clear strategy for their loved ones' release. "Once again, the 'senior official' tells us what they won't do—but not what they will," the Hostages and Missing Families Forum said. They urged Prime Minister Netanyahu's office to meet with families directly.

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Demonstrators block roads as 70 active & 110 reserve Haredi enlist in IDF

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Haredi extremists clash with police, new haredi recruits outside IDF enlistment center. Haredi extremists at the IDF enlistment center in Tel Hashomer protested the enlistment of Haredi soldiers on a draft day designed just for them; Demonstrators blocked roads, hurled insults, and distributed anti-enlistment propaganda, while recruits voluntarily joined the Haredi Netzach Yehuda Battalion under heavy security. Shilo Freid|13:51

Riots erupted outside the IDF recruitment center in Tel Hashomer in central Israel on Monday as extremist Haredi factions protested against the enlistment of Haredi soldiers. Demonstrators attempted to disrupt the recruitment process for the Haredi Netzach Yehuda Battalion, blocking roads, shouting anti-enlistment slogans, and distributing propaganda.

Protesters hurled phrases like "Don't kill yourself," "This is hell," and "They're Nazis" as newly recruited soldiers entered the base. Border Police officers secured the area, working to maintain order as the protests escalated.

Police reported deploying reinforcement forces to manage the situation, including directing traffic around the blocked roads. One protester was arrested during the chaos. "Disruptors attempted to block vehicles by lying on the road, and officers worked to free the vehicles," the police stated.

The protests caused road closures, including Yaakov Dori Street in Kiryat Ono between Shaul HaMelech and Levi Eshkol streets, as well as restricted access to other nearby roads. Traffic congestion was reported along Route 461, from the Beit B'Park intersection to Mesubim Junction, in both directions.

Inside the recruitment center, approximately 70 active-duty soldiers and 110 reservists transitioning to combat roles were expected to enlist voluntarily for the Haredi Netzach Yehuda Battalion. This battalion was specifically established to accommodate recruits who wish to maintain their religious lifestyle, ensuring a framework for integrating Haredi soldiers into the military.

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

ICJ begins debate on Gaza aid, as 40 nations discuss Israel in five days of hearings

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

ICJ begins debate on Israel's aid policies as world lines up to discuss Gaza  
Israel faces accusations at the International Court of Justice of failing its legal obligations to facilitate humanitarian aid to Gaza, as dozens of nations begin presenting arguments during hearings that start today  
Reuters|10:47

Israel is facing accusations that it broke a international law by refusing to let aid into the Gaza Strip as dozens of nations begin presenting arguments at the International Court of Justice during a week of hearings starting in The Hague on Monday.

In December, the UN's top court was tasked with forming an advisory opinion on Israel's obligations to facilitate aid to Palestinians that is delivered by states and international groups, including the United Nations.

The claims say that Israel completely cut off all supplies to the 2.3 million residents of the Gaza Strip since March 2 and food stockpiled during a ceasefire at the start of the year has all but run out.

Israel has said it would not allow the entry of goods and supplies into Gaza until the Palestinian terror group Hamas releases all remaining hostages.

Germany, France and the UK last week called on Israel to adhere to international law by allowing the unhindered passage of humanitarian aid into Gaza, after Israel reiterated that no aid would be allowed to enter Gaza, in order to pressure Hamas.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday said he had pushed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to allow food and medicine into the Palestinian territory. Israel has repeatedly accused Hamas of hijacking humanitarian aid that was allowed into Gaza. Hamas has denied the allegations and has blamed Israel for shortages. The resolution adopted in December by 137 of the 193 nations in the UN's General Assembly called on Israel to comply with its obligations toward the Palestinian population, as it expressed "grave concern" about the dire humanitarian situation. Israel, the United States and 10 other countries voted against the resolution, while 22 countries abstained. Representatives for the Palestinian territories will be among the first to address the court in The Hague on Monday.

Israel is not among the roughly 40 nations that will speak during the five days of hearings scheduled through Friday.

"This is another attempt to politicize and abuse the legal process to persecute Israel. The goal is to deprive Israel of its most basic right to defend itself. It is not Israel that should be on trial — it is the UN and UNRWA," Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said Monday in a statement.

"The UN has become a rotten, anti-Israel, and antisemitic body. Clear evidence shows that under the UN and its secretary-general, UNRWA employed terrorists who took an active part in the October 7th massacre — and then covered it up," he added. "This case is part of a systematic persecution and delegitimization of Israel. It abuses the international legal system and politicizes it. No country — democracy or non-democracy — has been brought before the Court as much, and as often, as Israel. No country is subject to such double standards."

The United States will state its opinion at the ICJ on Wednesday. Advisory opinions of the ICJ, also known as the World Court, carry legal and political weight, although they are not binding and the court has no enforcement powers.

The UN views Gaza and the West Bank as "occupied territory." International humanitarian law requires an occupying power to facilitate relief programs for people in need and ensure food, medical care, hygiene and public-health standards. After the hearings, the World Court will likely take several months to form its opinion.

04.28.25 – Mon - Omer 10

Iran fended off extensive cyber-attack against its infrastructure Sunday

04.28.25 – Mon - Omer 10

Iran says it fended off 'extensive cyberattack' against country

Cyber offensive comes one day after port explosion that killed at least 40 and injured hundreds, which Tehran continues to blame on Israel despite ongoing investigations  
Reuters|09:08

Iran's Tasnim News Agency reported Monday that the country faced "one of the most extensive and complex cyberattacks against its infrastructure" on Sunday.

The report, citing Iran's Telecommunication Infrastructure Company CEO Behzad Akbari, said the attack was repelled "by the grace of God and the efforts of security and technical teams," and that preventive measures were taken.

In a column two weeks ago, Ynet commentator Ron Ben-Yishai noted that CIA Director John Ratcliffe's recent visit to Israel included discussions of potential operations reminiscent of "Operation Olympic Games" in 2006.

According to foreign reports never officially confirmed, the U.S. and Israel used a sophisticated cyberattack to sabotage Iran's nuclear program. Intelligence officials believe that operation, if it took place, inflicted more significant damage than the assassination of nuclear scientists or localized sabotage.

The only killing believed to have caused comparable harm was that of Professor Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, head of Iran's nuclear program, nearly five years ago. According to Iranian media, the cyberattack occurred just a day after a massive explosion at Shahid Rajaei Port in Bandar Abbas, southern Iran. Firefighting teams were seen using planes and helicopters to drop water from the air. Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni said most of the fire had been contained by Monday afternoon. The death toll from the explosion has risen to over 40, with more than 1,200 injured.

For the first time, Iran publicly accused Israel of involvement. "Israel was involved in the Rajaei Port explosion. This was not an accident," Iranian parliament member Mohammed Seraj alleged.

"Explosives were planted in containers, either at the country of origin or along the shipping route. We do not rule out internal elements helping plant the explosives." He claimed that: "Clear evidence points to Israeli involvement. The explosion occurred at four different locations."

The blast occurred around 12:00 p.m. local time Saturday. Early footage showed orange smoke rising into the sky before a massive mushroom cloud formed. The explosion caused widespread damage to Shahid Rajaei Port, Iran's largest commercial port, with shockwaves reportedly felt across several kilometers.

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Normalize with Israel put Egypt in criticism defense from its own people & Arabs

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Egypt's el-Sisi says decades-old peace with Israel should serve as regional model  
Egyptian president's remarks highlight enduring state-to-state cooperation even as public sentiment in Egypt remains wary of complete normalization with Israel  
Giorgia Valente/The Media Line|08:14

In a recent speech that drew wide attention across the Middle East, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi said the decades-old peace between Egypt and Israel could serve as a model for the entire region. His remarks come as the Gaza war enters its second year, regional alliances shift, and Donald Trump's return to the White House signals possible changes in American Middle East policy.

Samir Ragheb, chairman of the Arab Foundation for Development and Strategic Studies, offered a candid assessment. "The peace treaty has worked well between governments. Relations between the Egyptian state and Israeli state function. But between the people of both countries? That hasn't worked. So-called normalization just isn't normal. The peace treaty prevents war but doesn't build relationships between ordinary citizens in either country," he said.

Ragheb said public sentiment remains deeply shaped by Israeli actions in Palestinian territories. "Israel hasn't given us the chance to forget its violence against innocent people. We aren't against a nation's right to protect its citizens, its land. But we oppose the killing of innocent civilians," he added.

