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Israel blocks Saudi delegation of Arab ministers to Ramallah, to recognize a PA state

06.06.25 – Fr - Omer 49

The Wolves of Gaza: The elite IDF unit sniffing out threats deep behind enemy lines

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The Wolves of Gaza: The elite IDF unit sniffing out threats deep behind enemy lines
Formed during the war to revive the fading art of battlefield tracking, the Wolves are 30 mostly reservist scouts who lead IDF forces in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria—hunting explosives, chasing terrorists and spotting snipers before troops are hit; 'The IDF advanced in cyber and technology, but something went wrong in translating that to the reality on the ground,' says the 63-year-old unit commander
Yoav Zitun|23:56

I first met Maj. Y., a 41-year-old reservist and father of five, on a dusty Humvee during a nighttime ride out of Gaza's Jabaliya refugee camp toward the 98th Division's staging area near the Black Arrow memorial. The vehicle rattled over the summer windblown terrain, headlights dim, drivers squinting through worn night-vision goggles, navigating a stop-start convoy.

I asked him who he was. "A new unit—we're still stitching it together. Let's call ourselves 'The Wolves,'" he said with excitement, his face covered by a thin hood.

A year later, the unit hasn't let go of its mission, and this article brings the story full circle. They aren't seeking media attention or praise—they're looking for recognition to recruit more people. Maj. Y. is one of only 30 soldiers in this mostly reservist force whose purpose is to serve as an elite forward-scouting team for company and battalion commanders operating in enemy territory.

“Call them wolves, not trackers,” corrects Lt. Col. (res.) B., the 63-year-old unit commander and founder. “Trackers do excellent work, mostly on borders and in routine security missions. Our unit operates offensively. The IDF sorely needed this—people who know how to feel the ground, sense the wind, pause, and find footprints left by terrorists who just entered a house in Shuja’iyya we thought had already been cleared by a drone.”

B. has the rugged air of an old-school kibbutznik—gray hair, no patience for political correctness. Despite the uniform, he makes the occasional sharp political remark but is quick to emphasize, “We’ve got guys from farms in the Shomron, city folks from Tel Aviv, moshavniks. It’s a strong mix of all backgrounds. Everyone reports for duty, regardless of their views. We train veteran fighters in two to three weeks to become maneuver warfare trackers and send them to embed with operational units. We began in Khan Younis in March 2024 and have been operating across Gaza since. Over 10 battalion commanders and three brigade commanders have fought over us.”

“Simple: prevent IDF casualties, especially from explosives. Knock on wood—we’ve done that. Y. was wounded three times, so was I, and one of our men, but minor stuff—don’t worry. Everyone’s on their feet, preparing for the next major operation in Gaza. Our people understand the terrain, and in today’s urban warfare, that skill is vanishing.”

Lt. Col. B. is so driven that he conducts many of the unit’s trainings not at IDF bases but in abandoned buildings and orchards near his kibbutz in central Israel—like a modern-day Palmach fighter. “It feels like the kibbutz movement in the ‘50s, when even older folks looked for ways to pitch in. During the First Lebanon War, I was a young officer who came home and saw antiwar protests—that didn’t sit well with me as a soldier. But ‘together’ isn’t just a slogan. Only together can you win.”

The idea for the Wolves came to Maj. Y. at exactly 7:10 a.m. on October 7, 2023. He left his house in the south, on his initiative, looking for a unit to fight with. His former unit, “Maarul,” formed after the 2014 kidnapping and murder of teens Eyal Yifrach, Gil-Ad Shaer, and Naftali Fraenkel, wasn’t relevant for the Southern Command.

“It started as a dream,” he recalls. “We called it the Wolves because we work like lone wolves—sent ahead of the main forces and scattered across combat zones, not together. That morning, I arrived at the entrance to Sderot and met the undercover Border Police unit. They were looking for terrorists; I was looking for ground. I joined them, and from Sderot we went on to battles in Be’eri and at the Nova music festival. I helped track blood trails that led to terrorists and signs of hostages. We even discovered a terrorist hiding in the bushes.”

Seeing the impact of a forward tracker in a fast-moving event, Y. pulled together fellow combat veterans with fieldcraft skills. Together with Lt. Col. B., and with the backing of the Southern Command deputy commander, Maj. Gen. (res.) Yossi Bachar, the unit was born. It began improvised and under fire in Gaza—but has since chalked up one success after another.

“Our Wolves, clearly and unequivocally, have identified and thwarted about 30 IED sites just before soldiers walked into them,” says Lt. Col. B. “We’ve also spotted dozens of exposed areas vulnerable to enemy snipers. But the biggest success is spreading our know-how throughout the army—basic techniques for detecting ground disturbances, suspicious markings, and above all, patience under fire. Even after casualties, don’t open closets with your hands when clearing a building—terrorists hide bombs in drawers. Early in the operation, no one checked those. Hamas adapted, and we had to, too.”

The Wolves use covert detection technologies normally reserved for elite units, as well as small drones for indoor sweeps. Patience is key. Y. and B. admit they sometimes pull their hair out reading incident debriefs involving wounded soldiers, often from IEDs, which have become Hamas’ weapon of choice.

“In an attack, a fighter’s instinct is to scan through doorways with their weapon,” they explain. “But that means they miss a lot on the floor. We’ve developed new combat doctrines to address this—combining classic urban warfare with ground tracking.”

Training the army, one step at a time

Just days before I met Maj. Y. near Jabaliya last year, soldiers from the 890th Battalion had pulled off something rare: a high-speed daytime pursuit of a terrorist squad through the refugee camp’s alleys. “The terrorists infiltrated a defensive position and were chased off quickly. The battalion commander ordered troops to the rooftops. I was next to him and suggested chasing them on foot—normally, why that’s an Air Force drone mission. He went with it. I tracked blood trails between buildings, and we found them on a rooftop. Our guys took them out.”

Two months later, in Shuja’iyya, another success: terrorists opened fire from a hidden spot in the crowded Gaza City neighborhood and wounded a Paratroopers reconnaissance officer. No one saw where the shots came from—until the embedded Wolf, suspecting the gunman had ducked into a building, flew in a small drone. It revealed subtle signs of presence. The terrorist was killed before he could flee.

“In another Shuja’iyya event, we knew terrorists were heading toward us, but didn’t know from where,” Y. adds. “So we adjusted our route and ran into them. Had we acted differently—or the company commander hadn’t trusted the Wolf with him—that story could have ended badly.”

In northern Gaza, during a sweep by the 101st Battalion, troops had just cleared a building and were about to leave when the attached Wolf spotted a fresh footprint at the door. “He stopped them. Inside, we found three Islamic Jihad terrorists who had entered after the drone sweeps and were lying in wait,” Y. says. “We shelled the house, tossed grenades, and killed them.”

In another incident during December 2023 near Gaza’s coastal Rashid corridor, an IED exploded near reservists from the 179th Brigade. Y., with them at the time, urged calm, not a rush. “I walked along the IED wires and found a hidden enemy post, packed with weapons, directly facing the path our troops had just taken. We lost an officer in that incident, but by stopping to study the scene, we uncovered and neutralized a more serious ambush intended to kill and kidnap.”

Now, the Wolves are preparing for the IDF's next phase in Gaza. They hope to integrate into more divisions, like the 36th, now active in Rafah. Lt. Col. B. believes that if the IDF had 130 Wolves instead of 30, many deadly incidents could have been prevented. "Battalions come and go, and the knowledge from one area doesn't always get passed down," he says. "Our people love the terrain, breathe it, smell threats. Hamas now stages attacks to bait rescue teams. I hope we'll become obsolete, only because we've passed on our skills, just like we did in Syria and Lebanon these past months. Before this war, the IDF climbed high with cyber and tech, but something got lost in translating that to real ground warfare."

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Israel agrees to Syrian forces deployment near buffer zone

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Israel agrees to Syrian forces deployment near buffer zone, report

UAE report says Israel approved forces deployment under US pressure, but will keep troops in the buffer zone

Lior Ben Ari|22:52

The Emirati site Aram News reported Friday that the Syrian General Security apparatus has begun preparations to deploy its forces in several areas in southern Syria near the buffer zone with Israel, marking the first such deployment since the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime.

Syrian sources cited in the report said the deployment follows Israeli approval and U.S. pressure.

Meanwhile, Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa visited the Daraa region in southern Syria for the first time since taking office. According to the Sham FM radio station, al-Joulani met his aunt during the visit — their first meeting in 30 years.

Sources speaking to Aram News explained that the Syrian forces will maintain security in cities adjacent to the buffer zone to prevent any attacks toward Israel. This comes after two rockets were launched from Syrian territory toward the Golan Heights, exploding in open areas. In response, the IDF struck regime weapons depots in southern Syria.

Additionally, the report stated that under Israeli approval, the Syrians will mostly carry light weapons. According to the sources, the decision to allow Syrian forces to deploy is tactical, not strategic, and the IDF will remain in the buffer zone.

The recent rocket fire toward the Golan raised concerns that the security vacuum in the area poses a growing threat to Israel if Syrian forces are not allowed to deploy. This concern reportedly pushed the shift in Israel's stance, from outright refusal to coordination regarding the deployment of Syrian security forces.

The rockets were fired from the Tasil area, a Palestinian village in southern Syria, which the IDF has recently targeted multiple times to destroy weapons caches. Responsibility for the attack was claimed by an unknown group called the “Muhammad Daif Martyrs Brigades,” which has not previously claimed responsibility for any attacks against Israel. Following the sirens, the IDF said it responded with artillery fire. Syrian reports mentioned a fire in the rural area west of Daraa city in southern Syria. Local Syrian sources told the Lebanon-based Al-Mayadeen network, associated with Hezbollah, that “Israeli drones are flying over the rural areas of Quneitra and Daraa.”

06.06.25 – Fr - Omer 49

The enemy won't return: journalists tour combat zones inside Khan Younis

06.06.25 – Fr - Omer 49

'The enemy won't return': IDF troops detail deeper gains, tactics in renewed Khan Younis operation

Military opens Gaza's Khan Younis combat zone to Ynet journalist, showcasing Operation Gideon's Chariots' strategic tunnel warfare, hostage recoveries and attrition tactics against Hamas

Elisha Ben Kimon|19:59

For the first time since the launch of Operation Gideon's Chariots, the IDF allowed journalists into combat zones inside Gaza. Reporters joined Col. Sh., commander of the 7th Armored Brigade, in Khan Younis—where his unit has operated since the ground offensive began.

“This is a test of determination and endurance,” Col. Sh. said. “We’ve developed new capabilities, improved intelligence and better precision—especially underground. In past operations, troops entered with limited intel. Today, we know where we’re going, what the enemy’s center of gravity is and which parts of the tunnel system to strike.”

While Hamas continues to operate a dense underground tunnel network, Sh. said the brigade aims to destroy critical tunnel segments to collapse the broader infrastructure.

“We reached the main tunnel arteries relatively quickly, surprising Hamas and allowing us to destroy key underground assets. We’re also discovering new strongholds.”

The brigade now uses tools that were previously unavailable, including drones. “It takes time to fully analyze tunnel intel,” he added, “but our new tools help us extract valuable information faster.”

Maj. L., the brigade's operations officer, stressed the importance of moving methodically. “We’re not wasting time—we’re working thoroughly so we don’t have to return. People have died here. That guides our mission.”

According to him, “the enemy won’t return. We know exactly where we’re going and what we’re doing. In the past, we were told to seize areas blindly. Now we have better intelligence and better planning.”

One outcome of that planning was revealed Thursday morning, when the IDF recovered the bodies of hostages Gadi Haggai and Judy Weinstein from Gaza.

Meanwhile, the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit reported that 7th Brigade forces have destroyed some 400 terror infrastructure sites, eliminated numerous terrorists and neutralized seven key tunnel shafts used by terror groups.

‘It looks slow—but we’re eliminating the entire area’

Reporters entered Khan Younis aboard a heavily armored vehicle. The journey took nearly 50 minutes—underscoring how deep the IDF has penetrated into the area. Along the route, nearly every structure was damaged or destroyed.

“This time, we’re going in deep and systematically,” said Col. Sh. “It may look slow, but it protects our forces. And unlike past operations, we’re dismantling the arena completely. Once we’re done, Hamas won’t be able to return for years.”

At a temporary staging area for resting troops, Lt. Col. D., commander of the 77th Battalion, said Hamas had clearly prepared for this round of fighting. “They studied us and adapted to the operation. There’s less face-to-face fighting now—more hidden explosives and remote detonation after spotting our forces. But we’ve developed tactics to dismantle that infrastructure.”

Maj. Y., the brigade’s medical officer, described how the nature of injuries has shifted. “We’ve seen all types. But now it’s less about gunfire and more about explosives.” He said he’s served over 300 days in reserves, previously fighting in both Lebanon and Gaza. “The last time, there were more enemy fighters and more clashes. Now it’s mostly underground. Wherever we go, we dismantle.”

Troops, both active-duty and reserve, noted that the way humanitarian aid is distributed also impacts the fighting. “Many terrorists appear to have dropped their weapons and moved into civilian areas. That means Hamas has fewer fighters in the field. It’s still a fight—but we can see the difference.”

Col. Sh. said Israel is engaged in a war of attrition. “Thinking we can wrap it up quickly with one big blow is a mistake. We must build a military that can fight long, drawn-out campaigns. That doesn’t mean we don’t want short wars—but the enemy has adapted. When they realize we can fight long-term, their attrition strategy will lose effectiveness.” The IDF has returned to Khan Younis—again. But this time, troops believe a combination of extended operations, tactical changes and humanitarian strategy could lead to different, possibly decisive, results. Ultimately, investigations into the October 7 massacre will also have to ask: why did we need to fight here so many times?

06.06.25 – Fr - Omer 49

IDF to government: Military alone can't enforce Haredi draft

Amid political crisis and Haredi threats to topple the government, IDF says its draft enforcement powers are not enough; 'This is the call of the hour and a real operational necessity,' IDF Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin says
Lihi Gordon|19:52

IDF Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin hinted Friday at the army's support for imposing personal sanctions on ultra-Orthodox draft dodgers, saying that "the sanctions the IDF can impose are not sufficient—we'll need a broader and more complementary solution."

Defrin, when asked about the chief of staff's position on personal sanctions, said the military is currently short more than 10,000 soldiers. As Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara stated Thursday, tens of thousands of additional draft notices will be issued in the upcoming enlistment year, which begins next month.

"This is the call of the hour and a real operational necessity," Defrin said. "We are taking all necessary steps, including sending draft orders to 16-and-a-half-year-olds, and tens of thousands more will be issued in the coming year. As for enforcement, the sanctions the IDF can apply are insufficient. We'll need a more comprehensive and coordinated response."

Defrin's remarks came amid a deepening political crisis with the ultra-Orthodox parties, threatening the stability of the coalition. The Haredi parties are demanding a law that will formally exempt yeshiva students from military service. While that law has yet to pass, the attorney general announced that the IDF will issue more than 50,000 draft notices to yeshiva students this July and present an enforcement plan targeting draft evaders.

The plan, presented to the attorney general by senior military officials, including the head of the IDF's Manpower Directorate, includes increased enforcement efforts in the coming weeks. The military also decided to shorten the time between issuing draft notices and officially declaring someone a draft evader, meaning more Haredim could soon be designated as such.

A late-night meeting between government officials managed to resolve some of the disputes surrounding the exemption bill, but the crisis remains far from over. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that in a meeting with Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chair Yuli Edelstein and Haredi representatives, "significant progress" had been made. Haredi sources said Edelstein had "climbed down from the tree" regarding the scope and enforcement of the sanctions, but the central disagreement remains unresolved: what counts as meeting ultra-Orthodox enlistment targets.

According to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office, "an effort will be made to finalize the outstanding issues." The meeting ended with Haredi leaders saying they would consult with their rabbis and resume discussions later. Still, members of the United

Torah Judaism party expressed anger at Netanyahu, asking, “Where has he been until now, and why did he intervene so late in the process?”

For now, the Haredi parties are continuing to push forward with a proposal to dissolve the Knesset. Until a finalized bill is ready for a vote, they are not accepting the “significant progress” Netanyahu claimed.

In recent days, the Haredi parties accused Edelstein of pushing to include a list of harsh personal sanctions in the draft law targeting those who evade service. These include: canceling municipal tax discounts; removing income tax credit points; denying eligibility for subsidized housing; imposing a purchase tax even on first homes; canceling academic tuition subsidies; revoking driver’s license eligibility; barring travel abroad; ending daycare subsidies; and eliminating public transportation discounts.

06.06.25 – Fr - Omer 49

IDF's shadow in the sky: Rare glimpse into Unit 9900 drone squadron

06.06.25 – Fr - Omer 49

IDF's eye in the sky: Rare glimpse into military's drone squadron

New unit redefines battlefield intelligence with low-altitude drones, tracking Hamas terrorists and guiding hostage rescues in Gaza; commanders face challenges from enemy adaptation and media leaks as war continues

Elisha Ben Kimon|15:14

On a dark Middle Eastern night, a faint hum cuts through the air — the sound of the IDF’s Unit 9900. For over five years, this elite visual intelligence (VISINT) unit has operated in near-total secrecy.

