

Ynet-News, May 23, 2025 – Friday  
Iyar 2<sup>nd</sup> Month Q-3; Omer 35

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France pressures UN & EU allies on June 17, to recognize Palestinian state

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Second 6.0-magnitude quake in Crete in week, tremor felt across Israel

05.22.25 – Th- - - News Placed in May 22 spot – Thursday - Omer 34  
Washington DC shooting: Two Israeli embassy staff killed near Jewish museum

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34  
Missile from Yemen intercepted over central Israel, at 2:59 am Thursday morning

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33  
Jerusalem home to over 1 million; 57% are Jews, 51% of Jews are ultra-Orthodox

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33  
Four rockets fired from Gaza; one intercepted, three failed to leave Gaza

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

IDF troops killed the gunman who murdered Tzeela Gez

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Netanyahu press briefing : At least 20 hostages are alive, Israel ready for cease fire

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

ICC prosecutor tells court not to withdraw Netanyahu, Gallant arrest warrants

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

High Court verdict & Attorney general forbid PM from appointing next Shin Bet head

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Rocket fired from Gaza intercepted over Ashkelon; no injuries reported

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

IDF fire warning near 25 diplomats in Jenin: Delegation deviated from approved route

05.21.25 – We- - - News Placed in May 21 spot – Wednesday - Omer 33

Israel shrugs as 9 to 10 of the 27 EU states remain with Israel

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Friend or foe? Israel seeing signs of dialogue in Syria, experts are cautious

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Israel prepared to strike Iran nuclear facilities: will proceed if provoked by Tehran

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

IDF chief Zamir expanding Gaza operations to dismantle Hamas 'decisively

05.20.25 – Tu- - - News Placed in May 20 spot – Tuesday - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

UK suspends free trade with Israel over Gaza offensive & sanctions settlers

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

MK Democrat Yair Golan, sparked backlash, slandering IDF & government

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

Eli Cohen's 1965 secret archive found near Assad's palace: transfer by Turkey

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

No 100 percent guarantee aid won't reach Hamas; nine aid trucks entered Gaza

05.19.25 – Mo- - - News Placed in May 19 spot – Monday - Omer 31

UK, France and Canada threaten UN sanctions on Israel over Gaza offensive & aid

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Protests erupt against Hamas in Khan Younis following IDF evacuation warning

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

As hostage talks hit deadlock, IDF presses forward in Gaza

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Trump continues to engage in talks with Hamas, seeking end to Gaza war

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

IDF covert operation in Khan Younis to extract & interrogate Hamas commander

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Israel will control all of Gaza & resume aid entry - to prevent famine

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

IDF launches major strike in Khan Younis, senior terrorist killed

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Houthi's renew threat, mimicking the style of IDF, to attack Ben Gurion Airport

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Videos disprove claims of Gaza starvation as war ramps up

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Amid US pressure, Netanyahu resumed Gaza aid without Cabinet vote

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

CNN false report claimed Hamas agreed to a hostage deal; IDF deny propaganda

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Vatican ceremony to Paris: Herzog met Macron amid French criticism of Israel

05.18.25 – Su - - News Placed in May 18 spot – Sunday - Omer 30

US firm for Gaza aid arrived; before start, proposed expanding distribution zones

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

IDF unleashed major Gaza campaign to finish off Hamas across Gaza

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Netanyahu says Doha talks include end to war, release of all hostages

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Katz says Sinwar likely killed in IDF strike after body reported found in Gaza

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Israel to divide Gaza into 3 troop-sealed zones: poised to escalate if negotiations collapse

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Dozens of suspects arrested as manhunt of fatal West Bank shooting continues

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Israel braces for critical 24 hours in hostage deal talks as delegations remain in Qatar

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Mediators hold urgent meetings in Qatar as Israel prepares Gaza escalation

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

IDF leaflets warn Gaza depicting splitting the Red Sea; Israel is making martyrs

05.17.25 – Sa - - News Placed in May 17 spot – Saturday - Omer 29

IDF moves Gazans southward before ground operation begins; hostage deal stalled

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Trump plans to relocate Gazans to Libya; Hamas insists Gazans will not leave

05.23.25 – Fr - Omer 35

Abbas with his son, wants control of June disarmament of 12 PA camps in Lebanon

05.23.25 – Fr - Omer 35

Historic turning point: Lebanon nears first major victory in war against terrorism  
Lebanon's unraveling began when Palestinian factions first armed; now, amid poverty  
and crime in refugee camps, a new era may be starting; a rare joint statement with Abbas  
marks a shift—but the toughest test is yet to come  
Lior Ben Ari|05.23.25 | 23:49

Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas was received in Beirut on Wednesday  
with a lavish ceremony. Following the reception, he proceeded directly to a meeting with  
Lebanese President Joseph Aoun at the presidential palace in Baabda, after which an  
unusual joint statement was issued.

In addition to the routine condemnation of Israeli strikes in Gaza and Lebanon, the  
statement addressed the main issue that brought Abbas to Lebanon: the disarmament of  
Palestinian refugee camps in the country, a process the Lebanese government is expected  
to begin in June.

Lebanon hosts 12 official Palestinian refugee camps: Beddawi, El Buss, Rashidieh, Mieh Mieh, Burj Barajneh, Burj Shemali, Shatila, Dbayeh, Ain al-Hilweh, Mar Elias, Wavel and Nahr el-Bared. As early as March, reports emerged that the United States and Israel were pressuring Lebanon to formally decide to disarm the camps—"by force if necessary"—and to halt the activities of Palestinian factions operating within the country. Abbas's visit was preceded by significant preparations, including advance visits by his son Yasser Abbas and Palestinian General Intelligence Chief Majed Faraj. According to reports, Faraj focused on the weapons issue—not only in camps south of the Litani River, but in all camps across Lebanon. He reportedly proposed that the Palestinian Authority assist in the transition phase, with its security personnel assuming responsibility within the camps, under coordination with designated Lebanese government officials. Why is this all happening now?

Since the ceasefire was declared between Israel and Hezbollah last November, "New Lebanon"—led by President Joseph Aoun, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri—has been striving to achieve an unprecedented goal: establishing the state's exclusive monopoly on the legitimate use of force, thereby bringing all armed groups under state control.

This is standard practice in any sovereign country, but Lebanon has long defied such classification. Transforming it into a "normal" state will not be easy; Hezbollah, though weakened, remains a powerful organization with substantial influence and a strong support base.

As a step toward this goal, Lebanon is pursuing "small victories," with the disarmament of Palestinian refugee camps—a legacy of the Fatahland era and the First Lebanon War—set as a primary target.

On May 6, the Hezbollah-aligned Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar reported escalating tensions between Lebanese authorities and Hamas, stating that a decision had been made not only to disarm Hamas but also to disrupt its activities across the country, similar to the approach taken with Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

It was reported that some Hamas members involved in the March rocket fire into Israel had been handed over to the Lebanese army.

According to the paper, international pressure on Lebanon to expel Hamas members is increasing. Regardless, the principal strongholds of Palestinian terrorist organizations remain the 12 refugee camps, which have long posed a threat to Israel, well before the October 7 terrorist attack.

Estimates vary on the number of Palestinians in Lebanon. Al-Akhbar reports about 520,000 registered residents, but the actual number is believed to be around 280,000, with only about 230,000 enrolled in UNRWA's emergency program.

The camps suffer not only from arms proliferation but also from deteriorating humanitarian conditions. Education, healthcare and aid services provided by UNRWA have been reduced to a minimum.

Residents face systemic discrimination and a lack of rights compared to Lebanese citizens. Palestinians are barred from working in many professions—such as medicine,

pharmacy, nursing, law, engineering and education—and can enter these fields only when there are significant labor shortages. Consequently, many take on low-paying menial jobs and face demeaning treatment.

“Residents are waiting for someone to see them as human beings, not as a group living in an isolated area called a ‘camp,’ and not as a political or security issue,” a Palestinian named Walid told Al-Akhbar.

Arabic media describe the camps as facing a dire and anarchic reality. Over the years, Syrian refugees have also arrived, but Palestinians remain the majority. Ali al-Rifai, head of the Palestinian Popular Committees in Beirut, said the Mar Elias camp nearly burned down a few weeks ago because fire trucks couldn’t access the fire’s location in the camp’s center. He added that transporting a sick person or holding a funeral often requires using rooftops, and that extensive illegal construction is endangering residents’ safety.

Armed clashes in Beirut’s Shatila refugee camp

Drug use is also rampant in the camps. Earlier this week, clashes between drug dealers in Beirut’s Shatila camp resulted in injuries. Following the violence, UNRWA announced it had suspended all activities in the camp on Monday to ensure staff safety. Videos posted the same day showed gunfire in the camp and residents fleeing. The clashes continued into Tuesday.

Hezbollah stays quiet, Palestinians fire

On Wednesday, following the meeting between Aoun and Abbas, a joint Lebanese-Palestinian statement was issued, aimed at addressing both the dire conditions in the refugee camps and the issue of weapons. The statement was divided into three sections: political agreements, accords on the legal status of Palestinians in Lebanon and commitments related to national security and stability.

The statement affirmed both sides’ commitment to a “just solution” for Palestinians that would allow them “to return to the homes from which they were uprooted in their homeland (Israel),” and rejected any “resettlement” or “displacement” initiatives. It effectively reaffirmed the Palestinian refugee crisis as a permanent reality, emphasizing support for UNRWA and calling for increased funding so the agency can meet its obligations. The parties agreed to establish a joint Lebanese-Palestinian committee to monitor conditions in the camps and work to improve refugees’ living standards while respecting Lebanese sovereignty and law.

They also reaffirmed their “commitment to ensuring dignified living conditions” for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, “without undermining their right of return or their national identity.”

On matters of security and stability, the declaration stated that “both parties confirm their commitment to the principle of state monopoly on weapons,” adding that “the era of weapons outside state control has ended, particularly given the decades of sacrifices borne by both Lebanese and Palestinians.”

Abbas and Aoun emphasized the need to enhance coordination between Lebanese and Palestinian authorities to maintain stability within and around the camps. The Palestinian side pledged not to use Lebanese territory for military activity and to respect Lebanon’s policy of non-intervention in foreign conflicts. Both sides also agreed to strengthen

cooperation in combating terrorism and extremism, ensuring the camps do not become sanctuaries for radical organizations.

However, the statement carries a major caveat: Abbas has never represented the Islamist terrorist factions, and it is unlikely that these groups within the Palestinian community in Lebanon will heed his authority.

Prof. Eyal Zisser, an expert on modern Lebanese and Syrian history and vice rector at Tel Aviv University, explained that Abbas is largely indifferent to Lebanon's effort to monopolize arms—since the pressure falls on Hamas. Abbas, Zisser noted, does not care whether refugees in the camps are armed.

“Historically, Lebanon's problems began in the refugee camps,” Zisser said.

“Palestinians formed an armed militia in the 1970s, which started the downward spiral. Moreover, Palestinians initially supported the Shiites and Hezbollah. Imad Mughniyeh, a top Hezbollah figure killed in 2008, was originally with the PLO. So you can't deal with one issue without addressing the other. The camps are also hotbeds of radical Islam. For Lebanon, they are no less important than Hezbollah—and far easier to address first.”

Zisser added that while disarming Hezbollah is more complex, Hezbollah has at least remained quiet, honoring understandings with the government and refraining from retaliating against Israeli strikes.

By contrast, “it's the Palestinians who occasionally open fire and stir trouble.” In the past six months, he said, Hezbollah has proven more disciplined. “If you strike a deal with Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem, it holds. But Hamas just suddenly fires rockets.” He stressed that while the March rocket fire into Israel made disarmament more urgent, the issue was bound to surface regardless.

The real challenge

Despite Abbas's declarations, the Palestinian Authority will not take part in the disarmament process—it lacks the power to do so. However, according to Prof. Zisser, Lebanon currently enjoys both international and inter-Arab support on the issue, and Palestinian factions do not pose as formidable a threat as they once did. Therefore, it is plausible that these terrorist groups will be disarmed.

“The Lebanese army razed the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp to the ground 18 years ago when it dealt with extremist Islamist forces,” Zisser noted. “So if the Lebanese want to, they can do it.”

But in facing this task, Lebanon confronts a far greater, more significant challenge: the disarmament of Hezbollah. The Iran-backed terrorist organization has evolved into one of the most heavily armed non-state militaries in the world. “Hezbollah has no choice but to accept the state's framework,” Lebanon's president recently said, emphasizing that the group has a right to “political participation” within that framework.

Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem staunchly opposes disarmament. At the end of April, reports surfaced that Hezbollah seeks to integrate its arsenal into Lebanon's “defense strategy.” Anonymous sources claimed the group would only give up its weapons if Israel withdraws from Lebanese territory, Lebanese prisoners are released and

Israel ceases its violations of Lebanese airspace—conditions that no authority is likely to guarantee.

Nevertheless, Hezbollah today is significantly weaker than it once was, as is its patron, Iran. Time will tell whether this historic opportunity will be missed as well.

05.23.25 – Fr - Omer 35

Peru launches war crimes investigation against Israeli soldier, based on media posts

05.23.25 – Fr - Omer 35

Peru launches war crimes investigation against Israeli soldier following NGO complaint  
Anti-Israel Hind Rajab Foundation says Peru has launched a criminal probe into an  
Israeli combat engineer accused of 'war crimes' in Gaza; complaint includes video  
allegedly showing soldier blowing up building and celebrating the act  
Itamar Eichner|05.23.25 | 22:56

Authorities in Peru have opened a criminal investigation against an Israeli citizen accused of participating in alleged war crimes in the Gaza Strip during 2023–2024, according to the Hind Rajab Foundation, a Brussels-based NGO focused on legal actions against Israeli soldiers.

The investigation, described by the foundation as a "landmark development for international justice," stems from a complaint filed by prominent human rights lawyer Julio César Arbizu González. The complaint alleges that the individual served as a combat engineering soldier and took part in what the foundation calls a "methodical and systematic destruction of civilian neighbourhoods in the Gaza Strip."

Supporting materials submitted include open-source documentation purportedly showing the soldier detonating a civilian building and celebrating the act. The soldier's name has not been publicly released, though the foundation published an image and a video allegedly depicting him.

The Hind Rajab Foundation claims the suspect could face charges including "war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide." It praised Peru's "adherence to the principles of international humanitarian and criminal law" and universal jurisdiction, which obliges countries to prosecute serious crimes regardless of where they were committed or the nationality of the suspects.

The NGO also asserted that the Combat Engineering Corps was not merely auxiliary but a "core operational arm of destruction, systematically reducing civilian areas to rubble, erasing entire communities, and rendering large swathes of Gaza uninhabitable."

It announced plans to compile and submit hundreds of additional legal files targeting members of the same military unit to judicial authorities worldwide in the coming months.



"Justice is not optional. Justice is imperative," said Dyab Abou Jahjah, chairman of the Hind Rajab Foundation. "This investigation marks a decisive step in the dismantling of Israeli impunity," he added.

The foundation did not confirm whether the soldier is currently in Peru, citing concerns that revealing such information could enable Israeli authorities to intervene, as allegedly occurred in previous cases. According to the NGO, it often identifies targets for legal action based on social media posts made by soldiers during travel.

Founded in September 2024, the Hind Rajab Foundation is named after a Palestinian girl allegedly killed by Israeli fire during the war. It operates as a branch of the March 30 Movement, a group active for more than 30 years in pursuing legal cases against IDF personnel. The organization gathers open-source intelligence on Israeli soldiers, including details of their military service, aiming to facilitate prosecutions abroad. To date, the foundation has initiated legal proceedings against dozens of soldiers in at least eight countries and has submitted information to the International Criminal Court regarding alleged war crimes by over a thousand Israeli soldiers and officers in Gaza and Lebanon.

05.23.25 – Fr - Omer 35

US-Iran nuclear talks stall, Israel ramps up preparations for multi-front war

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As US-Iran nuclear talks stall, Israel ramps up preparations for multi-front war. Amid reports of an Israeli strike plan on Iran, the IDF drills for multi-front war, focusing on home front defense and critical systems; US-Iran talks continue, though both sides express doubt over the chances of reaching a deal.

Yossi Yehoshua | 05.23.25 | 22:15

As nuclear negotiations between the United States and Iran face growing uncertainty, Israel is intensifying its military readiness for a potential multi-front war, the IDF said Friday.

The military announced the completion of a major General Staff exercise simulating a regional conflict across multiple fronts. The drill, named "Barak Tamir," tested emergency coordination between military branches and other defense agencies, with a focus on protecting critical infrastructure and maintaining continuity on the home front.

"This exercise was designed to refine coordination and improve the speed and quality of response during escalating scenarios," an IDF spokesperson said.

The escalation in Israeli preparations comes amid reports from CNN that U.S. intelligence suggests Israel is readying a possible strike on Iranian nuclear facilities. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned Tehran may take "special measures" to defend its nuclear assets and the enriched uranium it has accumulated.

In a letter to U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, Araghchi cautioned that any Israeli attack would result in legal consequences for the United States as well, according to Reuters. He also criticized recent U.S. media leaks suggesting Israeli attack plans, calling them “alarming” and demanding strong condemnation from both the UN Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Meanwhile, the fifth round of indirect talks between Iran and the United States concluded in Rome on Friday, mediated by Oman. Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi said there was “some but not conclusive progress.” In contrast, Araghchi described the discussions as “complex” and noted that Oman presented various proposals to bridge the gaps.

An Iranian source close to Tehran’s negotiating team told Reuters the talks are expected to continue, with Oman to set the time and place. However, earlier in the day, Iranian officials cast doubt on any near-term breakthrough, telling CNN that the American demand to dismantle Iran’s uranium enrichment program could collapse the negotiations. They added that Iran sees U.S. behavior at the table as disingenuous, asserting that Washington’s insistence on zero enrichment signals it is not serious about reaching an agreement, but rather using the talks as a tool of pressure.

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei also expressed skepticism this week, rejecting the U.S. and European demand to halt uranium enrichment as “excessive and outrageous.” In a speech in Tehran, Khamenei said: “No one in Iran is waiting for American approval to enrich uranium. We will not accept such demands.”

05.23.25 – Fr - Omer 35

Five Israeli divisions maneuver inside Gaza as IDF strikes terror currency hub

05.23.25 – Fr - Omer 35

Five Israeli divisions maneuver inside Gaza as IDF strikes terror financing hub  
Operation Gideon’s Chariots intensifies as Israeli forces target Hamas and Islamic Jihad infrastructure; airstrike hits Gaza money exchange used to funnel millions to terrorist groups, military says; sirens sound around border region

Yoav Zitun, Elisha Ben Kimon, Roni Green Shaulov | 05.23.25 | 19:53

The IDF said Friday evening that five divisions are currently maneuvering across the Gaza Strip as part of Operation Gideon’s Chariots, marking a significant escalation in ground operations.

The announcement came hours after rocket sirens were triggered in the Nir Am firing range and in the community of Mefalsim, both near the Gaza border. The IDF later confirmed that the Air Force had intercepted one rocket launched from Gaza. Another alert sounded in Nir Am less than two hours later, but determined to be a false alarm.