Political analyst Walid Kazziha, a former professor at the American University in Cairo, echoed this view, adding that Israeli policies have complicated Egypt's position.

"Netanyahu is putting Arab governments in an embarrassing position. He's forcing them onto the defensive. The occupation of that part of Gaza bordering Egypt has definitely put Sisi's regime on the defensive against criticism from his own people and from Arabs generally," he said.

Despite the cool diplomatic ties and negative public opinion, Egypt and Israel maintain robust military coordination, which remains a stabilizing factor in a volatile relationship. "Yes, there's very good coordination," Ragheb said about intelligence cooperation. "Without solid coordination at multiple levels—from communications officers to the high committee for military relations between Egypt and Israel—without this, we could have war triggered by any mistake," he explained.

Along the shared border from the Mediterranean to Taba, coordination is constant, Ragheb noted. "And there's reasonable tolerance for unintentional mistakes from both sides."

Kazziha pushed back against Israeli suggestions that Egypt's military is becoming a threat. "From my perspective, Egypt is gradually increasing its military positions and capabilities—which is entirely natural. But the Israelis exaggerate this to claim, 'Look, Egypt is building powerful military forces to attack Israel.' Egypt has no such intentions," he said.

"I think the Israelis are overstating Egyptian military developments to convince the Americans they need more support in terms of weapons," he added.

"From the very beginning, trade between Egypt and Israel has continued regardless of political circumstances," Ragheb said. "Through multiple conflicts in 2008, 2014, 2018, 2022, 2024—trade continues despite tensions or deteriorating relations between our countries."



Key sectors, including agriculture and gas, have remained closely linked. Israeli products often enter Egypt discreetly, Ragheb added, “sold as if from another country—labeled as made in China or the United Arab Emirates. The average consumer doesn’t realize they’re from Israel,” he said.

Sisi’s remarks come as the region adjusts to Trump’s reelection, which Arab leaders believe could bring both pressure and opportunity in their relations with Israel. “Yes, there’s definitely a Trump effect,” Ragheb said. “Unlike Democrats who have domestic political considerations, Trump is openly pro-Israel, not secretly. He’ll make decisions that strengthen Israel’s position, even at neighbors’ expense.”

Kazziha offered a more nuanced view. “There’s a feeling in the region that Trump probably isn’t pleased with the situation in Gaza and the Middle East generally, given Netanyahu’s approach of endless conflict and hostility toward Arab parties. But I think Netanyahu has overplayed his hand,” he said. Arab leaders seem to be adjusting accordingly. “Arab nations are lining up, seemingly preparing the ground for Trump by showing—whether Syrians, Egyptians or Jordanians—that they’re quite willing to accommodate Israel’s legitimate interests in the region,” Kazziha said.

Both experts agree that a sustainable peace will require recognizing Palestinian statehood. “Ordinary, rational people don’t expect a Palestinian state from the sea to the river. They accept the principle of two states,” Ragheb said. “If Israel recognizes Palestinians’ right to statehood and independence, then everything might change—even relations between our people.”

He emphasized that any solution would have to be based on the 1967 borders: “Two states living peacefully, coexisting.”

“In Egypt, we have laws prohibiting demonstrations without permission,” Ragheb said. “Any unauthorized demonstration subjects participants to legal consequences—potentially custody or charges of political crimes.”

Kazziha traced this broader trend back to the region’s political history: “Arab public opinion has been subdued by pressure from Arab regimes themselves. Over time, Arab citizens generally have come to feel powerless and defenseless. They believe their actions won’t make much difference.”

He linked today’s political mood to the failures of the Arab Spring. “The Arab Spring gave hope to a new generation that things could change. But ultimately it failed because Arab regimes, with Western powers’ support, contained that vibrant movement and brought it to a standstill,” he said.

Sisi’s call for Egyptian-Israeli peace to serve as a model comes during what appears to be a broader regional realignment, with developments including Syria’s shifting stance toward Israel, changes in Palestinian Authority leadership, Jordan’s crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood, and Hezbollah’s diminished presence in southern Lebanon.

“Yes, we’re entering a new era in the Middle East,” Ragheb said, recalling that when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat signed the Camp David Accords in 1978, the Arab

world rejected his peace initiative. “Now, Israel is widely recognized. We have at least nine Arab countries with peace treaties with Israel through the Abraham Accords, and more could happen.”

Kazziha was less optimistic, saying that “the Middle East is moving toward eliminating the last remnants of any force that might radically change the region’s political or economic landscape. Power remains concentrated in the hands of Arab regimes, Israel, and Western powers with regional influence, especially the United States.”

Sisi’s vision of Egyptian-Israeli peace as a regional model will be tested in this changing landscape. Military and intelligence ties between Egypt and Israel remain strong, and economic relations continue despite political tensions. Yet the absence of real people-to-people normalization, and the unresolved Palestinian issue, still cast long shadows over the relationship.

As Ragheb put it: “Personally, I believe in this principle. I don’t hate Israeli people. I hate the decisions of the Israeli government and cabinet—not ordinary citizens. So if the Israeli government could shift to something new, probably all the Arab world may see the country differently in the future.”

The distinction between governments and peoples remains at the heart of the Egyptian-Israeli dynamic—and will shape whether el-Sisi’s vision can succeed.

The story is written by Giorgia Valente and reprinted with permission from The Media Line.

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Israel hasn't attacked Yemen for 3 months, but the US has hit over 800 Houthi targets

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Israel hasn't attacked Yemen for 3 months, but the US has hit over 800 Houthi targets  
US CENTCOM says US troops have killed hundreds of Houthi terrorists in its Yemen operation that began about a month and a half ago, including senior officials; Command and control facilities have been destroyed, along with air defense systems, weapons production plants and weapons depots; 'from Israel's perspective, the Houthi threat is like a pesky fly, mostly'

Itamar Eichner, News Agencies | 07:42

Yemen continues to launch ballistic missiles at Israel, including over the weekend when they targeted areas further away from the center, but it appears that Israel is for the time being refraining from responding to a request of the U.S., which launched an intensive military operation in the region a month and a half ago. In fact, the last time Israel attacked in Yemen was three months ago.

Israel says there is currently no change in its approach, despite the continuing missile attacks. "The fact that they are firing does not mean anything," an Israeli security source said Sunday. "The American operation is very effective. Some Houthis still have the ability to launch, but they are not able to launch many missiles at a time. Most of the

launches are intercepted or fall on the way - from Israel's perspective, the Houthi threat is like a pesky fly, mostly."

He said it is difficult to determine when the threat from Yemen will disappear, but in any case "we need patience." In the face of Israel's choice not to respond, the source claimed that "the Americans are doing a good job there, we cannot contribute anything there in an attack." An Israeli source claimed regarding the operation against the Houthis, within the framework of which the Americans also attacked Yemen on Sunday, that "every day for this month and a half, the American attacks are about 10 times what we can do in Yemen in a year."

Over the weekend, two Houthi drones were intercepted without triggering alarms. On Saturday night, a ballistic missile was intercepted outside Israeli territory. Sirens sounded at 4:50 a.m. in several communities across the Arava and southern Dead Sea regions. Similar sirens were heard the previous night in Beersheba following another Houthi-launched missile, which was also intercepted.

For the past six weeks, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) forces have been conducting an intense military campaign against Houthi rebels in Yemen. The operation, dubbed Rough Rider, began on March 15 and has so far struck more than 800 strategic targets, killing hundreds of terrorists, including senior operatives, CENTCOM said in a statement released overnight between Sunday and Monday.

According to the update, numerous command and control centers, air defense systems, advanced weapons manufacturing sites and weapons depots have been destroyed. "The operation will continue as long as the Houthis deny the United States freedom of maritime navigation," the statement read. "Our objectives are clear, but we are deliberately discreet about our tactics to maximize impact." CENTCOM also highlighted key achievements: the shutdown of the Ras Issa fuel port; a 69% drop in ballistic missile launches; and a 55% reduction in the launch of explosive drones.

While the statement emphasized the precision and intelligence-based nature of the campaign to limit civilian harm, Houthi-affiliated Yemeni outlet Al-Masirah claimed eight people—including women and children—were killed in recent U.S. strikes on the capital, Sana'a.