Under the command of Lt. Col. A., head of the “ROKAK” drone squadron — which specializes in flights below 1,000 feet (305 meters) — the unit deploys advanced UAVs to deliver real-time intelligence to troops on the ground.

Since Hamas’s October 7 massacre and the ongoing war that followed, the unit has become a vital asset not only for the IDF but for Israel’s broader intelligence network, including the Shin Bet and Mossad. The unit tracks Hamas terrorists, uncovers hidden weapons stockpiles and guides troops through high-risk operations — among them, Operation Arnon, in which four hostages were rescued alive.

“The Russia-Ukraine war showed how drones are reshaping the battlefield,” says Lt. Y., commander of one of the unit’s flight teams. “We saw UAV capabilities there that we had never imagined — and we brought those lessons here.”

But behind the technological edge lie constant challenges: an evolving enemy, reckless leaks on social media and a global drone arms race that threatens to leave even Israel behind.

Founded in 2020 in response to an urgent operational need, the ROKAK squadron has quickly become one of the core pillars of Israeli intelligence. “Since the war started, intelligence collection has grown by thousands of percent,” says Lt. T., the unit’s intelligence officer. “We monitor everything: vehicle movements, structural changes, people entering and exiting buildings. The enemy is always adapting — we have to stay ahead.”

“We fly in places where every meter matters,” explained Lt. Y. The unit works closely with signals intelligence Unit 8200 to build full intel backgrounds, ranging from enemy travel routes to the daily routines of high-value targets.

Unit 9900’s drones, capable of flying at low altitudes with high-resolution imaging, were key in tracking Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Mohammad Reza Zahedi. He was reportedly killed in a suspected Israeli strike on a building tied to Iran’s embassy in Damascus. Zahedi oversaw Quds Force operations in Syria and Lebanon and helped direct terrorist activity in Israel.

The unit doesn’t just monitor high-level targets — it also tracks long-hidden weapons sites across Gaza, Lebanon and beyond. “During Operation Arnon, we opened access routes for troops within hours,” Lt. Y. said. “In Syria, we received an urgent request from the field in the middle of a mission. Within three hours, we provided intelligence that led to the destruction of enemy infrastructure.”

At 6:32 a.m. on October 7, Lt. Col. A. received a message from a reservist: “What’s going on?” Moments later, explosions rang out — the war had begun. “We activated all our systems within hours,” he recalls. “At first, we focused on the north, fearing coordinated attacks but quickly had to split our efforts to support the south.”

Unit 9900 worked around the clock, locating missing soldiers in Rafah, mapping routes and providing real-time intelligence. “In one day, we scanned thousands of square kilometers,” says A., “identifying everything from anti-tank mines to underground shafts.”

But the unit’s greatest challenge isn’t just the enemy — it’s the media. “They’re studying us,” warned Lt. Col. A. “They’re using camouflaging tarps, operating underground and constantly developing new tactics. This arms race demands innovation. Our soldiers are thinking outside the box, building tools that reach targets once thought inaccessible.”

Still, the biggest threat now, officers say, is exposure from within. “One leaked video can cost lives,” Lt. T. explained. “We saw this after Hezbollah released footage from a drone strike on the Golani Brigade’s dining hall and again when rocket impacts near Gilot were reported. Censorship isn’t doing enough. The media must take responsibility. Every leak gives the enemy a tactical advantage — and forces us to change how we operate.”

Harsh terrain, long hours, human toll

Gaza’s dense population and tunnel networks complicate drone surveillance. In the north, the hilly, forested terrain demands ultra-precise low-altitude flying. The workload is relentless. “There’s no day or night,” said Lt. Col. A. “Our soldiers operate in heat, cold, rain — often on the ground, not just behind screens.” Because of strict compartmentalization, many operators don’t even know the final outcome of the intelligence they gather.

“We’re not told everything in hostage rescue missions,” Lt. T. said “But we gather the broadest intel possible. From the lowest-ranking soldier to the general staff, everyone depends on us.” One officer recalls a mission in an undisclosed Middle Eastern country. “We scanned hundreds of square kilometers on request from another intel agency,” she said. “We found nothing unusual. “Then, as a last-ditch effort, we decided to scan a specific area using an unorthodox method. We didn’t expect to find anything. But the scan revealed strategically critical information. A few days later, it became the basis for an operational strike — and we realized just how vital our work had been.”

Looking ahead, Unit 9900 faces both immense promise and growing peril. Competing with drone superpowers like China requires major investment. “We have to boost our resolution and our collection capabilities,” Lt. Col. A. said. “A year from now, this war will look completely different.”

In the meantime, the unit continues to hand-build tools, develop new technologies and redefine battlefield intelligence. Whether it can maintain its edge — against a fast-learning enemy and a leaky information environment — remains to be seen.

One thing, however, is clear: Unit 9900 is the shadow that follows the IDF across the skies. And the mystery that surrounds it is part of its power.

06.06.25 – Fr - Omer 49

A jihad-like attack on America: Security threat shuts June Israel summit in Dallas

06.06.25 – Fr - Omer 49

‘A jihad-like attack on America’: Security threat shuts Israel summit

A Texas event for Christians supporting Israel had to move venues following ‘extremely concerning’ security threats; group was forced cancel event when the location of the new venue became public

Maayan Hoffman/The Media Line|13:57

A pro-Israel Christian event scheduled to take place in Dallas, Texas, was indefinitely postponed due to threats reportedly made by “radical jihadist” elements in the United States.

The HaYovel Israel Summit, which was initially planned for the Arlington Expo Center and later moved to Eagle Mountain International Church, was canceled on Thursday. According to Tim Miller, CEO of the LionHeart International Services Group, a private security company, security intelligence indicated that “there was active planning to target this event.”

Miller, a veteran Secret Service officer and former member of the Marine Corps, described the security alerts as “extremely concerning.” He referenced the recent murders of a young couple working at the Israeli embassy in Washington, DC, as well as the firebombing of a group of peaceful Jewish marchers in Boulder, Colorado, last week.

“That tends to inspire like-minded people to physical acts of violence and that was the concern and a foundation for some of the decisions that were made,” Miller said.

In a letter to the 700 expected attendees, HaYovel—an organization that brings Christians to Israel to volunteer—wrote, “While we are unsure of where and when the next Israel Summit will take place, we are not giving up. One thing we are certain of is this: the enemies of God’s Kingdom will NOT prevail. Together, we will continue to stand with the land and people of Israel.”

The organization apologized to those who had made travel plans and hotel bookings, saying it would work to issue full refunds for the three-day event, which was set for June 9 through 11.

“The problem is that people do not understand who they are dealing with,” said HaYovel CEO Joshua Waller. “We are dealing with radical anti-Israel, anti-American groups that are very violent and are willing to threaten and even cause harm to people that won’t align with their agenda. Americans are rightfully scared of them. ... This is not how Americans act. This is a jihad-like attack on America.”

Waller, who spends most of his time living on Har Bracha in Samaria—a hilltop settlement in the West Bank—said that these radical elements need to be called what they are: “Terrorist groups in America.” He added that he believes America is made up of “amazing people” and that these radical groups are small but loud.

“This whole war against Israel and the Jewish people is not supported by the American public,” Waller said. “We need to educate the good people of America to understand the reality we face.”

The organization booked the Arlington Expo Center around nine months ago. However, 10 days before the event, HaYovel was forced to relocate after being alerted that expensive additional security measures would be required. According to Waller and Miller, these included snipers, dog teams, and dozens more police officers.

Miller, who worked directly with the Arlington Police Department, said the unit was “extremely supportive” and “wanted the event to go forward,” but could not allocate the resources needed to secure it. He said the intelligence—specific details of which he could not disclose—pointed to a credible threat of violence. The security costs would have amounted to several hundred thousand dollars, which the organization could not afford.

“In the United States, law enforcement agencies don’t have unlimited budgets,” Miller explained. “The event was so quickly approaching, and the associated costs with officers and overtime required funding that was just not available. The department was willing to move forward but could not supplement the cost associated with it.”

Waller said, “This was news to us,” noting that the group had selected a public venue. “We had no idea an Israel event in Dallas would be treated like this.”

The second venue, a church, being private, would have required its own security. While HaYovel attempted to keep the location confidential, once word spread, the church ultimately withdrew out of concern for a violent incident.

“We decided for the safety of everyone not to proceed,” Miller said. The church could not be reached for comment. Miller called the situation “double terrorism,” explaining

that radical elements were not only threatening to attack the venue but also intimidating it out of existence. "This is a dark season in America," Miller said.

'Bring the truth of what's happening in Israel'

HaYovel is made up of conservative Christian Zionists. The organization was founded in 2004 by Waller's father, Tommy Waller, a Christian farmer from Tennessee. Since then, the group has brought more than 3,000 Christians from 30 countries to plant and harvest in the West Bank—what they call the Biblical heartland of Israel.

The Israel Summit was designed to be a pro-Israel event, aiming to support the country and bring visitors from Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Waller said the goal was to "bring the exact truth of what is happening in Israel."

The event was also expected to include Knesset members, congresspeople, influencers, Israeli veterans, and survivors of the Nova music festival massacre.

This is not the first time the Israel Summit was forced to relocate. Last year, it was scheduled to take place from May 20 to May 22 at the Sonesta Nashville Airport Hotel, which canceled hosting the event citing "threats."

Israel365, a cosponsor of last year's summit, told the Jewish News Syndicate at the time that the hotel consulted with local police, who "were concerned that the hotel, their guests, local businesses, and attendees to the Israel Summit would be in physical danger due to the threatening nature of the calls and messages they received."

"When Christians and Jews no longer feel protected and have lost their freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, our government has failed," said Steve Wearp, founder of the Christian Zionist business Blessed Buy Israel, which supports Jewish settlement in the West Bank. "The land of the free and home of the brave is being held hostage by Hamas terrorists."

He added, "I am ashamed of this country and its unwillingness to stand up for truth and freedom. This is a failure of Texas and the Trump administration to guarantee the safety and freedoms of both Christians and Jews."

Waller echoed the sentiment: "Americans need to wake up to the reality of what they are facing. The war on terror has entered American soil."

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

06.06.25 – Fr - Omer 49

Shin Bet arms Gaza Bedouin militia; recovered weapons used to coordinate attacks

06.06.25 – Fr - Omer 49

'No guarantee weapons won't target troops': Inside Israel's operation to arm Gaza militia
Covert operation arms Gaza's Bedouin militia under Netanyahu's directive, aiming to weaken Hamas but risking IDF retaliation and weapon diversion; security officials fear no plan in place to prevent use of arms against soldiers

Yoav Zitun|08:55

A covert Israeli operation to arm a rival Palestinian militia in Gaza was orchestrated in recent months by the Shin Bet, with direct authorization from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Ynet reported Thursday. The goal was to challenge Hamas in southern Gaza by strengthening a Bedouin-affiliated group based in Rafah that has long opposed the Islamist organization.

According to the report, dozens to hundreds of handguns and AK-47 rifles were transferred from Israel to the group in Rafah. Despite the intent to weaken Hamas, security officials admitted there were no guarantees the armed men wouldn't later target IDF troops—particularly along the Philadelphi Corridor or on humanitarian aid routes secured by Israeli forces.

“There was never a plan or intention for them to govern Rafah after Hamas. They don't have the ability—or even necessarily the desire—to do so,” security officials told Ynet. The group is reportedly not affiliated with ISIS in Sinai but maintains close economic ties with them.

“Their primary focus is smuggling, prostitution and extortion—not the Palestinian national cause,” one official added. “Still, they're part of the Arab nation—Bedouins and Gaza residents—so there wasn't consensus about the plan, especially due to the risk they'd use these weapons against IDF troops.”

Security officials reportedly debated this approach multiple times during the war, including discussions about how to handle large caches of weapons seized in Gaza and in Israel after October 7. One proposal was to reintroduce these weapons into Gaza, arming anti-Hamas factions. Officials confirmed that this is indeed what happened.

Israel is also investigating whether the group's close family ties to Bedouin clans in the southern part of the country enabled drone-based arms smuggling from Israel into Gaza in recent months. Some of the smuggling attempts were intercepted but others weren't. Security officials said the initiative originated with the Shin Bet, which has long-standing ties with the Rafah-based group. The IDF reportedly supported the plan as part of a broader strategy to weaken Hamas from multiple angles. “They've already harmed and challenged Hamas—and continue to do so,” the officials noted.

Some of those fighters—particularly those linked to ISIS near the Jordanian border—refuse to return the weapons. Israel has also long been reported to supply arms and military know-how to Kurdish forces, a claim it hasn't denied.

Following the publication of the report, Netanyahu did not deny the operation. “It was advised by security officials. What's wrong with that? It saves the lives of IDF soldiers,” he said. He criticized Yisrael Beytenu party chairman Avigdor Lieberman, who exposed the operation, saying his leak “only helped Hamas. He doesn't care. It's very serious.” At the center of the operation is Yasser Abu-Shabab, a 32-year-old Bedouin resident of Rafah who's presented on social media as the leader of a local militia. He heads a group called The Popular Forces, which he claims is meant to protect civilians and distribute humanitarian aid.

However, Palestinian and international reports say the group operates in coordination with Israel—especially in Israeli-controlled zones east of Rafah near the Kerem Shalom border crossing.

Abu-Shabab rose to infamy after being accused of looting UN trucks last year and reselling humanitarian supplies meant for Gazans—claims he denies. In a media interview, he claimed he only took food to feed his family but eyewitnesses, including a truck driver, said his men forcibly seized entire shipments.

Hamas later cracked down on the militia, killing Abu-Shabab's brother. According to an official statement from the group, Hamas forces "eliminated 20 gang members who had stolen aid." In a post quoted by The New York Times, Abu-Shabab denied receiving weapons from Israel, calling the reports "false claims meant to discredit a homegrown initiative against injustice, theft, and corruption."

'They get top-down orders—and arm gangs'

A security official directly involved in the operation told Israeli public broadcaster Kan that the unit executing the plan "takes orders from the top and arms gangs for combat inside Gaza." He said the force was coordinated by Shin Bet officers on the ground and described the process as "complex, deliberate and highly discreet—not just another military aid mission."

"I don't know exactly how long this has been going on—it's at the request of the Military Intelligence Directorate and Shin Bet," the source said. "I believe there are several operations happening in multiple parts of Gaza due to how sensitive and compartmentalized it all is." He added that the deliveries included light weapons, extensive equipment and likely also money.

"This wasn't a 'fire-and-forget' operation," the source continued. "It was calculated, supervised and targeted. These weren't just supplies dropped into Gaza—they were recovered weapons reintroduced into the Strip."

When asked whether participants understood the broader implications of the mission, the operative said: "There was a clear understanding in the field—who gets what, how and under what cover. The entire IDF apparatus was aware of it. It didn't need to be spelled out—it was obvious."

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Senior Hasidic rabbis call for immediate dissolution of Knesset over draft law

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Senior Hasidic rabbis call for immediate dissolution of Knesset over draft law

Declaration comes amid growing tensions in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition, which has faced internal divisions over efforts to formalize exemptions for ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students from mandatory military service

Shilo Freid23:16

The rebbes of Israel's major Hasidic sects, who comprise the Council of Torah Sages of Agudat Yisrael, called Thursday night for the immediate dissolution of the Knesset, escalating the political crisis over the military draft exemption for ultra-Orthodox men.

In a rare gathering at the village of Ora near Jerusalem, the council unanimously declared: "We will not be part of a government that takes part in persecuting the Torah world," and instructed Agudat Yisrael's four Knesset members to submit a bill to dissolve parliament.

The declaration comes amid growing tensions in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition, which has faced internal divisions over efforts to formalize exemptions for ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students from mandatory military service. The council's statement signals a hardening stance by United Torah Judaism, the ultra-Orthodox party that includes Agudat Yisrael.

The council represents Knesset members Yitzhak Goldknopf, Yisrael Eichler, Nussi Roth, and Yaakov Tessler. Its emergency meeting took place as Netanyahu met with Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chair Yuli Edelstein and former minister Ariel Atias, who represents the Shas party in coalition negotiations.

Netanyahu has been trying to prevent the collapse of his government by mediating between demands for immediate enforcement of military draft penalties, led by Edelstein, and the objections of his ultra-Orthodox partners. Shas has so far failed to convene its own Council of Torah Sages, but Atias has met with individual members, who urged him to pursue legislation acceptable to the Haredi community or to support a move to dissolve the Knesset.

Separately, Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara announced that the Israel Defense Forces will issue more than 50,000 draft orders to yeshiva students starting in July. The military is expected to present an enforcement plan targeting draft evaders, including shortening the time between issuing draft notices and officially designating someone as a defaulter. The move could significantly increase the number of ultra-Orthodox men classified as draft dodgers.

Despite the growing pressure, Netanyahu's office signaled optimism. A political source told Ynet that the prime minister has explored a possible deal with ultra-Orthodox factions: an agreement not to dissolve the Knesset before the end of the current legislative session, in exchange for removing Edelstein from his committee role.

However, Haredi leaders reportedly dismissed the offer, saying, "Removing Edelstein won't help us — the problem is the law, not the person."