In a statement, the IDF said the operation aims to maintain pressure on Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) amid ongoing hostilities. The army also revealed it had

carried out an airstrike on the Al-Qahira currency exchange office in Gaza City, which it said has played a key role in financing terrorist activity in the enclave.

The military spokesperson said Al-Qahira — formerly known as “Dubai” until it was blacklisted by then-defense minister Benny Gantz in 2022 — has served for years as a conduit for tens of millions of dollars used to fund Hamas and PIJ's armed wings. Despite being targeted previously, the office continued to transfer large sums over the course of the war.

According to the IDF, in August 2024, one of the exchange's employees, Tahsin Al-Naddim, was killed after being directly linked to terror financing. Even after his death, the office reportedly maintained its operations in support of armed groups in Gaza. In a separate development, the IDF said it completed a large-scale military exercise this week to enhance its readiness on the home front. The drill simulated emergency scenarios and tested coordination among branches of the military to improve response speed and resilience in real-time crises.

05.23.25 – Fr - Omer 35

IDF intercepts third missile in two days, fired at Israel from Yemen

05.23.25 – Fr - Omer 35

IDF intercepts a missile fired at Israel from Yemen

Ben Gurion Airport suspends flights for 10 minutes before renewing full operation; no injuries reported  
ynet|04:27

Israel came under a missile attack from Houthi rebels early on Friday. Sirens were heard in central Israel, including the greater Tel Aviv area and the Ben Gurion International Airport, where operations were temporarily suspended

This was the third missile strike targeting Israel in two days. The Houthis fired ballistic missiles at Israel in the predawn hours and again in the late morning. both missiles were intercepted by Israel's aerial defenses.

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

Netanyahu defies attorney general, moves to appoint Zini as Shin Bet chief

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

Netanyahu defies attorney general, moves to appoint new Shin Bet chief

Day after High Court ruled conflict of interest and attorney general said Netanyahu cannot name a successor to Ronen Bar, prime minister moved ahead, announcing he had chosen Maj. Gen. David Zini, current head of the General Staff Corps

Ynet|21:27

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday appointed Maj. Gen. David Zini as the next head of Israel's Shin Bet security agency, ignoring a directive from the attorney general and escalating a legal confrontation over his authority to make senior security appointments.

The move comes one day after Israel's High Court ruled that Netanyahu's dismissal of current Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar was unlawful, citing a conflict of interest. The conflict stems from the agency's investigation into individuals within the Prime Minister's Office reportedly connected to the so-called Qatargate affair — a suspected influence-peddling and foreign funding scandal.

Following the ruling, Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara reiterated that Netanyahu is barred from making senior law enforcement or security appointments under the terms of a prior conflict-of-interest arrangement related to his ongoing corruption trial. She warned that the prime minister must refrain from appointing a successor to Bar. Netanyahu, however, signaled during a Wednesday press conference that he would not wait. On Thursday, his office announced Zini's appointment without notifying the attorney general in advance.

In response, Baharav-Miara's office said Netanyahu had acted in violation of legal guidance and warned that "there is serious concern he acted while in a conflict of interest, and the appointment process is fundamentally flawed." Petitions to the High Court challenging the appointment are expected.

Zini, 50, currently commands the IDF's General Staff Corps and has held numerous elite and senior roles in the Israel Defense Forces, including service in Sayeret Matkal, command of the Egoz and Alexandroni brigades, and leadership of the IDF's commando brigade. He also led the military's training command and was promoted to major general in July 2023.

Zini authored a 2023 internal report warning of vulnerabilities in the Gaza Division's readiness for a surprise attack — concerns that were borne out during the October 7 Hamas assault. On that day, he joined frontline troops and helped repel an incursion near Kibbutz Mefalsim, reportedly killing several terrorists.

A father of 11, Zini holds degrees in education, national security, and public administration, and is a graduate of Israel's National Defense College and the Churchill Program at the Argaman Institute.

His name has previously drawn political attention. Israeli media reported that Sara Netanyahu, the prime minister's wife, lobbied for his appointment as IDF chief of staff while in Miami, despite his not being among the official candidates at the time.

The appointment intensifies a constitutional showdown between the prime minister and the legal establishment and may face judicial review.

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

Hostage talks falter: Israel refuses Hamas demands for guarantees, recalls delegation

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Hostage talks falter: Israel refuses Hamas demands for guarantees, recalls delegation

As indirect negotiations stall, Hamas pushes for UN resolution and U.S. guarantees; Israel pulls entire team from Doha, warning deal possible only if Hamas accepts Witkoff outline

Itamar Eichner|15:57

Israel on Thursday recalled its remaining delegation from Doha after indirect negotiations with Hamas over a hostage deal stalled, an Israeli official said.

The decision to withdraw all representatives came after Hamas failed to respond to a U.S.-backed proposal that Israel had accepted. “Hamas has not responded at all to the American proposal and continues to cling to its rejectionist stance,” the official said. “If there is a change and Hamas accepts the proposal, the delegation will immediately return.”

The move comes amid rising frustration over the lack of progress in negotiations mediated by Steve Witkoff, President Donald Trump’s special envoy to the Middle East. While senior members of the Israeli negotiating team returned to Israel earlier this week, working-level Mossad teams had remained in Doha at Witkoff’s request. They were recalled Thursday following what officials described as a complete impasse. Hamas has demanded that any ceasefire agreement be anchored in a United Nations Security Council resolution and that the United States provide clear guarantees. The group has also called for Witkoff to personally sign the deal. Israeli officials have rejected those demands, saying they were not part of the Witkoff framework Israel agreed to.

Senior Israeli officials involved in the negotiations — including the M, deputy head of the Shin Bet security agency; Gal Hirsch, the government’s coordinator for hostages and missing persons; and Ophir Falk, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s foreign policy adviser — returned to Israel early Tuesday. The recall of the remaining teams followed.

Netanyahu’s office announced Tuesday that Israel had accepted the American proposal “based on the Witkoff framework,” and that it had been relayed to Hamas through mediators. “So far, Hamas continues to reject it,” the statement said. “After about a week of intense contacts, the senior negotiation team will return to Israel for consultations.”

Sources close to the talks said that despite reports, no substantive negotiations actually took place in Doha. Hamas officials have echoed that assessment. “It all depends on Trump,” one source said. “Only he can save the situation. The negotiations have run their course. If Hamas decides to move forward with the Witkoff framework, the delegation will return immediately.”

Witkoff is continuing indirect discussions with Hamas through Palestinian American businessman Bashara Bahbah. U.S. officials are reportedly frustrated with Israel amid allegations that it is not pursuing a comprehensive agreement. Despite the stalled talks, American officials believe a deal remains possible, even as Israel expands its military campaign in Gaza under Operation Gideon's Chariots.

Back in Israel, the Hostages and Missing Families Forum expressed anguish over the halted negotiations. "The news of the suspension causes us immense pain — pain that has lasted 594 days and only grows worse," the group said in a statement. "But we will not break, and we will not despair. We will continue to fight for the return of each and every one of them. We don't have the privilege of giving up on our loved ones."

The group warned against political spin surrounding the negotiations. "No hollow attempt to present a false image of victory will succeed. There will be no victory, and Hamas will not be defeated as long as it holds even one hostage," the statement said. "We will bring them back. We will rise."

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

IDF Oct 7 probe: Military failed defending kibbutz, clearing terrorists took 5 days

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

IDF probe: Military failed defending Kibbutz Kissufim, cleared of terrorists only after 5 days

Some 150 Hamas terrorists infiltrated community and neighboring military base during the Oct. 7 massacre, killing of 17 civilians—including foreign workers and members of the local security team—and 27 IDF soldiers

Elisha Ben Kimon|15:00

Some 150 Hamas terrorists infiltrated Kibbutz Kissufim and its neighboring military base during the Oct. 7 massacre, taking advantage of tactical failures that enabled the killing of 17 civilians—including foreign workers and members of the local security team—and 27 Israel Defense Forces soldiers, according to an IDF inquiry released Wednesday.

It took five days before all the terrorists were eliminated and the kibbutz was no longer under threat.

The findings were presented to the families of the victims and members of the kibbutz. The investigation revealed that despite efforts by some soldiers and the local defense team, the IDF failed to adequately protect the community. The team managed to disrupt part of the terrorists' operations but was ultimately overwhelmed.

In total, 25 terrorists were killed at the base, 30 within the kibbutz, and another 50 in the surrounding area. The rest withdrew to Gaza.

The inquiry, which lasted a year, included interviews, recorded communications, security camera footage and reenactments. The IDF noted that inaccuracies may remain and the findings are subject to updates.

The initial rocket attack at 6:29 a.m. forced deployed forces to seek shelter, delaying their ability to defend the kibbutz. Terrorists, some dressed in IDF uniforms, broke through the gate using motorcycles and vehicles. After about an hour of fighting, the troops were forced to withdraw into the kibbutz.

Inside the base, much of the fighting occurred near a shelter where terrorists threw grenades, killing six soldiers.

Reinforcements arrived only at 1:45 p.m. and were divided into teams to defend the women's quarters, where terrorists had entrenched themselves. Two IDF lookouts who had lost contact with their units earlier in the day were rescued.

The kibbutz security team was alerted to prepare for an invasion at 6:38 a.m., and by 6:55 a.m., terrorists had entered neighborhoods in the northern and southern sectors.

During the assault, kibbutz residents were abducted, including Shlomo Mansur, who was later murdered in captivity. Six Thai agricultural workers were also killed. Soldiers managed to prevent terrorists from advancing from the northern neighborhoods to other areas.

Evacuation of residents began at 5 p.m., but at 1:30 a.m. on Sunday, forces encountered terrorists hiding in the Godo family home. During the operation, Tom Godo, who was hiding there, was mistakenly shot and killed by the troops.

Fighting continued into Monday, Oct. 9, as terrorists took over the cow shed and murdered its manager. They were eventually killed by helicopter and tank fire. The last terrorist in the kibbutz was eliminated on Oct. 12.

The report concluded that the military failed in its mission to protect the residents of Kissufim, misjudged the force ratio against the attackers, and deployed troops untrained in defending civilian communities. The result was a series of tactical errors, incidents of friendly fire, and a prolonged delay in neutralizing the threat.

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

France pressures UN & EU allies on June 17, to recognize Palestinian state

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

France pressures Western allies to recognize Palestinian state

Macron leads efforts to secure international recognition of a Palestinian state at a UN summit with Saudi Arabia, while the EU debates suspending trade agreements and sanctions, leaving Israel increasingly isolated

Itamar Eichner|09:18

France is pressuring a number of Western countries to recognize a Palestinian state and formally announce it at a peace summit being organized by President Emmanuel Macron and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The summit is scheduled to take place at the United Nations on June 17. French officials hope several European nations—including Belgium, Portugal and Luxembourg—will join the initiative.

Belgium has emerged as a stumbling block, with its right-wing prime minister opposing the move. France is reportedly applying intense pressure to sway Brussels. “Macron is trying to create an anti-Israel atmosphere to convince as many countries as possible to recognize a Palestinian state,” A senior Israeli official said.

In response, Israeli ambassador to the UN Danny Danon is working closely with U.S. diplomats to block the French initiative and persuade other nations not to support recognition.

Israel is also preparing for an upcoming UN Security Council meeting on May 28, where several European countries are expected to push for a ceasefire in Gaza and the entry of humanitarian aid. Israel, once again working in coordination with the U.S., is hoping Washington will veto any such resolution.

Diplomatic sources said the current wave of international pressure began during a recent meeting of EU foreign ministers, where some member states pushed to suspend trade agreements with Israel.

Dutch media reported this week that the Netherlands has secured enough support—at least 17 member states—to bring the matter of canceling Israel’s EU partnership agreement to a formal discussion.

European Commission Vice President Kaja Kallas said, “It’s up to Israel. The decision is reversible.” She added, “There was broad support for the move. This shows countries recognize the situation in Gaza is unsustainable and humanitarian aid must be allowed in immediately.”

Kallas also confirmed that EU states held talks about imposing sanctions on Israeli ministers and Jewish West Bank settlers—likely following a proposal from Sweden’s Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard—but said the effort was blocked by a single opposing member state.

Separately, the UK announced this week it would suspend negotiations on a future free trade agreement with Israel, summon Israeli Ambassador Tzipi Hotovely for a formal rebuke and impose sanctions on several settlers. The move came less than 24 hours after the UK, Canada and France all threatened sanctions against Israel.

These mounting diplomatic and economic measures could have serious consequences.

The UK is one of Israel’s major trading partners, with bilateral trade totaling approximately £9 billion (\$11.5 billion), making it Israel’s fourth-largest partner. The now-stalled agreement was considered vital for Israel’s tech sector and was expected to expand into new areas.

A Foreign Ministry official told Ynet this week: “We’re facing a real tsunami that’s only getting worse. This is the worst position Israel has ever been in. It’s beyond a catastrophe. The world isn’t with us.”



The official added, “Since November 2023, all the world sees on TV are dead Palestinian children and flattened buildings. People are fed up. Israel isn’t offering a solution, a post-war plan or any hope — just death and destruction. The silent boycott was already here and it’s only going to intensify. We can’t take this lightly. No one wants to be associated with Israel right now.”

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

Second 6.0-magnitude quake in Crete in week, tremor felt across Israel

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

Second 6.0-magnitude tremor in Crete in week, felt in Israel

Quake sends tremors rippling across Israel, marking the second such event in a week, with GFZ data confirming its regional seismic impact

Reuters|08:40

A 6.0-magnitude earthquake struck the Greek island of Crete on Thursday morning, according to the German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ).

Residents in several Israeli cities reported feeling the tremor, including Jerusalem, Holon, Acre, Be’er Sheva, Rosh HaAyin, Kfar Saba, Ness Ziona, Ramat Gan, Rehovot and Haifa.

GFZ reported the earthquake occurred at a depth of 77 kilometers (48 miles) below the surface.

A similar earthquake struck Crete last week during the night between Tuesday and Wednesday and was also felt across Israel. Residents reported shaking in Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Ramat Gan, Rishon LeZion, Kiryat Yam, Rehovot, Herzliya, Givatayim, Kiryat Ono, Petah Tikva, Holon, Beit Shemesh, Kfar Saba, Ramat Hasharon, Ma’ale Adumim, Ra’anana, Modi’in, Ashkelon and even Eilat.

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

Washington DC shooting: Two Israeli embassy staff killed near Jewish museum

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

2 Israeli embassy staffers murdered in D.C. terror attack

30-year-old in custody after the shooting attack outside Washington's Jewish Museum;

Victims were a couple engaged to be married; Israel's US envoy says Trump told him the administration will fight hate, incitement and delegitimization of Israel

Daniel Edelson, New York, News Agencies| | 07:01

Two staff members of Israel's Embassy in Washington, D.C., were shot dead outside the city's Jewish Museum late on Wednesday. According to a report on CBS, others were wounded in the terror attack carried out by a white bearded man.

D.C. police said they arrested a suspect in the fatal shooting that took place during an event held by the American-Jewish Committee (AJC).

President Donald Trump condemned the violence. "These horrible D.C. killings, based obviously on antisemitism, must end, NOW! Hatred and Radicalism have no place in the USA. Condolences to the families of the victims," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. "So sad that such things as this can happen!"

Tal Naim Cohen, a spokesperson for the Israeli embassy in Washington, said two of its staff members were shot "at close range" while attending a Jewish event at the museum.

Israel's ambassador Yehiel Leiter said the victims were a young couple who were engaged to be married. "They were a beautiful couple," he said. "We won't be afraid — together we will overcome moral depravity." Leiter said he had spoken with U.S. President Donald Trump, who said his administration will do all it can to fight antisemitism and end the hate, incitement and delegitimization of the state of Israel.

U.N. Ambassador Danny Danon called the attack a "depraved act of anti-Semitic terrorism." He said harming diplomats and Jewish communities crosses a red line. "We are certain the authorities in the U.S. will act

US Homeland Security Secretary of State Kristi Noem said in a post on X that the perpetrators will be brought to justice.

"Two Israeli Embassy staff were senselessly killed tonight near the Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C. We are actively investigating and working to get more information to share. Please pray for the families of the victims," she said in a post.

Washington Police Chief Pamela Smith identified the attacker as 30-year-old Elias Rodriguez of Chicago, Illinois and said the attacker shouted "free Palestine" after he was arrested.

According to Smith, the two victims were shot as they were leaving the event at the museum, located near FBI headquarters in the nation's capital. Rodriguez was seen walking back and forth outside the Jewish Museum before approaching a group of four people, pulling out his gun and opening fire. He then entered the museum, where he was detained by security. He showed the guards where he had discarded his gun and indicated that he was behind the shooting.

Horrific act of terror that the people of Israel are waking up to this morning. AG Pam Bondi called to let me know and was at the scene. 2 dead in shooting targeting Israeli embassy staffers outside Jewish Museum in Washington D.C.

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee described the attack as a horrific act of terror. "This abhorrent attack is a terrible act of antisemitic terrorism," said President Issac Herzog. "I send my deepest condolences to the families in this difficult time and pray for the recovery of the wounded. We stand with the Jewish community in Washington and across the United States, and I wish to send comfort and strength to the entire embassy staff. The United States and Israel will always stand united in defending our peoples and our shared values. We won't let terror and hatred break us."

Democratic Congresswoman and Israel critic Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez condemned the attack. "Absolutely nothing justifies the murder of innocents. I am devastated by the killing of two people outside an event here in Washington. Our prayers are with the victims, families, and loved ones of all impacted," she said in a post. "As we await more details, we must be clear that hatred has no home here. Antisemitism is a threat to all we hold dear as a society. It must be confronted and rooted out everywhere."

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

Missile from Yemen intercepted over central Israel, at 2:59 am Thursday morning

05.22.25 – Th - Omer 34

Missile launched from Yemen intercepted over central Israel, sending over a million residents to shelters

IDF confirms Arrow 3 defense system intercepts missile; flights at Ben Gurion Airport briefly halted; no casualties reported

Ynetnews|03:12

Air raid sirens sounded across central Israel early Thursday morning after a missile was launched from Yemen, sending over a million residents to shelters. The IDF said a single missile was successfully intercepted by the Arrow 3 missile defense system.

The alerts were triggered at 2:59 a.m. in key population centers including the Tel Aviv metropolitan area, the Sharon region and the Shfela lowlands. In response, operations at Ben Gurion International Airport were temporarily halted, and several flights—including those operated by El Al and its subsidiary Sundor—were delayed in the air.

Magen David Adom emergency services reported no direct hits or casualties, though one man sustained injuries while making his way to a shelter. Police officers were dispatched to search for any remnants of military ordnance in potential impact zones.

A similar incident occurred early Sunday, also prompting nationwide sirens and ending with a successful interception. That missile attack came just minutes after Israeli singer Yuval Raphael was announced as the runner-up at the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest.

The Israeli Air Force launched strikes last Friday night on Houthi-controlled ports in Yemen, including Hodeidah and Al-Salif. The strikes were part of Operation Red Sunsets,

involving 15 fighter jets flying 1,200 miles with mid-air refueling to deliver over 35 munitions. The strikes came after Israel issued a warning earlier in the week. Saudi outlet Al Hadath reported that more than 10 strikes were carried out at the two ports. Israel stated the operation aimed to impose a naval blockade on the Houth movement. Ynet defense analyst Ron Ben-Yishai said the ongoing campaign seeks to prevent Iran from using these ports to supply the Houthis with missiles and other military equipment.