Alongside the campaign in Yemen, the U.S. continues indirect nuclear negotiations with Iran. However, the Pentagon stressed the link between Tehran and the Houthi threat. "The Houthis are only able to continue attacking our forces because of support from the Iranian regime. Iran is clearly providing the backing," CENTCOM stated, vowing to "continue tightening the pressure until our goals are achieved, including restoring freedom of navigation and reestablishing American deterrence."

## Trump announces US very close to reaching nuclear agreement with Iran

04.28.25 – Monday - Omer 10

'In a good place': Trump announces US nearing nuclear agreement with Iran  
U.S. president claims is close to finalizing a nuclear agreement with Tehran during his return from Rome, while also expressing frustration over Russia's actions in Ukraine  
Daniel Edelson, New York | 07:41

U.S. President Donald Trump said Sunday night aboard Air Force One, on his way back from Pope Francis' funeral in Rome, that the U.S. is very close to reaching a nuclear agreement with Iran.

"We're in a very good place," Trump told reporters. "There's going to be a deal very soon. It's happening. We'll have something without needing to drop bombs. I want to finish the Iran issue."

Trump's remarks followed a third round of negotiations between the sides, held Saturday in Oman between his special envoy, Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, as part of efforts to reach a new nuclear agreement. Talks lasted over four hours.

Iran expressed satisfaction with the discussions, and U.S. officials said "progress" had been made toward a deal. However, The Wall Street Journal reported ongoing disputes over whether Tehran would be allowed to continue enriching uranium and over Washington's demand to include Iran's missile program in the agreement — a condition Iran has rejected.

Trump also voiced disappointment with Russian President Vladimir Putin's handling of the war in Ukraine, amid White House efforts to broker an end to the conflict and growing threats to abandon mediation.

Despite calls for a ceasefire, Trump noted that Russia continued firing missiles at Kyiv. "I was very disappointed that missiles were flying from Russia after the talks," he said. "I want Putin to stop shooting, sit down and sign an agreement. I believe we already have the framework for a deal. I want him to sign it and be done with it."

Trump recounted his Saturday meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at the Vatican, calling it "a beautiful meeting." He praised the setting as "the most beautiful office I've ever seen," and said the meeting was "one of the most beautiful I've ever had." He added that Zelensky seemed "more relaxed" and "understood the situation," suggesting there was a real chance to reach an agreement. "I think he wants to make a deal," Trump said.

When asked if Zelensky was prepared to relinquish Crimea as part of a future settlement, Trump replied, "I think so. Crimea was 'given away' 12 years ago. It happened under [Barack] Obama.

"They handed it over without firing a single shot. So don't talk to me about Crimea — talk to Obama and Biden." Trump said Zelensky "briefly raised" the issue during their meeting.

Commenting on the situation on the ground, Trump added, "It's very sad. Pieces of bodies scattered across the battlefield — I don't like seeing that. If I had been president, it never would have started."

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

PM meets Ambassadors of EU, Asia, Africa & Latin America in Jerusalem

04.28.25 – Mo - Omer 10

Iran was set to scan Hezbollah pagers, so the operation was moved up by several weeks, Netanyahu reveals

Prime minister says Israel accelerated its pager operation after intelligence showed devices were being scanned in Iran; he also detailed what he considers a 'successful deal' with Iran; He added: 'We have another war front: the deep state'

Itamar Eichner|01:11

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu revealed Sunday that Israel moved up its pager operation against Hezbollah by several weeks after intelligence indicated that three pagers sent from Lebanon were being scanned in Iran.

Speaking at the Jewish News Syndicate (JNS) conference in Jerusalem, Netanyahu said, "In the third week of September, we learned that Hezbollah had sent three pagers to Iran for scanning. I was told it would take them a day. I said: we need to act."

The operation, originally planned for October, was expedited. "We launched the campaign in Lebanon three weeks earlier than planned, while the military still needed time to prepare for war," he said. "I told them to prepare for war immediately." Netanyahu said Israel faced several options: wait and see what would happen with the pagers, attempt a broader assault or combine approaches. He mocked a proposal, which he dubbed "conquering Bulgaria," referring to an alleged suggestion from the IDF to seize Beirut and take over Lebanon.

Instead, Netanyahu said, he chose a fourth option: "target the ballistic missile stockpile that [Hezbollah leader Hassan] Nasrallah built over years inside private homes." He added that Israel also targeted an explosive scanner Iran had intended to send to Lebanon to examine the pagers. "We bombed the scanner," Netanyahu said. "That's how we confirmed they were sending the pagers to Iran for inspection." To avoid civilian casualties, Netanyahu said, Israel hijacked Lebanese television broadcasts to warn residents before striking. "Within six to seven hours, we destroyed most of the weapons Nasrallah had stockpiled over 30 years," he said. "Nasrallah counted on us not attacking homes — and he was right. But we did attack."

Netanyahu also revealed that immediately after his speech at the UN, his military secretary handed him a note reading “executed,” confirming the operation’s success. “Eliminating Nasrallah broke the axis,” he said, noting that “some people are irreplaceable — and so far, he has no replacement.”

Netanyahu added that he had considered notifying the Americans beforehand but ultimately decided against it. “[Former defense minister] Yoav Gallant and [former IDF chief of staff] Herzi Halevi were relieved when they realized I wasn’t going to,” he said sarcastically.

Netanyahu also disclosed that Israeli F-16 fighter jets were deployed to intercept Iranian aircraft en route to Damascus to prevent the collapse of Bashar Assad’s regime. “Without our help, Assad’s regime wouldn’t have fallen,” he said, adding that Israel destroyed 90% of the Iranian weaponry transferred to Syria to ensure Assad’s survival.

Turning to Iran’s nuclear program amid ongoing Washington-Tehran negotiations, Netanyahu insisted the only way to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons was a complete dismantling of its enrichment infrastructure, similar to the Libyan model. “There are ways to achieve this: a deal that neutralizes their nuclear infrastructure,” he said.

Netanyahu noted that Israeli operations had delayed Iran’s progress toward a nuclear bomb by about a decade but had not halted it entirely.

He warned that Iran had made significant advances in uranium enrichment and weaponization. “It’s not enough to prevent enrichment — they must lose the capability altogether,” he said, stressing the need to destroy centrifuges and remove enriched uranium from Iranian territory.

Any agreement allowing Iran to resume enrichment later would, he warned, “lead to the opposite result.” He stressed, “One way or another, Iran will not have nuclear weapons.” The prime minister also attacked the Palestinian Authority (PA), equating it with Hamas. “Hamas says: we’ll destroy them militarily now. The PA says: we’ll push them back to the 1967 lines and then conquer them militarily,” Netanyahu said. “There’s no difference in approach between the Palestinian national movement before and after Israel’s founding.”

He rejected the idea of establishing a Palestinian state, calling it “nonsense.” Referring to Gaza, he said, “We tried that already.” Netanyahu added that after Hamas is defeated, Israel would not allow the PA to take control of Gaza. “Hamas won’t be there. But we’re not putting the PA there either,” he said. “Why replace one regime sworn to destroy us with another regime sworn to destroy us?” He added Israel would continue to maintain military control over Gaza after the fighting ends.

Netanyahu reiterated Israel’s commitment to returning all hostages and said the war’s goals were “the elimination of Hamas and the return of the captives.”

Netanyahu also addressed what he called the “domestic front” — hidden power structures he said threaten Israeli democracy. “We have another front: the deep state,” he said. “Very deep, like the ocean. It threatens democracy and prevents citizens from forming governments that act on their behalf.” He did not specify which institutions he was referring to.

Earlier Sunday, Netanyahu met with a delegation of dozens of UN ambassadors at his Jerusalem office, accompanied by Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon. According to Netanyahu's office, the ambassadors, who came from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, heard an in-depth briefing from Netanyahu about Israel's fight on the international stage, its military campaign in Gaza, the efforts to free hostages and the battle against antisemitism.

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Air Force jet accidentally drops bomb over north Israel kibbutz for second time

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Air Force jet accidentally drops weapons shrapnel over northern Israel kibbutz for second time

Residents of Kibbutz Dan reported hearing a 'loud explosion' after fragments of Israeli Air Force weapons fell near the border following an airstrike in Lebanon; comes 2 weeks after bomb accidentally dropped on a kibbutz; the IDF said it is investigating Yair Kraus, Yoav Zitun|21:41

Weapons shrapnel were mistakenly dropped Sunday morning over Kibbutz Dan near the northern border following an Israeli Air Force strike in southern Lebanon. It marked the second such incident this month, after a fighter jet accidentally dropped a bomb over Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak near the Gaza border about two weeks ago due to a technical malfunction.