A senior Haredi minister told Ynet that recent meetings appeared aimed more at sidelining Edelstein than solving the core dispute. "This is Bibi's way," the minister said. "When he was threatened over the trapped profits issue, he fired Galant. Now they're threatening to dissolve the Knesset, so he'll probably fire Yuli tonight. But the real solution won't come — so the Knesset needs to be dissolved."

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

IDF attack four Hezbollah facilities in Beirut, used to produce thousands of UAVs

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

IDF attacking underground Hezbollah facilities in Beirut: 'Used to produce thousands of UAVs'

Military's Arabic spokesperson says attack targeted four buildings which house underground facilities used by Hezbollah's Unit 127 for its drone manufacturing program
Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun|Updated:22:50

The IDF launched strikes Thursday evening targeting Hezbollah's aerial unit facilities in the Dahieh neighborhood of Beirut. The attack followed a warning issued by IDF Arabic-language spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee to residents of Dahieh, alerting them to impending strikes on four buildings located in the neighborhoods of Al-Hadat, Haret Hreik and Burj al-Barajneh. According to the IDF, the targets included underground infrastructure used to manufacture unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

Defense Minister Israel Katz stated, "We will not allow any entity to create threats against northern communities or the citizens of Israel." Following the warning, heavy traffic jams were reported in Dahieh as residents attempted to flee the area.

Katz added, "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and I instructed the IDF to strike this evening and destroy buildings used for the production and storage of UAVs by the Hezbollah terror organization in the heart of the Dahieh district of Beirut. Residents of these buildings have already received evacuation notices. We will continue to enforce the ceasefire terms uncompromisingly. We hold the Lebanese government directly responsible for preventing violations of the ceasefire and any terrorist activity against the State of Israel."

Adraee addressed residents living near Hezbollah sites, warning, "You are located near facilities belonging to the terrorist organization Hezbollah. For your safety and that of your families, you must immediately evacuate these buildings and distance yourselves by at least 300 meters."

The IDF statement said Hezbollah's aerial unit, known as Unit 127, was working to produce thousands of UAVs under the direction and funding of Iranian terror elements. It noted that after extensive use of UAVs in recent attacks against Israel, Hezbollah has been ramping up its drone production in preparation for a future war.

The operation marks what is expected to be the IDF's most extensive and significant strike in Lebanon since the ceasefire. While no restrictions have been placed on Israel's home front, the alert level of the country's air defense network has been raised in anticipation of a possible Hezbollah response.

Lebanese and Saudi media reported that the Lebanese army entered buildings in Dahieh to prevent the strikes, following orders from Lebanese Army Commander Gen. Rodolphe

Haykal. However, the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar later reported that the army had withdrawn from the threatened buildings.

Although the IDF has been striking targets in Lebanon almost daily, the last attack in Dahieh occurred on April 27. After three warning shots, the military targeted what Lebanon referred to as the “Victory Tent,” a missile storage facility. According to a joint statement from Netanyahu and Katz, the site housed precision missiles belonging to Hezbollah. Israel notified the United States ahead of the strike.

On April 1, Israeli fighter jets struck a Hezbollah operative in Dahieh. According to the IDF and the Shin Bet security agency, the operative had recently been guiding Hamas operatives in plotting an imminent large-scale terror attack against Israeli civilians. The Lebanese Health Ministry reported four fatalities and seven injuries in the strike. The target, Hassan Ali Mahmoud Bdeir, was identified as a member of Hezbollah’s Unit 3900 and the Iranian Quds Force. The IDF, Shin Bet and Mossad jointly stated that he was aiding Hamas in planning the attack.

Earlier, on March 28, the Israeli Air Force conducted a strike in Dahieh for the first time since the ceasefire, destroying a building after two rockets were fired at Kiryat Shmona. The IDF said the target was a UAV storage facility used by Hezbollah’s Unit 127. Prior to the strike, Adraee issued an evacuation warning, prompting panic in Dahiyeh. Dramatic footage showed the targeted building collapsing as bombs hit in sequence.

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Nation divided by duelling protests; opposition in Tel Aviv & coalition in Jerusalem

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Nation divided: Israelis launch duelling mass protests in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem
In the capital, thousands gathered outside the Supreme Court in support of the coalition, while in Tel Aviv’s Rabin Square, Speakers accused government of undermining democratic foundations and attempting to silence dissent
Roy Rubinstein, Liran Tamari|22:10

On Thursday evening, tens of thousands of Israelis poured into the streets of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in two simultaneous mass rallies that laid bare the country’s growing political and ideological divide.

In Jerusalem, thousands gathered outside the Supreme Court in support of the coalition, waving Israeli flags and chanting slogans like “Gali won’t decide,” in reference to Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara. Protesters accused the judiciary of sabotaging elected officials and demanded the attorney general’s removal.

The rally was attended by senior government ministers, including Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, Justice Minister Yariv Levin and Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi—all of whom delivered forceful speeches attacking the legal establishment.

Smotrich accused “unelected officials” of hijacking democracy: “The government has the right—no, the obligation—to appoint officials like the Shin Bet head and civil service commissioner. We won’t let anyone take democracy away from us.” He warned against any move to remove Netanyahu from office, calling it a red line.

Ben-Gvir echoed that sentiment, saying, “They allowed a military chief to be appointed during elections but not a Shin Bet chief? Enough! Gali, go home.” He urged Netanyahu to ignore the attorney general’s “illegitimate” opinions and pledged to push for Hamas’s defeat through “victory, settlement and voluntary emigration.”

Justice Minister Levin described the judiciary as a “small group of judges” who have seized control of Israeli democracy. “We’ll fulfill the people’s will. There will be full judicial reform,” he vowed. The crowd responded with chants of “The people demand judicial reform.”

Communications Minister Karhi and Education Minister Yoav Kisch joined in, accusing the Supreme Court and Baharav-Miara of dismantling democracy and claiming that “the people” were under attack by “a minority judicial elite.”

The Jerusalem rally was organized by right-wing groups, with participation from bereaved families and hostages’ relatives. Tzvika Mor, whose son Eitan is being held in Gaza; and Itzik Bonzel, whose son Amit was killed in combat, spoke of betrayal and abandonment. “We didn’t vote for the opposition—we voted for a right-wing path,” Bonzel said.

Netanyahu had personally urged his supporters to attend, declaring in a video: “We’ll decide who heads the Shin Bet and who serves as civil service commissioner. The people will decide, not unelected bureaucrats.”

In Tel Aviv’s Rabin Square, demonstrators demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government, warning of a dangerous drift toward authoritarianism and extremism. Meanwhile, outside the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, supporters of the government rallied against what they called judicial overreach and elite obstruction of democratic will.

The Tel Aviv protest was held under the banner “Ending the madness—yes to a Jewish and democratic state, no to racist Kahanism.” Speakers accused the government of undermining Israel’s democratic foundations and attempting to silence dissent through incitement and fear.

“This ‘ Hamas is an asset ’ government is trampling the law and trying to oust the attorney general illegally,” said protest leader Shikma Bressler. “They’re defying court rulings and attacking the judiciary head-on.” She urged citizens not to back down: “We—the overwhelming majority—stand with you.”

Tel Aviv Deputy Mayor Chen Arieli warned that democratic erosion is becoming “a flood,” saying, “We cannot stay silent while incitement becomes government policy. Without democracy, there is no pride.”

Prof. Yaniv Roznai of Reichman University called the government’s tactics a “populist playbook,” accusing it of “dismantling oversight, delegitimizing the opposition and

undermining elections.” Only one in five Israelis supports the government, he said, warning of its “deep legitimacy crisis.”

Protest leader Moshe Radman described the Jerusalem rally as “a show of support for Kahanism, racism and anarchy,” while vowing to defeat Netanyahu’s coalition at the ballot box. “We understand this revolution in real time. It won’t be easy and it won’t be quick—but we’ll win,” he said. “The fight for Israel’s soul will be decided in the streets, schools and city councils.”

Organizers said their demonstration was a direct response to the pro-government rally in Jerusalem, which they described as a “Kahanist dictatorship’s” bid to tighten its grip on power under cover of war.

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Haredim block Highway, destroy draft notices as coalition crisis ramps up

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Radical Haredim block Highway 4, destroy draft notices as coalition crisis ramps up
Attorney general says more than 50,000 military draft notices to ultra-Orthodox Jewish men next month, as Netanyahu races to prevent ultra-Orthodox from leaving government

Shilo Freid, Tova Zimuky, Sivan Hilaie, Shalev Kachlon|20:15

Israeli authorities will issue more than 50,000 military draft notices to ultra-Orthodox Jewish men next month, amid deepening tensions within Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s coalition over the controversial conscription of yeshiva students, Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara announced Thursday.

The statement followed a meeting between Baharav-Miara and senior military officials, including the head of the Israel Defense Forces’ Human Resources Directorate. The attorney general said the IDF would begin enforcement efforts against draft evaders in July.

The announcement sparked immediate backlash from the Jerusalem Faction, a radical ultra-Orthodox group that opposes military service. Protesters blocked Highway 4 near the entrance to the predominantly Haredi city of Bnei Brak on Thursday afternoon, tossing draft notices into a toilet in symbolic defiance.

Police declared the demonstration illegal and redirected traffic to alternate routes. Northbound lanes were closed from the Aluf Sadeh Interchange, with drivers sent to Route 471. Southbound traffic was diverted from the Em HaMoshavot Junction toward Petah Tikva.

The dispute over Haredi conscription has pushed Netanyahu's governing coalition to the brink. The prime minister met Thursday with Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman Yuli Edelstein and former minister Ariel Atias of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party to resolve disputes within the coalition. Edelstein has demanded immediate enforcement of draft sanctions, a position opposed by Haredi lawmakers. Earlier in the day, Netanyahu was seen receiving a note from United Torah Judaism leader Yitzhak Goldknopf at an event in Yeruham. Aides later clarified the prime minister had only asked for a blank sheet of paper. The two were also seen shaking hands. In a sign of rising stakes, the Council of Torah Sages of Agudat Yisrael was scheduled to meet Thursday night in the village of Ora. The meeting was expected to back a threat issued by the Gerrer Rebbe and senior Lithuanian rabbis calling for either a mutually agreed-upon draft law or new elections. Shas has not formally convened its rabbinic council but has conducted individual consultations. Party officials said rabbis delivered a clear message: support legislation acceptable to Haredi parties or back a bill to dissolve the Knesset. Asher Medina, a Shas spokesperson, wrote in an op-ed published in HaDerech that the Likud party had "turned its back" on religious tradition, accusing it of enabling a "cruel and disgraceful campaign of persecution and humiliation" against Torah scholars.

The political standoff may reach a climax next Wednesday when the opposition plans to bring a preliminary vote on a bill to dissolve the Knesset. Haredi parties are expected to support the measure if no agreement is reached.

Senior ultra-Orthodox officials expressed little optimism. "Netanyahu doesn't grasp the scale of the crisis," one said.

Possible scenarios include Edelstein's removal in exchange for Haredi support to keep the government intact, advancing the draft law without his dismissal to allow more time for talks, early elections in coordination with the opposition, or Netanyahu preemptively dissolving his government.

Despite the turmoil, there is broad agreement across party lines to avoid holding new elections in October.

Edelstein addressed rumors of his potential ouster during a committee meeting Thursday. "If you're asking whether I'm being removed, they've been trying for a year—and I'm still here," he said. "I'm not working to break up the coalition or topple the government. But any good bill deserves to advance quickly to its final votes."

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Netanyahu says Israel activated some clans to fight Hamas; damage already done

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Netanyahu says Israel 'activated some clans' to fight Hamas

Prime minister defends measure, which he says was recommended by the security establishment, as life-saving; officials say operation meant to challenge terror group's hold on enclave

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the arming of Gaza-based militias on Thursday evening, defending the strategy as a life-saving measure recommended by the security establishment. “What’s wrong with it? It’s only good. It saves the lives of IDF soldiers,” he said. Netanyahu sharply criticized Avigdor Lieberman, head of the Yisrael Beiteinu party, whose disclosure of the operation, he claimed, “only helped Hamas. He doesn’t care—it’s very serious.”

The Shin Bet is reported to have spearheaded the operation. Senior security officials described the effort as a managed, strategic initiative. “It saves soldiers’ lives,” one said. “This is about targeted strikes, infrastructure destruction, occupation, and new governance models. It disrupts Hamas’ ability to project strength and deterrence. In time, it may even pave the way for a governing alternative.”

The most prominent among these militias is led by Yasser Abu-Shabab, a 32-year-old resident of Rafah from a Bedouin background, who is described on social media as a “militia leader in southern Gaza.” According to Abu-Shabab, his group now controls parts of eastern Rafah and has urged residents to return, promising food and shelter. He claims to operate “under Palestinian legitimacy,” a reference to the Palestinian Authority, and says his activities are coordinated with its leadership.

“This is a move that saves the lives of IDF soldiers,” one senior official told Ynet. “It’s a calculated effort. While it will take time to judge its success, it clearly disrupts Hamas’ ability to maintain the deterrence and security it once enjoyed. Eventually, it could open the door to new governing alternatives.”

The initiative was publicly exposed on Thursday when former defense minister and Yisrael Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman violated military censorship by disclosing that Israel had armed a Gaza clan fighting Hamas. The censorship office then cleared parts of the information for publication, but security officials said the damage had already been done.

The Prime Minister’s Office did not deny the report, stating only that “Israel is working to defeat Hamas through various means, following the recommendations of all security chiefs.” During his term as defense minister, Lieberman had backed similar efforts in Syria, arming rebel factions aligned with Israeli interests. Not everyone in the security establishment supports the current plan. Some warn that backing Abu-Shabab’s militia could become a long-term strategic risk, though officials appear willing to tolerate cooperation with unaligned local actors so long as they oppose Hamas.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid criticized the move sharply. “After Netanyahu finished sending millions of dollars to Hamas, he’s now providing weapons to groups affiliated with ISIS in Gaza,” Lapid said. “It’s all improvised, without strategic planning, and will lead to more disasters. Weapons that enter Gaza will eventually be turned against IDF soldiers and Israeli civilians. This government must go.”

Lieberman, in a radio interview, also questioned whether the plan was approved by the security cabinet. "It was likely known to the Shin Bet director," he said, "but I don't know if the chief of staff was fully informed." He warned again that "these weapons will ultimately be used against us."

Abu-Shabab, a polarizing figure in Gaza, was reportedly arrested by Hamas before the war on charges of theft and drug trafficking, but escaped prison after an Israeli airstrike destroyed Hamas' security headquarters. In a recent video, he announced the creation of a new armed force aimed at protecting civilians from "the de facto Hamas government's terror" and from "aid looters." His group claims to distribute food and humanitarian supplies to hundreds of families, including in areas under Israeli control. "This is not out of desire," he said, "but out of necessity—to prevent forced displacement." Despite the potential risks, Israeli authorities appear committed to pursuing the strategy of supporting non-Hamas-aligned groups in Gaza, in hopes of reshaping the post-Hamas political landscape.

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Gaza transport union halts aid deliveries amid militia violence; convoy was attacked

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Gaza transport union halts aid deliveries amid militia violence

One driver was killed and three wounded in an attack on a Gaza aid convoy; The transport union halted operations, urging UN protection, as GHF says it's working to ensure safe food box distribution

Einav Halabi | 17:58

The Private Transport and Contractors Union in Gaza announced Thursday a complete suspension of humanitarian aid transport across the Gaza Strip until further notice.

The decision follows allegations that an aid convoy was attacked Wednesday evening by unidentified gunmen, resulting in the death of one driver, injuries to three others, and significant damage to the trucks. The incident has reignited debate over Israel's alleged role in arming local militias, some of which have been accused of looting aid convoys.

The convoy, consisting of 50 aid trucks, had entered Gaza via the Kerem Shalom crossing and proceeded along the perimeter road through the Kisufim gate en route to Deir al-Balah in central Gaza. The ambush occurred at the intersection of Al-Shuhadaa and Salah al-Din Streets, where gunmen opened fire directly on the drivers and their vehicles. The identity of the assailants remains unclear, though they claimed to be independent and not affiliated with Hamas.

On Thursday, Yisrael Beiteinu party leader Avigdor Lieberman alleged that Israel is arming Islamic State-affiliated militias in Gaza under orders from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Prime Minister's Office did not deny the claim. Yasser Abu-Shabab, a Rafah resident recently named as the leader of an armed militia in southern

Gaza, claimed his group is distributing food and humanitarian supplies to hundreds of families. Hamas, however, accused its men of looting aid convoys.

In response to Wednesday's deadly attack, the Gaza transport union said it was halting all aid deliveries to protect drivers' lives and safeguard property. The union condemned the incident as the most serious in a string of assaults on humanitarian operations and called on the international community and the United Nations to take responsibility for securing supply routes and protecting aid workers. The union also demanded that local authorities enforce the law and bring those responsible to justice without compromise.

The union's statement concluded with an appeal for national unity in defense of humanitarian aid and its safe delivery to those in need, emphasizing that these criminal acts do not reflect the values of the "resilient people of Gaza" and constitute a betrayal of humanitarian principles.