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Jerusalem home to over 1 million; 57% are Jews, 51% of Jews are ultra-Orthodox

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Jerusalem home to over 1 million, half of all Jews are ultra-Orthodox

Latest data reveals overwhelmingly young population, with 31.7% of residents under the age of 15, but city does see negative growth, with more leaving the capital than move in  
Yaron Drukman|23:06

Jerusalem is the largest city in Israel with a population of 1,046,300, according to the latest report by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) published ahead of Jerusalem Day, which is celebrated next week. The Data shows that one in 10 Israelis is a resident of the capital.

Jews make up 57% of the city's population and 38% are Arab. According to figures relating to 2023, 51% of Jewish residents belonged to the ultra-Orthodox sector of the population.

In 2024, the city's population grew by 17,900, mostly in new births. 1,500 people moved into the capital that year. But more people moved away from Jerusalem than moved to it. Most newcomers to the city were from other ultra-Orthodox urban centers.

The capital has a young population with 31.7% children up to 14 years of age, compared to 18.9% in Haifa and 18.2% in Tel Aviv. Just 9.5% of residents in Jerusalem are 65 and older compared to 20.7% in Haifa and 15.6% in Tel Aviv.

25,680 new babies were born in Jerusalem in 2024. 66% of them to Jewish mothers and 34% to Arab women. Babies born in Jerusalem made up 14% of all newborns in Israel.

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Four rockets fired from Gaza; one intercepted, three failed to leave Gaza

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Rockets fired from Gaza at southern Israel for 2nd time in hours

IDF Arabic Language spokesperson warns residents of northern Gaza of imminent attack after a rocket fired from the area is intercepted over Ashkelon earlier  
Ynet|21:46

Rocket sirens were activated in Southern Israel on Wednesday evening for the second time in hours, warning of fire targeting Israel from the Gaza Strip. The military said three other projectiles were fired but did not cross into Israeli territory.

Earlier the IDF intercepted a rocket in the sky over the southern city of Ashkelon. No injuries or damage were reported.

The military's Arabic Language spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee warned residents of the northern areas of Gaza to head south for safety ahead of an imminent attack in response to the rocket fire. "The IDF will act with force in the area from which rockets were fired. Terror groups, especially Hamas, are responsible for the suffering of civilians. Your own safety, head to the south," Adraee said in his post. According to the Israel Defense Forces, a single projectile launched from the northern Gaza Strip was intercepted by the air defense after crossing into Israeli territory. The IDF confirmed there were no injuries in the incident and said it is continuing to investigate the details.

The Ashkelon Municipality also reported that one rocket was intercepted and said no unusual incidents or damage were recorded in the city.

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the rocket attack, stating it was carried out in response to what it called "the Zionist massacre against our Palestinian people."

In a statement, the group said it had "bombed Ashdod and Ashkelon with a barrage of rockets" as retaliation.

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

IDF troops killed the gunman who murdered Tzeela Gez

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

IDF: We killed the terrorist who murdered Tzeela Gez

IDF troops shot and killed Nael Samara, Hamas-affiliated gunman behind the deadly May 14 West Bank attack

Elisha Ben Kimon|21:22

Israeli security forces have killed the Palestinian gunman who carried out a deadly shooting attack near the West Bank settlement of Bruchin earlier this month, the military said Wednesday. Two other suspects were arrested in connection with the attack.

The IDF said troops from its Ephraim Brigade, operating with Shin Bet intelligence guidance, encountered the suspect last Saturday during a raid in the Palestinian village of Bruqin, near the site of the May 14 shooting in which Tzeela Gez, an Israeli civilian, was killed.

According to the military, the suspect ran toward the soldiers holding a bag believed to be rigged with explosives and shouting at them. The soldiers opened fire and killed him. No Israeli forces were injured.

The Shin Bet identified the assailant as Nael Samara, a former Hamas member who served a prison sentence for terror activity and was briefly detained again in 2019 for incitement on social media. Authorities said he used an M-16 rifle and other weapons found in the bag he was carrying during the encounter.

Following an investigation by the Shin Bet, the IDF and the Israel Police's Judea and Samaria District, officials determined Samara was responsible for the Bruchin attack that killed Gez.

Two additional suspects were arrested during the investigation, including the alleged head of the cell. Authorities believe the group was behind three other recent shooting attacks in the area, including a March 12 incident near Ariel that wounded an Israeli civilian.

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Netanyahu press briefing : At least 20 hostages are alive, Israel ready for ceasefire

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Netanyahu: At least 20 hostages are alive, Israel ready for temporary ceasefire  
In first press briefing since December, PM signals readiness for short-term truce if it brings more home and outlines conditions for ending the war, including Hamas disarmament and leadership exile

Ynet|20:22

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday that he agrees to end the war in Gaza if Hamas is defeated, its leaders exiled and the Strip is demilitarized.

For the first time in 163 days, Netanyahu faced the press at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem. Since his last briefing in December, Netanyahu has made several public statements, posted lengthy videos on social media and given “interviews” — exclusively to his advisor, Topaz Luk — but has not answered questions from the press.

At the start of his remarks, Netanyahu offered condolences to the families of Sgt. Yosef Yehuda Chayek and Staff Sgt. Danilo Mokanu, who were killed in combat in the Gaza Strip. He then addressed the situation of the hostages, stating that “there are definitively 20 hostages still alive and up to 38 killed.” He added, “If there is an opportunity for a

temporary cease-fire to bring more hostages home — and I stress, a temporary cease-fire — we are prepared for it.”

Netanyahu hinted that Mohammed Sinwar, brother of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, was killed in an IDF strike in Gaza. Listing Israel's war aims, he said, “These goals are interlinked, and we are committed to achieving them fully. We've accomplished a great deal, but the work is not done. We have a very clear plan. We began in Gaza, eliminated tens of thousands of terrorists, and took out top murderers — Deif, Haniyeh, Yahya Sinwar and likely also Mohammed Sinwar.”

The prime minister said, “Three days ago, together with Defense Minister Katz, I ordered the launch of another stage in the war for our national resurgence. Our forces are delivering massive blows that will intensify against Hamas strongholds in Gaza. Ask the residents of Sderot, Netivot, Beersheba and the Gaza envelope — their homes are shaking not from Hamas rockets but from the overwhelming firepower of the IDF.” “Our forces are capturing more territory to cleanse it of terrorists and Hamas infrastructure,” he said. “At the end of this operation, all of Gaza will be under Israeli security control and Hamas will be fully defeated. To ensure our operational freedom and allow our allies to continue supporting us, we must also enable the entry of humanitarian aid.”

He added, “True and dear friends of Israel are telling me: ‘We support you fully, we’re sending you weapons, backing you at the UN Security Council, eliminate these monsters — but we cannot accept a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.’ At the same time — and you all know this — Hamas loots much of the aid and sells the rest at exorbitant prices to fund its terror army. That’s how they finance their recruitment of terrorists. We eliminate them and they recruit with the money that enters via aid.”

To address this, Netanyahu said, “We developed, together with the U.S., an alternative plan: distributing basic food aid for children. It will be rolled out in three phases. Phase one: immediate delivery of essential food into Gaza to prevent a humanitarian crisis and allow the fighting to continue. Phase two: setting up food distribution centers run by American companies, secured by the IDF. Phase three: creating a sterile zone where civilians can be relocated for their protection.”

Netanyahu also outlined his conditions for ending the war: “I have news — I’m ready to end the fighting under clear conditions,” he said. “All hostages return, the Hamas leadership is exiled from Gaza and the group is disarmed — and then we begin implementing the Trump plan in Gaza.”

The press conference comes amid a stalemate in negotiations with Hamas over the release of hostages, mounting international pressure and silence from the United States.

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

ICC prosecutor tells court not to withdraw Netanyahu, Gallant arrest warrants

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

ICC prosecutor tells court not to withdraw Netanyahu, Gallant arrest warrants  
Nazhat Khan, who replaced ICC chief prosecutor put on forced leave over sexual misconduct allegations, says there is no legal basis to cancel warrants and there are reasonable grounds for suspicion of war crimes  
Itamar Eichner|19:43

The prosecution at the International Criminal Court opposed Israel's request to withdraw warrants issued for the arrest of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on suspicion of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in the war in Gaza.

Israel petitioned the court to disqualify the arrest warrants earlier this month, citing Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan's alleged sexual misconduct. Khan was placed on forced leave pending an investigation.

Deputy Prosecutor Nazhat Khan argued that there was no legal basis to cancel the warrants or suspend the investigation in the 'Palestine situation.' According to Khan, the court has already determined there is a reasonable evidentiary basis to believe Netanyahu and Gallant bear responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity. In a 10-page document, the deputy prosecutor said that "there are reasonable grounds to believe that they bear criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Gaza from at least 8 October 2023 to 20 May 2024."

Kahn said that arrest warrants are withdrawn or vacated by Chambers under article 58(4) in the event of a suspect's death or other exceptional circumstances. "In the cases against NETANYAHU and GALLANT, there is no basis to withdraw or vacate the Warrants." She asked the court to reject Israel's request to withdraw the arrest warrants and suspend the investigation into the allegations of war crimes.

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

High Court verdict & Attorney general forbid PM from appointing next Shin Bet head

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Attorney general forbids Netanyahu from appointing next Shin Bet head following High Court verdict

In landmark decision sought by attorney general, justices say Shin Bet's head is not a political appointee and must remain free of loyalty expectations from elected officials  
Netael Bandel|Updated:19:40

Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara stated that the Supreme Court ruling regarding the dismissal of Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar determined that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu acted under a conflict of interest due to the ongoing Qatargate investigation. As a result, she said, Netanyahu must refrain from any actions related to appointing a



new head of the Shin Bet until legal guidelines ensuring the integrity of the process are finalized. These guidelines are expected in the coming days.

In her statement, Baharav-Miara wrote: "The court found that the prime minister acted in a conflict of interest. Therefore, he must refrain from any steps concerning the appointment of a new Shin Bet director until legal instructions are established to ensure the process is conducted properly. These will be formulated in the coming days."

Coalition Chair Ofir Katz quickly responded, calling to disregard the attorney general's directive. "I've never seen a legal opinion prepared so quickly—it's as if she knew the verdict in advance," he said. "Ignore the attorney general's instructions. Don't play with Israel's security. Appoint now!"

In its decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the dismissal of Shin Bet head Ronen Bar was carried out under a conflict of interest and that Netanyahu himself was compromised due to his involvement in the so-called Qatargate investigation. Chief Justice Yitzhak Amit and Justice Daphne Barak-Erez were in the majority, while Deputy President Noam Sohlberg dissented. The majority concluded that "the government's decision is unprecedented in the history of the State of Israel."

Justice Amit stated, "The decision to terminate the Shin Bet chief's tenure was flawed in multiple ways, including lack of factual basis, absence of a proper hearing, and acting in conflict of interest. Each of these flaws is significant on its own, and together they indicate the dismissal was unlawful." He added that despite Bar's announcement that he would step down—rendering the petitions moot—the court needed to establish deterrence to prevent similar future cases. "This issue could recur, and deterrence is needed to prevent improper conduct. It's a matter of preemptive protection: when a legal or normative question arises, we must address it."

Quoting the Shin Bet Law, Amit noted that "the agency must operate in a statesmanlike manner" and that "no task may be imposed upon it to advance partisan-political interests." He explained, "This provision—which forms a kind of constitutional DNA for the Shin Bet—is unique in legislation and is intended to ensure that although the agency is hierarchically subordinate to the political echelon, its work remains professional and independent. The tools entrusted to it must be used solely for purposes that align with Israel's democratic character."

He continued, "There may be tension between the agency's subordination to the political echelon and the principle of nonpartisan governance. The concern is that the government could impose tasks on the agency meant to serve political ends—contrary to the law's explicit language. Amid this tension, the Shin Bet director's responsibility is to ensure the tools and powers entrusted to the agency are used in good faith and not for political purposes."

Regarding the prime minister's conflict of interest, stemming from the Qatargate affair and a related classified documents leak, Amit said, "The prime minister himself is not a suspect in these affairs, but it's evident he has a personal stake in their outcomes. Any

legal ruling on the proper conduct of the Prime Minister's Office—especially during wartime—can affect his public image and political standing. Netanyahu himself acknowledged as much by publicly addressing these matters as developments occurred during the investigations."

"The prime minister has tied himself to these investigations and their results, even if he is not formally implicated. Moreover, he has been called to give open testimony in the Qatar funding probe, which further substantiates claims of his personal involvement," Amit concluded.

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Rocket fired from Gaza intercepted over Ashkelon; no injuries reported

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Rocket fired from Gaza intercepted over Ashkelon; no injuries reported

IDF says single projectile launched from northern Gaza Strip was intercepted by the air defense after crossing into Israeli territory

Ynet|19:20

Rocket sirens were sounded Tuesday evening in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon and its southern industrial zone, prompting residents to seek shelter.

According to the Israel Defense Forces, a single projectile launched from the northern Gaza Strip was intercepted by the air defense after crossing into Israeli territory. The IDF confirmed there were no injuries in the incident and said it is continuing to investigate the details.

The Ashkelon Municipality also reported that one rocket was intercepted and said no unusual incidents or damage were recorded in the city.

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

IDF fire warning near 25 diplomats in Jenin: Delegation deviated from approved route

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

IDF troops mistakenly fire near diplomats in Jenin: 'Delegation deviated from approved route'

Italy and France summon Israeli ambassadors after incident, calling gunfire unacceptable and demanding answers as military investigates how high-level diplomatic visit strayed into active combat zone without alerting nearby troops

Noa Lutzky, Elisha Ben Kimon|16:49

Israel Defense Forces troops mistakenly fired near a diplomatic delegation visiting Jenin on Wednesday after the group reportedly strayed from an approved path in an active combat zone, according to the military. No injuries were reported.

The incident occurred as 25 Arab and European ambassadors and diplomats toured the area, according to Palestinian officials. Video from the scene showed IDF soldiers firing warning shots into the air as the diplomats approached a yellow gate separating them from the military. Gunfire could be heard in the background of one interview conducted with a member of the delegation.

The IDF said the delegation had coordinated its visit in advance and had been instructed to follow a specific route due to ongoing military operations in the area. "A preliminary investigation indicates the delegation deviated from the approved path and entered a restricted area," the military said. "The IDF force on site fired warning shots. There were no casualties or damage."

Some members of the delegation reportedly approached the Jenin refugee camp, where IDF troops have been operating for several months. The soldiers fired to keep the group at a safe distance, the military said.

Once it was confirmed that the individuals were foreign diplomats, Maj. Gen. Yehuda Fuchs, head of the IDF Central Command, immediately launched an investigation. Brig. Gen. Hisham Ibrahim, head of the Civil Administration, instructed officers to speak directly with representatives of the countries involved and brief the diplomats on the findings of the initial probe. "The IDF regrets the discomfort caused," the statement said. The Palestinian news agency Wafa reported the delegation included ambassadors from Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, the European Union, Portugal, China, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Turkey, Spain, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Japan, Romania, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Canada, India, Chile, France, the United Kingdom and others. The Palestinian Foreign Ministry condemned the incident.

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani called the shooting "unacceptable" and demanded "immediate clarification from the Israeli government about what happened. Threats to diplomats are intolerable," he said. Tajani also said that Israel's ambassador to Italy will be summoned.

Shortly after, France's foreign minister Jean-Noel Barrot said he would also summon the Israeli ambassador. Barrot, writing in a post on social media platform X, called the incident "unacceptable" and said the ambassador would be required to explain.

The Jenin refugee camp has long been a focal point of Palestinian militant activity and has been under IDF control for several months. Dozens of Israeli troops, along with Border Police units, remain stationed there. Meanwhile, the city of Jenin has seen a partial return to normal life, with schools and shopping centers open. Israeli authorities have also resumed allowing Arab citizens of Israel to shop in the city on weekends, generating millions of shekels in local revenue.

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Israel shrugs as 9 to 10 of the 27 EU states remain with Israel

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Stopping the war? Israel shrugs off fears of US shift at UN over Gaza war

Despite reports of Trump's frustration, Israeli officials trust US will veto any UN move to halt the war; Washington is still pushing for a hostage deal; officials believe global pressure over Gaza aid may soon begin to ease

Alexandra Lukash, Itamar Eichner, Roni Green Shaulov | 16:04

Israeli officials believe global pressure over humanitarian conditions in Gaza may ease in the coming days, following the launch of a U.S.-backed humanitarian food distribution program.

The operation, led by an American humanitarian fund, is being carried out independently of the IDF and staffed by personnel experienced in conflict zones who have already arrived in Israel.

According to officials familiar with the initiative, the food packages—expected to sustain a family for approximately one week—will be distributed at designated centers in Gaza, with additional locations to open as Operation Gideon's Chariots—Israel's ground push to dislodge Hamas from the enclave—continues. The exact locations of the distribution sites have not yet been disclosed.

A central diplomatic question now facing Israel is how the United States will respond if calls for a ceasefire reach the United Nations Security Council. Unlike General Assembly resolutions, Security Council decisions are binding. Israeli officials said Wednesday they are confident the U.S. will continue to use its veto power, as it has in the past. Despite reports that President Donald Trump is growing “impatient,” “frustrated,” or considering a diplomatic shift, the U.S. administration has publicly denied any change in policy, and Israeli sources emphasize ongoing coordination.

Meanwhile, American diplomats are continuing indirect negotiations in hopes of securing the release of additional hostages held by Hamas. Israeli officials believe that escalating military pressure could increase Hamas' willingness to reach a deal, though they estimate such progress could take weeks.

Several aid trucks entered Gaza via the Kerem Shalom border crossing on Wednesday, but not yet under the new U.S. program. Instead, they were delivered through the existing aid mechanism, which Israel acknowledges lacks sufficient safeguards to prevent Hamas operatives from seizing supplies. Palestinian sources later claimed the trucks did not reach their intended destinations inside Gaza. At the crossing, activists from the Israeli group Tzav 9 protested the deliveries, calling for a halt to humanitarian aid to the enclave. Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Oren Marmorstein, told Ynet that the diplomatic picture in Europe remains “complex.” He noted that the EU's Foreign Affairs Council did not adopt a unified position this week. “The high representative, Kaja Kallas, issued a statement that we view as flawed, though its language was deliberately vague,” he said.

“It spoke of a ‘reassessment,’ not a suspension. No one in Brussels pulled the plug on ties with Israel.”

According to Marmorstein, around 9 to 10 out of the 27 EU member states remain supportive of Israel. He also downplayed the British announcement to freeze trade negotiations with Israel, calling it a “PR stunt.” “This was a process already frozen. They just re-froze it for effect,” he said.

“The reality is not rosy, not what we hoped for, but when Britain, Canada and France issue statements that Hamas applauds—one has to ask, who are we standing with?” he added. “The distance between Gaza and Sderot is shorter than from Gaza to the Champs-Élysées. Some things are clearer from here than from there.”