No injuries were reported in either case, and the IAF has launched an investigation into the incident.

Around 9 a.m., residents of the Upper Galilee reported hearing a loud explosion. A crater was later found near the border within Kibbutz Dan's territory. The local regional council informed residents that "during IDF offensive operations in the eastern sector, a missile exploded in agricultural land near Kibbutz Dan." The military later clarified that the incident involved weapon fragments falling from a fighter jet.

A similar incident occurred two weeks ago, when a bomb was accidentally dropped in the area surrounding Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak. At the time, the IDF reported that the ordnance fell relatively close to the kibbutz's western fence, on the outer side, and at a distance from residential homes.

Such incidents are not unprecedented. In June of last year, a shell fired by an IDF tank at a target in Gaza veered off course and landed inside Israeli territory near the border fence. The military said the malfunction was under investigation.

A month earlier, a 500-kilogram bomb dropped from an Israeli Air Force F-15 fighter jet was found between homes in the moshav of Yated in the Eshkol region. At the time, the IDF described the malfunction as "exceptional, rare, severe and dangerous."

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

PM submits affidavit, Shin Bet chief did not warn of imminent October massacre

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Netanyahu submits affidavit, accuses Shin Bet chief of lying about October 7

Prime minister files a sworn affidavit accusing Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar of mismanaging warnings ahead of the October 7 massacre, while stopping short of explicitly denying allegations he sought to override the judiciary

Itamar Eichner, Netael Bandel|20:03

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu submitted a sworn affidavit to the High Court of Justice on Sunday, responding to the sharp affidavit filed last week by Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar. In his filing, Netanyahu lifted confidentiality protections from classified cabinet protocols, personally approving the disclosure of highly sensitive material.

Netanyahu accused Bar of lying about warnings ahead of the October 7 massacre, the handling of Gaza escalation, Bar's testimony in Netanyahu's own corruption trial and the Shin Bet's response to protests against the prime minister.

He attached numerous documents aimed at refuting Bar's claims. While Netanyahu addressed Bar's core allegation — that the prime minister had ordered him to obey Netanyahu over the High Court during a potential constitutional crisis — he stopped short of explicitly denying it.

"Bar's blindness was the biggest intelligence failure in the history of Israel," Netanyahu charged at the beginning of the affidavit.

Netanyahu was initially required to submit his affidavit by midnight Thursday but requested an extension. The court granted the request, setting Sunday as the new deadline. In his request, Netanyahu's attorneys cited delays in receiving Bar's classified affidavit.

In the affidavit, Netanyahu argued that Bar did not warn of an imminent attack on the night of October 7 and failed to "jolt the system," as Bar claimed. According to Netanyahu, Bar held a situation assessment at 5:15 a.m. — roughly 75 minutes before the assault began — yet did not issue a war alert or order emergency preparations. Instead, Bar instructed that forces maintain "medium readiness" and avoid major operations "to prevent miscalculations." Netanyahu concluded that Bar's assertion that he gave powerful warnings was "false" and that no alerts were sent to the prime minister, defense minister, alert squads in kibbutzim or organizers of the Nova music festival. Handling Gaza: 'Bar recommended strengthening Gaza's economy' Netanyahu further alleged that throughout 2023, Bar did not warn of escalating violence from Gaza. Instead, he advised strengthening Gaza's economy and avoiding targeted eliminations to "preserve calm."



The affidavit quoted Security Cabinet meetings and situation assessments in which Bar stressed Hamas' restraint and described the entry of Gaza workers into Israel as a stabilizing factor.

Later, on February 12, 2023, Bar described former Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar as a "sober" figure not seeking a broad conflict and noted that "their northern front still does not pose a real threat."

A background review dated April 4, 2023, reported that Hamas leadership in Gaza had internally reaffirmed a strategy of restraint while stoking tensions in the West Bank. In an intelligence report from October 3, 2023, Bar assessed that renewing security understandings with Hamas in exchange for easing restrictions could "preserve stability in Gaza."

Allegation over trial testimony: 'A lie'

Netanyahu also rejected Bar's claim that the prime minister sought to prevent Bar's testimony in Netanyahu's corruption trial. According to the affidavit, Netanyahu insisted the testimony proceed without delay and ordered the Shin Bet to arrange necessary security measures at the Jerusalem District Court.

He stressed that the trial should not be delayed "even by a single day" and pressed Bar to submit a detailed security plan.

"Ronen Bar lied when he said I sought to prevent my testimony," Netanyahu wrote.

"That is his interpretation. The meeting with him took place one day after a drone strike on my home and I demanded detailed security protocols. I explicitly told Bar I did not want any delay."

Addressing allegations that he ordered the Shin Bet to unlawfully surveil anti-government protest leaders, Netanyahu said he merely sought to "clarify the limits of the law" and insisted any actions stay strictly within legal boundaries. He cited concerns over violent harassment and threats against public officials that, in his view, police had failed to address adequately.

A protocol attached to the affidavit records Netanyahu asking Bar: "We need to know the legal limits. Then there's the problem of enforcement, because the police do nothing. I don't understand the legal limits of harassment or persecution."

"In a free society, can someone stand outside your home with an air horn in your ear and not stop? Can I pay people to harass you with an air horn? Is that legal?" Bar replied: "I can't tell you."

Key allegation not explicitly denied

While Netanyahu addressed Bar's central accusation — that Netanyahu instructed him to obey the prime minister over the High Court during a constitutional crisis — he did not categorically deny it.

Instead, he noted: "Bar claims I demanded loyalty over the High Court but there's no trace of this in the attached transcript," implying the request was not recorded but not outright denying it happened.

Netanyahu also addressed Bar's reference to the so-called Qatargate investigation and the leaking of classified documents. He argued that the announcement of the Qatar probe

coincided suspiciously with a deadline for Netanyahu to undergo questioning and suggested it was intended to sabotage Netanyahu's efforts to fire Bar.

Netanyahu claimed that plans to remove Bar had been under discussion as early as November 2024, well before the investigation. The affidavit outlined what Netanyahu called "serious failures" during Bar's tenure, including incitement against political leaders, security breaches at protected facilities and a flare incident at Netanyahu's residence in Caesarea.

Despite these failures, Netanyahu stressed, neither he nor his ministers sought illegal measures against protesters but demanded only equal enforcement of the law.

Bar's accusations against Netanyahu

Bar's affidavit, filed in his petition against his dismissal, accused Netanyahu of improper conduct, including attempts to use the Shin Bet against protesters. He linked Netanyahu to conspiracy theories about the Shin Bet's role in the October 7 failures and reiterated claims about the reasons behind Netanyahu's "loss of confidence" in him.

Alongside his public affidavit, Bar submitted a classified document. Shortly after Bar's filing, Netanyahu's office issued a statement calling it a "false affidavit," vowing it would be "thoroughly refuted soon," and notably avoided referring to Bar as Shin Bet chief.

Government warning to High Court

Earlier on Sunday, the government unanimously approved a declaration reaffirming Bar's dismissal and calling on the High Court to cancel its temporary injunction blocking his ouster. Netanyahu, who had missed much of the cabinet meeting, voted in favor.

The three-page declaration warned the High Court against "undermining democracy and national security." It was not included in last month's government decision, which did not address the court proceedings.

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

IDF targets Hezbollah weapons warehouse in Beirut; warned residents of strike

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

IDF targets Hezbollah weapons warehouse in Beirut

Fighters jets strike a Hezbollah weapons warehouse in Beirut's Dahieh following evacuation warning, as tensions escalate with intercepted drones from Yemen and ongoing rocket threats

Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun|19:19

IDF forces attacked a warehouse where Hezbollah precision missiles were stored in Beirut, according to a joint announcement by the prime minister and defense minister. The statement said that they warehouse and its missiles "posed a significant threat to the State of Israel."

The airstrikes on Sunday came after the IDF's Arabic-language spokesperson, Col. Avichay Adraee, warned residents in Lebanon's Beirut ahead of the strike, as rocket fire toward Israel continues. Also on Sunday, for the second time in 24 hours, Israeli fighter

jets intercepted a drone approaching from the east, likely launched from Yemen. No sirens were sounded in accordance with protocol, according to the military. Following three warning strikes, the IDF targeted the Dahieh area. Lebanese news outlets also reported the strike hit a warehouse. Sky News Arabia cited an Israeli source who said the target contained Hezbollah missiles. Israeli officials later confirmed that the warehouse stored "significant weaponry" belonging to Hezbollah.