Amid repeated attempts by Hamas and other groups to raid and loot aid convoys, the American humanitarian aid organization GHF (Gaza Humanitarian Foundation) announced overnight it would delay the opening of its distribution centers for a second consecutive day. In a Facebook post, the organization cited "maintenance and repair work" as the reason for not opening its sites Thursday morning as planned. However, by midday Thursday, GHF announced it had opened two of its four planned centers—one in the Tel al-Sultan area and the other at a new site in the Saudi neighborhood. The organization urged Gaza residents to consult the attached maps to locate the sites and clarified that each family is entitled to receive only one box of aid. The GHF began operations in the Gaza Strip about ten days ago, introducing a new system intended to prevent Hamas from seizing the aid. Still, the launch has faced significant challenges. On its first day, crowds stormed the Rafah distribution site and looted all available supplies. In recent days, there have also been repeated reports of IDF fire near the distribution zones, alongside alleged attempts by the militant group to disrupt the organization's efforts and prevent Gaza residents from accessing the aid.

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Praising terror, dancing during Iran attack on Israel: activist flotilla to arrive June 7

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Praising terrorists, dancing during Iranian attack on Israel: These are the activists on the flotilla en route to Gaza

12 activists set out on the Madleen flotilla heading for Gaza, including Greta Thunberg; They say they are bringing humanitarian aid but some of them glorify terrorists, deny the Oct. 7 massacre and spread antisemitism

Zeev Avrahami, Berlin|16:37

Some of the people currently aboard the "Madleen" flotilla—which departed from the Italian port of Catania on June 1 and is expected to arrive off the coast of Gaza on June 7

in an effort to "break the blockade and deliver basic goods to Gaza residents"—were already familiar faces. I met several of them about a month ago at the Kalkara Marina in Valletta. Around 40 volunteers from various countries were waiting to join the previous flotilla, which was halted in Maltese territorial waters after a drone strike damaged the vessel and forced it to stop.

Just three days into the current voyage from Sicily, activists claimed once again to have spotted a drone circling overhead—this time approximately 80 kilometers from Greece—and said that "everyone is on high alert."

Previously, the group boarded speedboats, reached the edge of Maltese Coast Guard jurisdiction, shouted "Free Palestine," and returned to shore. Many were convinced that Israel was responsible for the attack, and in fact most of them blamed Israel for everything bad happening in the world. It was a group seething with antisemitism—people who hate Israel more than they love Palestinians.

One activist from Belgium told me, "If Israel didn't exist, there wouldn't be problems in the world." A Brazilian participant declared, "We won't stop until the world knows that Israel is committing ethnic cleansing, genocide and crimes against humanity. And then we'll continue until every Palestinian refugee returns home."

Twelve individuals are participating in the current flotilla, including Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg; French-Palestinian Member of the European Parliament Rima Hassan; German activist Yasemin Acar, French participants Baptiste André, Omar Faiad, Pascal Maurieras, Yanis Mhamdi, and Reva Viard; Turkish national Suayb Ordu; Spanish activist Sergio Toribio; Brazilian Thiago Avila, and Dutch participant Marco van Rennes.

While on the surface the group appears to be driven by humanitarian motives such as delivering basic goods to Gaza, reports from the German outlet Bild suggest that at least some among them hold deeply anti-Western, pro-terrorist ideologies and seek the destruction of Israel.

Consider Omar Faiad, a journalist with the Qatari propaganda network Al Jazeera. Just days after the October 7 massacre, Faiad equated IDF soldiers with Nazis, writing that "Israel is carrying out a new Holocaust in Gaza." European Parliament member Rima Hassan blamed Israel for the deaths of Shiri Bibas and her two young children, Kfir and Ariel, falsely claiming they were killed in Israeli airstrikes.

Yasemin Acar, a veteran Berlin activist, has repeatedly expressed her hatred for Israel, Jews, Zionism and even German authorities. During Iran's missile attack on Israel, she posted a video showing her dancing joyfully in her kitchen. In one protest, she was filmed altering a sign from "Destroy Hamas" to "Destroy Zionism," and in another, she was caught yelling at a woman confronting her, "You're a white woman—you don't get to tell us what to do."

Thiago Avila may be the most extreme example of the flotilla's underlying agenda. In February, he attended the funeral of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon, describing it as "a great honor" to be present. He referred to Nasrallah as a "martyred

saint and beloved leader who inspired people across the globe, and a historic figure in the anti-colonial struggle.”

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New recordings reveal Hamas fired on Gaza aid hub to steal supplies, blaming IDF

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New recordings reveal Hamas fired on Gaza aid hub to steal supplies

In conversation with IDF officer, Gaza residents say terror group fired mortars on center in Rafah; testimonies challenge claims of Israeli fire and highlight growing efforts to block independent humanitarian aid

Yoav Zitun, Gal Ganot|16:31

In a newly released audio recording, a Gaza resident accuses Hamas terrorists of firing mortars near a humanitarian aid hub in Rafah, aiming to disrupt food distribution and seize control of supplies.

The recording, released by the Israel Defense Forces and the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, captures a conversation between an Israeli military liaison officer and a Gazan man discussing the widely reported incident on Sunday in which more than 30 people were allegedly killed by Israeli fire.

“I swear to you—it’s a lie, nothing happened,” the man says, disputing the death toll. “There were wounded, yes—maybe seven or eight dead.” He later adds, “The army responded after they were fired on with mortars, but the ones who fired were Hamas members.”

The resident goes on to say that Hamas operatives deliberately sought to sabotage the aid operation, accusing them of living off stolen aid and enriching their leadership. “They want to derail the program so the aid goes to them, so they can steal it,” he says. “They live off this—selling, trading, money, food and drink for themselves and Hamas leaders.”

He also says that Hamas terrorists were present in the area during the alleged attack and that the group is pressuring international agencies to route aid through their hands. “They want the aid to come in through the UN and international bodies so they can steal it,” he adds.

Describing the group as “real criminals” and “like ISIS,” the resident denounces Hamas as inhuman and devoid of compassion for its own people. “They’re not human at all,” he says. “They’ve completely gone bankrupt. The people understood, they saw, they were there.”

The release of the recording challenges earlier reports, based on Hamas sources, that blamed Israel for civilian casualties at the site. The IDF has denied firing on civilians and says the incident is under investigation.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a U.S.-Israeli initiative that has delivered nearly six million meals in its first week, also rejected the claims. The foundation published surveillance footage from the site showing no evidence of gunfire or panic. An additional eyewitness account echoed the resident's version of events and said no Israeli fire took place during the aid distribution. Israeli officials say Hamas is actively obstructing humanitarian aid to preserve its influence and exploit the suffering of Gaza's civilian population.

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

France prepares June 17–20 in New York, conference against Israel amid Gaza aid crisis

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

France considers 'concrete steps' against Israel amid Gaza aid crisis, Macron says
French and Brazilian presidents call for Palestinian statehood recognition as academic institutions in Europe sever ties with Israeli universities over Gaza war
Itamar Eichner|15:38

French President Emmanuel Macron announced Thursday that France is contemplating "concrete steps" against Israel due to alleged obstruction of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Speaking alongside Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Paris, Macron said that a decision would be made in the coming days.

"Discussions on this matter are ongoing," Macron said. "We will decide in the next couple of days if we need to harden our tone and take concrete steps regarding Israel." President Lula echoed Macron's sentiments, emphasizing the moral and political imperative of recognizing a Palestinian state. "Recognition of a Palestinian state is a moral and human duty, and a political requirement for all world leaders," Lula said. Brazil recognized the State of Palestine in 2010.

These statements come ahead of a United Nations-backed conference on the two-state solution, co-hosted by France and Saudi Arabia, scheduled for June 17–20 in New York. The conference aims to establish a framework for Palestinian statehood while ensuring Israel's security.

Macron has previously indicated that France might recognize a Palestinian state during the conference, a move that could position France as the first major Western power to do so. Such recognition would align France with the 147 UN member states that have already recognized Palestine.

Israel has expressed strong opposition to these developments. In response to Macron's recent remarks, Israeli officials accused him of launching a "crusade against the Jewish state." Israel's government maintains that unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state undermines peace efforts and rewards terrorism.

Meanwhile, two prominent European universities have announced the suspension or termination of academic collaborations with Israeli institutions, citing concerns over the ongoing war in Gaza and potential human rights violations.

The University of Geneva said on Thursday that it will end its strategic partnership with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and will not renew a student exchange program with Tel Aviv University set to expire in 2026. In a statement, the university expressed "outrage at the humanitarian situation in Gaza" and called on all parties, particularly the Israeli government, to respect human rights and international humanitarian law. Similarly, Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands announced an immediate freeze on collaborations with Bar-Ilan University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Haifa. The decision follows recommendations from the university's Advisory Committee on Sensitive Collaborations, which found credible indications that these Israeli institutions may be involved in structural violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The committee advised against initiating new partnerships or collaborations with the mentioned universities and recommended suspending existing exchange programs. It also suggested minimizing participation in existing research consortia involving these institutions until further assessments can be made.

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Liberman accuses PM of arming PA militias in Gaza; PM's office offers no denial

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

Liberman accuses Netanyahu of arming ISIS-linked militias in Gaza; PM's office offers no denial

Opposition lawmaker claims Israel arming 'thugs and criminals' in Gaza without Cabinet signoff, Shin Bet chief knew; PMO says moves backed by top security officials; in Rafah, militia leader announces PA coordination in control of ' Hamas-free zone'

Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi | 13:56

Yisrael Beiteinu Party Chairman Avigdor Liberman on Thursday accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of supplying weapons to armed militias in Gaza with ties to ISIS, as new reports raise questions about coordination between Israel and emerging non-Hamas factions in the enclave.

In an interview with public broadcaster Kan Reshet Bet, Liberman claimed the Israeli government was "transferring weapons to a group of thugs and criminals who identify with ISIS."

He said he believed the move was carried out with the knowledge of the head of the Shin Bet internal security agency, but without Cabinet approval. "I don't know how much the IDF chief of staff was informed," he added.

Netanyahu's office did not deny the allegation, saying only that "Israel is taking various steps to defeat Hamas, based on the recommendations of all security agency heads." Liberman responded with a brief post on X, formerly Twitter: "Don't give them guns."

The controversy comes as attention grows around Yasser Abu Shabab, a resident of Rafah in southern Gaza, who recently appeared in a video declaring the formation of a new armed force.

He claimed it is operating "under Palestinian legitimacy," referencing the Palestinian Authority (PA), and said he received the blessing of PA leadership. According to Abu Shabab, his forces have "cleared" eastern Rafah of Hamas fighters and are now in full control of the area.

Yasser Abu Shabab, leader of an armed militia operating in southern Gaza against Hamas

In the video, Abu Shabab said his new militia is tasked with protecting civilians from "the de facto Hamas government's terror" and from "aid looters." He claimed his forces are distributing food and humanitarian aid to hundreds of families, including in areas controlled by the IDF.

"This is not by choice, but by necessity — to prevent the expulsion plan," he said, referring to a U.S.-backed proposal by President Donald Trump to relocate Gaza's population during postwar reconstruction efforts. The footage shows militia members setting up tents, distributing supplies and calling for media coverage of their operations. Palestinian sources have alleged that Abu Shabab is cooperating with both Israel and the U.S.-based Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) relief mechanism. Hamas has accused his group of looting aid convoys and released footage of its fighters opening fire on militia members during what it described as "a clash with undercover Israeli operatives." The emergence of armed factions like Abu Shabab's has raised alarm among Israeli security officials. Earlier this week, defense sources warned that growing lawlessness in Gaza could jeopardize hostage negotiations, as captives may fall into the hands of unaffiliated militias. That scenario would force Israel to negotiate with multiple actors, rather than Hamas alone.

Some officials reportedly told hostage families that if Hamas loses control, the situation could fragment, complicating future talks. "The conclusion is that a deal must be reached now, before it's too late — while hostages are still held by Hamas' military wing, under the group's central command," one source said.

However, the view is not uniform across the security establishment. A senior official involved in hostage affairs said, "I don't see signs of Hamas collapse. Even if there are public uprisings, I don't believe Hamas' chain of command will fall apart."

A senior IDF officer added that Israel's assessment remains that Hamas retains control over the hostages, with no clear signs of losing that grip.

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

New US CENTCOM commander may strike Iran alongside Israel this summer

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Meet the new US CENTCOM commander who may strike Iran alongside Israel Vice Adm. Brad Cooper to replace staunch Israel ally Gen. Michael Kurilla, who backed US carrier deployments during the war; Cooper, who led naval operations against Iran and the Houthis, also considered close to Israel
Daniel Edelson, New York|11:36

Vice Adm. Charles Bradford “Brad” Cooper II is set to become the next commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), overseeing American military operations across the Middle East, including against Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis.

The appointment, pending Senate confirmation, will elevate the 58-year-old officer to the rank of full admiral (four-star general). He is expected to replace Gen. Michael Kurilla, whose term will conclude this summer.

A seasoned naval warfare officer, Cooper has served as CENTCOM’s deputy commander since February. Before that, he led U.S. naval forces in the Middle East for three years, commanding the Fifth Fleet and spearheading multinational maritime cooperation. His career includes key leadership roles across U.S. Pacific and Africa Commands, the Pentagon and the White House. He also served in combat operations in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and the Red Sea, and as a senior adviser to the Afghan government. During his time in naval command, Cooper directed maritime operations against Iran and the Houthis, including the campaign launched in December to secure commercial shipping in the Gulf and Red Sea. He described it in February as “the largest and most intense operation by the U.S. Navy since World War II.” He also initiated the Navy’s first task force integrating unmanned systems and artificial intelligence.

Behind the polished image of a three-star Navy officer lies a man raised across military bases worldwide as the son of a career Army officer. Born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in 1967, Cooper grew up immersed in military life, which he carried into a 30-year career from the Caribbean to the Red Sea.

He is married to Susan, a speech therapist he met in high school. Together, they raised two children through nine operational deployments, including missions off South America, over Bosnia and in Afghanistan’s ground campaign, where he served as a senior adviser. Cooper is known as a well-liked commander who regularly credits his team for their achievements.

Cooper is regarded as a close ally of Israel and is highly familiar with the regional landscape. In early 2025, he visited Israel at the invitation of then-IDF deputy chief of staff Amir Baram, toured Air Force bases, attended operational briefings in the north and south and held discussions with senior IDF officials on confronting the Houthi threat. He also participated in strategic assessments and air drills involving Israeli F-35s and American F-15s and was involved in planning the humanitarian aid pier for Gaza, ensuring Israel’s security needs were taken into account.
CENTCOM’s increasing focus on Israel

The choice of a Navy admiral over Army Gen. James Mingo, initially seen as the frontrunner, raised eyebrows at the Pentagon amid a broader reshuffle of senior leadership under the Trump administration. Mingo had ties to former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley, a known adversary of Trump, and served in senior roles during the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan—factors seen as political liabilities by current Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who has replaced much of the Pentagon's Biden-era leadership.

Cooper's appointment comes as Israel remains a central focus of CENTCOM following its official move from U.S. European Command in January 2021. This shift, partly driven by the Abraham Accords, aimed to foster greater security collaboration among the U.S., Israel and moderate Arab states against Iran and its proxies. Cooper played a key role in developing these new frameworks.

His predecessor, Kurilla, is ending a notably active tenure that began in April 2022 and included unprecedented support for Israel since the start of the war. Kurilla visited Israel more than 15 times in two years, including during and before the current war. Israeli defense officials credit him with key Pentagon decisions, such as deploying U.S. aircraft carriers to the region.

A recent New York Times report revealed Kurilla as a leading advocate within the U.S. defense establishment for a joint strike with Israel against Iran's nuclear facilities, opposing voices in the Trump administration who favored continued diplomacy with Tehran. According to the report, Israel hoped to strike Iran before Kurilla's departure. Kurilla's final year also included a controversial incident: an investigation was launched after he allegedly shoved an aircrew member during a flight to Israel over logistical issues. Although the standard practice is to suspend officers under investigation, Kurilla remained in his post.

CENTCOM denied any knowledge of a formal investigation, and Israeli defense officials say the incident did not affect their high regard for Kurilla, praising his hands-on involvement, pragmatic approach and consistent advocacy for Israel's needs at the highest levels in Washington.

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

UN Security Council new members: Israel-friendly states replace hostile ones in 2026

06.05.25 – Th - Omer 48

A welcome shift at UN Security Council: Israel-friendly states to replace hostile ones
UN Security Council shake-up favors Israel: Slovenia and Algeria out, Latvia, Liberia, Congo in; Colombia to replace anti-Israel Guyana; new members take seats starting January 2026

Itamar Eichner|08:30

The makeup of the UN Security Council is set to become less hostile toward Israel following elections held this week for five new non-permanent members, who will take their seats in January 2026.

Latvia, which just last month abstained in the EU vote on suspending trade agreements with Israel, will replace Slovenia, considered one of the more hostile members toward Israel. Colombia will take the seat currently held by Guyana, which has pushed a series of anti-Israel resolutions since the war in Gaza began. While Colombian President Gustavo Petro has taken a sharply anti-Israel stance and led severe measures against Jerusalem, his term is set to end in May 2026, and Israel hopes for a shift in Bogotá's position thereafter.

Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — both of which have expressed openness to moving their embassies to Jerusalem — will join the council in place of Algeria, considered perhaps the most hostile country toward Israel currently on the council, and Sierra Leone.