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Friend or foe? Israel seeing signs of dialogue in Syria, experts are cautious

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Friend or foe? Israel risks 'self-fulfilling prophecy' in Syria, expert warns

With US backing Syria's new regime and al-Sharaa's motives unclear, Israel must tread carefully militarily while boosting diplomacy, says Syria scholar; questions remain over al-Sharaa's break from terror, impact of lifted sanctions and implications for Israel

Sharon Kidon|10:34

Veterans of the American intelligence community likely rubbed their eyes in disbelief as they watched a former jihadist terrorist arrive in a suit to meet with U.S. President Donald Trump. Ahmad al-Sharaa, once designated a global terrorist known by his nom de guerre Abu Mohammed al-Golani, had been on the run for decades with a \$10 million bounty on his head as the leader of Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda affiliate.

Following the fall of the Assad regime, al-Sharaa appears to be undergoing a process of "rehabilitation." With Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan acting as a mediator, he has begun courting the West, culminating in a meeting with Trump during the president's first trip to the Middle East in his current term. Still, not all is rosy. Just Tuesday, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned that the interim government faces the risk of collapse and that Syria could descend into a new civil war.

Dr. Carmit Valensi, senior researcher and head of the Syria program at the Institute for National Security Studies, discussed al-Sharaa's background and his dramatic shift in ideology over the past two decades.

She explored whether his break from terrorist groups is a recent move or part of a longer, more credible process, the current economic and social state of Syria, the implications of the sanctions relief announced by Trump and how Israel should navigate this new reality to safeguard its security interests — and potentially lay the groundwork for future normalization.

“Ahmad al-Sharaa was actually born in Saudi Arabia and moved to Syria at a young age. His family is originally from Syria, and some claim his father was born in the Golan Heights — hence the name al-Golani,” explains Dr. Valensi.

“He didn’t start out as a jihadist or Islamist. That came later, largely in response to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. He initially joined al-Qaeda and later ISIS, but quickly realized it wasn’t for him and broke away completely by 2016. So what we’re seeing now — what some are calling a process of moderation or pragmatism — isn’t new. This isn’t a jihadist taking off his uniform and putting on a suit. It’s a long-term shift away from jihadist ideology.”

On the lifting of economic sanctions on Syria, Valensi says: “The civil war has had a devastating impact on Syria’s economy. More than half the country’s basic infrastructure has been destroyed. Unemployment is extremely high, with over 90% of the population living below the poverty line. There are severe shortages of basic goods. Even in Damascus, the capital, there are only a few hours of electricity each day because of serious energy shortages. Prices are sky-high and the Syrian pound is at a historic low.

“So the lifting of sanctions — something al-Sharaa and his circle pushed for from the start — is a key opportunity for economic change. These sanctions had effectively blocked all foreign investment. Now we’re already hearing about plans to rebuild infrastructure and ease financial transfers through banks, as well as a return of some international companies. Experts estimate that rebuilding Syria could take 50 years and cost between \$250 billion and \$3 trillion. It’s going to take time. Gulf states like Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE — and especially Turkey, which is arguably the most influential player in Syria today — are expected to play a major role in this reconstruction.”

Regarding how Israel should respond, Valensi notes: “Israel has taken a very militant stance. But we must understand that the longer Israel maintains a military presence in Syria, the more anti-Israel sentiment will build. Israel wasn’t a focus of the new regime, but we’re slowly becoming one. We’re also seeing a shift in Israeli policy, with early signs of dialogue — which is a positive development, because military action alone isn’t sustainable. We risk creating a self-fulfilling prophecy: we’re there militarily to prevent threats, but those threats may no longer be present. The more aggressive we appear, the more we risk inciting opposition.

“There needs to be a better balance between military action and diplomatic engagement — maintaining a healthy degree of caution, but doing so in a calibrated way. This is the moment to act, while the Syrian regime remains relatively weak. There’s still leverage to secure Israeli security interests — and potentially, in the long run, even normalization. But that will take time.”

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

Israel prepared to strike Iran nuclear facilities: will proceed if provoked by Tehran

05.21.25 – We - Omer 33

New intelligence suggests Israel preparing to strike Iranian nuclear facilities: report

Strike on Iran could mark sharp break with Trump, sources tell CNN, noting it hinges on nuclear talks; no decision yet, but intel includes Israeli communications, military activity; Israeli source says Jerusalem won't accept a 'bad deal'

Ynet | 07:59

U.S. intelligence has obtained new information suggesting that Israel is making preparations for a possible military strike on Iranian nuclear facilities, even as the Trump administration continues diplomatic efforts with Tehran, CNN reported on Tuesday, citing multiple U.S. officials familiar with the intelligence.

According to these officials, such an attack would mark a major break with President Donald Trump's current diplomatic approach and could potentially trigger a broader regional conflict in the Middle East—an outcome the U.S. has sought to avoid.

The intelligence indicates that while Israeli leaders have not made a final decision, there is a notable increase in military activities that could signal preparations for a strike. These include movements of aerial munitions and the completion of air exercises. Intercepted communications and observations of Israeli military movements have further contributed to U.S. concerns.

However, officials also noted that these steps could be part of a strategic pressure campaign aimed at forcing Iran to abandon key components of its nuclear program, by signaling the potential consequences of refusing to do so.

One U.S. official noted that the likelihood of an Israeli strike has "gone up significantly in recent months." The potential for such action is influenced by Israel's assessment of the ongoing U.S.-Iran negotiations and whether they believe the resulting agreement sufficiently addresses their security concerns, namely a deal that would allow Iran to retain any of its enriched uranium.

CNN said it contacted Israel's National Security Council and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, but did not receive a response. The Israeli Embassy in Washington also declined to comment.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei expressed skepticism on Tuesday about the success of nuclear talks, saying that U.S. demands for Iran to cease uranium enrichment are excessive and unacceptable. Khamenei said he does not expect negotiations to "reach a conclusion," adding that Iran will not accept demands to stop enrichment.

A senior Western diplomat who met with President Trump earlier this month told CNN that the president indicated the U.S. would allow only a few weeks for negotiations to succeed before considering military options. Currently, the White House maintains a policy focused on diplomacy.

While Iran is considered to be at its weakest military state in decades, U.S. officials believe Israel sees a "window of opportunity" to act. The U.S. is reportedly stepping up intelligence gathering to be prepared to assist if Israel decides to proceed, although

another source familiar with the Trump administration's thinking indicated that U.S. support would likely depend on a significant provocation from Tehran. An Israeli source told CNN that Israel would be prepared to take military action independently if the U.S. negotiates a deal that Israel deems unacceptable. Another source familiar with U.S. intelligence suggested that Israel might act to disrupt a potential agreement if it believes President Trump is inclined to accept a "bad deal."

President Donald Trump announces 'direct' negotiations with Iran

Israel is caught "between a rock and a hard place" as Washington pursues nuclear negotiations with Iran, said Jonathan Panikoff, a former senior intelligence official specializing in the region, highlighting the mounting pressure on Netanyahu. According to him, the Israeli leader is under pressure—both to avoid a U.S.-Iran deal that Israel sees as insufficient and to avoid alienating President Trump, who has already broken with the Israeli prime minister on key security issues in the region.

“At the end of the day, the Israeli decision-making is going to be predicated on U.S. policy determinations and actions, and what agreements President Trump does or does not come to with Iran,” Panikoff said, who added that he did not believe Netanyahu would be willing to risk entirely fracturing the U.S. relationship by launching a strike without at least tacit U.S. approval.

Amid the ongoing nuclear negotiations, the New York Times reported last month that Israel had planned a strike on Iranian nuclear sites but was "waved off" by Trump. The president later addressed the report, denying he had blocked the move.

“I wouldn't say waved off,” Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. “I am not in a rush to do it because I think that Iran has a chance to have a great country and to live happily without death... That's my first option.”

Still, Trump added that any strike on Iran's nuclear facilities would be “very bad for Iran.” He continued, “I think Iran wants to talk. I hope they want to talk. It would be very good for them if they do. I'd like to see Iran thrive in the future, do fantastically well. I know the Iranian people — they're incredible people. They always have been.” However, he made one point clear: “Iran can't have a nuclear weapon. It's as simple as that.”

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

IDF chief Zamir expanding Gaza operations to dismantle Hamas 'decisively'

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

IDF chief: Gaza operations expanding to dismantle Hamas 'decisively'

Reaffirming military's conduct, Zamir says forces operate according in accordance with its core values and Israeli and international law; 'any statement that casts doubt on morality of our soldiers is baseless'

Elisha Ben Kimon | Yesterday | 21:23



The Israel Defense Forces is expanding its ground campaign in the Gaza Strip with the aim of establishing operational control over additional territory and dismantling Hamas's military infrastructure, IDF Chief of the General Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir said Tuesday.

"We will expand our operation, establish operational control of additional territory, clear and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure — until Hamas is decisively defeated," Zamir declared during a field tour and situational assessment with commanders and troops involved in Operation Gideon's Chariots.

Zamir said the new phase of the operation was launched to improve conditions for the return of the hostages, to strike Hamas and to defeat it decisively in the areas where Israeli forces are operating. He noted that since the resumption of fighting, the IDF has eliminated hundreds of terrorists, split the Gaza Strip, established operational control of the Morag Corridor, cleared terrorist elements from the Rafah area, and expanded the buffer zone — all aimed at strengthening the defense of Israeli communities. Zamir said the campaign aims to achieve three core objectives: the return of Israeli hostages, the defeat of Hamas and the dismantling of its rule in Gaza. He stressed that the IDF is operating with determination, guided by Israeli and international law and remains committed to protecting Israeli civilians.

Zamir directly addressed Gaza residents, saying Israel is not responsible for their suffering. "We are not the ones who brought this destruction upon you," he said. "This is your leadership — the ones holding our hostages. Hamas is responsible for starting the war... it brought destruction and it will not be the one to rebuild."

Reaffirming the IDF's conduct, Zamir said Israeli forces operate according to IDF values, Israeli law and international law. "Any statement that casts doubt on the integrity of our actions or the morality of our soldiers is baseless," he said, adding that Israel's moral obligation is to protect its citizens from "one of the most brutal" enemies in modern history.

He praised the leadership of IDF commanders and the dedication of reservists, calling them "the backbone of our national resilience." He noted the toll on reservists and their families and thanked them for returning to duty time and again.

"We are in a long, multi-front war," Zamir concluded. "I will lead this campaign based on one consideration only: the security of the State of Israel and the protection of our civilians. Now is the time to support and unite around the IDF soldiers. Together we will fight. Together we will prevail."

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

UK suspends free trade with Israel over Gaza offensive & sanctions settlers

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

UK suspends free trade talks with Israel over new Gaza offensive

London also summons Israel's ambassador and announces sanctions against three individuals, including prominent settler leader Daniella Weiss Itamar Eichner, Reuters|Updated:17:01

The United Kingdom has suspended negotiations for a free trade agreement with Israel, citing concerns over Israel's military actions in Gaza.

Foreign Secretary David Lammy announced the suspension in Parliament on Tuesday, describing the 11-week blockade of Gaza as "cruel" and stating that "the threat of starvation looms over hundreds of thousands of civilians." He criticized Israel's conduct, saying it is isolating the country from its allies and damaging its global image.

"They are isolating Israel from its friends and partners around the world, undermining the interests of the Israeli people and damaging the image of the state of Israel in the eyes of the world," Lammy said. He called on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to "end this now."

In addition to halting trade talks, the UK government summoned the Israeli ambassador to convey its concerns. Lammy also announced sanctions against three individuals, including prominent settler leader Daniella Weiss, two illegal settler outposts and two organizations it alleges to be supporting violence against Palestinians.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer echoed Lammy's sentiments, expressing horror at the escalation in Gaza and reiterating calls for a ceasefire. He emphasized the need for unhindered humanitarian aid and warned that the UK's relationship with Israel could suffer further if the military offensive continues.

In response, Israeli officials criticized the UK's actions. They stated that the trade agreement had not been actively pursued by the current UK government and emphasized that the agreement benefits both nations. They accused the UK of harming its own economy due to "anti-Israel obsession and internal political considerations." Regarding the sanctions against settlers in the West Bank, Israeli officials called them "puzzling, unjustified and particularly regrettable," especially as Israel mourns the death of Tzala Gaz, who was killed by Palestinian terrorists while en route to the delivery room. Her newborn remains in critical condition.

"The British mandate ended exactly 77 years ago. External pressures will not divert Israel from its path in its struggle for existence and security against enemies seeking its destruction," the Israeli statement concluded.

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

MK Democrat Yair Golan, sparked backlash, slandering IDF & government

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

Yair Golan draws fire after saying Israel 'becoming a pariah state, killing babies as a hobby'

Democrats Party leader claims IDF targeting civilians in Gaza, drawing fierce condemnation from across the political spectrum, with senior officials accusing him of spreading antisemitic libels and endangering national unity during wartime  
Moran Azulay, Alexandra Lukash|10:39

Yair Golan, leader of the Democrats Party, sparked political backlash Tuesday after appearing to accuse the state of Israel of killing babies “as a hobby” during a radio interview.

Speaking to public broadcaster Kan, Golan warned that Israel was “on the way to becoming a pariah state, the South Africa of the past—if it does not return to behaving like a sane country.” He added, “A sane country does not wage war against civilians, does not kill babies as a hobby and does not set goals of population expulsion.”

Golan, a former IDF general and deputy minister, also criticized the current government, calling it “full of vengeful, immoral individuals” who lack the ability to manage a state in crisis. “This government,” he said, “is dangerous to our very existence.”

The comments drew swift condemnation from both coalition and opposition lawmakers. Shortly after the interview aired, Golan issued a clarifying statement but did not retract his remarks.

“The meaning of my words was clear,” he wrote. “This war is the realization of the fantasies of [National Security Minister] Itamar Ben-Gvir and [Finance Minister] Bezalel Smotrich. If we allow them to continue, Israel will become a pariah state.”

Golan emphasized that his criticism was directed at the government, not the military. “IDF soldiers are heroes, the government ministers are corrupt. The IDF is moral, the people are decent and the government is crooked,” he said. “We must end the war, bring back the hostages and rebuild Israel.”

Netanyahu slams Golan: 'The vilest antisemitic blood libels'

Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar wrote on X (formerly Twitter) that Golan's comments amounted to a “blood libel against the State of Israel and its army,” warning that his statements would “undoubtedly fuel global antisemitism” at a time when Israel is “fighting for its survival against a coalition seeking its destruction.”

Defense Minister Israel Katz echoed the outrage, referencing Golan's past comparison of Israeli society to the Nazi regime and declaring that he “should be cast out of public life.” Katz called Golan's statement—accusing IDF soldiers of “killing babies in Gaza as a hobby”—a “despicable blood libel” against soldiers risking their lives in combat to rescue hostages and defeat Hamas.

Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi went further, calling Golan a mehabel—a Hebrew term meaning both “saboteur” and “terrorist”—and accused him of undermining Israel's war aims, the IDF's security and the country's democracy.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir accused Golan of adopting Hamas propaganda. “Golan’s only hobby has always been spreading antisemitic blood libels against Israel,” he said. “He should be ashamed.”  
Aliyah and Integration Minister Ofir Sofer added: “It is painful that anyone would choose to point a blaming finger at his own country during such a difficult time, while ignoring the brutal reality Israel faces. Golan’s words are falsehoods and a gift to our enemies.”

Education Minister Yoav Kisch called on Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara to open a criminal investigation into Golan’s statements. “You should be ashamed,” Kisch wrote. “These kinds of slanders are heard only from our worst enemies.”  
Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also weighed in, issuing a strong condemnation. “I strongly denounce Golan’s incitement against our heroic soldiers and the state,” he said. “The IDF is the most moral army in the world, and our soldiers are fighting for our very existence. Golan, who has encouraged draft-dodging and once compared Israel to the Nazis while in uniform, has reached a new low.”  
Netanyahu accused Golan and the radical left of echoing “the vilest antisemitic blood libels against IDF soldiers” during a critical multi-front war and diplomatic efforts to free hostages and defeat Hamas. “There is no limit to this moral decay,” he added.  
Knesset member Tzvi Succot told Ynet that Golan’s remarks were “a horrifyingly cynical bid to return to power,” saying they harmed IDF soldiers and gave ammunition to antisemites. “This is a deeply sad moment,” he said, adding that “the opposition is now marked by who can attack Israel the hardest—Golan just took it one step too far.”

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

Eli Cohen's 1965 secret archive found near Assad's palace: transfer by Turkey

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

Report: Eli Cohen's secret archive found near Assad's palace: Turkey possibly involved  
Hezbollah-linked Lebanese paper reports 2,500 items tied to Israeli spy were stored near Assad's palace and remained untouched during Syria's civil war; materials may have reached Israel via Turkish intelligence

Lior Ben Ari|09:57

On Sunday, exactly 60 years after Israeli spy Eli Cohen was executed in Damascus, the Mossad intelligence agency announced it had obtained some 2,500 documents, photographs and personal items related to his espionage activities. It now appears the transfer was far from routine.

According to Syrian sources quoted by Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar on Tuesday, the materials were stored in the archives of Syria's National Security Bureau—an agency formerly headed by senior intelligence official Ali Mamlouk—and were found a few hundred feet from the residence of former President Bashar Assad. Unlike other security installations, this site remained unbreached even during the early days of Syria's civil war.

According to the report, the documents did not reach Israel through a “regular” intermediary, raising speculation that they were deliberately leaked. The article points to Turkish intelligence as a likely source, possibly in the context of quiet contacts between Ankara and Jerusalem over regional issues, especially Syria.

Sophie Ben-Dor, Cohen’s daughter, told Ynet in an interview that she hopes the recovered items may contain clues to her father’s burial place in Syria. “I really hope they’ll uncover hints or connections to people who might know,” she said. “The problem is there’s no clear lead, no one who knows for certain. There are many who claim to know, who try to sell information, who want to be part of the story or profit from it. Mossad has a lot of work to do to find the real thread.”

Ben-Dor believes those clues may be with Bashar Assad. “I hope Trump will help us with this. I hope he’ll help us with Putin, who might be able to speak with Assad and get information from him,” she said. “I’m really asking this of him. I don’t think many people know this secret—where my father is buried. If there’s any chance, it’s through Assad.”

She added that over the years, there had been attempts to reach Bashar Assad through individuals close to Putin. “We tried for many years, but our ties with Putin weakened. I hope we can get to him through Trump.”

On Sunday, as Mossad announced the recovery of the rare items in a complex operation, Cohen’s widow, Nadia, met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Mossad Director David Barnea. “They drove my mother to meet with the prime minister and the Mossad chief, and they told her about it,” Ben-Dor recounted.

At that meeting, Netanyahu and Barnea revealed the nature of the materials, including original documents and personal effects—among them, the original version of Cohen’s last will, which he wrote just hours before his execution. Until now, only a copy had been made public. “Only when my mother left the meeting on her way back from Jerusalem did she tell us about the documents that had been brought to Israel in the operation,” Ben-Dor added.

“I’ll read them with reverence to understand what my father went through. I’ll glean every shred of information from them,” said Ben-Dor, who grew up viewing her father as a symbol of courage and sacrifice for Israel’s security. “There’s the personal side of Eli Cohen as a father, a husband and a family man, and there’s the national side—his contribution to Israel’s security and his work for the country. For me, the documents are another piece of reality about my father.”