Meanwhile, Lebanese government sources told Qatar's Al-Araby outlet that "talks are underway with the ceasefire monitoring committee to pressure Israel to stop its attacks."

Saudi outlet Al-Hadath also reported on the IDF's warning strike in Beirut, noting it came shortly after the military warned residents in the area. Lebanese media reported fighter jets and drones flying over the district, with rescue teams deployed on site.

"Israel will not allow Hezbollah to grow stronger and pose any threat to it – anywhere in Lebanon," the statement said. "The Dahieh district of Beirut will not serve as a sanctuary city for the terrorist organization Hezbollah."

The IDF released a photo of the strike alongside its warning, saying: "Anyone inside the building marked in red (in the image) and in nearby buildings is close to Hezbollah facilities. For your safety and the safety of your families, you must immediately evacuate and move at least 300 meters (984 feet) away."

Lebanese sources claimed the marked building was a warehouse, while Lebanon's National News agency said it was located near schools and residential buildings. Earlier Sunday, rocket sirens were activated in Be'er Sheva and surrounding areas following a missile launch from Yemen, which the Israeli Air Force intercepted. Hours later, the IDF reported that another drone approaching from the east had been intercepted. No sirens were activated in accordance with military protocol.

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Iran accuses Israel of Saturday 12:00 pm port explosion, as death toll rises to 36

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Iran accuses Israel of orchestrating port explosion as death toll rises to 36

Iranian officials claim 'clear evidence' links Israel to the deadly explosion at Shahid Rajaei Port, despite ongoing investigations into whether the incident was caused by improper storage of dangerous chemicals

Lior Ben Ari, Itamar Eichner|18:06

Firefighting efforts continued Sunday at Iran's Shahid Rajaei Port in the southern city of Bandar Abbas, following a massive explosion that took place there on Saturday. Fire crews were seen deploying planes and helicopters to drop water from above.

Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni said 80% of the fire had been contained but estimated it would take several more hours to fully extinguish. However, new container explosions around midday caused the flames to intensify again.

Authorities raised the death toll to 36 and said 800 people had been injured, with 190 still hospitalized. Meanwhile, state media reported that operations had partially resumed at undamaged areas of the port. Iranian television aired footage showing containers being unloaded from a docked ship.

For the first time, Iran publicly accused Israel of involvement. "Israel was involved in the Rajaei Port explosion. This was not an accident," Iranian parliament member Mohammed Seraj alleged.

"Explosives were planted in containers, either at the country of origin or along the shipping route. We do not rule out internal elements helping plant the explosives." He claimed that: "Clear evidence points to Israeli involvement. The explosion occurred at four different locations."

The blast occurred around 12:00 p.m. local time Saturday. Early footage showed orange smoke rising into the sky before a massive mushroom cloud formed. The explosion caused widespread damage to Shahid Rajaei Port, Iran's largest commercial port, with shockwaves reportedly felt across several kilometers.

New footage released Sunday showed the blast's impact inside an office 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) from the site, where a woman was seen standing up from her desk, approaching a window and then being hurled backward by the shockwave.

Additional images from the scene showed a structure completely destroyed, believed to be the same hangar filmed during the initial explosion.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose country has strengthened ties with Iran amid the Ukraine war — heavily relying on Iranian-made drones — sent condolences, expressing "sympathy and support for the victims' families and wishes for the wounded's recovery."

Later, Russia announced it would send aircraft to assist with firefighting efforts.

On Saturday night, officials said high winds had made it difficult to control the blaze.

Emergency services announced that schools, offices and universities in Bandar Abbas would remain closed Sunday. Iran's Health Ministry advised residents of Hormozgan province to stay indoors due to the release of toxic gases.

The cause of the explosion remains under investigation. Early reports suggest it occurred in containers holding chemicals. Hossein Zafari, spokesman for Iran's emergency management agency, blamed "improper storage."

Shahid Rajaei Port is believed to have recently received shipments of sodium perchlorate from China — a key ingredient for manufacturing solid rocket fuel used in Iran's ballistic missiles. Overnight, a source described as linked to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) confirmed to The New York Times that sodium perchlorate was the material involved.

Iran's Defense Ministry, however, denied any military materials were stored at the port, dismissing foreign media reports as "part of an enemy psychological operation."

So far, there is no conclusive evidence the blast was caused by a deliberate attack and Iran's leadership has not officially suggested sabotage. Iran is currently engaged in negotiations with the United States — the explosion coincided with a third round of talks Saturday in Oman — making a deliberate act of sabotage unlikely, as it could jeopardize the talks.

Still, negligence or a technical failure remains a strong possibility. Iran has suffered several such incidents in the past, due to aging infrastructure, U.S. sanctions severely hampering maintenance and widespread mismanagement and corruption.

Shahid Rajaei Port is part of the vital infrastructure of Bandar Abbas, located on the northern shore of the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf — a strategic waterway that handles 20% of global oil shipments. The port is crucial to Iran's economy, processing 70% of its commercial goods — about 80 million tons annually. It also houses oil and petrochemical facilities.

In 2020, the port was reportedly targeted by a cyberattack that disrupted operations. At the time, The Washington Post reported that Israel was behind the attack.

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Fires break out in Wadi Qelt and near Ramat Gan Safari; rescue efforts underway

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Fires break out in Wadi Qelt and near Ramat Gan Safari; rescue efforts underway

Firefighters are working to rescue hikers in the Binyamin hills under difficult conditions; ambulances, aircraft, police forces and IDF helicopters dispatched to scene for rescue efforts

Yael Ciechanover, Liran Tamari, Elisha Ben Kimon|17:10

A large fire broke out Sunday in Wadi Qelt, located in the Binyamin hills east of Jerusalem. Firefighters are working to rescue numerous hikers trapped in difficult terrain conditions. Aircraft and ambulances have been dispatched to the scene.

According to the Israel Fire and Rescue Service, "Firefighters from the Binyamin regional station are operating at the scene. Many hikers are reported to be in the wadi, and the area's challenging topography is hampering rescue efforts."

A large number of ambulances from Jerusalem are making their way to the site. Police said volunteers are also heading to the area to assist firefighters, police forces and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority with evacuating the hikers.

United Hatzalah warned that the combination of heavy foot traffic and the potential formation of a "fire corridor" along the wadi path poses a serious risk. Aerial readiness was declared, and IDF helicopters along with Ram Battalion troops have been mobilized to support evacuation and firefighting operations.

In a separate incident, a fire also broke out near the Ramat Gan Safari. Five firefighting teams from the Dan District stations responded and managed to bring the blaze under control. The fire involved brush and a truck parked near the site. No injuries were reported.

The latest incidents come just three days after firefighters succeeded in fully containing a massive wildfire in the Jerusalem Hills, following nearly 24 hours of intense firefighting and evacuation of residents. That fire spread quickly, threatening several communities, including the moshav of Mesilat Zion, and caused significant damage to forests and local wildlife.

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

Egypt demands Hamas provide full report on hostages' condition by early May

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Egypt demands Hamas provide full report on hostages' condition by early May  
Terror group reportedly tells mediators that ramping up of ground operations in Gaza must halt 'to ensure safety of hostages'; Israel said to dismiss temporary cease fire  
Lior Ben Ari|13:53

Egypt has demanded that Hamas provide a complete dossier on all hostages in Gaza by early May, Saudi Arabia's Al-Hadath TV reported Sunday, citing unnamed sources. The report said Hamas informed mediators that ramping up of ground operations in Gaza must be halted to ensure the safety of the hostages. It also said Israel rejected the possibility of a temporary ceasefire and continues to insist on a resolution to the issue of Hamas' weapons.

Despite Israel's objections, mediators are continuing efforts to negotiate a temporary ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

Separately, the Saudi newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat, published in London, reported that Egypt and Qatar are drafting a new proposal calling for a six-month ceasefire. In exchange, Hamas would release all hostages, both living and deceased, in return for Palestinian prisoners. During the proposed six months, negotiations would focus on reaching a comprehensive ceasefire and setting postwar arrangements, including Gaza's reconstruction according to an Egyptian plan. The plan reportedly excludes former U.S. President Donald Trump's "resettlement" initiative for Gaza residents.