Another notable change is the replacement of South Korea with Bahrain. While South Korea has been relatively friendly to Israel, it still supported most ceasefire resolutions during the war. Bahrain, for its part, is expected to voice the Arab League's position but is a signatory to the Abraham Accords and is not expected to adopt as adversarial a tone as Algeria.

Greece, Panama and Denmark will continue to serve on the council. Greece and Panama are both seen as friendly to Israel, while Denmark is viewed as relatively balanced. Israeli officials say that overall, the new composition marks a clear improvement for Jerusalem, at least in terms of tone.

Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon said, "I welcome the countries elected to serve on the Security Council. We look forward to working with the new members and are confident their election will bring moral clarity to the council's work."

Meanwhile, the Security Council — still in its current composition — voted on Wednesday on a draft resolution submitted by 10 non-permanent members calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the entry of humanitarian aid to all parts of the enclave. The proposal was initiated by Slovenia, Guyana and Algeria, and ultimately failed thanks to a U.S. veto.

This was the first resolution brought before the Security Council since President Donald Trump returned to the White House.

Acting U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Dorothy Shea defended Washington's decision to veto the resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, asserting that such a move without a clear condemnation of Hamas would amount to "rewarding terror."

"After all, it was Hamas that launched the brutal attack," Shea said. "It continues to hold Israeli hostages and uses Palestinian civilians as human shields." She criticized Security Council members for repeatedly refusing to denounce the terrorist organization.

Acting US Ambassador to the United Nations Dorothy Shea defends Washington's decision to veto the resolution

"The United States supports Israel's right to defend itself and defeat Hamas so that it can never again pose a threat," she said. "Our opposition to this resolution should not come as a surprise. The U.S. has made clear it will not support any effort that fails to condemn Hamas. We cannot allow the Council to reward terrorism."

Shea argued that an immediate ceasefire would only serve to empower Hamas and enable it to stage another October 7-style attack. "No one wants to see Palestinians in Gaza hungry or thirsty," she said. "But Hamas must accept the proposal currently on the table. The United States is working with Egypt and Qatar to bring this terrible conflict to an end."

In closing, Shea declared: "Let us instead demand that Hamas surrender and leave Gaza for good. A real agreement—one that frees the hostages, brings about a ceasefire, and allows Palestinians to break free from Hamas—is what we must aim for."

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

US vetoes UN resolution forcing Gaza ceasefire; would amount to rewarding terror

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

US vetoes UN Security Council resolution urging immediate Gaza ceasefire
Resolution was supported by 14 of the 15 council members, but the US blocked its adoption; resolution also called for unimpeded entry of humanitarian aid across Gaza;
'The focus now must be on pressuring Hamas, not the State of Israel'
Itamar Eichner|23:31

The United Nations Security Council voted Wednesday on a resolution submitted by 10 non-permanent member states calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the unimpeded entry of humanitarian aid across the territory. The resolution, initiated by Slovenia, Guyana, and Algeria, was supported by 14 of the 15 council members—but the United States exercised its veto, blocking its adoption.

The Security Council members that supported the proposal are: China, France, Russia, Britain, Algeria, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, South Korea, Japan, Guyana, Ecuador, Slovenia, Malta and Switzerland.

Since President Donald Trump returned to the White House, no Security Council resolutions concerning Israel have passed a vote. A senior U.S. State Department official described the latest resolution as "ill-conceived and shameful," particularly "at a time when serious questions are being raised about the effectiveness, funding and priorities of the United Nations." The official warned that the measure would "undermine ongoing diplomatic efforts to secure a ceasefire."

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such a move without a clear condemnation of Hamas would amount to “rewarding terror.”

“After all, it was Hamas that launched the brutal attack,” Shea said. “It continues to hold Israeli hostages and uses Palestinian civilians as human shields.” She criticized Security Council members for repeatedly refusing to denounce the terrorist organization. Acting U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Dorothy Shea defended Washington’s decision to veto the resolution

“The United States supports Israel’s right to defend itself and defeat Hamas so that it can never again pose a threat,” she said. “Our opposition to this resolution should not come as a surprise. The U.S. has made clear it will not support any effort that fails to condemn Hamas. We cannot allow the Council to reward terrorism.”

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Pakistan’s ambassador sharply criticized the decision, calling it “a sad day.”

“Once again, Council members have shown they are willing to uphold the responsibility entrusted to them,” the Pakistani envoy said. “But the veto sends a dangerous message—that the lives of more than two million Palestinians do not matter. Gaza is worse than hell on earth. Disease and despair are spreading faster each day.” He echoed figures released by Gaza’s Hamas-run Health Ministry, claiming that 100 Palestinians were killed and 400 injured in the past 24 hours.

In contrast, Israel’s Ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, condemned the proposed resolution and thanked the United States for blocking it. “You chose appeasement. You chose surrender,” he said. “This resolution sends a dangerous message to Hamas: reject every offer, and the international community will reward you. Hold civilians hostage, and the UN will grant you legitimacy. This is not diplomacy—this is surrender to terror.”

Danon reaffirmed Israel’s stance that no ceasefire will occur as long as hostages remain in Gaza. “Israel will continue to apply military pressure and act by all necessary means until every hostage is returned,” he declared.

He also expressed gratitude to Washington: “We thank the United States for its moral clarity and leadership today. In standing firm, the U.S. chose truth, justice, and the fight against terror—rather than giving legitimacy to Hamas’s lies and extortion.”

Ahead of the vote, Danon criticized the initiative: “At a time when negotiations to release hostages are making real progress, some are advancing a resolution that will contribute nothing. The focus now must be on pressuring Hamas, not the State of Israel.”

UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric also addressed the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, calling the situation “unacceptable.” He noted that “civilians are risking—and often losing—their lives simply trying to access food.” The UN has expressed opposition to a new aid distribution mechanism in the territory, and Dujarric reiterated the organization’s

warning that the current system is a “recipe for disaster—and that is precisely what we are seeing.”

Slovenian Ambassador to the UN Samuel Žbogar told Reuters: “The time to act has long passed. It is our historical responsibility not to remain silent.”

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

PM explores ousting Edelstein to delay Knesset dissolution; haredim push back

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Netanyahu explores ousting Edelstein to delay dissolution of Knesset, but haredim push back

As the crisis peaks, Shas blasts Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee chair, who refuses to back down; After meeting Netanyahu, he says talks were 'positive'—the same words he used before the last blowup

Moran Azulay|23:09

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Wednesday that he is expected to meet again on Thursday with Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman Yuli Edelstein, after their meeting Wednesday evening suggested that “there is a path to bridging the gaps” on passing a military draft exemption law for ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students.

Netanyahu recently sounded out ultra-Orthodox leaders on a proposal: Would they agree not to dissolve the Knesset during the current session in exchange for Edelstein's removal from his post? The response from the Haredi parties was unequivocal: “Ousting him won't help us.”

Meanwhile, one ultra-Orthodox minister believes the meetings are meant not to resolve the draft law crisis, but simply to remove Edelstein. “This is Netanyahu's style—when there were threats to torpedo the trapped profits tax bill, he fired [Yoav] Gallant. Now that there are threats to dissolve the Knesset, he'll probably oust Edelstein tonight,” the minister said. However, he added, that won't solve anything: “The problem will remain. Netanyahu never wanted—and still doesn't want—to resolve the issue of Torah students' status. The only solution is to dissolve the Knesset.”

Following the meeting, Netanyahu's office said he would also meet Thursday with Shas senior figure Ariel Atias and Cabinet Secretary Yossi Fuchs “to advance a solution.” According to a statement from Netanyahu's office, “tonight's meeting clarified that there is a way to bridge the gaps on the draft issue.”

Edelstein's office issued a nearly identical statement to the one released after his recent meeting with Haredi leaders, saying: “The Edelstein-Netanyahu meeting has concluded. The meeting was held in good spirits. Further discussions have been scheduled.” After Edelstein's meeting with the ultra-Orthodox parties earlier this week, a similar message

was issued, followed shortly thereafter by those parties announcing their support for dissolving the government.

Ahead of the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, Edelstein released a statement and a clip from a speech he gave last month. "A law without effective personal sanctions is not a draft, it's evasion," he declared.

"There is nothing new under the sun," Edelstein said, referring to his inconclusive meeting with Haredi leaders. "The draft law framework I presented in our meeting is the same one we've been discussing for over a year. A law without effective personal sanctions, with high enlistment targets and a sharp upward trajectory—isn't conscription, it's evasion. I've opposed that all along."

Edelstein added: "While IDF soldiers and commanders are in the midst of a campaign to defeat Hamas, I am committed to them, to their families, and to Israel's security—to broaden the draft base, secure the IDF's future for generations, and ease the burden on reservists."

Even as United Torah Judaism and Shas threaten political consequences, Edelstein made his position clear: "I am not in favor of dissolving the coalition or bringing down the government, and I do not share in the hostility toward our Haredi brothers. On the contrary. As chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, with full awareness of the security threats we face, I say this openly: We must not pause our efforts on multiple fronts to engage in politics. The order of the day is to pass an effective and genuine draft law. After 77 years, we can make history."

Sources close to Netanyahu said the prime minister is currently in a "marathon of meetings" to avoid early elections. "Elections are not what the country needs right now. They send the wrong message to our enemies in wartime," a source said. "He's speaking with senior rabbis and ultra-Orthodox party leaders. Right now, he's meeting with Yuli [Edelstein] and doing everything he can to prevent elections."

Despite those efforts, the Haredi parties have already identified Edelstein as the main obstacle to their preferred draft exemption law. They emerged from their long and unproductive meeting with him earlier this week deeply dissatisfied, despite his attempt to frame the meeting as "positive." Significant gaps remain between the sides, particularly on enlistment targets and penalties for draft dodgers.

According to ultra-Orthodox officials, Edelstein introduced new conditions that had not previously been on the table. As a result, they decided not to wait for Netanyahu, and the leading Haredi rabbis, who are the ultimate decision-makers, issued statements supporting withdrawal from the coalition, a bill to dissolve the Knesset, or both. Their frustration, however, is not solely aimed at Edelstein—they are also pointing fingers at Netanyahu.

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

PM in recording: IDF chief & defense minister ousted to advance draft exemption

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Netanyahu in leaked recording: IDF chief and defense minister ousted to advance draft exemption law

In conversation with a senior rabbi urging the prime minister to support the draft evasion law, Netanyahu said: 'When the defense minister is against you and the chief of staff is against you, you can't move forward. Now we can move forward ... they have delayed us for too long'

ynet|20:50

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is heard in newly released recordings admitting that he effectively removed IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in order to push forward legislation aimed at exempting ultra-Orthodox Israelis from military service. The comments were revealed Wednesday evening in a report aired by Channel 13.

In a private conversation with a senior rabbi, Netanyahu is heard saying: "We need to save not only the State of Israel, but also the Torah world—and that is something I deeply believe in. With God's help, that is what we will do. To achieve this, we need time to pass the law properly, in a way that cannot be challenged. We had enormous obstacles that we removed. You know, when the defense minister is against you and the chief of staff is against you, you can't move forward. Now we can move forward."

The prime minister continued: "There are people trying to undermine us. The army is now doing exactly what we asked of it—creating pathways, enabling the military to absorb ultra-Orthodox recruits while preserving a Haredi lifestyle. It's amazing what's being done, so that people enter the army as Haredim and leave as Haredim. We don't want them to enter Haredi and leave secular. In fact, because we replaced the chief of staff and the defense minister—who had blocked this throughout the entire period—we can now move forward with greater security and professionalism."

The recordings are released amid growing tensions between coalition partners and public scrutiny over unequal service obligations.

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Shas likely to support the dissolution of Knesset: 'Edelstein is blocking everything'

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Shas likely to support the dissolution of Knesset, Deri: 'Edelstein is blocking everything'
In an urgent and fateful meeting called by the Shas chairman, the party decided to support dissolution of the Knesset; Deri harshly attacked the chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee: 'Edelstein is acting out of personal revenge. We have no choice';
Netanyahu is scheduled to meet with Edelstein tonight

Shilo Freid, Moran Azulay|19:14

Amid growing fractures within the coalition, statements and briefings calling for the dissolution of the Knesset are now being issued primarily by the rabbinical leadership of

the Degel HaTorah faction of the United Torah Judaism party. This shift comes after Agudat Yisrael—Degel's partner in the alliance—led last week's push toward dismantling the government.

Notably absent from the conversation for much of Wednesday was Shas chairman Aryeh Deri. Neither Deri nor his party's rabbis made public statements regarding the unfolding coalition crisis. However, by late afternoon, Deri convened Shas ministers and Knesset members for an urgent meeting outside the Knesset. Following the meeting, it became clear that Shas is likely to back a bill to dissolve the Knesset.

Shas spiritual leader Rabbi Reuven Elbaz, a senior member of the party's Council of Torah Sages and a prominent opponent of military conscription, reportedly invited National Unity leader Benny Gantz for a private meeting. During the party meeting, Deri pointed the finger at Likud lawmaker Yuli Edelstein, chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, accusing him of sabotaging the coalition out of personal vendetta. "Edelstein is blocking everything. He wants to bring down Bibi's coalition out of revenge. He's the reason we see no way forward. He's dragging the right-wing bloc and the religious camp into an unprecedented political crisis because he didn't get a cabinet post," Deri said.

Sources in Degel HaTorah had earlier noted that Deri was fully informed of developments and would support the dissolution proposal. Last night, some sources indicated Deri was still attempting to broker a compromise—but emphasized that leaving the government had never been off the table.

In an attempt to de-escalate the crisis, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was scheduled to meet with Edelstein on Wednesday night. Shas officials, however, continued to single him out: "We can be flexible with everyone, but Edelstein is the problem," they said following their party meeting.

Even if Shas ultimately supports dissolving the Knesset, it may allow United Torah Judaism to take credit for the move. Party insiders are reportedly concerned about backlash from Shas's base—which includes many traditional voters, some of whom serve in the military and are loyal to Netanyahu—if the party is seen as actively breaking up the government.

Strategically, Shas may be reluctant to bring down the coalition at a time when city rabbi appointments are imminent—positions the party hopes to fill with its candidates, including Deri's nephew in Be'er Sheva. For that, maintaining control over the Interior Ministry and the Ministry for Religious Services would be advantageous.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid, meanwhile, struck a triumphant tone. Speaking in the Knesset, he announced that his party, Yesh Atid, would submit a bill to dissolve the Knesset next week. "This Knesset is finished. It has nowhere left to go. All it has brought to the State of Israel is pain, tragedy, bereavement and crisis," he said.

"You cannot continue leading us from one disaster to the next. You will not pass a draft-dodging law while Israeli children are dying daily defending this homeland. It's time for a coalition of hope, one that can heal this wounded nation," Lapid added.

Notably, the opposition could have initiated the dissolution process this week, having been aware of the ultra-Orthodox deadline in advance. However, it only moved forward Wednesday morning after the rabbinic announcements were issued, submitting three separate bills to dissolve the Knesset.

'Netanyahu doesn't grasp the moment'

The public statements from leading rabbis on Wednesday morning came as little surprise to observers who had noted increasingly harsh rhetoric from ultra-Orthodox leaders in recent days. On Tuesday, Degel HaTorah chairman Moshe Gafni delivered a message from Rabbi Moshe Hillel Hirsch: "If no solution is found by tonight, actions will escalate."

Late Tuesday night, ultra-Orthodox representatives emerged frustrated from a lengthy meeting with Edelstein, who many in the bloc blame for the current crisis. Despite Edelstein's characterization of the meeting as "positive," participants described it as a failure. The core disagreement remains the terms of the draft law—particularly the imposition of sanctions on those who evade military service. According to the ultra-Orthodox parties, Edelstein introduced additional conditions that had not previously been discussed, prompting the Council of Torah Sages to act independently of Netanyahu and issue statements indicating their readiness to either leave the coalition or support the dissolution of the Knesset—or both.

The rabbis also directed blame at Netanyahu himself. They accuse Edelstein of demanding sweeping punitive measures for draft evaders—including the cancellation of property tax discounts, revocation of income tax credits, exclusion from subsidized housing, imposition of purchase taxes on first homes, ineligibility for academic tuition subsidies, denial of driver's licenses and travel permits, and removal of public transit discounts.

Rabbi Dov Landau reportedly declined to speak with Netanyahu on Wednesday morning—a longstanding practice on his part—but notably, Rabbi Hirsch also refused contact, despite having spoken with the prime minister as recently as March. A source close to Rabbi Hirsch said: "If the prime minister wants to speak, he needs to bring something new."

"Netanyahu doesn't grasp the scale of the crisis we're facing," senior ultra-Orthodox political sources told Ynet. "Yuli is demanding conditions harsher than what even the opposition would settle for. So it's not at all certain that we'd have a harder time negotiating with the opposition than with him."

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Targeted assassination at a barbershop: Airstrike reported in Khan Younis

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Targeted assassination at a barbershop: Airstrike reported in Khan Younis

Attack reported in southern Gaza; footage shows heavy smoke rising and many people gathering in the area; Palestinian terror group sources: 'Reports of the killing of a senior official are false, the IDF attacked empty towers'

Einav Halabi, Elisha Ben Kimon|18:20

A rare Israeli airstrike Wednesday afternoon reportedly hit a barbershop in a city in southern Gaza, according to local Palestinian media. Footage from the scene showed heavy smoke rising and large crowds gathering nearby.