The 'Last Kisses' letter to Nadia

The newly unveiled archive of approximately 2,500 documents, photographs and personal belongings belonging to Cohen reveals previously unseen material gathered by Syrian intelligence after his arrest in January 1965. The collection includes audio recordings, investigative files on Cohen and his contacts, handwritten letters to his family in Israel, photos from his time undercover in Syria and personal items taken from his home after his capture.

Among the many files uncovered is a thick orange folder titled “Nadia Cohen.” A review of its contents shows that Syrian intelligence closely monitored the efforts of Cohen’s widow to secure his release from prison, including letters she sent to international leaders and to the Syrian president himself pleading for his freedom.

The archive also contains deeply personal letters Cohen wrote to his family. In one letter, written in Arabic after his arrest and before his trial in Syria, Cohen addresses his wife with a heartfelt farewell.

“To my wife Nadia and my dear family,” he wrote, “I am writing you my final words and asking you to remain forever connected with one another.”

Turning directly to Nadia, he continued, “I ask your forgiveness, Nadia. Take care of yourself and the children. Make sure they receive a full education. Deprive neither yourself nor them of anything, and always stay in touch with my family. You may remarry, so the children will not grow up without a father. You have my full blessing to do so. Please don’t waste your time crying over what was—always look toward the future.”

“These are the last kisses I send to you, to Sophie, to Iris, to Shaul and to all our family—especially my mother Odette and her family, Maurice and his family, Ezra and his family and Albert and his family. And don’t forget your dear family—send them my final greetings and all my longing. And don’t forget to pray for the souls of my father and me. To all of you—my last kisses and farewell.”

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

No 100 percent guarantee aid won’t reach Hamas; nine aid trucks entered Gaza

05.20.25 – Tu - Omer 32 Q3 7:00am

‘No 100 percent guarantee aid won’t reach Hamas,’ Israeli official says

Israel expected Hamas to accept Witkoff deal, but terror group rejected it and is holding direct talks with the US; ‘We’re closer to a deal, partly thanks to the IDF,’ says Trump envoy; Israeli officials admit aid may still reach terrorists

Itamar Eichner, Daniel Edelson, New York|01:13

Senior Israeli officials said Monday that U.S. President Donald Trump’s special envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, presented a new proposal over the weekend aimed at securing the release of 10 living hostages and the return of the remains of 16 more. In exchange, Israel would agree to a 45-to-60-day cease fire and release Palestinian prisoners under terms to be negotiated.

During the pause in hostilities, a second phase of talks would begin with the goal of releasing all remaining hostages, recovering additional bodies and ending the war.

According to Israeli sources, the government responded positively to the U.S. proposal, but Hamas declined to respond, effectively rejecting the offer. Nevertheless, U.S. officials remain engaged, with continued support from Qatari and Egyptian mediators, all

of whom believe a deal remains possible. Israeli officials say the Americans were expecting a favorable response from Hamas and now view the group as the primary obstacle to progress.

Jerusalem confirmed that President Trump is also operating a parallel diplomatic channel via Bashara Bahbah, a former head of Americans for Trump, who is reportedly in direct contact with Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya. This same backchannel facilitated the release of Israeli-American soldier Edan Alexander. Israeli officials hope that as military pressure mounts, Hamas will reconsider and agree to the Witkoff framework.

U.S. Hostage Affairs Envoy Adam Boehler, speaking at the Jerusalem Post conference in New York, said negotiations are progressing. “We’re getting closer to a deal,” he said. “If Hamas is ready to release hostages, we’re open to legitimate proposals. I believe we’re closer than ever, in part thanks to Israeli military pressure.”

Israel believes al-Hayya has emerged as Hamas’ key decision-maker following the assassination of Yahya Sinwar and an attempt on the life of his brother Mohammed. However, Israeli analysts remain divided over whether Hamas is capable of rational negotiation or driven by ideological rigidity that precludes compromise.

One senior Israeli official suggested that Hamas may change its position if an international humanitarian fund begins operating and distributes aid directly to Palestinian families—undermining Hamas’ control over resources and ability to pay salaries or recruit fighters. That, he said, could push the group to seek a way out of Gaza. The official also noted that Israel’s ground maneuver in Gaza is currently at its most intense since the war began. To date, the IDF has destroyed only 25% of Hamas’ tunnel network but intends to eliminate the rest of the group’s strategic infrastructure, which could further weaken its operational capacity.

On Monday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened a high-level security meeting at IDF headquarters in Tel Aviv to discuss the hostage issue and the next phase of Operation Gideon’s Chariots. Attendees included Defense Minister Israel Katz, Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar, Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, Shas party leader Aryeh Deri, Shin Bet head Ronen Bar, Mossad director David Barnea, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir and other senior security officials.

The Israeli negotiating team remains in Doha and will continue discussions there; no decision has been made to recall them.

No guarantee aid won’t fall into Hamas hands

Senior Israeli officials said Monday that emergency humanitarian aid to Gaza will be distributed through two international organizations considered relatively reliable and unaffiliated with Hamas, along with Emirati and Jordanian groups already operating aid programs and bakeries in the territory.

“There is no 100 percent guarantee the aid won’t reach Hamas,” one official acknowledged, “but we believe the vast majority will not.” The officials emphasized that

the selected groups have established delivery networks and are viewed as trustworthy in avoiding diversion to terrorist hands.

Regarding the U.S.-led international humanitarian fund set to operate in the enclave, Israeli officials said its design will prevent Hamas from intercepting supplies. Unlike past deliveries where full truckloads were seized by the terror group, the new approach involves direct distribution to Palestinian families. "They won't go house to house looting individual parcels. That makes no sense," one official said.

Still, the officials did not rule out that Israel may need to continue providing emergency relief to areas far from the designated distribution centers, which will initially be concentrated in southern Gaza.

Tom Fletcher, the UN's deputy secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, confirmed that Israel allowed nine aid trucks to enter Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing on Monday, ending an 11-week total blockade. "This is a drop in the ocean compared to the urgent need," Fletcher said. "Far greater access must be granted starting tomorrow morning."

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

UK, France and Canada threaten UN sanctions on Israel over Gaza offensive & aid

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

UK, France and Canada threaten sanctions on Israel over Gaza offensive, humanitarian crisis

In rare joint statement, world powers urge Israel to halt Gaza offensive and lift restrictions on entry of humanitarian aid; 'The level of human suffering in Gaza is intolerable,' leaders say

Itamar Eichner|22:01

Britain, France and Canada issued an unusually strong joint statement Monday, warning they are considering imposing sanctions on Israel over the "intolerable" level of human suffering in Gaza.

The statement, released by UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office alongside French President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, called for an immediate halt to Israeli military operations in the Palestinian enclave and the unrestricted entry of humanitarian aid.

"We call on the Israeli Government to stop its military operations in Gaza and immediately allow humanitarian aid to enter Gaza. This must include engaging with the UN to ensure a return to delivery of aid in line with humanitarian principles," the leaders wrote. The statement also demanded the immediate release of all hostages held by Hamas.

The leaders accused Israel of failing to provide essential aid to civilians, warning this may constitute a violation of international humanitarian law. They also condemned



statements by Israeli Cabinet ministers suggesting the forced relocation of Gaza residents, calling such remarks a breach of international law.

While acknowledging Israel's right to self-defense, the joint declaration criticized the scope of the latest IDF campaign, known as Operation Gideon's Chariots, as "wholly disproportionate," and said their governments would not remain passive. "We will not stand by while the Netanyahu Government pursues these egregious actions," the statement read, noting that targeted sanctions are among the measures under consideration.

The three countries also addressed developments in the West Bank, urging Israel to halt settlement expansion, which they labeled illegal and a threat to the two-state solution. They vowed not to hesitate in taking further action if necessary.

The declaration comes amid renewed international efforts to secure a ceasefire, and reflects the leaders' backing of the American-Qatari-Egyptian mediation initiative. Starmer, Macron and Carney voiced support for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages and a political resolution that would end Hamas rule in Gaza and advance a two-state solution.

Finally, the three leaders committed to pursuing recognition of a Palestinian state as the "only way to bring long-lasting peace" and confirmed their participation in an upcoming international summit in New York aimed at "building international consensus" on the issue.

Western diplomats sharply criticized a new humanitarian aid distribution plan for Gaza, agreed upon by Israel and the United States, calling it "madness" and warning it is unlikely to meet the needs of the enclave's 2 million residents.

The plan would see food aid distributed in sealed boxes at four central locations across Gaza, replacing roughly 400 previous distribution points. A senior Western diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, described the plan as "complete lunacy," questioning how such a limited number of centers—some of which are reportedly still under construction—could serve the entire population. "Each center would have to serve 460,000 people—that's the population of Tel Aviv. There is no way this can work," the diplomat said.

He added that the logistical burden of transporting 20 to 30 kilograms of food per family on foot, particularly at night, posed serious risks. "It's like telling everyone in Tel Aviv to queue for food at Kikar Hamedina. This is a mistake I desperately hope won't be made—it would be disastrous," he said.

The criticism comes as 25 Western countries and major humanitarian organizations issued a joint statement Monday urging Israel to immediately allow the resumption of large-scale humanitarian aid to Gaza. The statement, released by the UK Foreign Office and signed by foreign ministers of Canada, Germany, France, Japan, Australia, Spain, Sweden, Italy and others, warned that more than two months of aid restrictions have

caused acute shortages of food, medicine and essential supplies, raising fears of mass starvation.

The signatories also rejected the proposed Israeli aid model, stating that it compromises the ability to deliver assistance at scale and endangers aid workers by linking humanitarian access to military or political objectives. They emphasized that aid distribution must remain neutral, depoliticized and independently operated. “Humanitarian aid must never be used as a political tool, nor should it result in demographic or geographic changes within the Palestinian territory,” the statement read. In addition to calling on Israel to open access routes, the statement urged Hamas to immediately release all remaining hostages and to refrain from obstructing the delivery of humanitarian relief.

The statement concluded by asserting that an immediate return to a ceasefire and progress toward a two-state solution are essential for achieving lasting peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians, as well as long-term regional stability. Meanwhile, the Washington Post reported that senior Trump administration officials reportedly warned Israel that continued military operations in Gaza could result in the U.S. withdrawing its support. A source familiar with the matter told the paper that American pressure on Israel has intensified in recent days, particularly following Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s decision to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza without a Cabinet vote, after months of restrictions.

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Protests erupt against Hamas in Khan Younis following IDF evacuation warning

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Protests erupt against Hamas in Khan Younis following IDF evacuation warning  
Residents demand Hamas’ ouster and an end to the war as military ramps up Gaza offensive; for the first time in months, 5 UN aid trucks enter Gaza after undergoing rigorous security inspections

Elisha Ben Kimon, Itamar Eichner, Noa Lutski|21:08

Hundreds of Palestinians protested against Hamas in Khan Younis on Monday, just hours after the IDF issued an extraordinary evacuation warning, declaring the area an active combat zone ahead of what it called an “unprecedented attack” aimed at dismantling terrorist infrastructure.

Demonstrators chanted “Hamas out” and called for an end to the war with Israel. According to local reports, protests broke out across multiple areas of Khan Younis, with many demanding that Hamas relinquish control of Gaza.

The IDF’s warning instructed residents to evacuate immediately to the humanitarian zone in al-Mawasi. “From this moment on, the Khan Younis governorate will be considered an

active combat zone. The terror organizations have brought disaster upon you. For your own safety—evacuate now,” the statement read. The last IDF ground maneuver in Khan Younis took place in August. Monday’s warning followed the IDF’s announcement of the start of a new ground operation in the Gaza Strip under Operation Gideon’s Chariots, even as hostage deal negotiations with Hamas continue in Doha.

Five IDF divisions are currently operating across the enclave, following a week of intensive airstrikes targeting terrorist infrastructure. The military confirmed Monday that it remains “in the midst of Operation Gideon’s Chariots and is active throughout the Gaza Strip.”

According to Ynet military analyst Ron Ben-Yishai, the IDF has entered the second phase of the operation, involving heavy firepower and urging civilians to relocate to designated safe zones near Rafah. The army has deployed screening checkpoints—nicknamed “filters”—to prevent terrorists, particularly armed operatives, from reaching those areas.

Also on Monday, for the first time in months, five UN aid trucks carrying humanitarian supplies, including baby formula, entered Gaza via the Kerem Shalom crossing after undergoing rigorous security inspections. A military statement emphasized that all aid deliveries followed the recommendations of IDF professionals and were approved by the political leadership. The IDF added—in a separate English-language release intended for international media—that it “will allow humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip while making every effort to ensure it does not fall into the hands of the Hamas terror organization.”

Western diplomats sharply criticized a new humanitarian aid distribution plan for Gaza, agreed upon by Israel and the United States, calling it “madness” and warning it is unlikely to meet the needs of the enclave’s 2 million residents. The plan would see food aid distributed in sealed boxes at four central locations across Gaza, replacing roughly 400 previous distribution points. A senior Western diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, described the plan as “complete lunacy,” questioning how such a limited number of centers—some of which are reportedly still under construction—could serve the entire population. “Each center would have to serve 460,000 people—that’s the population of Tel Aviv. There is no way this can work,” the diplomat said.

He added that the logistical burden of transporting 20 to 30 kilograms of food per family on foot, particularly at night, posed serious risks. “It’s like telling everyone in Tel Aviv to queue for food at Kikar Hamedina. This is a mistake I desperately hope won’t be made—it would be disastrous,” he said.

The criticism comes as 25 Western countries and major humanitarian organizations issued a joint statement Monday urging Israel to immediately allow the resumption of large-scale humanitarian aid to Gaza. The statement, released by the UK Foreign Office and signed by foreign ministers of Canada, Germany, France, Japan, Australia, Spain,

Sweden, Italy and others, **warned** that more than **two months of aid restrictions** have **caused acute shortages** of food, medicine and essential supplies, raising **fears of mass starvation**.

The signatories also **rejected** the proposed **Israeli aid model**, stating that it compromises the ability to deliver assistance at scale and **endangers aid workers** by linking humanitarian access to military or political objectives. They emphasized that aid **distribution must remain neutral**, depoliticized and independently operated. “Humanitarian **aid must never be used as a political tool**, nor should it result in demographic or geographic changes within the Palestinian territory,” the statement read. In addition to calling on Israel to open access routes, the **statement urged Hamas to immediately release all remaining hostages** and to refrain from obstructing the delivery of humanitarian relief. The **statement** concluded by **asserting** that an immediate return to a **ceasefire** and progress toward a two-state solution are **essential** for achieving lasting peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians, as well as long-term regional stability.

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

As hostage talks hit deadlock, IDF presses forward in Gaza

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As hostage talks hit deadlock, IDF presses forward in Gaza

Hostage deal talks in Doha stall, with Israel dismissing reports of **Hamas' latest** proposal as **propaganda**; as **IDF launches second phase** of Operation Gideon's Chariots, Khan Younis **residents told to evacuate** ahead of 'unprecedented attack'  
Itamar Eichner|19:02

**Negotiations** in Doha over a potential **hostage deal with Hamas** **have yet to produce** progress, sources familiar with the talks told Ynet on Monday. Meanwhile, the **IDF** **stepped up military operations in Gaza**.

Meanwhile, IDF Arabic spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee **warned residents of Khan Younis of an “unprecedented attack”** and **ordered them to evacuate**. “Move immediately westward toward the al-Mawasi area. From this moment on, the Khan Younis governorate will be **considered an active combat zone**. The **terror organizations** have **brought disaster upon you**. For your own safety—**evacuate now**,” he wrote.

According to Ynet military analyst Ron Ben-Yishai, the call to evacuate Khan Younis marks the second phase of Operation Gideon's Chariots, which is being carried out in **three major stages**: the **first**—already underway—involves **preparations**; the **second** includes preparatory **air and ground strikes** and the **movement of most civilians** in the enclave to safer zones near Rafah; and the **third phase** is a **heavy ground maneuver** to **gradually seize control** of parts of the territory and **prepare for a prolonged military presence there**.

CNN reported Sunday night that Hamas had agreed to release 7–9 hostages in exchange for a 60-day ceasefire and the release of 300 Palestinian prisoners. A senior Hamas official told the network that the release of hostages would depend on an Israeli withdrawal east of the Salah al-Din Road, Gaza's main north-south highway. However, Israeli officials dismissed the report as “Hamas propaganda,” stating that the terror group has yet to commit to any agreement. According to senior Israeli officials, “We’re not on the path to a deal yet—the gaps between the sides are substantial.”

The Security Cabinet convened Sunday night for a tense session focused on humanitarian aid to Gaza and the hostage issue. Before the meeting, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said the negotiating team in Doha is acting under his directive to explore every chance for a deal—“whether according to a framework presented by U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff or as part of ending the war, which would include the release of all hostages, the expulsion of Hamas operatives and the demilitarization of the Gaza.” This sparked an uproar among right-wing ministers. Israeli officials later clarified that negotiations are currently focused solely on the Witkoff framework, and if Hamas agrees to expulsion, a broader discussion about ending the war will follow.

Cabinet ministers said Netanyahu is facing one of the most consequential decisions of his premiership: whether to proceed with the first stage of the Witkoff plan, involving the release of 10 hostages, or pursue a broader deal.

On Sunday, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir held a situational assessment in northern Gaza and emphasized that Operation Gideon's Chariots would continue “until we break the enemy’s fighting capability, until we defeat them wherever we operate.” At the same time, he stated: “The IDF will allow the political leadership flexibility to promote any hostage deal. A deal isn’t a pause—it’s an achievement. We are working for that.”

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Trump continues to engage in talks with Hamas, seeking end to Gaza war

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Trump continues to engage in talks with Hamas, seeking end to Gaza war, White House says

White House confirms direct US engagement with Hamas following release of American-Israeli hostage Edan Alexander; Trump demands full release of captives and aims to broker broader ceasefire deal amid Israel’s surprise at backchannel talks  
Reuters|18:37

President Donald Trump's administration is continuing to engage with all parties involved in the war in the Gaza Strip, White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said Monday, following direct talks between Hamas and Washington that led to the release of American-Israeli hostage Edan Alexander.

“The president wants the war in Gaza to end,” Leavitt told reporters during a briefing, adding that Trump personally delivered a direct demand to Hamas for the release of all hostages held in the enclave for nearly 600 days. “The president continues, not just through his team but personally, to speak with the parties involved. He made it clear to Hamas that he wants to see all hostages freed,” she said.

Leavitt summarized Trump’s foreign policy doctrine in two words: “America First,” emphasizing that “the American people and taxpayers come first.” She said this principle underpins the administration’s efforts to bring an end to wars in both Israel and Ukraine. “With regard to Israel and Gaza, President Trump and his national security team continue to engage with both sides. His goal is not only to save money, but to save lives,” she added.

Last week, Hamas released soldier Edan Alexander, an American citizen, after what the group said were direct negotiations with the Trump administration. Hamas called the release “one of the steps” toward reaching a ceasefire in Gaza that would include reopening crossings and allowing humanitarian aid into the territory. Israel was not involved in the talks and did not release any prisoners in exchange.