Last week, Mossad Director David Barnea traveled to Doha to meet with Qatar's prime minister in an effort to advance an interim agreement involving phased steps. Israeli officials viewed Barnea's trip as a sign of urgency, given apparent deadlock in Egyptian mediation efforts. Qatar recently told the United States that it considered Egypt's ceasefire proposal unserious, while Egyptian officials accused Qatar of pressuring Hamas to sabotage Cairo's initiative.

Vicki Cohen, whose son Nimrod has been held captive in Gaza for 569 days, said Sunday that she and other families were encouraged by reports of a potential agreement, including one offering a five-year truce. "This was another weekend of turmoil," Cohen said in an interview with Ynet. "We heard there's a proposal that would bring everyone home at once, and that's what we've been demanding for a long time. This opportunity must not be missed. Otherwise, this government will be remembered as the one that prevented the saving of lives."

Cohen warned that the ongoing war could endanger the hostages, pointing to the killing of six Israeli captives in a Hamas tunnel in Rafah last August. "We hear heartbreaking updates being cleared for publication," she said. "This war must end. Hamas has indicated readiness to return everyone. Why delay? We must stop this ongoing nightmare."

Anat Angrest, whose son Matan is among the hostages, also voiced frustration. "For a year and seven months, we've been receiving the same empty messages about 'ongoing efforts,'" she said. "The only thing that must happen is for Israel to announce that it is willing to stop the war in exchange for the release of all the hostages."

Angrest added that the war is costing the lives of more soldiers without achieving further gains. "Soldiers were killed yesterday in Shujaiya — the fifth time the army has entered there," she said. "This war is no longer achieving anything. Hamas has been signaling for a long time."

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

IDF bill to extend compulsory military service for men amid growing troop shortage

04.27.25 – Su - Omer 09 New Moon

IDF extends compulsory military service for men amid growing troop shortage

Military extend service by four months to a full three-year term, including suspending pre-release leaves for soldiers, impacting both active and reserve forces

Yoav Zitun|10:11

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) announced it will extend compulsory military service due to a manpower shortage caused by heightened security challenges. Compulsory service will be extended by four months, with these additional months classified as reserve duty, allowing soldiers to complete a total of three years of service.

The IDF has also decided to suspend leaves traditionally given to soldiers prior to their release, requiring them to serve a full three years before discharge.

The decision comes in response to difficulties in maintaining troop levels after months of intense fighting and significant casualties. The IDF aims to reduce pressure on the reserve forces, some of whom have been called to serve for extended periods, putting strain on their finances and families.

The government had previously attempted to pass legislation extending compulsory service to three years, up from the current two years and eight months. However, the bill faced opposition from ultra-Orthodox members of the coalition, who have demanded an exemption for their constituents from military service.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had pledged to pass a new draft bill as part of his coalition agreement with the Haredi parties but has been unable to reach a consensus within his own party, which opposes granting exemptions for Haredi men in the wake of the October 7 Hamas massacre and the ongoing war.

The additional four months of service will benefit soldiers financially, as reserve duty is compensated by the government. The IDF has warned that the measure is a temporary solution to current manpower shortages.

“At the moment, we are short 10,000 troops, 7,000 of them in combat units,” the IDF stated.

Despite efforts to limit the duration of reserve service, some units have been called to serve an additional two and a half months in 2025. Before the war, reserve soldiers typically served an average of 20 days a year, but some have already accumulated 500 days of service.

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

IDF aerial defenses intercept Houthi missile strike on southern city of Beer sheva

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

IDF aerial defenses intercept Houthi missile strike on Arava

No injuries or damage reported in ballistic missile attack that comes just over 24 hours after Houthis target the southern city of Beer sheva

ynet|Updated: | 04:27

The IDF aerial defenses intercepted a ballistic missile fired from Yemen by the Houthi rebels on Sunday, targeting the Arava Desert area and the northern Dead Sea. No injuries or damage were reported

The missile strike came just 24 hours after the Houthi rebels targeted the southern Israeli city of Beer Sheva and its surroundings, early on Saturday and days after they launched missiles at northern Israel, including Haifa and the Western Galilee region.

After the military said it intercepted the missile to Haifa, shrapnel from the intercept was found in the city's northern suburbs.

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

Israel skips Pope Francis funeral, angering president of Humanitarian Coalition



04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

### Israel skips Pope Francis funeral, angering officials

Snub of pontiff's funeral following previous comments on Gaza sparks global criticism; deleting condolences on official government accounts worsens isolation, ex-officials say  
Itamar Eichner | Yesterday | 22:22

Some 400,000 mourners attended the funeral of Pope Francis in a massive ceremony Saturday. However, Israel sent no official delegation to Rome, opting instead for its ambassador to the Vatican, Yaron Sideman, to represent the country.

This decision comes against the backdrop of a diplomatic controversy surrounding the Foreign Ministry's move to delete condolence messages posted by Israeli missions worldwide immediately following Pope Francis' death. The late pontiff was known for his strong criticism of the ongoing war in Gaza.

In an interview with Ynet, former Israeli ambassador to the Vatican Raphael Schutz sharply criticized the handling of the situation. "When a leader of this magnitude passes away, you don't deviate from diplomatic protocols," Schutz stated. "We should discuss our disagreements with the Vatican directly with the Vatican, not by boycotting the funeral. A funeral that the whole world is attending, from Trump downwards, our absence creates a negative front for us with the entire Catholic Christian world – 1.3 billion people."

He added, "These are two different matters: you can continue to express your dissatisfaction with the deceased pope and detail why he was wrong, and at the same time, you attend the funeral. This is how the diplomatic world behaves. Beyond the fact that the funeral was an opportunity to meet other world leaders, as always happens at such funerals, Israel, through its absence, beyond the antagonism it created with the Christian world, also created yet another display of political isolation – and this is not a good image for us, certainly not in these times."

"The world is watching the farewell ceremony for Pope Francis. Dozens of kings, princes and heads of state, many of whom are not Catholic, have arrived at the Vatican to pay their last respects to the head of the Catholic Church," the forum said in a statement.

"The absence of a senior representative of the State of Israel, the Jewish state, a proud member of the family of nations, especially during these days between Holocaust Remembrance Day and the revival of our independence, is a serious diplomatic error vis-à-vis the countries of the world in general and the Christian world in particular, and it is a badge of shame for the government of Israel and its head."

Rabbi Yosef Garmon, a former chief rabbi of Guatemala and current president of the International Humanitarian Coalition, spoke with Ynet about his meetings with Pope Francis. He also voiced criticism regarding Israel's diplomatic conduct.

"I have been working around the world for years, particularly within the Christian world, investing time and resources, and in recent days I have been receiving many calls from various leaders who are angry, and rightly so, at Israel," he stated.

"Has Israel gone mad?" they ask me. 'We supported Israel throughout the war, and suddenly we receive this severe blow to our feelings.' I like to explain, but here I am left speechless, and I truly have no way to explain this bizarre, not to say delusional, behavior. I think Israel has made a serious mistake here, and we will pay the price for it."

Rabbi Garmon continued, "One can oppose the pope, one can even be angry at him, anything is possible, but we must not simply hurt the feelings of more than 1.3 billion people who believe in him and see that Israel published condolence messages on official networks – and shortly after deleted everything, and of course, screenshots remained and were published everywhere in the world."

"It would have been appropriate to send even a slightly more respectable delegation to his funeral and not ignore it almost completely. The pope is not the issue here, and his opinions no longer matter so much. Israel may even be right, but it is certainly not wise in this matter."

Rabbi Garmon recounted his meetings with the pontiff: "I personally cannot forget that he always received us with love and attention, and he personally told me that whenever a delegation from Israel wished to meet with him, he would make time."

"I was attacked when I went to meet with the pope during the war, but I went to explain the situation to him from the heart and to show him how absurd it is to accuse Israel. When Israel endangers the lives of its soldiers, and I showed him how many of my friends died because of it, it is solely to harm terrorists. Israel could have ended the war in a single day with enough bombs to wipe out Gaza completely, and it did not do so to protect innocent people and for the benefit of the Palestinians who need to be freed from Hamas."