Sources affiliated with Palestinian terror groups, quoted in Gaza-based media, denied claims that a senior operative had been assassinated in the strike. "Reports of a high-profile elimination are false," they said, alleging that "the IDF struck empty towers."

Separately, Palestinian reports stated that three people were killed in an Israeli strike in Beit Lahia, in northern Gaza. Earlier in the day, additional strikes were reported in the Hamad neighborhood of northwest Khan Younis and near a mosque in the al-Nasr neighborhood of Gaza City. As of Wednesday evening, Israel had not issued a statement addressing these specific incidents.

Gazan sources also reported a "heavy Israeli strike" near the Shuhada Shati School, adjacent to al-Quds University in western Gaza City, as well as another strike at the Tamos junction in the al-Nasr neighborhood.

In recent weeks, forces from the IDF's Nahal Brigade have been operating in Beit Lahia under the command of the 162nd Division. During their deployment in the area, troops have targeted a wide range of terrorist infrastructure both from the air and on the ground, including operatives, weapons caches, booby-trapped buildings, and tunnel shafts. In one documented operation, soldiers destroyed a booby-trapped building identified via drone surveillance. The structure concealed explosives hidden inside a sack, apparently intended to target Israeli forces.

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Hezbollah attempts presence in southern Lebanon with rows of prefab structures

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Hezbollah attempts to reestablish presence in southern Lebanon

Amid its declining standing, Hezbollah is attempting to reestablish its foothold in Shiite villages in southern Lebanon through a civilian 'association' that provides temporary structures to residents — which are later expected to become terrorist outposts

Lior Ben Ari|17:58

Footage from the funeral of a Hezbollah operative recently killed in southern Lebanon illustrated the complex situation unfolding in the country. Hundreds of the terrorist organization's supporters marched through the rubble-strewn streets of the village of Aita

al-Shaab, waving Hezbollah flags and chanting religious songs associated with the terror group, just a short distance from IDF troops stationed along the border.

The terrorist, Mohammad Ali Srour, was killed in a drone strike that targeted a vehicle on the Aita al-Shaab–Debel road in southern Lebanon. Following the announcement of his death, Hezbollah-affiliated social media accounts circulated an invitation to attend his funeral in the village, which lies just one kilometer from the Israeli border. According to the Lebanese broadcaster Al-Jadeed, the funeral was held “in view of Israeli soldiers positioned in the area of al-Raheb.”

Meanwhile, alongside Hezbollah’s ongoing activities, Lebanon’s official authorities are also calling for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from five locations still held by the IDF in the country’s south. Their demands also include a halt to airstrikes and the release of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel. Hezbollah would likely be pressing these same demands through far less diplomatic means, were its standing in the country stronger. For now, residents of southern Lebanese villages, many of them from Hezbollah strongholds, are gradually returning to their homes, resuming daily life, and awaiting aid and reconstruction.

Hezbollah’s ‘association’ and the kidnapped fisherman

Israel continues to monitor Hezbollah’s activities in Lebanon, and the ongoing airstrikes reflect the sustained military pressure. On Wednesday, Lebanese media reported that Israel distributed leaflets threatening a senior Hezbollah figure residing in the village of Yaroun, Mohammad Abbas Shahin. The message warned Shahin that he was under aerial and ground surveillance and urged him, “for his own sake and for the sake of the residents of Yaroun,” not to cooperate with the association Wa A’inu Ala al-Birr — a Hezbollah-linked civilian group that allows the organization to operate under the guise of social aid.

This group has donated portable structures to several villages in southern Lebanon, many of which have been targeted by the IDF in recent months. Israel’s precision strikes against Hezbollah operatives and infrastructure have reinforced suspicions that the association serves as a civilian cover for military activity, similar to the previously exposed Hezbollah-affiliated organization “Green Without Borders.”

On May 17, a security source told the Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar, which is affiliated with Hezbollah, that Israel had struck all of the prefab structures in towns along the western sector of the border.

The Alma Research and Education Center, which studies security developments in northern Israel, published a report in April detailing Hezbollah’s use of Wa A’inu Ala al-Birr. The report stated: “The association’s charitable and social aid activities are part of Hezbollah’s broader influence strategy.” It also noted that “the campaign to deploy mobile structures along the contact line is part of Hezbollah’s renewed military footprint in southern Lebanon.” According to the report, the association’s financial ties to Hezbollah and Iran are explicit, and its director, Afif Shuman, appears to be exploiting its financial resources for personal enrichment at the expense of Hezbollah’s Shiite base.

The center further noted that Hezbollah's tactic is clear: flood the contact line with identical portable structures. While some of the structures may indeed be used by civilians and farmers, others — especially those placed in locations designated by Hezbollah as operationally strategic — are expected to become terrorist outposts staffed by terrorists.

At the same time, Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV reported that "four Israeli boats crossed the buoy line and abducted a fisherman from his boat off the coast of Ras al-Naqoura."

According to Al-Akhbar, contact was lost with the fisherman, identified as Ali Fneish, after Israeli vessels surrounded two fishing boats approximately four kilometers into Lebanon's territorial waters near Ras al-Naqoura.

The IDF has yet to respond to the Lebanese reports of the alleged "abduction."

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Reports of an unusual explosion in Syria: An Israeli drone attacked

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Reports of an unusual explosion in Syria: 'An Israeli drone attacked' | Watch

After two rockets were launched into the Golan Heights Tuesday, and after Israel attacked in response in its northeastern neighbor's territory, Syria is now reporting an explosion at a missile depot in the Hama area - and 4 deaths. Qatari report: 'Israel attacked with a drone'

Lior Ben Ari|17:06

Syrian media reported a significant explosion on Thursday at a former military site near the village of al-Rabiya in rural Hama, where a missile storage facility was reportedly located. According to Syrian radio station Sham FM, "the cause of the explosion remains unknown, and no information has yet been received regarding the extent of the damage."

Qatari outlet Al-Araby and the Iraq-based Sabrin News agency, affiliated with pro-Iranian militias, claimed the blast was the result of an Israeli drone strike. Other reports indicated that four people were killed in the incident.

Additional unconfirmed reports in Syrian media claimed that Israel also targeted a Syrian air defense battalion west of Hama airport, near the villages of Matnin and al-Rabiya. According to those accounts, two individuals were killed and three others wounded. Another report alleged that the IDF carried out artillery fire toward Daraa in southern Syria. However, the IDF said it was "not currently aware of any fire toward Syria."

The Syrian news outlet SyriaTV confirmed the death toll in Hama as four, but noted conflicting reports regarding the cause of the explosion. Saudi-owned Al-Hadath claimed that drone activity was heard in the area shortly before the missile depot detonated.

The incident follows a separate security alert on Wednesday at 9:36 p.m., when sirens sounded in the Israeli communities of Hispin and Ramat Magshimim in the southern

Golan Heights. The IDF reported that two projectiles were launched from Syrian territory and landed in open areas inside Israel.

Defense Minister Israel Katz responded to the rocket fire by holding the Syrian regime directly accountable: "We view the president of Syria as personally responsible for every threat and launch against the State of Israel. A full response will follow shortly. We will not return to the reality of October 7."

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Rabbis refuse to meet PM: Edelstein bill derails Orthodox, may collapse coalition

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Amid coalition crisis, senior rabbis refuse to meet with Netanyahu: 'He's totally out of the loop'

Despite Haredi threat to quit, sources close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insist that Knesset would not be dissolved, despite growing fears of early elections

Shilo Freid|Updated:12:45

Israel's ruling Likud party is directing mounting frustration at senior lawmaker Yuli Edelstein, accusing him of derailing efforts to pass a military draft exemption law for ultra-Orthodox men and pushing the coalition toward collapse. The internal discord comes as the country's religious parties, central to the coalition, remain largely silent amid growing speculation over a potential government breakup.

Edelstein, chair of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, is overseeing the controversial draft legislation and has resisted pressure from Likud to soften his stance. Party officials say his refusal to compromise is threatening the coalition's stability at a sensitive security moment.

"Despite the ultra-Orthodox compromising again and again, Edelstein has decided to break up the government," a senior coalition official said Wednesday. "He's not going to pass the draft law, not one Haredi will enlist, and we could end up with a left-wing government in the middle of a war."

Sources close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted that the Knesset would not be dissolved, despite growing fears of early elections.

Edelstein has maintained a consistent position for more than a year, pushing for a version of the draft law that includes sanctions for eligible ultra-Orthodox men who do not enlist. He wants to exclude recruits to emergency services like the police and Magen David Adom from counting toward draft quotas, insisting the law should focus on combat soldiers and combat-support roles.

"What's happening now is an attempt to weaken a law that actually enables enlistment," a source close to Edelstein said. "His bill is logical, effective and fair. We understand the

ultra-Orthodox fear — this is a historic change — but it's the only draft law that will realistically leave the committee.”

The disagreement has sparked warnings from the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party, whose spiritual leaders are weighing whether to leave the government or support dissolving the Knesset. Rabbi Moshe Hillel Hirsch and Rabbi Dov Landau — two top Haredi leaders — have signaled that they may instruct their party to exit the coalition. This morning, Landau reportedly declined to speak with Netanyahu, though it should be noted he routinely avoids direct contact with Israeli political leaders. In addition, sources told Ynetnews that Hirsch also refused a conversation with Netanyahu today, despite the two having spoken as recently as March. A source in Rabbi Hirsch's circle said, “If the prime minister wants to talk, he should bring something new.”

Senior ultra-Orthodox political figures told Ynet that Netanyahu “is out of touch and doesn't grasp the magnitude of what we're dealing with.” They added, “Yuli Edelstein is demanding far more than the opposition is willing to offer us, so it's not certain negotiations will be harder with them going forward.” The Haredi boycott in the Knesset is expected to continue today, marking the fifth straight week that coalition-sponsored private bills will be blocked from advancing.

Meanwhile, the prime minister's adviser, Nevo Katz, met this morning with MK Moshe Gafni in an effort to bridge the divide. Allies of Rabbi Hirsch are also seeking a compromise but admit chances are slim. “It's very unlikely, but we're trying,” a source close to the rabbi said.

“The senior rabbis have decided — we're going to elections,” a Degel HaTorah source said. “There's been no progress on the draft issue, and the party may soon quit the coalition.”

A bill to dissolve the Knesset has not yet been submitted, though opposition lawmakers were prepared for such a move after the Shavuot holiday. If submitted next week, it could pass a preliminary reading.

The Shas party, also part of the coalition, has yet to comment publicly and reportedly imposed a media blackout on its Knesset members. The silence from Shas and other religious factions has added to the uncertainty surrounding the government's future. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, usually outspoken, have not commented on the crisis.

Edelstein's stance has drawn strong support from reservist groups, who say a weak draft law would betray public trust and endanger national security. “We are stretched to the limit,” the Brothers in Arms reservist organization said. “To pass a draft-evasion law now is a blow to Israel's defense.”

Meanwhile, ultra-Orthodox critics accused Edelstein of deceiving them. “He hid the real content of the bill and is using us in his fight against Netanyahu,” one source said. Despite a late-night meeting between Edelstein and ultra-Orthodox representatives, disagreements remain over when sanctions would take effect and how draft targets will be defined.

As political maneuvering intensifies, Netanyahu faces a growing test from within his own party. Edelstein has signaled he will not back down.

“Now is the moment of truth,” said a reservist statement supporting Edelstein. “Don’t give in now. We’re counting on you.”

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

US detains family of Colorado firebomb attack on pro-Israel rally

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

US detains family of suspect in firebomb attack on pro-Israel rally in Colorado
U.S. immigration officials detain wife and children of Mohamed Sabry Soliman;
authorities are investigating whether they had prior knowledge, saying they are set for
deportation in the coming days

Daniel Edelson, New York, News Agencies|07:23

U.S. immigration authorities on Tuesday detained the wife and five children of an Egyptian man accused of firebombing a pro-Israel rally in Boulder, Colorado, and moved to deport them, officials said.

The family of Mohamed Sabry Soliman, 45, may be removed from the country as early as Tuesday night, the White House said in a post on X. Homeland Security officials are investigating whether Soliman’s family had prior knowledge of the June 1 attack or offered any support. No charges have been filed against them, and officials have not indicated any evidence of their involvement.

Soliman is accused of throwing Molotov cocktails and using a makeshift flamethrower at a weekly event organized by Run for Their Lives, a group advocating for the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas. Twelve people were injured, ranging in age from 52 to 88, including a Holocaust survivor. Three remained hospitalized Wednesday at UCHealth University of Colorado Hospital.

According to police, Soliman had prepared 18 incendiary devices but used only two during the attack. He intended to kill all 20 participants but abandoned his plan out of fear, authorities said. Witnesses said he shouted “Free Palestine” during the assault and caught himself on fire while throwing the second device.

In statements to investigators, Soliman said he had planned the attack for a year and waited until his daughter graduated before carrying it out. He expressed no remorse and said he would do it again if given the chance. Authorities said he took a concealed-carry class and attempted to buy a firearm but was denied because he is not a U.S. citizen.

Originally from the village of el-Motamedia in Egypt’s Nile Delta, Soliman spent 17 years in Kuwait before moving to Colorado Springs three years ago. He entered the U.S. on a tourist visa in August 2022, which expired six months later. He applied for asylum the following month and was granted a temporary work permit in March 2023, which has since lapsed.

His daughter was recently profiled in a local newspaper for her academic achievements and aspirations to attend medical school.

Soliman faces multiple counts of attempted first-degree murder, use of incendiary devices, and a federal hate crime. He is being held on a \$10 million bond and could face up to 624 years in prison if convicted. His attorney, Kathryn Herold, declined to comment after a court hearing Monday.

A community vigil is scheduled for Wednesday evening in Boulder to honor the victims and denounce the attack.

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

IDF strike Syria after rocket fire on Golan Heights; parties seeking to destabilize

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

IDF strikes in Syria after rocket fire on Golan Heights

Israel blames Syrian regime, while Damascus denies involvement, saying it 'has never been and will never be a threat to anyone in the region'

News Agencies|Yesterday | 07:30

The IDF carried out airstrikes overnight Wednesday against targets in southern Syria, in response to a rocket fired toward the Golan Heights the previous day.

"The Syrian regime is responsible for the current situation in Syria," the military said in a statement. Defense Minister Israel Katz echoed that sentiment, holding Syria's leadership "directly responsible" for the escalation.

Syria's state-run SANA news agency reported shelling in the Yarmuk Basin area, located in the western part of Daraa province.

The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said "violent explosions shook southern Syria," particularly around the town of Quneitra and the wider Daraa region, in the wake of Israeli airstrikes between Tuesday night and early Wednesday.

Syria's foreign ministry denied involvement in the rocket fire, stating the country "has never been and will never be a threat to anyone in the region." It accused unnamed parties of seeking to destabilize the region for their own purposes.

"The absolute priority in southern Syria is to extend the authority of the state and end the presence of weapons outside the framework of official institutions," the ministry added. The rocket attack marked the first such incident from Syria into Israeli territory since the ousting of longtime President Bashar Assad in December. Syria's interim leader, Ahmed al-Sharaa, previously led the Islamist faction credited with orchestrating the offensive that led to Assad's downfall.

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Statistics of political opinions conducted in 24 countries; majority negative of Israel

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

These countries view Israel the most negatively

A Pew Research Center study in 25 countries shows public opinion toward Israel is negative - and even more so toward the PM. The survey was conducted among the Israeli public: only 21% believe that a Palestinian state can exist in peace, the lowest numbers in more than a decade

Daniel Edelson, New York|01:58

A new comprehensive global survey published Tuesday by the Pew Research Center reveals widespread negative sentiment toward Israel and its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The survey, conducted in 24 countries among more than 28,000 respondents, found that in all but two countries—Kenya and Nigeria—Netanyahu's approval failed to exceed one-third.

Attitudes toward Israel as a whole were similarly critical: in 20 of the surveyed countries, a majority expressed an unfavorable view of the country. In the United States, 53% of respondents said they hold a negative opinion of Israel—an 11-point increase since 2022. In the United Kingdom, the percentage of those with an unfavorable view rose from 44% in 2013 to 61% today.

The data shows that younger people in many high-income countries—including Australia, Canada, France, Poland, South Korea and the U.S.—are more likely than older generations to view Israel negatively. The same trend is seen among those who identify as politically left-leaning, who consistently express more critical views of Israel than those on the political right.

The 10 countries with the most negative views of Israel were: Turkey (93%), Indonesia (80%), Japan (79%), the Netherlands (78%), Spain (75%), Sweden (75%), Australia (74%), Greece (72%), Italy (66%) and Germany (64%).

Conversely, the countries with the most favorable views of Israel were: Nigeria (59%), Kenya (50%), the U.S. (45%), India (34%), South Africa (34%), Hungary (36%), Brazil (32%), South Korea (31%), Canada (33%), and Argentina (26%). However, in most of these nations—except Nigeria and Kenya—negative opinions still outnumber positive ones.

Public attitudes toward Netanyahu largely mirror those toward Israel, with trust in the prime minister often lower than overall favorability ratings for the country itself.