The revelation of direct communication between the Trump administration and Hamas surprised Israeli officials. The initial contacts were made by Adam Boehler, Trump’s envoy for hostage affairs. After news of the talks emerged, Israeli officials claimed Boehler had acted without authorization and had been dismissed. However, Alexander’s release later confirmed that Boehler had been operating with Trump’s full backing. U.S. officials clarified that the release of Alexander did not come at the expense of other hostages, but reflected a commitment to the last known American citizen held by Hamas. The administration hopes the move could pave the way for a broader agreement to secure the release of remaining captives.

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

IDF covert operation in Khan Younis to extract & interrogate Hamas commander

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Commandos in women's clothing: New details on IDF’s covert operation in Khan Younis  
Special forces kill senior Gaza terrorist Ahmad Sarhan in daring raid involving disguises,  
intense airstrikes and reportedly aimed to extract intelligence before assassination  
Iskander Khabibulin|13:29

Eyewitnesses in Khan Younis reported on Monday that IDF special forces disguised as women killed Ahmad Sarhan, a senior commander in the Al-Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades, the military wing of the Popular Resistance Committees. The terror group later confirmed his death, calling him a “special operations officer.”

According to accounts gathered by Hamas-affiliated Safa News Agency, a white bus arrived on Mars Street in the Al-Mahatta neighborhood early Monday morning, appearing to carry displaced women and their belongings.

Witnesses said nine individuals dressed in women's clothing — some veiled, others with exposed faces — exited the bus and stormed Sarhan's home, shooting him dead and arresting his wife and children.

Roughly four hours later, the group publicly acknowledged Sarhan's death. The house had previously been damaged by an Israeli airstrike, witnesses said. The operation reportedly lasted about 20 minutes and included intensive aerial support. Witnesses described hearing gunfire from inside the house before the force quickly withdrew under cover of heavy Israeli airstrikes.

Palestinian media reported that over 30 Israeli airstrikes were launched over a 40-minute span to secure the special forces' extraction. Helicopters and tanks provided additional firepower, reportedly killing and wounding dozens.

Safa claimed physical evidence was found at the scene, including rifle butts, shell casings, smoke grenades, women's clothing and a camouflaged box resembling belongings of displaced persons.

Al-Hares, a media outlet affiliated with Palestinian factions, said Israeli forces used a civilian vehicle with local plates, women's disguises, concealed weapons and air cover to confuse residents. The channel urged civilians to remain vigilant and report any unfamiliar individuals or suspicious activity.

Palestinian sources said the goal of the raid was to extract intelligence from Sarhan before killing him. Images shared from the scene showed a bundle of mattresses allegedly brought in as part of the disguise.

Palestinian media also reported the killing of Mahdi Kawara, the Hamas's Southern Khan Younis Battalion commander, though it remains unclear if his death took place during the same operation.

The IDF confirmed operations in Khan Younis as part of the ongoing operation in Gaza but denied media reports that Monday's mission was related to a hostage rescue. "There is no change in the current situation," an IDF spokesperson said.

Sarhan was a top operative in the Al-Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades, the armed wing of the Popular Resistance Committees — Gaza's third-largest terror group. The group follows a jihadist-salafist ideology and participated in the 2006 kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit alongside Hamas and the Army of Islam.

The group was also responsible for the kidnapping and murder of Eliyahu Asheri that same day, sparking an Israeli operation in Gaza. Over the years, it has carried out numerous attacks, including roadside bombings targeting military and civilian sites both before and after Israel's 2005 disengagement from Gaza.

In recent years, the group has fired rockets at Israel during multiple rounds of fighting and has lost several senior commanders in Israeli strikes. It also took part in the October

7 massacre and was involved in the abduction and murder of Ohad Yahalomi, whose body was returned to Israel in the latest hostage deal with Hamas.

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Israel will control all of Gaza & resume aid entry - to prevent famine

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Netanyahu: Israel will control all of Gaza, resumed aid entry - to prevent famine

Under global pressure and facing internal dissent, PM says move is a temporary step until Israeli-controlled distribution points are ready, warning starvation could erode backing for war against Hamas

Moran Azulay|Updated:11:11

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday that Israel will take full control of the Gaza Strip and defended his decision to resume the delivery of humanitarian aid to the enclave, saying it was necessary to prevent a humanitarian collapse that could jeopardize international support for the war effort.

“We must not reach a situation of famine,” Netanyahu said in a video statement alongside his adviser Topaz Luk. “Substantively and diplomatically, we won’t have support, and we won’t be able to complete the mission of victory.”

Netanyahu’s remarks come after weeks of internal government tensions, criticism from within his right-wing coalition, and his refusal to hold a vote in the security cabinet on the resumption of aid deliveries. He said the decision was driven by pressure from close U.S. allies, including Republican lawmakers and President Donald Trump, who warned that images of mass starvation could undermine international backing.

“Even our strongest supporters told me, ‘We can give you weapons, support at the U.N., help in defeating Hamas. But one thing we can’t support is mass starvation,’” Netanyahu said.

Israel initially approved the delivery of limited aid into Gaza during the war, but later halted it after accusing Hamas of looting supplies. Netanyahu said the current plan, coordinated with the U.S., involves establishing secure distribution points controlled by the Israeli military to prevent Hamas access. Until those are operational—likely after May 24—Israel will temporarily revert to earlier methods that could allow Hamas to seize some of the aid.

“We’re working to create an area under IDF control where all Gaza residents can safely receive food and medicine,” he said. “This is happening alongside significant military pressure and a massive entry into Gaza to eliminate Hamas’s ability to loot aid.”

The plan was presented in the security cabinet on Sunday evening, but no vote was held. National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir demanded a vote, which was denied.



Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara backed the prime minister's authority to proceed without one.

Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar and other ministers reported heavy diplomatic pressure, not only from the U.S. but also from the European Union, to avoid a humanitarian crisis. Netanyahu, Cabinet Secretary Yossi Fuchs, and IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Eyal Zamir left the room after presenting the plan, and the meeting concluded with ministers voicing their views.

In the video, Netanyahu also made a veiled reference to a military operation earlier in the day in Khan Younis, reportedly an attempt to capture a senior Hamas operative alive.

"Our fighters are doing an excellent job, including this morning," he said.

He reiterated his goal of "combined victory"—defeating Hamas and securing the release of hostages taken during the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas-led militants that triggered the war.

The decision to resume aid sparked immediate backlash from members of Netanyahu's coalition. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, leader of the Religious Zionism party, had previously warned he would leave the government if any aid reached Hamas. "Not a single grain of wheat will go to Hamas," he declared last month. "That was the cardinal mistake in the first phase of the war."

In a past interview, Smotrich called humanitarian aid "logistical support for the enemy," and said it undermines Israel's military achievements. On Monday, he announced he would make a "significant statement" following the aid decision.

Ben Gvir also denounced the move, saying, "Our hostages have no humanitarian aid," and warning that any aid entering Gaza would "fuel Hamas while our hostages rot in tunnels." Other Likud lawmakers echoed the criticism. MK Avichay Buaron called the decision "insanity," while MK Moshe Saada said, "You can't deploy five IDF divisions to destroy the enemy and at the same time give it food to survive."

Benny Gantz, leader of the opposition National Unity party, accused Netanyahu of hiding behind the military. "When things go wrong—the IDF recommended. When they go right—I gave the order," Gantz said. "This is what frightened leadership looks like in wartime."

Aid deliveries are expected to begin immediately, as an interim measure until an American security company can begin distributing supplies in designated humanitarian areas. The IDF's chief of staff proposed including northern Gaza and some combat zones in the aid delivery, but most ministers opposed the idea. A compromise was reached to send aid to other parts of the Strip not currently experiencing active fighting.

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

IDF launches major strike in Khan Younis, senior terrorist killed

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IDF launches major strike in Khan Younis, senior terrorist killed

Dozens reported killed or wounded; Saudi outlet claims special forces tried to extract hostages, but reports remain unconfirmed

Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi | 07:40

The IDF carried out dozens of strikes in the Khan Younis area of southern Gaza, using fighter jets and artillery, Palestinian media reported early Monday. The reports also said internet in the area was cut.

According to Saudi broadcaster Al Arabiya, a special operations force was present in the area in an effort to extract hostages held by Hamas. Although the report could not be independently confirmed, images from the enclave showed helicopters over Khan Younis. The military said there had been no change to the situation on the ground.

Sources in Gaza claimed that during the strikes in Khan Younis, Israeli forces attempted to capture Ahmad Sarhan, a senior commander in the Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades, the armed wing of the Popular Resistance Committees, Gaza's third-largest terrorist organization.

The escalation follows the IDF's ground incursion into Gaza and a decision by the Security Cabinet to allow humanitarian aid into the enclave for at least one week. The move, critics say, risks allowing Hamas to regain control of aid distribution before a new mechanism is put in place.

Palestinian sources also claimed that dozens were killed or wounded in strikes near Al-Ansar Hospital, where medical teams reportedly feared an imminent Israeli assault.

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Houthis renew threat, mimicking the style of IDF, to attack Ben Gurion Airport

05.19.25 – Mo - Omer 31

Houthis renew threat to attack Ben Gurion Airport

Second warning in under 24 hours includes map of Ben Gurion area, Israel's main international gateway, mimicking IDF Arabic spokesman's alerts for Yemen's ports  
Lior Ben Ari | 06:40

The Houthi rebels in Yemen on Monday issued a warning to Israel: evacuate Ben Gurion International Airport ahead of a missile attack. It was the second such warning in less than 24 hours and included an image marking the area of the airport.

On Sunday, the Houthis published similar threats against Ben Gurion Airport, mimicking the style of IDF Arabic spokesman Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee, who in recent days has issued evacuation warnings for areas near Yemen's ports.

Since the start of the war, Adraee has become the face of Israel across the Middle East—more recently, also in Yemen. Following his initial warnings to evacuate ports under Houthi control, which were seen as unusual at the time, Iran-backed rebels in Yemen now appear to be “doing an Adraee” of their own.

Shortly after Israel launched its ground operation in Gaza, the Houthis issued their first direct threat: “We will strike Ben Gurion Airport in the coming hours. Evacuate immediately.”

Adraee’s messages are typically addressed to residents of areas targeted by the IDF. He often explains that terrorist groups are operating from those sites, urges civilians to evacuate and stresses that remaining at the locations puts their lives at risk. Following a series of such Arabic-language warnings to Yemenis—some preceding actual strikes and others not—the Houthis now appear to be adopting the same tactic.

In a previous post, Amer claimed the strikes on Israel were a response to “the recent escalation against the Gaza Strip and attacks on Yemen,” and part of a broader Yemeni decision to impose an air blockade on Ben Gurion Airport and other airfields. He also cited the naval blockade and closure of Eilat Port, which the Houthis say will remain in place until Israel ends its military campaign in Gaza and lifts the blockade.

Amer urged remaining airlines operating out of Ben Gurion to “leave immediately,” warning that “all those present, especially foreigners, should leave for their own safety.” Amid a wave of flight cancellations to Israel, a senior Houthi source issued another warning to foreign carriers considering a return to Ben Gurion: “They should change course and take seriously the warnings of the Yemeni military, which is determined to establish a no-fly zone not only over Ben Gurion Airport but over all of Israeli airspace,” he told Hezbollah-affiliated Al Mayadeen.

Overnight Sunday, the Houthis launched a missile toward central Israel. It was intercepted in midair, but sirens sounded from the Shfela region to Netanya, prompting delays in departures and arrivals at Ben Gurion Airport. In recent weeks, following a Houthi missile strike near the airport, the IDF has conducted three retaliatory strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen.

Meanwhile, Iran-backed proxies continue to fire rockets and missiles at Israel weekly, forcing millions of Israelis to seek shelter on a regular basis.

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Videos disprove claims of Gaza starvation as war ramps up

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Footage disproves repeating claims of Gaza starvation as war ramps up

WFP warns of starvation in Gaza as aid trucks stall at the border but reports highlight high food access to Gazans despite conflicting claims

Lior Ben Ari|23:11

The World Food Program (WFP) warned Sunday that families in Gaza are starving while food trucks pile up at the border, calling the situation “a race against time.” The organization urged the international community to take immediate action to restore aid flows into the Strip.

U.S. President Donald Trump addressed the issue on Friday, saying: “Many people are starving, a lot of bad things are happening there.”

His special envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, said in an ABC interview that the administration is working to ramp up humanitarian aid, including sending mobile kitchens and trucks filled with flour currently waiting at the border. “Everyone is concerned about the conditions in Gaza,” he said, while noting the logistical and safety challenges in delivering the aid.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, a prominent supporter of Israel in the Trump administration, expressed concern over the humanitarian situation last Thursday. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi claimed during an Arab League summit in Baghdad on Saturday that Israel is using starvation and deprivation as a “weapon” against Gaza’s population.

Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani made a similar accusation in April, saying, “We cannot accept the starvation of Palestinians or the use of aid as a weapon.” Yemen’s Houthi leader Abdul-Malik Badreddin al-Houthi has repeatedly claimed that Israel is deliberately starving Palestinians.

While these allegations dominate political speeches and media headlines, the reality in Gaza appears more complex.

Though some markets in Gaza have been photographed empty, residents have also shared images and videos showing bustling food stalls, especially in Gaza City’s Al-Zawiya market. Despite war-related shortages and disruptions, food remains available in many areas, albeit at high prices.

“Even during the worst times in northern Gaza, people could still buy things — it was just expensive,” said Jackie Peleg, director of Imshin, a project documenting life in Gaza. She monitors Gaza-based food-related businesses and shares current footage online that contradicts claims of widespread starvation.

“There are gaps. Some people can pay, some can’t. The poor go to soup kitchens, and many of those are privately run.” Peleg added that the narrative of starvation in Gaza long predates the war.

“They’ve talked about starvation throughout the war, but I keep seeing other images,” she told Ynet. “Sometimes they relied almost entirely on UN flour sacks. But even when the crossings were open and supplies came in, people still claimed they were being starved. During the start of Ramadan, the crossings were closed, yet people celebrated.”

“There’s less meat but there are still plenty of canned meat products, which people started throwing away after a while,” Peleg said. “When people returned to northern Gaza and found their homes gone, many moved into tents in Gaza City or onto the rubble. There’s real hardship, but it’s not uniform. Even people from destroyed areas can reach markets or distribution centers.”

Peleg said prices fluctuate based on border conditions: “Last week, when they thought the border crossings would reopen, prices dropped immediately—then rose again.”

According to her, Hamas has been playing “a delicate game for years,” keeping the

population very poor but not starving. “Even before the war, the terror group and those tied to it lived well.”

Israel has also challenged the starvation claims. The IDF’s Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) recently responded on X (formerly Twitter) to the latest UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) food security report, saying: “Even based on IPC’s own analysis, there is no famine in Gaza.”

COGAT called IPC’s terminology—such as “facing famine”—misleading and based on future projections that have repeatedly failed since the war began.

“The IPC keeps publishing alarming findings without releasing its data or analysis,” the statement read. “Its lack of transparency has been consistent. Its forecasts have repeatedly overstated the situation. The methodology for assessing Gaza’s food security is deeply flawed.”

COGAT also criticized the IPC’s reliance on UN sources that, during the ceasefire, reflected only about one-third of the actual aid entering Gaza. “Israel has published detailed analyses of these failures and the IPC has never responded.”

Witkoff said efforts are ongoing to resolve logistical barriers. “The question is: how do we get all those trucks into Gaza and how do we set up the aid stations?” he said. “It’s complicated and the conditions are dangerous. There are still unexploded shells everywhere. But we won’t let a humanitarian crisis occur under President Trump’s leadership.”

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Amid US pressure, Netanyahu resumed Gaza aid without Cabinet vote

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Amid US pressure, Netanyahu announces resumption of Gaza aid without Cabinet vote. Decision made despite indications that majority of ministers opposed the move; When Ben-Gvir repeated his call for a vote, National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi responded, 'You are inciting'

Itamar Eichner|22:47

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday authorized the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza, a decision made without a cabinet vote and against the apparent will of a majority of ministers. The move came amid mounting pressure from the United States to prevent a worsening humanitarian crisis in the territory.

During a meeting of the security cabinet, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir demanded a vote but was denied. National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi rejected his request, accusing him of incitement. Following Netanyahu’s announcement, he, Cabinet Secretary Yossi Fuchs and IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir left the meeting. The army gave a situational briefing, ministers voiced their opinions, and the session was adjourned.

Cabinet members who attended said they believed the decision stemmed from U.S. pressure. Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara backed Netanyahu, asserting that no vote was required.

In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office said the aid decision was made on the recommendation of the Israel Defense Forces and was driven by operational needs. "To enable the continued intensification of the fighting to defeat Hamas, Israel will allow a basic quantity of food into Gaza to prevent the development of a famine crisis," the statement said. "Such a crisis would jeopardize the ongoing Gideon's Chariots operation to dismantle Hamas." The statement added that Israel will act to prevent Hamas from taking control of the aid distribution and ensure it does not reach its fighters.

The aid arrangement, seen as a temporary solution, is intended to last until an American security firm begins overseeing distribution in a designated humanitarian zone, expected to start on May 24. Until then, the army proposed sending aid to northern Gaza and other areas where fighting continues—a plan rejected by most ministers, with only Minister Dudi Amsalem in support. The final decision allows aid to reach more areas of Gaza but excludes active combat zones.

Ministers also debated whether famine conditions exist in Gaza. While some claimed shortages are real, others cited reports of available goods in markets and continued Hamas control over food warehouses. The aid deliveries are set to begin immediately.

The announcement followed remarks Friday by U.S. President Donald Trump during a visit to the United Arab Emirates, where he said, "We're looking at Gaza, and we'll deal with it," adding that "many people are starving, many bad things are happening there."

In response, Ben-Gvir's office criticized the decision, saying any aid to Gaza—especially across the entire territory—would "fuel Hamas and give it oxygen" while Israeli hostages remain in captivity. "The prime minister is making a grave mistake and lacks a majority for this decision," the statement said, adding, "Hamas must be crushed, not sustained."

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

CNN false report claimed Hamas agreed to a hostage deal; IDF deny propaganda

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Hamas reportedly agrees to partial hostage deal, Israeli officials deny 'false propaganda'  
CNN reports terror group agreed to release between seven and nine hostages in exchange for a 60-day ceasefire and the release of 300 Palestinian terror prisoners  
Itamar Eichner|22:20

As the IDF expanded its military activities in Gaza under Operation Gideon's Chariots, CNN reported Sunday evening that Hamas has agreed to release between seven and nine hostages in exchange for a 60-day ceasefire and the release of 300 Palestinian terror

prisoners. A senior Hamas official told CNN the release would depend on an Israeli withdrawal east of the Salah al-Din road.

Israeli officials rejected the report as “false Hamas propaganda,” saying the terror group has not agreed to any terms. “We are not on the path to a deal—the gaps between the sides are substantial,” said one senior Israeli official.