"He personally retracted his accusation against Israel of genocide, both to me and to the media, and this was published on his official page. He said he saw so much material from Gaza because there are people close to him there who are very anti-Israel, and Israel did not bother to show him anything, so he said it needed to be investigated. One doesn't have to believe him, but at least it was important to make that effort. It is clearly easiest to make peace with the prince of Monaco and with Zionists, but in the complex world we live in – we must talk to everyone."

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

Freelance journalist for BBC Arabs praises attacks on Jews: burn Jews like Hitler did

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

'We'll burn Jews like Hitler did': Freelance journalist for BBC Arabic praises attacks on Jews: report

Samer Elzaenen, who appeared on BBC Arabic multiple times since war began, shared posts promoting hatred, violence against Jews and support for terror; BBC says he is not an employee and they were unaware of his social media activity

Ynet | 21:21

A Gaza-based journalist who has appeared frequently on BBC Arabic since the beginning of the war expressed support for violence against Jews and praised terrorist attacks, the Telegraph reported on Saturday.

The journalist, 33-year-old Samer Elzaenen, reportedly wrote in a social media post, "We'll burn Jews like Hitler did" and posted a series of antisemitic statements inciting violence. In a Facebook post from July 2022, Elzaenen wrote, "When things go awry for us, shoot the Jews, it fixes everything."

In another post from May 2011, he addressed "Zionist Jews," writing: "We are going to take our land back, we love death for Allah's sake the same way you love life. We shall burn you as Hitler did, but this time we won't have a single one of you left."

Over the past decade, Elzaenen repeatedly voiced support for more than 30 attacks on Israeli civilians, describing acts of terrorism as "blessed" and attackers as "heroes" and "martyrs" who "ascended" to "heaven."

Following a car-ramming attack in Jerusalem in February 2023 that killed two children and a young man, Elzaenen wrote that the victims "will soon go to hell." He also referred to Hamas operatives involved in the Oct. 7 assault—including the attackers at the Nova music festival—as "resistance fighters."

Ahmed Qannan, Ahmad Kanaan, who has regularly appeared on BBC Arabic, similarly expressed approval of violence against Jews. After a January 2023 shooting outside a synagogue in Jerusalem that left seven civilians dead on Holocaust Remembrance Day, Qannan posted his hope that the wounded would die. When a friend commented, "We want to see some throats cut," Qannan replied, "Don't give up on your ambition." He also called a 26-year-old terrorist who killed four civilians and a police officer in Bnei Brak in March 2022 a "hero."

BBC sources stressed that Elzaenen and Qannan are not employees of the broadcaster. However, their work as freelance contributors has sparked sharp criticism from media watchdog groups, who accuse the BBC of enabling anti-Israel bias through its Arabic-language service.

The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA) said the revelations demonstrate that BBC Arabic is using reporters who cannot be trusted to provide balanced and objective coverage. "The BBC misleadingly frames freelance journalists used by the Arabic service as mere 'contributors' so it won't have to take responsibility for the hatred they regularly spew in social media," a CAMERA UK spokesperson said.

"Providing live reporting from the Gaza Strip and other world locations, it is not their opinion that the BBC asks them to share with its audience but their eyewitness, based on their presence on the ground. Freelancers who divulge such egregious bias should not be covering Israeli and Jewish affairs for the BBC. Any individual whose social media activity indicates their support for violence targeting Israel's Jewish civilians lacks the basic journalistic skill of distinguishing between combatants and uninvolved bystanders."

The controversy follows previous accusations against BBC Arabic journalists. Last year, the Telegraph revealed that another BBC Arabic correspondent, Ahmed Alagha, had described Israelis as "less than human" and Jews as "devils" on social media.

The latest revelations prompted calls for reform. Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch last month demanded a "wholesale reform" of BBC Arabic, following a CAMERA report accusing the service of "appalling antisemitism and anti-Israel bias." In a letter to BBC Director-General Tim Davie, Badenoch wrote, "BBC Arabic is intended to provide high-quality, trusted news for the -hundreds of millions of people who speak Arabic. It should uphold the highest standards of public-service broadcasting. Instead, it seems that the World Service may be fomenting -extremism and misleading audiences – while funded by the taxpayer and -licence fees. This is simply unacceptable and must stop."

Several BBC Arabic presenters and journalists had previously been investigated for liking or sharing posts that celebrated the Oct. 7 Hamas attack, but no disciplinary action was taken at the time.

In a statement, the BBC said: "International journalists including the BBC are not allowed access into Gaza so we hear from a range of eyewitness accounts from the strip. These are not BBC members of staff or part of the BBC's reporting team. We were not aware of the individuals' social media activity prior to hearing from them on air. We are absolutely clear that there is no place for anti-Semitism on our services."

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

Border Police officer, IDF captain killed in clashes with terrorists in Gaza

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

Border Police officer, IDF captain killed in clashes with terrorists in Gaza

Sgt. Neta Kahana and Capt. Ido Voloch killed during intense two-hour rescue operation with terrorists in Gaza City's Shijaiyah; IDF forces continue operations  
Yoav Zitun | 20:38

Two Israeli soldiers, including a Border Police commando and an Armored Corps officer, were killed Friday during fierce clashes with terrorists in the Shijaiyah neighborhood in eastern Gaza City, the IDF said on Saturday.

Sgt. Neta Yitzhak Kahana, 19, from Moshav Eitan, a fighter in the elite southern Yamas undercover unit, and Capt. Ido Voloch, 21, from Jerusalem, a platoon commander in the 401st Armored Brigade's 36th Battalion, fell during an intense series of battles.

The soldiers were operating in an effort to expand the buffer zone along Gaza's border with Israel, an area designed to push Palestinian terrorist activities further from Israeli communities. Earlier on Friday, 16th Brigade reservists conducted sweeps in eastern Shijaiyah, destroying terrorist structures and infrastructure overlooking southern Israel.

At around 4:40 p.m., during an ambush by the Yamas unit, armed terrorists approached and opened fire, resulting in the fatal shooting of Kahana. Several terrorists were reportedly hit in the exchange. Evacuating the wounded from the dense urban area took about two hours and involved five separate firefights, including small arms and anti-tank missile fire directed at the rescuing forces.

At 4:45 p.m., a soldier from the rescue convoy was moderately wounded when an anti-tank missile struck a Humvee. Forty minutes later, additional RPGs targeted Israeli tanks participating in the extraction effort. Capt. Voloch was killed at 5:39 p.m. when an anti-tank missile struck his tank. In a later exchange of fire at 6:17 p.m., two other reservists were lightly to moderately wounded.

Commander A., head of the undercover unit operating in Gaza, described the harrowing battle: "The operation began midweek, with several nights inside Gaza. We eliminated several terrorists during ambushes. Yesterday, a terrorist emerged from a tunnel, fired at the force, and Kahana, who was alert and ready, returned fire along with another fighter. The terrorist managed to fire another burst, fatally hitting Kahana."

He added, "Soon after, heavy fire erupted from across the neighborhood. We called in reinforcements and evacuated Kahana under continuous engagement, providing medical treatment as best we could while continuing to fight until nightfall."

Commander A. emphasized the skill and spirit of the fighters, saying, "Our unit brings a unique advantage to Gaza. Our fighters, including those who fought on October 7 and younger recruits, fight like lions and operate with professionalism and determination. We are proud to take part in the battle for Israel's survival."

Kahana, who enlisted in December 2023, initially joined the Givati Brigade before transferring to the submarine corps course and later to the Border Police, where he was selected for the Yamas unit. His comrades described him as a dedicated and highly motivated soldier, full of Zionist spirit, love for the country and a deep camaraderie with his unit members.

"He was a dominant and very present figure," said D., a fellow fighter. "He dreamed of building a house in a truck and traveling the country. He loved weapons and shooting and had endless plans. He was like a brother—someone who never left you behind, always ready to help others."

Friends also recalled his vibrant personality and sense of adventure. "A week ago, we sat by a spring in the Jordan Valley, making coffee and swimming," one recalled. "Two weeks ago, in freezing weather, we challenged ourselves to ice-water training. Kahana went through it smiling, showing he was made of something special. He was fearless."

The police said in a statement: "It is with deep sorrow and pain that the Israel Police and Border Police announce the death of Sgt. Neta Yitzhak Kahana, who fell in battle against terrorists in Gaza. The police will continue to stand alongside the bereaved family in their grief and accompany them forever."