In Israel: Discontent with leaders and declining hope for peace

Domestically, Netanyahu also faces a divided public. According to the same Pew report, 53% of Israelis surveyed view him negatively, compared to 45% who still support him.

Opposition leaders also fared poorly: dissatisfaction with Benny Gantz rose from 44% to 54% over the past year, while 61% of Israelis now view Yair Lapid unfavorably, with only 35% expressing a positive view.

Among Lapid's supporters, 78% identify as secular, compared to 70% of Gantz's base. Meanwhile, 86% of Netanyahu's supporters are religious or ultra-Orthodox.

The survey, which included a representative sample of around 1,000 Israelis and was conducted between February and March—during the ceasefire before the resumption of hostilities in Gaza—also highlighted a sharp drop in optimism about peace with the Palestinians. Only 21% of Israelis now believe a Palestinian state could exist peacefully alongside Israel, the lowest percentage recorded since 2013 and a 14-point drop from last year. The divide is stark: just 16% of Jewish respondents are optimistic about peace, compared to 40% of Arab citizens of Israel.

Only 41% of Israelis believe the Palestinian people are committed to peace, while 56% believe the Israeli public is. Notably, 45% said the Palestinian Authority is at least somewhat committed to peace—nearly identical to the 47% who said the same about the Israeli government.

Trust deficit and divided views on Gaza's future

The greatest perceived obstacle to peace is mutual distrust: 75% of Israelis cite the lack of trust as the central barrier. Other frequently cited challenges include the status of Jerusalem (70%), Israeli settlements (52%), internal political divisions, and the split between Hamas and Fatah. Despite the common view of settlements as a peace barrier, 44% of Israelis believe they enhance national security, while only 35% see them as harmful.

Opinions on Gaza's future remain mixed. A third of Israelis support continued Israeli control over the Strip after the war—a drop from 40% in the spring of 2023. No other option commands majority support, including a unified Palestinian administration, UN or UNRWA oversight, or rule by the Palestinian Authority or Hamas. Just 16% support allowing Gazans to choose their own leadership, and only 11% support other unspecified leadership alternatives.

Israelis also express deep skepticism about the role of the international community, with most viewing foreign governments and the UN as detrimental to peace efforts. The notable exception is the United States: 81% of Israelis believe Washington's involvement is helpful.

Despite its association with Hamas in Israeli public discourse, Qatar is seen by 29% of Israelis as a positive force in peace efforts—though 61% disagree. Support for Qatar is significantly higher among Israeli Arabs and political leftists, while it is nearly nonexistent on the political right.

While 62% of ultra-Orthodox Jews and 61% of religious Jews believe Israel is respected globally, only 25% of secular Israelis share that view—compared to 74% who say the country's global image is negative.

Growing ambivalence and 'public fatigue'

The Pew report found clear ideological divides: secular and traditional Jews are more likely to see Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority as potential peace partners, while religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews favor continued Israeli control over Gaza and express near-total distrust of the Palestinian side.

In a range of key questions—such as whether peace is achievable or whether the world will recognize a Palestinian state—15% to 20% of Israelis chose “depends” or “don't

know.” Researchers interpret this as a sign of public confusion or loss of faith in clear solutions, reflecting what they call a growing sense of “mental or emotional fatigue” among the Israeli public.

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Hamas rewriting response to ceasefire proposal as US pushes for breakthrough

06.04.25 – We - Omer 47

Hamas rewriting response to US ceasefire proposal as Washington pushes for breakthrough

Source familiar with details of negotiations told Ynet that Hamas is trying to make its response to the outline 'more positive'; Senior Hamas official: 'We will not agree to anything that does not include a promise to stop the war'

Einav Halabi, Lior Ben Ari, Itamar Eichner|00:16

A Palestinian source familiar with the negotiations toward a ceasefire in Gaza told Ynet on Tuesday evening that Hamas is currently revising its response to the proposal put forward by U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff, aiming to present a more positive reply that could serve as a basis for renewed talks. Witkoff, appointed by former President Donald Trump as his Middle East envoy, has reportedly been pressuring mediators to secure a response from Hamas that aligns more closely with his plan—hoping it could lead to proximity talks in Doha.

The U.S. hopes to announce a breakthrough before the Eid al-Adha holiday later this week. Such an announcement could pave the way for renewed negotiations between Israel and Hamas.

However, senior Hamas official Basem Naim clarified Tuesday evening that the group has conveyed to mediators its readiness for a new round of negotiations—but not based on the Witkoff framework approved by Israel.

“We cannot agree to any deal that does not guarantee an end to the war,” Naim stated, alleging that Witkoff returned to Hamas with “a completely different document than what had previously been agreed upon.” He claimed the proposal included vague language that failed to commit to ending the war in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Egyptian broadcaster Al-Rad reported that Hamas has backed down from many of its previous objections to the Witkoff proposal. According to the unverified report, Hamas has agreed to the deal with several amendments: following an initial 60-day phase, negotiations—under the auspices of the U.S., Egypt, and Qatar—would continue uninterrupted until a comprehensive, permanent ceasefire is reached. Other proposed amendments include immediate, unrestricted entry of aid to all parts of Gaza through UN agencies and the Red Crescent; sufficient quantities of various forms of humanitarian aid; Israeli forces to withdraw within one week to the positions they held

before the resumption of hostilities; and the establishment of an independent committee with full authority to govern the Strip.

Witkoff has reportedly asked Palestinian-American businessman Bishara Bahbah to remain in Doha and continue engaging with Hamas in an effort to bring the group closer to his proposal. The U.S. hopes Bahbah's continued presence signals that negotiations remain open and that the door has not closed. American officials are pushing to announce progress by the end of the holiday, even if only a statement about returning to talks is made.

Qatari and Egyptian mediators are also continuing direct discussions with Hamas. As part of the ongoing diplomatic efforts, Israel's Minister for Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer held a rare conversation with Qatar's prime minister—an unusual move given Dermer's known skepticism toward Qatar.

The outreach reportedly came at Witkoff's urging. Until recently, communication with Qatar was managed solely by Mossad chief David Barnea, who had led Israel's negotiation team until Dermer assumed a more prominent role.

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

Negotiations underway to reunite Arab parties: Oust Netanyahu, Smotrich & Ben Gvir

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

Negotiations underway to reunite Arab parties: 'Oust Netanyahu, Smotrich and Ben Gvir's government'

After winning 15 seats in 2020, Arab parties discuss running together again as possibility of early election looms; Knesset lawmaker Tibi: 'Such a list will boost Arab turnout,' although Balad opposes Abbas, seen as 'too moderate' Yuval Karni²³:39

Amid talks about a possible early election triggered by the controversy over the exemption law from military service, interest is growing among Arab parties inside and outside the Knesset. In recent weeks, quiet negotiations have been underway to unite all the Arab parties: Ra'am, Hadash, Ta'al and Balad. The goal is to replicate the dramatic success of the Joint List in the March 2020 Knesset elections, when it won 15 seats.

Afterward, the Joint List dissolved, partly due to Ra'am leader Mansour Abbas' decision to join a Zionist coalition. In the last elections, the far-left Balad party, which chose not to run with Hadash and Ta'al, failed to cross the electoral threshold, leaving the Arab factions with only 10 seats.

Following discussions over the past year about Ra'am no longer being part of a Zionist coalition and concerns over losing seats due to the Joint List's split, the Arab party leaders began quiet talks about reuniting the Joint List.

All the Arab party leaders support such a move, though Balad remains hesitant about partnering again with Mansour Abbas's Ra'am, viewing him as "too moderate." Sources within the Arab factions confirmed to ynet details of the negotiations, some of which were previously reported by ynet and Yedioth Ahronoth a few weeks ago.

Knesset member Ahmad Tibi (Hadash-Ta'al) confirmed Tuesday in an interview with Knesset Channel that talks are ongoing to reestablish the Joint List with all four parties. "We are working to reestablish the Joint List with all four parties. Such a list will ensure increased voter turnout among Arab voters, and thus we can oust the government of Netanyahu, Smotrich, and Ben Gvir," he said. Tibi added that such a union would bring the Arab parties 15 seats.

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

US has offered nuclear deal to Iran; Saudi & UAE will supply fuel for power

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

Uranium enrichment allowed under nuclear deal US has offered to Iran
Iran claims the proposal for a nuclear agreement 'raises many questions' and the White House is again threatening "serious consequences" if Iran rejects it; Washington is offering to allow Tehran to continue enriching uranium to a low level for several years, until a consortium is established with Arab countries that will transfer enriched uranium to power plants in Iran, when it would then be required to stop enrichment on its territory completely

News Agencies, Daniel Edelson, New York|23:20

Former U.S. President Donald Trump declared Tuesday that the United States would not agree to any deal allowing Iran to enrich uranium—just hours after the news outlet Axios reported that the American proposal currently under discussion with Tehran would, in fact, permit low-level enrichment for civilian use. This stance runs counter to Israel's demand for a complete dismantling of Iran's nuclear facilities to fully block any path to a nuclear weapon.

While the full details of the U.S. proposal have not been made public, The New York Times reported that the initial phase of the proposed deal would allow Iran to continue enriching uranium at low levels. Iranian and European officials told the newspaper that Washington is offering an interim agreement under which the U.S. would help Iran establish nuclear power reactors and launch negotiations to build enrichment facilities operated by a consortium of Arab states. Only once these conditions are met would Iran be required to halt all enrichment on its own soil.

In the meantime, Iran would be allowed to enrich uranium at low levels for several years until the new facilities become operational. The New York Times described this strategy as a U.S. attempt to "trap" Iran in a bear hug of regional cooperation—led by countries

such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE—that would permit the supply of fuel for power plants but prevent Iranian domestic enrichment.

Reuters reported Monday that Iran plans to formally reject the U.S. offer. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi did not confirm the report but hinted at dissatisfaction, stating during a visit to Lebanon that the proposal contains “many ambiguities” and “raises numerous questions.”

He reiterated that Iran would never agree to give up its ability to enrich uranium. “Continued enrichment on Iranian soil is a red line,” he said.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt was asked Tuesday about the negotiations and reiterated what she called a “crystal-clear” message. “The president has made his position unequivocal on Truth Social—it couldn’t be clearer. Iran will not be allowed to enrich uranium,” she said.

She added that Special Envoy Robert Witkoff had submitted a “detailed and broadly acceptable” offer to Iran’s regime. “The president hopes they will accept it. If not, they will face severe consequences—as he has repeatedly emphasized.”

Watchdog in the dark: IAEA’s broken puzzle of nuclear oversight

Even if a deal is reached, it would need to address not just uranium enrichment but also the massive knowledge gaps faced by international inspectors regarding Iran’s nuclear progress. Reuters published an investigative report on the severe challenges faced by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) since Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal in 2018—prompting Iran to severely curtail inspector access.

The agency now operates with numerous “blind spots” in its core mission: verifying that Iran is not developing nuclear weapons. One IAEA source said that last year, when Iran moved hundreds of advanced IR-6 centrifuges to its underground Fordow facility, inspectors watched the trucks arrive—but had “no idea where the centrifuges came from.”

Due to Iranian restrictions, the IAEA no longer knows how many centrifuges Iran possesses or where they are being manufactured. The agency has also lost its ability to conduct surprise inspections at undeclared sites. Experts told Reuters that any new deal must include a robust verification mechanism to restore confidence in the oversight process.

Alarming report: Enough uranium for 9 bombs

“The knowledge gaps in Iran’s nuclear program must be closed to gain even a basic understanding of its scope,” said Ali Vaez, director of the International Crisis Group. He noted that rebuilding the lost knowledge could take months, calling the effort “critical” for restoring trust in the process.

Iran continues to claim its program is purely civilian and that its curbs on inspections are justified because the U.S. withdrew from the original 2015 agreement. But evidence has shown that Iran had a military nuclear program until 2003, and Israeli officials assert that parts of it have continued in secret.

The original deal allowed Iran to enrich uranium up to 3.67%—suitable for civilian energy use and far below the 90% weapons-grade threshold. At the time, experts estimated that Iran’s “breakout time”—the time needed to produce enough highly

enriched uranium for one bomb—was about one year. Since the U.S. withdrawal, however, Iran has advanced rapidly, reducing that time to mere days. Trump argued in 2018 that the nuclear deal was “the worst in history” for its temporary restrictions and failure to address Iran’s missile program and support for terrorism. Critics now question whether the new proposed deal addresses these issues either. Meanwhile, Iran has been enriching uranium to 60% purity.

According to the latest IAEA report, Iran now possesses enough 60%-enriched uranium that, with further processing, could yield material for at least nine nuclear weapons. While producing a deliverable warhead—one that could be mounted on a ballistic missile—would take additional time, experts warn that Iran could shorten that timeline by producing a crude, less sophisticated weapon.

A closed window, and the 'fallback option'

A European source told Reuters that Iran’s enrichment capabilities are now so advanced that even if the program were frozen, it could be rebuilt within months. The “window of opportunity” to return to the one-year breakout time of the 2015 deal has effectively closed. Any future agreement, the source added, will require much stricter oversight mechanisms.

Since 2022, Iran has dismantled IAEA monitoring equipment installed under the original deal, including at centrifuge production sites. The agency no longer has access to footage from these cameras, and its current visibility extends only to declared enrichment facilities. According to Reuters, the IAEA now monitors about 20,000 centrifuges but has no way of knowing how many more exist or where.

IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi recently warned that the agency can no longer guarantee that Iran’s nuclear program is peaceful. Reconstructing oversight—what diplomats call “reestablishing the knowledge baseline”—is likely to be a daunting task. Eric Brewer, a former U.S. intelligence analyst and current fellow at the Washington-based Threat Initiative, emphasized the challenge: “Reassembling the puzzle will be essential to any agreement. We know establishing a new baseline will be hard,” he said, adding that much will depend on Iran’s willingness to cooperate. Even then, he noted, there is a serious risk that a full picture of Iran’s nuclear activity will never be restored.

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

Elite IDF commander to replace detention of West Bank hilltop youth

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

Educator and elite IDF commander tapped to head project to help West Bank hilltop youth

Colonel (res.) Avichai Tanami, a former Sayeret Matkal operative, will lead a new initiative to rehabilitate the Hilltop Youth, a group of radical settlers; Backed by Defense Minister Israel Katz, the program aims to replace punitive measures with a coordinated, educational approach to reduce extremism and unrest

Elisha Ben Kimon|22:55

Defense Minister Israel Katz has appointed Colonel (res.) Avichai Tanami—formerly a commander and fighter in the IDF's elite Sayeret Matkal unit—as his special project coordinator to address the issue of the "Hilltop Youth" in the West Bank. The appointment follows Katz's decision, made earlier in his tenure, to halt the use of administrative detention orders against settlers in the West Bank.

Tanami's appointment, first reported by Ynet, was made in coordination with the National Security Council, attorney general, Shin Bet and several relevant government ministries. The role is intended to help craft and implement a coordinated approach to dealing with radical settler youth.

In February, Ynet reported that the Ministry of Defense, together with the Shin Bet and IDF, had been searching for a qualified candidate to lead a comprehensive initiative on the issue. The goal was to find someone with operational capabilities and strong leadership skills, backed by a multidisciplinary team, to advance a systemic plan for guiding and rehabilitating the youth. The position requires close collaboration with government ministries, IDF and police forces.

In August 2023, Ynet and Yedioth Ahronoth revealed that Shin Bet's Jewish Division had assigned a dedicated staff member to oversee the matter, maintaining ongoing contact with rabbis and regional council heads. Tanami's appointment marks the first time an independent civilian—not affiliated with a security agency—has been selected to lead the initiative while coordinating with all relevant bodies.

Tanami is considered a capable educator with a talent for connecting with youth and providing positive guidance. He has previously developed tailored educational programs for his students. At the end of the 2020 school year, students honored him with the gift of a horse—a gesture seen as symbolic of his impact. Security officials believe that Tanami's background—combining combat, intelligence, education, and deep roots in the settler community—positions him to facilitate cooperation across all agencies.

"As I promised, we are introducing alternative, constructive tools to address this issue—replacing the extreme use of administrative detention orders, which I have abolished and strongly oppose," Katz said. "I wish Avichai great success in this mission. He will have our full support and the resources needed to confront the Hilltop Youth phenomenon in the most effective and respectful manner."

Tanami added: "I thank the defense minister for his support and trust. I accept this national mission with humility and a deep sense of responsibility, fully aware of the sensitivity and the human lives involved."

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

IDF intercepts Yemen missile over central Israel; rockets from Syria hit Golan field

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

IDF intercepts Yemen missile over central Israel that sends millions to shelters; rockets fired from Syria hit Golan

Alerts sound throughout central Israel following a missile launch from Yemen that was intercepted, about 20 minutes after two rockets were launched from Syria and exploded in an open area in the Golan Heights; At the same time, alarms were also sounded in the Nazareth area

Yair Kraus, Yoav Zitun, Lior Ben Ari|22:04

Rocket alert sirens sounded throughout central Israel on Tuesday night, sending millions of Israelis to seek shelter. Moments later, sirens sounded east of Nazereth in northern Israel. The missile from Yemen was successfully intercepted, according to the IDF. No casualties were reported.

Just moments before the alerts in central Israel, sirens sounded in Hispin and Ramat Magshimim in the southern Golan Heights, following the launch of two rockets from Syria, which exploded in an open area. No casualties were reported.