The claim that Hamas is open to a partial deal was met with skepticism in Israel, where officials maintain that no real progress has been made. On Saturday night, demonstrators gathered at Hostage Square in Tel Aviv to demand the captives’ release. Israeli sources said mediators had proposed a plan similar to the one initially offered by CIA Director William Burns, but on a smaller scale. Hamas is reportedly insisting on guarantees for ending the war, not just a pullback from the Salah al-Din axis.

Israel has said it will not withdraw from the Philadelphi Corridor or from Netzarim, but is prepared to leave territory captured during Operation Firm Hand.

Jerusalem has set a deadline, warning that Hamas must respond by Monday. “This is the final date,” officials said, though it is unclear whether Israel will follow through or extend negotiations under U.S. pressure. Analysts believe the IDF’s announcement of a ground operation is part of a strategy to pressure Hamas into accepting a compromise, potentially making the operation unnecessary.

Meanwhile, the Security Cabinet met Sunday evening for a tense discussion focused on humanitarian aid to Gaza and the fate of the hostages. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said the negotiating team in Doha was working under his direction to exhaust every option for a deal—“whether under the Burns framework or as part of ending the fighting, including the release of all hostages, the exile of Hamas operatives, and the disarmament of Gaza.” That statement triggered backlash from right-wing ministers.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir conducted a situation assessment in northern Gaza earlier Sunday and stressed that the operation would continue “until we break the enemy’s ability to fight, until we defeat them wherever we operate.” He added, “The IDF will allow the political echelon flexibility to pursue any hostage deal. A hostage deal is not a pause—it is an achievement. That’s what we’re working toward.”

Later in the evening, IDF Spokesman Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin held a press briefing from southern Israel. “Unlike in the past, this time we will fight until victory,” he said. “We are prepared for any development.” He emphasized that the IDF is acting under the directives of the political leadership and added, “We are entering the next phase of combat, progressing gradually and according to a structured plan that incorporates operational lessons from the fighting so far. The fighting is fully coordinated with the Hostages and Missing Families Forum. They are always in our sights, and we will not rest until they return.”

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Vatican ceremony to Paris: Herzog met Macron amid French criticism of Israel

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

From Vatican ceremony to Paris: Herzog to meet Macron amid French criticism of Israel  
President makes an unscheduled stop after attending Pope Leo XIV's coronation in Rome,  
with meeting set to center on ongoing efforts to reach hostage deal and ceasefire in Gaza  
Itamar Eichner|19:44

Israeli President Isaac Herzog flew to Paris on Sunday evening to meet with French  
President Emmanuel Macron, hours after representing Israel at the coronation of Pope  
Leo XIV in the Vatican.

Herzog's trip to France was not pre-scheduled and comes amid heightened international  
focus on the Israeli hostages held in Gaza. His meeting with Macron follows recent  
criticism by the French president of Israel's government. Herzog is expected to return to  
Israel later Sunday.

During the Vatican ceremony, Herzog wore a sticker on his suit that marked 590 days  
since the hostages were taken. According to a statement from his office, he wore the  
sticker as a sign of solidarity with the hostages' families and to draw international  
attention to their plight. "The president aimed to call for their immediate release and  
urged the international community to act," the statement said.  
Herzog thanked Pope Leo XIV for making the return of the hostages one of his first  
public appeals. "The president took the opportunity to urge the pope to continue  
advocating for their return," his office said.

While in Rome, Herzog also met with several world leaders attending the coronation,  
including U.S. Vice President JD Vance, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy,  
Dutch President Dick Schoof, Italian President Sergio Mattarella, Spanish King Felipe VI,  
and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had considered attending the Vatican ceremony, and  
diplomatic contacts were made with the Italian government and the Vatican. However,  
due to concerns that the International Criminal Court in The Hague could enforce an  
arrest warrant issued against him, Netanyahu ultimately decided not to travel.

Herzog used the occasion to hold diplomatic meetings with international leaders gathered  
in Rome for the coronation.

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

US firm for Gaza aid arrived; before start, proposed expanding distribution zones

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30



Cabinet meets as Gaza war reaches crossroads; Netanyahu faces 'most crucial decision yet'

Meeting held as Qatar talks continue; IDF chief says military will offer flexibility to political echelon to advance hostage deal

Itamar Eichner, Elisha Ben Kimon|19:24

Israel's security cabinet convened Sunday for a tense meeting focused on the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and efforts to reach a deal to free hostages held by Hamas, as Israeli forces expanded a ground operation across the territory.

The meeting came as IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir toured the northern Gaza Strip, where he approved plans for continued operations and reaffirmed Israel's dual objectives: defeating Hamas and securing the release of hostages.

"This past weekend, we launched Operation Gideon's Chariots," Zamir told troops from the 401st Brigade. "We will continue until we dismantle the enemy's combat ability and achieve a decisive defeat wherever we operate. We cannot go back to the reality of October 7.

"The IDF will provide flexibility to the political echelon to advance any hostage deal," he added. "A hostage deal is not a halt, it is an achievement. We are actively working toward it."

At the cabinet meeting, ministers discussed a U.S.-brokered framework allowing humanitarian aid into Gaza through an American security firm. The company's personnel arrived in Israel earlier Sunday ahead of their deployment under the agreement.

Maj. Gen. Ghassan Alian, head of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, emphasized the urgent need to deliver aid to civilians in Gaza. He proposed expanding distribution beyond designated humanitarian zones to prevent a looming famine.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir opposed any aid deliveries, warning they would endanger soldiers. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich supported aid only to specific areas. The proposal sparked sharp criticism from ministers on the government's right flank, many of whom accused Alian of undermining military efforts.

Tensions also rose over comments by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said Israeli negotiators in Doha were acting under his directive "to exhaust every possibility for a deal — whether under the White House framework or as part of an end-of-war agreement that includes the release of all hostages, exile of Hamas terrorists and disarmament of the Strip."

The statement drew backlash from right-wing ministers. Israeli officials later clarified that negotiations are currently focused solely on the U.S.-backed proposal and that any broader terms would be discussed only if Hamas agrees to exile its leadership.

Cabinet ministers said Netanyahu is weighing whether to move ahead with the first stage of the White House plan, which includes the release of 10 hostages, or press for a broader

agreement. Ben-Gvir and Smotrich oppose any partial deal, arguing that Hamas must be fully deterred. Others support advancing a deal for at least some hostages now and negotiating wider terms later.

The Hostages and Missing Families Forum issued a warning Sunday, saying the ongoing military campaign could jeopardize the lives of the hostages and prevent the recovery of the bodies of the deceased.

“Operation Gideon’s Chariots may lead to the death of living hostages and eliminate the chance to recover the fallen,” the group said in a statement.

Prof. Hagai Levine, head of health policy for the forum, and former Mossad chief Tamir Pardo released a joint paper warning of the risks posed by continued fighting.

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

IDF unleashed major Gaza campaign to finish off Hamas across Gaza

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Operation Gideon’s Chariots: IDF unleashes major Gaza campaign to finish off Hamas  
Military says troops under Southern Command—including both active duty and reservists, have begun extensive maneuvers throughout enclave; escalation comes at talks in Qatar on cease fire, hostage deal continue

Ynet|16:28

The Israeli military said Sunday it has launched a new phase of ground operations across multiple areas of the Gaza Strip, marking the start of what it calls Operation Gideon’s Chariots, even as negotiations over a possible ceasefire and hostage release continue in Qatar.

The IDF said troops under the Southern Command, including both active-duty soldiers and reservists, began wide-ranging ground maneuvers over the past day in both northern and southern Gaza.

According to the military, the latest operations follow a week of intensified airstrikes that targeted more than 670 Hamas sites across the enclave. The strikes were aimed at disrupting Hamas preparations and paving the way for ground advances. Targets included weapons storage sites, underground tunnels, anti-tank missile launchers and operatives, the IDF said.

Ground forces have so far eliminated dozens of Hamas fighters, dismantled infrastructure both above and below ground, and secured strategic positions within Gaza, according to the military.

The IDF said it would “continue to operate against the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip as required, in order to defend Israeli civilians.”

The renewed offensive comes as high-stakes negotiations in Doha seek to broker a ceasefire agreement and secure the release of Israeli hostages still held by Hamas.

International mediators, including Qatar, Egypt and the United States, are involved in the talks.

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Netanyahu says Doha talks include end to war, release of all hostages

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Netanyahu says Doha talks include end to war, release of all hostages

In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office says Netanyahu instructed the negotiating team sent to Qatar to 'exhaust every possibility' to reach a deal

Itamar Eichner|13:31

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said for the first time on Sunday that the negotiating team sent to Qatar for talks on a ceasefire agreement and hostage release deal are discussing the possibility of all hostages being freed and an end to the war.

The statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) was released as the IDF was positioning its forces to expand its offensive on Gaza.

“Under the prime minister’s direction, even at this hour, the negotiating team in Doha is working to exhaust every possibility for a deal — whether according to the Witkoff outline or within the framework of ending the war, which would include the release of all hostages, the exile of Hamas terrorists, and the disarmament of the Gaza Strip,” the statement read.

According to an unconfirmed report earlier on Sky News Arabic, Hamas agreed to release half of the live hostages and those who were dead, in exchange for a two-month-long ceasefire. Unnamed Israeli officials denied the report that if true, would constitute a significant shift in the Hamas position and could delay or suspend Israel's planned assault on the Gaza Strip.

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Katz says Sinwar likely killed in IDF strike after body reported found in Gaza

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Katz says Sinwar likely killed in IDF strike after body reported found in Gaza

Saudi outlet reports Hamas military wing chief is found dead along with the remains of 10 others killed in the bombing of an underground tunnel system running beneath a Khan Younis hospital

Niv Shaiovich|09:38

Defense Minister Israel Katz said there are increasing indications that Sinwar was killed, although the IDF did not confirm the report. The body of Mohammed Sinwar was found

in the ruins of a Hamas tunnel complex in Khan Younis, five days after it was bombed by the IDF, according to a report in the Saudi Al-Hadath channel.

The remains of 10 others, described as his aides, were also uncovered, including Muhammed Shabaneh who was the commander of the Rafah brigade.

The strike targeted a tunnel route that ran beneath the European Hospital in Khan Younis and was carried out in part as preparation for a possible future maneuver. Destroying the underground infrastructure would significantly degrade Hamas' command and control capabilities in the sector and allow for more intensive operations should negotiations fail to produce a breakthrough.

The IDF had no certainty that Sinwar was in the underground complex during the strike but after having near certainty that there were no hostages there and amid the importance of the tunnel system to the ability of Hamas to operate in the area, the military was given the go ahead by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz.

The military also regarded the destruction of the tunnel as a necessary move ahead of troops moving into the area in the expected expanded offensive on Gaza, should negotiations fail.

Sinwar, who was the brother of Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas who was killed by the IDF last October, commanded the terror group's military wing and was considered the de facto new leader in Gaza.

On Sunday, Palestinian media outlets reported on another of the Sinwar brothers who was killed in an Israeli strike on Gaza. Zakaria Sinwar, a lecturer of modern and contemporary history at the Islamic University, was killed with three of his sons in a strike on his tent in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza.

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Israel to divide Gaza into 3 troop-sealed zones: poised to escalate if negotiations collapse

05.18.25 – Su - Omer 30

Israel to divide Gaza into 3 troop-sealed zones: report

Civilians to be barred from moving across Gaza without authorization; goods restricted to post-inspection transit under plan dubbed 'Stage Three: Total Occupation of Gaza'

Niv Shaiovich|09:14

Israel plans to divide the Gaza Strip into three parts as part of an expanded military offensive that would begin if cease-fire and hostage release negotiations in Qatar fail, according to a report in the British Sunday Times.

A map published with the report—allegedly leaked by diplomats briefed on the plan—shows civilians concentrated between IDF-controlled areas in northern, central and southern Gaza.

According to the report, the plan is dubbed “Stage Three: Total Occupation of Gaza,” under which civilians would be barred from moving between zones without authorization, and the movement of goods would be permitted only after security inspections. The IDF did not confirm or deny the Sunday Times account.

The report comes at a critical moment, as the military appears poised to escalate its operations if negotiations collapse.

In a separate, unconfirmed report from Sky News Arabia—denied by unnamed Israeli officials— Hamas was said to have agreed to release half of the living hostages and some of the bodies of the dead in exchange for a two-month cease-fire.

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Dozens of suspects arrested as manhunt of fatal West Bank shooting continues

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Dozens of suspects arrested as manhunt after perpetrator of fatal West Bank shooting of pregnant woman continues

Since the attack, a lockdown has been imposed on the nearby villages of Burqin and Kafr ad-Dik, both close to Gez’s home in the settlement of Bruchin

Elisha Ben Kimon<sup>23:12</sup>

Three days after a deadly shooting that killed Tzeela Gez, Israeli security forces continued Saturday their search for the gunman responsible in the northern West Bank.

Since the attack, a lockdown has been imposed on the nearby villages of Burqin and Kafr ad-Dik, both close to Gez’s home in the settlement of Bruchin. The Israel Defense Forces and the Shin Bet have been conducting intensive searches and interrogations, questioning about 40 suspects so far.

Earlier Saturday, during a search in Burqin, security forces identified a man running toward them while carrying a bag suspected to contain explosives, shouting “Allahu Akbar.” The forces shot and killed the suspect, identified as Nael Samara. The Shin Bet is investigating whether he was involved in the attack that killed Gez.

The attack occurred near a road linking Burqin with the nearby settlement of Bruqin. The gunman reportedly approached under cover of bushes and opened fire on a vehicle carrying Gez and her husband Hananel, who was wounded in the assault. Some local residents have called for construction near the attack site “as a response to terror.”

Intelligence remains central to the manhunt. A special reconnaissance unit was deployed recently to gather evidence and track suspects. Unlike previous incidents where attackers fled to refugee camps in the northern West Bank such as Jenin and Nur al-Shams, these camps were reportedly empty on Friday, with Israeli forces inside making arrests and detaining known militants.

Separately, the IDF said soldiers from Unit 636 thwarted a terrorist cell that threw stones at a main road near the village of Burqa, close to Burqin. "During a pre-planned operation, forces identified three terrorists throwing stones at a main road used by civilians with no casualties," the IDF spokesperson said. "The soldiers responded with precise fire to neutralize the threat—one terrorist was killed and two were wounded. No injuries were reported among the forces."

In the wake of the attack, hundreds have visited the Gez family home in Burqin to mourn. Their fourth child, born by cesarean section after the attack, remains hospitalized at Schneider Medical Center in Petah Tikva.

Among visitors was Yossi Dagan, head of the Shomron Regional Council. At Gez's funeral, her sister Shaked Poras confronted Dagan, demanding he avoid political remarks. The following day, Poras urged Dagan "to do everything in your power" to take firm control over villages producing "so much evil" including the one where the attacker lived. Hananel Gez appointed Dagan as "our envoy so no one else suffers as my wife did."

Tzeela's mother, Galia Avioy, added, "If there are people sowing destruction and evil, we don't want them here. They don't belong."

Dagan said he plans to relocate his office near the site of the shooting and vowed to intensify calls for security measures. "We will demand action against this village, this wasp's nest, Burqin," he said. "We will insist on addressing illegal construction near the road that enables such attacks and push for operations like those in Jenin and Khan Yunis. We will stand for security and national honor."

The attack happened late Wednesday night as the couple was en route to the hospital for the birth of their fourth child. Hananel was lightly wounded and discharged two days ago. Doctors delivered the baby, who was rushed to Schneider Medical Center in critical condition. Efforts to save Tzeela's life failed and she was pronounced dead.

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Israel braces for critical 24 hours in hostage deal talks as delegations remain in Qatar

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Israel braces for 'critical 24 hours' in hostage deal talks as delegations remain in Qatar

Outline at center of talks proposes that Hamas release 10 living hostages in exchange for ceasefire lasting between 40 and 50 days; on tenth day of truce, terror group would provide detailed list of remaining captives and their conditions

Itamar Eichner|22:23

Israel's Security Cabinet is preparing for what officials described as a decisive 24-hour period in the ongoing negotiations for a hostage release deal with Hamas, as both sides face mounting international pressure to reach an agreement.

Cabinet members said the government is giving the negotiations a genuine chance and that a final decision is expected by late Sunday, after which Israel will decide whether to go ahead with its planned military escalation in Gaza. "This isn't a game or a performance," one official said. "A decision will need to be made, one way or the other." The cabinet is scheduled to meet Sunday afternoon.

At the center of the talks is the so-called "Witkoff framework," which has reportedly been agreed upon in principle. Under the proposed deal, Hamas would release 10 living hostages in exchange for a ceasefire lasting between 40 and 50 days. On the tenth day of the truce, Hamas would provide a detailed list of the remaining hostages and their conditions. Negotiations would then continue during the cease-fire on a broader agreement to end the war and release additional hostages, both living and deceased. Israeli officials said they are open to minor changes in the framework but will reject any substantial modifications. "We won't allow them to drag this out," one said.

A senior Israeli official said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been in continuous contact throughout the day with the Israeli negotiating team in Doha, as well as with Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer and U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff. The conversations have focused on persuading Hamas to abandon its refusal to compromise and advancing a deal for the hostages' release.

Instructed by Netanyahu, the Israeli team will remain in Qatar for now in order to exhaust every possibility to secure the hostages' freedom, the official said.

A central point of contention remains Hamas' refusal to disarm. While the United States has signaled support for a phased disarmament of Gaza, Israel is demanding a swift and complete process.

Despite continued mediation efforts, both Israel and Hamas remain entrenched in their positions.

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Mediators hold urgent meetings in Qatar as Israel prepares Gaza escalation

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Mediators hold 'urgent meetings' in Qatar as Israel prepares Gaza escalation

Israel and Hamas resume indirect talks as international pressure mounts for ceasefire; IDF expands operations in northern Gaza, destroying tunnels and targeting terror infrastructure amid growing global concern over humanitarian crisis

Einav Halabi, News Agencies|16:16

Indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas have resumed in the Qatari capital of Doha, even as the Israel Defense Forces continue preparations for a broader ground operation in the Gaza Strip.

Taher al-Nounou, a senior Hamas official, told Reuters that both parties are "discussing all issues without preconditions." The renewed dialogue comes amid increasing

international pressure on Israel to avoid a full-scale incursion and instead pursue a resolution that would end the war, remove Hamas from power, and secure the release of hostages without reoccupying the enclave.

Meanwhile, Israeli airstrikes targeted the eastern part of Deir al-Balah in central Gaza on Saturday, as international calls for restraint intensified.

Italy's foreign minister, Antonio Tajani, said his country does not want to see the Palestinian population suffer further. "Enough with the attacks—let's move toward a cease-fire," he said. "Free all the hostages and leave in peace those who have become victims of Hamas. We must tell the Israeli government: enough."

The Dutch government also expressed concern and urged the European Union to reconsider its agreements with Israel. In the United Kingdom, conservative commentator Piers Morgan—who has previously backed Israel—called the situation in Gaza a "horrific massacre" in a post to his 8.8 million followers on the social media platform X, adding, "Netanyahu is out of control and must be stopped."

A Hamas source told the Qatari news outlet Al-Araby Al-Jadeed that the group had entered an "urgent meeting" with Qatari mediators to discuss a proposed two-month partial deal, during which talks would continue on a broader agreement to end the conflict. The source said the current round includes more stringent guarantees, including "clear" commitments from the United States to enforce the deal.