Separately, in Rafah's Tel al-Sultan neighborhood near the Philadelphi Corridor in southern Gaza, three soldiers were wounded Friday afternoon, one seriously, after their

Humvee convoy struck a roadside bomb during a resupply mission. Two of the wounded are members of the 205th Reserve Brigade's administrative support battalion. Terrorists also opened fire with small arms during the ambush, and Israeli forces returned fire. About an hour later, another Israeli soldier was lightly wounded by an anti-tank missile strike during fighting in eastern Gaza City.

The IDF has been expanding the buffer zone in recent days, particularly in areas where Palestinian neighborhoods are located close to Israeli communities, such as between Kibbutz Nahal Oz and Shijaiyah or between Daraj Tuffah and Kibbutz Kfar Aza. IDF officials estimate that friction with Hamas guerrilla cells will likely intensify as operations continue, particularly during raids in Rafah, the last major city in Gaza where Israeli forces are now operating with three brigades.

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

Hamas negotiating for 5-year truce and all hostage release for IDF withdraw

04.26.25 – Sa - Omer 08

Hamas leadership signals willingness for 5-year truce and hostage release in Gaza talks  
Senior Hamas officials meet Egyptian mediators in Cairo, expressing openness to a comprehensive ceasefire but rejecting Israeli demands for Gaza's demilitarization  
Einav Halabi, News Agencies | 13:48

Hamas is open to an agreement to end the war in Gaza that would include the one-time release of all remaining hostages and a five-year cessation of hostilities, an official from the terror group said on Saturday.

"Hamas is ready for an exchange of prisoners in a single batch and a truce for five years," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity, as a delegation from the group was set to meet mediators in Cairo later in the day.

The official said Hamas would welcome any initiative that would bring an end to the war and opposed a partial deal, which he claimed was aimed solely at appeasing the Israeli public.

A delegation including Mohammed Darwish, head of the Shura Council, along with Khaled Mashal, Khalil al-Hayya, Zaher Jabarin and Nizar Awadallah—five of the group's most senior members—arrived in Egypt early Saturday and began meeting with Egyptian officials to discuss a ceasefire and a comprehensive agreement that would include a full withdrawal of IDF troops.

"The idea of a truce or its duration is not rejected by us, and we are ready to discuss it within the framework of negotiations. We are open to any serious proposals to end the war," said Taher Al-Nono, media adviser for Hamas leadership, in the first clear signal that the group was open to a longer-term truce.

However, Nono ruled out a key Israeli demand that Hamas disarm. Israel insists on the demilitarization of Gaza. "The weapon of resistance is not negotiable and will remain in our hands as long as the occupation exists," Nono said. Hamas has previously indicated it might agree to a long-term truce in exchange for an end to Israeli occupation, though such offers were part of broader proposals. Meanwhile, Mossad chief David Barnea was reportedly heading to Qatar for a meeting with Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed Al-Thani, marking their first meeting since Barnea was removed from leading the hostage negotiation team.

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Ynet-News, April 25, 2025 – Friday Nissan 1<sup>st</sup> Month  
- Thursday April 24, Holocaust memorial day -  
First Fruits Saturday April 19 - Omer 01

04.25.25 – Fr - Omer 07

IDF's Unit 8200 leverages AI to enhance targets for strikes, locate hostages

04.25.25 – Fr - Omer 07

Trump says he urges Netanyahu to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza

04.25.25 – Fr - - News Placed in April 25 spot – Friday - Omer 07

Heavy fighting in Gaza: Reservist seriously injured by missile near Philadelphi Corridor

04.25.25 – Fr - Omer 07

Gideon Sa'ar proposed to cancel 200-shekel bills as economic blow to Hamas

04.24.25 – Th - Omer 06 Holocaust memorial day

IDF covertly arrived at Samaria camp hideout, arrested head of terror cell in a riot

04.24.25 – Th - Omer 06 Holocaust memorial day

Israeli soldier killed, two seriously wounded in north Gaza tunnel ambush

04.24.25 – Th - Omer 06 Holocaust memorial day

Removed negotiator Barnea to meet Qatari Prime Minister on hostage talks

04.24.25 – Th - Omer 06 Holocaust memorial day

Top US general Kurilla visits Israel amid tensions over Iran nuclear talks

04.24.25 – Th - Omer 06 Holocaust memorial day

Jerusalem Hills wildfires: 71 crews still battling blaze, evacuated residents can return

04.24.25 – Th - - News Placed in April 24 spot – Thursday - Omer 06

Iran Nuclear generator fuel can be imported; Rubio will not allow their own enrichment

04.24.25 – Th - Omer 06 Holocaust memorial day  
Netanyahu: pressure on Hamas continue, we'll bring all hostages & prevent nuclear Iran

04.23.25 – We - Omer 05  
Jerusalem hills wildfires: Air Force aid firefighting efforts overnight

04.23.25 – We - - News Placed in April 23 spot – Wednesday - Omer 05  
Abbas tells Hamas; Give back the hostages, surrender weapons to PA

04.23.25 – We - Omer 05  
IDF, Border Police uncover weapons cache in Hebron women's clothing store

04.23.25 – We - Omer 05  
Smotrich: PM responsible for stagnating war, warns aid must not reach Hamas

04.23.25 – We - Omer 05  
Uptick in security at West Bank crossings, by elder smugglers of goods & people

04.23.25 – We - Omer 05  
Gazans post videos of themselves eating horse, turtle, shark & dolphin for sympathy

04.22.25 – Tu - - News Placed in April 22 spot – Tuesday - Omer 04  
President Herzog will lead Holocaust March in Auschwitz with 80 survivors

04.22.25 – Tu - Omer 04  
Trump call with Netanyahu, on the same side of every issue, no mention of hostages

04.22.25 – Tu - Omer 04  
Body found after shark attack off northern Israel coast; remains sent for examination

04.22.25 – Tu - Omer 04  
Sunni militia commander with Muslim Brotherhood killed near Beirut

04.22.25 – Tu - Omer 04  
Gaza talks in Qatar, Hamas demands full ISF withdrawal & retain weapons

04.21.25 – Mo - Omer 03  
Inside Rafah's rubble: Israel's mission push against Hamas strongholds

04.21.25 – Mo - Omer 03  
US 41 airstrikes in six provinces, force Houthis to hoard fuel using propaganda

04.21.25 – Mo - Omer 03  
Iran scorns Israel coordination with US, in Rome nuclear negotiations

04.21.25 – Mo - Omer 03



PM wanted me to obey him, not court & surveil protest leaders, Bar tells court

04.21.25 – Mo - - - Omer 03

Smotrich insists Israel must occupy to establish military rule; remove PA from Gaza

04.21.25 – Mo- - - News Placed in April 21 spot – Monday - Omer 03

Pope Francis dies at 88, Vatican announces at 7:35 Monday morning after Easter

04.20.25 – Su - - - Omer 02, Q3 8:37pm

Ben Shapiro to light torch at Israel's 77th Independence Day ceremony, April 30

04.20.25 – Su - - - Omer 02, Q3 8:37pm

Senior editor of Jerusalem Post alleges police confiscated his phone without warrant

04.20.25 – Su - - - Omer 02, Q3 8:37pm

Lebanese army foils rocket attack on Israel as president Aoun disarms Hezbollah

04.20.25 – Su- - - News Placed in April 20 spot – Sunday - Omer 02, Q3 8:37pm

Hamas recruiting 30,000 fighters as it shifts to guerrilla warfare; recruits lack training

04.20.25 – Su - - - Omer 02, Q3 8:37pm

Israel to indict 22 Hamas terrorists who participated in October 7 massacre in Nir Oz

04.19.25 – Sa - - - First Fruits - Omer 01

Hamas rations 20,000 fighters while targeting IDF patrols in buffer zone attacks

04.19.25 – Sa- - - News Placed in April 19 spot – Saturday - First Fruits - Omer 01

Hamas rejected hostage deal, demands IDF withdraw; PM will not bow to murderers

04.19.25 – Sa - - - First Fruits - Omer 01

Israel prefers to strike Iran with well known US general before his replacement

04.19.25 – Sa - - - First Fruits - Omer 01

Israel only obstacle to nuclear free Middle East, Iranian foreign minister says

Pesach 8<sup>th</sup> Day, March 19 First Fruits – Omer 01

04.18.25 – Fr- - - News – Friday Pesach 07

Iran, US to hold talks in Rome Saturday, in bid to reach nuclear deal