Hamas official Mahmoud Mardawi confirmed to the outlet that talks in Doha remain ongoing and are open to all subjects, without reference to previous Israeli proposals. A separate Hamas official told the Saudi newspaper Asharq that the group is prepared to reach an immediate agreement if a permanent cease-fire and full Israeli withdrawal are guaranteed.

A senior Israeli official familiar with the negotiations said Hamas has not accepted the original framework proposed by Special U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff, which included the release of 10 hostages on the first day of a truce, followed by additional negotiations. "They're willing to present their positions, but the chances of progress are slim," the official said. "We're not optimistic."

European condemnation, U.S. concern

On Friday, leaders of Ireland, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Malta, and Slovenia issued a joint statement condemning what they called a "man-made humanitarian disaster" in Gaza. "More than 50,000 men, women, and children have lost their lives," the statement said. "Many more may die of starvation in the coming days and weeks unless immediate action is taken."

The leaders called on Israel to "immediately reverse its current policy, refrain from further military operations, and fully lift the blockade," while ensuring safe and unhindered humanitarian aid throughout Gaza.

Earlier in the week, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez described Israel as a "genocidal state" during remarks in his country's parliament. The Israeli ambassador to Spain was summoned for a formal reprimand, according to Israeli media.



U.S. President Donald Trump, speaking Friday in Abu Dhabi alongside Emirati President Mohamed bin Zayed, said “a lot of people are starving in Gaza” and that “bad things are happening.” He added, “We’re looking at Gaza—and we will deal with it.”

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, one of Israel’s most outspoken supporters in the Trump administration, echoed those concerns. Speaking to reporters in Turkey, Rubio said he had spoken with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and emphasized that the United States is “concerned” about the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

“The United States is not immune to the suffering in Gaza,” Rubio said. He also responded to criticism of Washington’s aid distribution plan, which involves American contractors delivering assistance directly to Gaza residents to avoid diversion by Hamas. He said he is “open to other suggestions” after aid groups raised concerns that the plan would not effectively reach all civilians.

IDF Expands Northern Gaza Operations

On Saturday, the Israeli military announced it had destroyed a strategic two-kilometer Hamas tunnel in northern Gaza. In a video released from the Morag corridor in the south, IDF Arabic-language spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee said Hamas was “under heavy fire and pressure—from north to south, underground and above ground.”

“We will not stop until the hostages are returned and Hamas’ rule is dismantled,” Adraee said.

The IDF said its Northern Brigade, under Division 252, continues operations in the northern Strip. Dozens of militants were killed, and extensive terror infrastructure was destroyed. Combat engineers from the elite Yahalom unit located and demolished the underground route, the army said.

Troops also uncovered tunnel shafts, explosives, rocket launchers, and other Hamas weapons including rockets and grenades. “The IDF will continue to act against terror organizations in the Gaza Strip to protect the citizens of the State of Israel,” the military said.

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

IDF leaflets warn Gaza depicting splitting the Red Sea; Israel is making martyrs

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

IDF warns Gazans to steer clear following night strikes that kill 58 Palestinians. Aiming to launch an expanded ground offensive, IDF has distributed leaflets warning residents to evacuate targeted areas; Israel’s Air Force killed at least 58 Palestinians in overnight strikes on Gaza, resulting in growing international pressure to hold ceasefire talks and deliver humanitarian aid.

Reuters|15:27

Israel’s air force killed at least 58 Palestinians in overnight strikes on Gaza, local health authorities reported on Saturday, as the country appeared poised to escalate its military

campaign with a ground offensive. The strikes targeted areas across Gaza, including Gaza City, Khan Younis, Beit Lahiya, and Shijayiah. Since Thursday, more than 300 Palestinians have been killed in what has become one of the deadliest phases of bombardment since a truce collapsed in March.

In addition to the airstrikes, reports from Gaza indicated that the Israeli military distributed leaflets in various areas depicting the splitting of the Red Sea during the Exodus from Egypt, accompanied by the caption: "Residents of Gaza, the Israeli army is coming." This psychological tactic appears to be part of Israel's broader strategy to pressure Hamas and the local population.

"Since midnight, we have received 58 martyrs, while a large number of victims remain under the rubble. The situation inside the hospital is catastrophic," said the director of the Indonesian Hospital in northern Gaza, Marwan Al-Sultan.

The military campaign, which Israel says is focused on defeating Hamas and securing the release of hostages, has devastated Gaza. According to local health authorities, more than 53,000 people have been killed since the war began on October 7, 2023, following a Hamas-led attack on Israeli communities that killed approximately 1,200 people and resulted in the capture of around 250 hostages.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza continues to worsen, with the United Nations warning of famine after Israel blocked aid deliveries to the strip 76 days ago. UN aid chief Tom Fletcher recently asked the Security Council if it would act to "prevent genocide." President Donald Trump, who concluded his Middle East tour on Friday, acknowledged Gaza's growing hunger crisis and the need for aid deliveries but made no apparent progress toward a new ceasefire.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has stated that Israel is planning an expanded, intensive offensive against Hamas, with his security cabinet approving plans that could involve seizing the entire Gaza Strip and controlling aid distribution. The military campaign has displaced nearly all of Gaza's inhabitants, leaving the densely populated enclave in ruins.

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

IDF moves Gazans southward before ground operation begins; hostage deal stalled

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

IDF expands Gaza campaign as regional tensions spike, hostage deal stalled  
IDF strikes on Gaza are expanding in scope, targeting Khan Younis and Jabaliya;  
Hostage talks in Doha remain stalled, with Trump stating he's unsure Netanyahu can secure a resolution, while emphasizing the need to address Gaza's growing humanitarian crisis

Ron Crissy, Gal Ganot, Einav Halabi|08:54

IDF has announced shortly before midnight on Friday that over the past day, it had begun extensive strikes and moved forces to seize dominating positions in Gaza as part of the opening moves of Operation "Gideon's Chariots" and the expansion of the campaign in Gaza. According to the statement, "all of these efforts are aimed at achieving the objectives of the war in Gaza, including the release of hostages and the defeat of Hamas. Israeli forces under the Southern Command will continue to act to protect Israeli citizens and fulfill the goals of the war."

In Gaza, there were simultaneous reports of a loud explosion in the northern Gaza Strip and heavy fire from IDF troops. Reports also mentioned renewed artillery fire and gunfire from IDF vehicles east of the Tuffah neighborhood, east of Gaza City. According to the reports, "IDF is bombing buildings in northern Gaza." Overnight, there were also reports of strikes in Khan Younis, Jabaliya, and Deir al-Balah.

The dramatic IDF announcement came just hours after President Donald Trump's tour of the Middle East concluded and amid stalled hostage negotiation talks in Doha. Over the past two days, attacks in Gaza have escalated significantly, with more than 250 people killed since Thursday morning, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health—marking the deadliest strikes in Gaza since the ceasefire collapsed in March.

IDF strikes in northern Gaza on Friday were described by military analyst Ron Ben-Yishai as aiming to push residents of the area to move southward. However, he noted that no ground operation has yet begun, and that the goal appears to be exerting pressure on Hamas during the Doha negotiations. Military sources indicated that "part of Operation Gideon's Chariots involves moving the Palestinian population." They added that preparations for a ground offensive are currently underway.

Sources familiar with the matter said that Trump's Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, attempted to break the deadlock in the Doha talks with a small deal for hostage releases in exchange for a month-long ceasefire. However, there is currently no agreement, as Hamas still insists on a permanent end to the war. Reports from Jerusalem indicate that the talks are at a standstill, with both sides entrenched in their positions and awaiting a decision from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on whether to recall the delegation. Israeli sources added that "Witkoff has given up and is leaving the decisions to Israel." No comment was provided by Witkoff. One source claimed, "There is no progress in the talks, no optimism. Hamas is not ready for the big deal, and as it looks now, Israel is heading for a ground maneuver within days. There might be last-minute changes." President Trump, speaking on Friday afternoon at the end of his visit to the UAE, said he was unsure if Netanyahu could secure the release of the hostages. "We'll know soon; they're not in a good situation. We'll work together on this," he said. He added, "We're looking at Gaza, and we have to deal with it. There's a lot of bad stuff happening." Trump expressed optimism, saying that many "good things" would happen in Gaza over the next month.

Trump did not comment on whether he supports Netanyahu's plans to expand military activity in Gaza but emphasized the humanitarian crisis caused by the war. "We also need to help the Palestinians," he said. "You know, many people are starving in Gaza, so we need to look at both sides. But we'll do a good job."

While preparations for a ground operation are ongoing, assessments suggest that even if Israel intensifies its actions, it will not be the large-scale operation previously mentioned but rather a smaller initiative aimed at scaring Hamas into agreeing to a deal. In any case, the IDF reiterated, amid tensions between ministers and IDF Chief of Staff, that "IDF soldiers will not stand by distributing humanitarian aid."

Trump speaks in Abu Dhabi about Gaza

UN Deputy Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher criticized the new Gaza aid fund announced by the U.S., calling it "a waste of time." In a statement to the press, Fletcher rejected proposals to establish an alternative mechanism for delivering aid, urging, "Let's not waste time. We already have an operational plan based on non-negotiable principles—humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence." He added, "We've done this before. We can do it again. We know how to prevent hunger. Let us work." Fletcher emphasized the UN has the personnel, distribution networks, community trust in the field, and the aid itself—160,000 pallets of supplies ready for delivery.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk warned on Friday of what he called "ethnic cleansing" in Gaza. "The latest wave of bombings forces people to move under the threat of even heavier attacks," Türk said. "The systematic destruction of entire neighborhoods and the prevention of humanitarian aid constitute what appears to be an attempt at permanent demographic change in Gaza, undermining international law and amounting to ethnic cleansing."

Following Friday's operation in which two ports in Yemen were attacked, Defense Minister Israel Katz hinted that Mohammed Sinwar, Hamas' de facto leader in Gaza, had been eliminated in an airstrike earlier this week at the European Hospital in Khan Younis, although no official statement has been made. "If the Houthis continue to fire missiles at Israel, they will suffer painful blows, and we will target terrorist leaders just as we did to Mohammed Deif and the Sinwars in Gaza, Nasrallah in Beirut, and Haniyeh in Tehran. We will hunt down and eliminate Abdul-Malik al-Houthi in Yemen too," Katz said. Israeli military, however, has not yet confirmed that Mohammed Sinwar was killed in the strike. "This week, we targeted the European Hospital, where Hamas militants at various levels were present. We will provide updates once we have confirmed information. All the strikes are coordinated with the Prisoners and Missing Persons Headquarters to avoid harming the hostages," military sources said.

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Trump plans to relocate Gazans to Libya; Hamas insists Gazans will not leave

05.17.25 – Sa - Omer 29

Trump's administration plans to relocate one million Gazans to Libya, report says. According to NBC, the US plans to relocate Palestinians from Gaza to war-torn Libya, discussing the deal with Libyan leaders and offering frozen funds; incentives like free housing and scholarships are considered.

Ynetnews|00:05

The Trump administration is working on a plan to permanently relocate one million Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to Libya, according to five sources familiar with the matter who spoke to NBC News. The plan is reportedly being taken seriously, with evidence including discussions held with Libyan leadership.

Sources told NBC that, in exchange for hosting the Palestinians, the U.S. would release billions of dollars in frozen funds that have been held for more than a decade. Three sources said no agreement has yet been reached and noted that Israel has been updated on the talks. The State Department and the National Security Council did not respond to NBC's requests for comment.

Libya has faced instability for the past 14 years, following the outbreak of civil war and the overthrow of its leader Muammar Gaddafi. Two rival governments—one in the west, led by Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh, and another in the east under Khalifa Haftar—are competing for control. The State Department advises Americans against traveling to Libya due to crime, terrorism, unexploded landmines, kidnappings, and armed conflicts.

It is unclear how many Palestinians would voluntarily agree to leave Gaza. One possibility discussed within the administration, according to a former U.S. official, is to offer financial incentives, free housing, and even scholarships to encourage relocation.

Hamas senior official Basem Naim said the group was not informed of the talks and insisted that Gazans would not leave: "The Palestinians are rooted in their land, committed to their homeland, and ready to fight to the last and sacrifice everything to protect their land, homeland, families, and their children's future. The Palestinians alone have the right to decide what to do, including the people of Gaza."

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Ynet-News, May 16, 2025 – Friday  
Iyar 2<sup>nd</sup> Month Q-3; Omer 28

05.16.25 – Fr - Omer 28

German tabloid, alleges PM role in blocking hostage release deal

05.16.25 – Fr - Omer 28

Police officer stabbed in Jerusalem's Old City, attacker neutralized

05.16.25 – Fr - Omer 28

IAF struck two seaports in Yemen after Houthi missile fire

05.16.25 – Fr - - News Placed in May 16 spot – Friday - Omer 28

Syria struggling under sanctions & forming legitimacy, view Accords as relevance

05.16.25 – Fr - Omer 28

Iran acting confused on US proposal; until able to weaponize nuclear bomb

05.16.25 – Fr - Omer 28

IDF intensifies offensive strikes on north Gaza as ceasefire talks falter

05.16.25 – Fr - Omer 28

Iran, EU to hold nuclear talks in Turkey; US to drive Iran oil to zero if talks fail

05.16.25 – Fr - Omer 28

One in five Israeli combat troops is a woman IDF is working to expand gradually

05.15.25 – Th - - News Placed in May 15 spot – Thursday - Omer 27

Israel rethinks Syria policy after Trump, al-Sharaa meeting lifted US sanctions on Syria

05.15.25 – Th - Omer 27

Yemen missile launch sends Israelis to shelters, leaving Lag B'Omer bonfires

05.15.25 – Th - Omer 27

Senior Hamas confirms terror group holding direct peace talks with US

05.15.25 – Th - Omer 27

No agreement in Doha, plumes of smoke rise in north Gaza as operation expands

05.15.25 – Th - Omer 27

US-GHF Gaza relief fund, gets Israel green light to begin before end of the month

05.15.25 – Th - Omer 27

Hostage deal, Abraham Accords and Saudi ties: US ramps up pressure on Israel

05.15.25 – Th - Omer 27

Inside Israel's massive anti-terror operation transforming Judea and Gaza

05.14.25 – We - Omer 26

Pregnant Israeli killed in Samaria shooting; baby delivered, remains in intensive care

05.14.25 – We - Omer 26

Spain PM & Dutch Mayor call Israel a genocide state; failing to mention Hamas

05.14.25 – We - Omer 26

IDF intensifies strike in Khan Younis, targeting Hamas compounds, civilians warned

05.14.25 – We - Omer 26

Hamas Rafah Brigade commander also killed with Sinwar, IDF believes

05.14.25 – We - Omer 26

Deadlock in hostage negotiations: Witkoff pressures PM to examine options

05.14.25 – We - Omer 26

Netanyahu accuses Macron of siding with Islamists, demanding Israel surrender

05.14.25 – We - News Placed in May 14 spot – Wednesday - Omer 26

IDF strike Sinwar hideout again, killing 60 searching for bodies, warned to stay away

05.14.25 – We - Omer 26

Trump meets with Syria president al-Sharaa, urges him to normalize with Israel

05.14.25 – We - Omer 26

Israel fresh warning to Yemen ports of retaliatory strike after third Houthi missile

05.14.25 – We - Omer 26

Freed IDF hostages mock Hamas commander in song following his assassination

05.14.25 – We - Omer 26

IDF intercepts Houthi missile, third in 24 hours; warning Yemenis of possible attack

05.13.25 – Tu - Omer 25

US was not informed of sudden opportunity; Gaza hospital strike of Hamas leader

05.13.25 – Tu - Omer 25

Rockets fired from Gaza intercepted; Sinwar operation may take days to confirm

05.13.25 – Tu - Omer 25

Iran-Houthi missile Tuesday evening intercepted by the Arrow system

05.13.25 – Tu - News Placed in May 13 spot – Tuesday - Omer 25

Hamas military chief Mohammed Sinwar, target of strike on Gaza hospital

05.13.25 – Tu - Omer 25

US appears ready to sell Turkey advanced stealth aircraft, and Israel is worried

05.13.25 – Tu - Omer 25

PA Abbas lifts ban on Al Jazeera media in West Bank; still banned in Israel

05.13.25 – Tu - Omer 25

IDF to detain draft evaders after three summons; yeshiva students avoid conscription

05.13.25 – Tu - Omer 25

Smotrich advancing annex of Judea & Samaria unverified land from PA control

05.13.25 – Tu - Omer 25

Committed to bringing everyone home: Witkoff, Boehler head to Doha for hostage talks

05.13.25 – Tu - Omer 25

Better chance for release of all remaining hostages in Gaza, with Alexander's freedom

05.13.25 – Tu - Omer 25

IDF kills top Hamas media star who broadcast October 7 massacre

05.12.25 – Mo- Full Moon - Omer 24

Edan Alexander reunited with family after release from Hamas captivity

05.12.25 – Mo- Full Moon - Omer 24

Tortured by Hamas, known as the American: Edan Alexander's ordeal in captivity

05.12.25 – Mo- - News Placed in May 12 spot – Monday Full Moon - Omer 24

American hostage freed from Gaza; Hamas seek negotiations to end war

05.12.25 – Mo- Full Moon - Omer 24

Israel seeks to dismiss ICC warrants: Khan diverted attention from his scandal

05.12.25 – Mo- Full Moon - Omer 24

Monday's missile never reached Israel, emphasized response to striking Houthis

05.12.25 – Mo- Full Moon - Omer 24

Israel readies for Edan Alexander's release as US mulls flying him to Qatar

05.12.25 – Mo- Full Moon - Omer 24

A Trump Tower in Damascus in exchange for meeting: Syria wants a deal with Israel

05.11.25 – Su- - Omer 23

Disguised commandos in wheelchairs: Dramatic Nablus anti-terror special op

05.11.25 – Su- - Omer 23

Witkoff has Hamas agree to release Israeli-American hostage Edan Alexander

05.11.25 – Su- - Omer 23

Trump shifts US policy with Netanyahu, thinks new Gaza offensive a wasted effort

05.11.25 – Su- - Omer 23

Egypt's connection with Israel tumbles to new lows following extension of Gaza war

05.11.25 – Su- - Omer 23

Trump will meet Saudi Prince with Abbas along with leaders of Syria & Lebanon

05.11.25 – Su- - Omer 23

Frustration grows as Trump struggles to deliver peace in Ukraine, Gaza



05.11.25 – Su- - Omer 23

Orthodox parties will block Knesset votes over draft exemption law

05.11.25 – Su- - - News Placed in May 11 spot – Sunday - Omer 23

Trump's Saudi, UAE, Qatar tour seeks investment deals favorable to the US

05.10.25 – Sa- - - News Placed in May 10 spot – Saturday - Omer 22

Thousands protest across Israel demanding return of 59 hostages held in Gaza

05.10.25 – Sa - - Omer 22

Huckabee blasts claim Trump will recognize PA state to fuel Abraham Accords

05.09.25 – Fr - - Omer 21

Captured Hamas lead IDF to major Rafah tunnel, a kilometer long, 8 stories deep