This is the first time that alarms have sounded in Hispin since the end of February. On the same day four months ago alarms were activated there due to a drone intrusion. In December, the regime changed in Syria - when President Ahmed al-Sharaa came to power.

After the launches to the Golan Heights, local sources in Syria told the Lebanese Al-Mayadeen network, which is affiliated with Hezbollah, that "Israeli drones are flying in the skies over the rural areas of Quneitra and Daraa." The Syrians are also reporting artillery fire into the rural areas west of the city of Daraa in southern Syria.

Earlier, the Syrians reported that two shells fell on agricultural land in the western countryside of Daraa, without causing damage.

The alarm that sounded following the missile launch from Yemen also sounded at Menorah Hall in Tel Aviv during the playoff semi-final game between Hapoel Tel Aviv and Hapoel Jerusalem basketball teams. The scoreboard read "alarm," and spectators were asked to remain in their seats.

On Monday night, at 8:54 p.m., sirens sounded across central Israel following the launch of a missile from Yemen. Alerts were heard in the Tel Aviv area, Jerusalem, the Shfela region, the Sharon, and Samaria. Shortly afterward, the IDF confirmed that the ballistic missile had been successfully intercepted.

Senior Houthi official Hazem al-Asad posted in Hebrew on the social media platform X, alongside a map showing the alert zones across Israel, writing: "The temporary entity will not feel safe."

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

Hamas grip is weakening with aid in Gaza; IDF expecting flotilla of pro-PA activists

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

'We will not report information that isn't true': IDF spokesman on shootings at Gaza aid center

' Hamas' grip is weakening,' said Effie Defrin, adding that the IDF is preparing for the arrival of the flotilla of pro-Palestinian activists and aid distribution plan for Gaza residents is 'successful'

Gal Ganot|21:28

IDF Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin delivered a statement Tuesday evening, providing updates on the military's continued operations in the Gaza Strip. "We are in the midst of a large-scale operation," Defrin said, emphasizing that sustained military pressure is eroding Hamas' control. " Hamas' grip on the population is weakening."

Defrin explained that the Southern Command is continuing systematic efforts to dismantle Hamas and bring home the hostages. Displaying a map showing five IDF divisions operating across Gaza, he noted on day 606 of the war that " Hamas is losing control over the civilian population, spreading false information and obstructing the delivery of aid."

Addressing reports of Israeli fire toward civilians at a humanitarian aid distribution site in Rafah earlier in the day, Defrin said: "We will not report information or details that are not true. The incident is being investigated thoroughly, and we will uncover the full truth. We are not preventing civilians from receiving aid— Hamas is the one obstructing it." He described the aid operation in Gaza as "successful" and confirmed that the IDF is prepared to respond to a pro-Palestinian flotilla en route to Gaza, which includes activist Greta Thunberg and actor Liam Cunningham.

"We are holding territory and clearing it of terrorists and infrastructure," Defrin said. "As part of Operation Gideon's Chariots, we've struck across the Strip. We are acting to bring home the hostages. Since the resumption of fighting, we have eliminated hundreds of terrorists and hit numerous terror targets throughout Gaza."

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the deaths of three Givati Brigade soldiers, killed by a powerful explosion in Jabaliya in northern Gaza. "We are advancing cautiously to minimize casualties among our forces," he said.

Netanyahu expressed deep sorrow for the fallen soldiers—Staff Sgt. Lior Steinberg, 20, of Petah Tikva, Staff Sgt. Ofek Barhana, 20, of Yavne, and Staff Sgt. Omer Van Gelde, 22, of Maale Adumim. "May their memories be a blessing," Netanyahu said. "Their deaths were not in vain. They fell in a just war—one in which we will defeat Hamas, free all of our hostages, and ensure that Gaza no longer poses a threat to Israel."

"Regrettably, there are no cost-free wars," he added. "The price paid by the families—and by all of Israel—is heavy, at times unbearably so. But we will achieve every one of the war's objectives—without exception."

The three soldiers, from Givati's Rotem Battalion, were killed Monday when their Humvee was hit by an explosive device while returning from assisting a burning armored vehicle that had also struck an explosive in Jabaliya. Two other soldiers were moderately

wounded. Engineering and bomb disposal teams subsequently uncovered a large minefield in the area containing dozens of explosive devices, apparently intended to cause far greater harm.

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Huckabee: Paris should carve out piece of French Riviera if it wants Palestinian state

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Huckabee: Paris should ‘carve out piece of French Riviera’ if it wants Palestinian state
"They are welcome to do that, but they are not welcome to impose that kind of pressure on a sovereign nation," said the U.S. envoy.

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee holds a press conference at the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, May 9, 2025. Credit: Oren Ben Hakoon/Flash90. U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee holds a press conference at the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, May 9, 2025. Credit: Oren Ben Hakoon/Flash90.

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee denounced France’s push for Palestinian statehood on Saturday, telling Fox News that Paris should instead “carve out a piece of the French Riviera” for the Palestinians.

“Oct. 7 changed a lot of things,” Huckabee said of Hamas’s 2023 murder spree that killed 1,200 people, primarily civilians. “If France is really so determined to see a Palestinian state, I have a suggestion for them—carve out a piece of the French Riviera and create a Palestinian state,” he continued.

“They are welcome to do that, but they are not welcome to impose that kind of pressure on a sovereign nation. And I find it revolting that they think they have the right to do such a thing,” he said.

The French Riviera, or Côte d’Azur, is a famed stretch of Mediterranean coastline in the southeastern part of France, renowned for its sun-drenched beaches, luxurious resorts and historic seaside towns.

On April 9, French President Emmanuel Macron stated that Paris “must move toward recognition” of a Palestinian state, warning that he could do so at a June global summit in New York hosted by France and Saudi Arabia.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz again came out against the move on Friday, threatening to strengthen Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria in response and saying that Macron’s declaration would be “thrown into the dustbin of history,” whereas “the State of Israel will flourish and thrive.”

“They will establish a Palestinian state on paper, but we will build the Jewish-Israeli state here on the ground,” he added.

Huckabee on Saturday urged Macron to reconsider, while emphasizing that the Trump administration “simply will not be a part of such a ruse.”

“It’s incredibly inappropriate in the midst of a war that Israel is dealing with ... to go out and present something that, I think, increasingly Israelis are steadfast against,” the diplomat said in the interview with Fox News.

Some 71% of Israelis oppose establishing a Palestinian state that would include Judea and Samaria, according to a survey published on Jan. 29. Nearly 70% want to extend Israeli sovereignty over the disputed area.

In February 2024, the Knesset plenum voted 99-11 to back a Cabinet decision to reject any unilateral recognition of Palestinian statehood.

All coalition members and most lawmakers of the Zionist opposition parties voted to support the Cabinet statement against “international diktats regarding a permanent settlement with the Palestinians.”

The Israeli government has recently warned some key European nations that any unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state could bring about Jerusalem extending its sovereignty over parts of Judea and Samaria.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar and Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer reportedly told France, the United Kingdom and other countries that the move could lead Israel to annex Area C of Judea and Samaria and legalize outposts.

“Unilateral moves against Israel will be met with unilateral moves by Israel,” Sa’ar told his counterparts, the Israel Hayom daily reported.

“There was a Palestinian state. It was called Gaza,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Feb. 6. “Look what we received. The biggest massacre since the Holocaust. To establish a Palestinian state after Oct. 7 is a huge prize, not only for Hamas [but also] for Iran.”

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Gaza relief unravels as senior officials quit, BCG consulting firm withdraws

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Gaza relief initiative unravels as senior officials quit, advisory firm withdraws
Amid civilian casualties and organizational setbacks, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation continues food distribution in southern Gaza; Key partners like BCG have pulled out, while global aid groups criticize the operation’s links to Israeli authorities and its lack of humanitarian independence

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), which launched a high-profile food distribution initiative in the Strip and was initially met with some enthusiasm among the local population, has encountered major obstacles during its first week of operation. Alongside reports of deadly shooting incidents—allegedly involving IDF fire on civilians collecting aid—two senior figures from the foundation have resigned, and leading humanitarian groups, including the UN, have refused to participate.

Sources familiar with the initiative told the Washington Post that GHF is now struggling to function without its core team, particularly following the withdrawal of Boston Consulting Group (BCG), the global consulting firm that had served as a critical operational partner.

On Friday, BCG announced it was terminating its contract with GHF and withdrawing its personnel from Tel Aviv. One senior partner involved in the project was placed on leave, pending an internal review. According to the Washington Post, BCG had effectively been the engine of the project—designing the logistics model, determining operating costs, and coordinating the contractors who built four distribution centers in southern Gaza.

Although BCG insisted it had offered its services pro bono, other sources claimed the firm submitted invoices exceeding \$1 million per month.

Despite these setbacks, GHF maintains that over 7 million meals were distributed during the first week. “This proves our model works and offers a viable emergency channel to deliver lifesaving aid to civilians in Gaza,” said the company’s interim CEO. The operational model—developed with private sector input and Israeli government coordination—was designed to minimize Hamas interference. To that end, GHF contracted armed American personnel to escort convoys and secure distribution centers.

Three of the four centers are currently operational in southern Gaza, though they open only for limited hours each day, until supplies run out. While no violence has been reported inside the distribution compounds, medical sources in Gaza reported dozens of casualties from gunfire outside. IDF officials stated that soldiers fired into the air to disperse the crowds and denied shooting directly at civilians. The military further claimed the reported casualties were part of a “Hamas propaganda effort” and released footage purporting to show armed terrorists firing into the crowd.

Major international aid organizations have distanced themselves from the initiative, citing concerns over humanitarian neutrality and its alignment with Israeli military interests. Several international donors also expressed hesitation, and internal Israeli defense ministry assessments reportedly warned that overcrowding and chaos at distribution points could lead to violent incidents.

Cindy McCain, head of the UN’s World Food Program (WFP) and widow of former GOP presidential candidate John McCain, called the situation a “tragedy.” In an interview with ABC, she said: “What we need now is an immediate ceasefire, safe and unrestricted access, and the full opening of all crossings—to feed people and avoid catastrophe.”

Though Israel has allowed UN convoys into Gaza over the past week, the WFP reported that some trucks were looted by desperate civilians before reaching designated distribution zones. One humanitarian official who declined to participate in the GHF initiative commented: “Like it or not, Israel is setting the terms on the ground. Neutral humanitarian aid is virtually impossible under these conditions.”

In the wake of the deadly Rafah incident—still unaddressed by the IDF beyond a brief early morning statement—GHF announced plans to open a fifth distribution center in northern Gaza on Wednesday. The expansion aims to improve access for residents in the north, with detailed instructions on operating hours and pickup logistics to follow. GHF also issued a warning in Arabic advising civilians to avoid the area south of Netzarim due to ongoing military activity.

According to company figures, the Tel Sultan distribution center (SDS1) dispatched 21 food trucks on Tuesday morning, delivering 20,160 boxes and an estimated 1.15 million meals. To date, GHF reports it has distributed more than 107,000 food packages—equivalent to over 7 million meals—across the Gaza Strip.

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IDF weighs revamp of reservist model as burden grows amid war

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IDF weighs revamp of reservist model as burden grows amid war

Military debates reservist service overhaul as burden continues to grow: Shift to shorter, concentrated deployments proposed to ease manpower strain, risking reservists' dual-income reliance

Yoav Zitun|11:11

An internal dispute in the IDF over how to manage the growing burden on reservists in the coming years is nearing a decision by the military's Human Resources Directorate. The expected outcome: Reservists will continue to serve at least two months per year under the most conservative scenario, unless the army increases its number of conscripts.

The discussion comes amid ongoing efforts by ultra-Orthodox parties to block legislation aimed at drafting tens of thousands of yeshiva students into the military—efforts that have included threats to bring down the government.

Since late last year, the IDF has implemented a new reservist model requiring combat soldiers to serve 72 days annually—about two and a half months—with breaks built into that period, barring any major military operation.

However, the current war has already exceeded this quota. In recent months, limited ground operations in Gaza—led primarily by active-duty units—have also involved reservist brigades that were not scheduled to serve during this period.

The slow deployment of active-duty divisions to Gaza under the IDF Southern Command has left gaps along other borders, particularly in the north and the West Bank, prompting the sudden call-up of tens of thousands of reservists to replace active-duty troops.

Even before the current escalation in Gaza, company and battalion commanders had raised concerns that during the two-and-a-half-month service period, soldiers were often “neither here nor there.”

Because of exhaustion and burnout, many commanders have been sending their troops home for extended breaks—sometimes up to a week or more at a time—allowing them to rest, reconnect with family and continue working or studying. In many cases, these reservists remain on full pay from the IDF, even when not actively deployed.

“The intention was good, but the outcome is problematic,” a reservist officer told Ynet. “They’re not really on reserve duty but they’re not at home either. They can be called back at any moment. It creates a serious headache for commanders managing manpower and operational deployments.”

To address this, the Human Resources Directorate is considering a shift to shorter, more concentrated deployments—three to four weeks every three to four months. These stints would include minimal breaks, primarily over weekends, allowing reservists to remain fully focused on their missions without the continuous back-and-forth between home and base.

Under this model, the total annual reserve service would remain roughly the same—around 10 to 12 weeks—but spread across multiple shorter deployments rather than one long stretch, assuming no escalation in Gaza or on the northern front.

Reservists serve four times longer than before October 7

The current service burden represents a significant shift from the pre-October 7 era, when most reservists served far less. Before the war, only battalion commanders typically served two months per year. A regular reservist in a high-priority unit, such as one under the Northern Command, might have trained for one to two weeks in one year and carried out three weeks of operational duty the next.

Now, company and battalion commanders are often serving three to four times as much, spending most of their time in uniform since the war began. These are civilians with careers and families, not permanent military personnel.

While the proposed changes would simplify manpower planning for commanders, they could financially impact reservists. Under the current model, some reservists use their time at home during service periods to continue working or managing businesses—effectively earning double income from both their civilian jobs and IDF reserve pay. The new model would minimize such breaks, with only a one-week recovery period after each rotation. Extended time at home during reserve duty would no longer be standard. Field reports indicate the pressure on reservists is intensifying, with heavy personal and professional consequences.

A battalion commander from a Northern Command division—whose units also operate in Gaza—said, “Company and battalion commanders are spending a third of their time

dealing with soldiers' personal struggles, trying to ease their burdens so we don't lose them entirely."

He described cases where soldiers are barred by their spouses from crossing into combat zones, threatening divorce if they do. These soldiers are reassigned to rear roles inside Israel. Others can only serve a few days out of a 10-week deployment. "That's fine," he said. "Every little bit helps. Anyone who can assist reduces the strain on others."

Commanders are also lobbying employers not to fire reservists, many of whom hold senior positions in government agencies, public institutions and private companies. "The state is giving reservists billions in benefits, which is great," the commander said. "But what about the employers who are losing key staff for weeks on end?"

"They get almost nothing in compensation. Public hospitals have fired employees just for being called up too often. Career growth is stalled for reservists, while their colleagues who don't serve get promoted."

He noted that while some large companies, including in high-tech, support reservist employees, they warn of limits to how much absenteeism they can tolerate. "Small and mid-sized businesses just can't afford to keep losing people for months at a time."

Grassroots support and long-term solutions

Some reserve brigades are launching internal initiatives to support soldiers' families. The Carmeli Brigade, for instance, developed a volunteer-based system to help reservists manage everyday needs—from car inspections to home repairs—during deployments.

The Ground Forces Command awarded the brigade special recognition for the program, which was built by Golani Brigade veterans.

"We must find ways to reduce the load on reservists over time," A senior officer from the Human Resources Directorate told Ynet. "Even 10 weeks a year is a lot and this year it'll likely be more due to the Gaza ground operation."

His proposed solution: extend mandatory service for conscripts back to 36 months and expand the conscription pool to include more segments of society. "We're short more than 10,000 soldiers due to casualties and thousands more are being discharged with PTSD."

"The issue is under review," the IDF Spokesperson's Unit said in response. "Final decisions will be made in accordance with operational developments."

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Canada war crimes probe into Israeli-Canadian IDF soldiers, but not Gazans

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Canada opens war crimes probe into dual Israeli-Canadian IDF soldiers

Canada quietly probing citizens over alleged war crimes committed while serving in the IDF during Gaza war; launched in 2024, investigation remains unannounced; Jewish community voices concern: 'Canada is becoming more hostile toward us by the day'
Itamar Eichner|10:45

Canada's federal police have launched a criminal investigation into several IDF soldiers who also hold Canadian citizenship, on suspicion of crimes against humanity allegedly committed during their military service, Canadian media reported Tuesday.

The report, first published by the *Toronto Star*, marks the first time Canadian authorities have formally opened a war crimes investigation against dual Israeli-Canadian nationals. The move has triggered concern and controversy within Canada's Jewish and Israeli communities.

According to the report, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) are investigating Canadian citizens who served in the IDF, whether in active duty or as reservists, during the war in Gaza. The probe reportedly began in 2024 but remained under wraps until now. It could include evidence collection, information sharing with international bodies and potentially even indictments on Canadian soil.

The RCMP classified the effort as "structural investigations," a term used for inquiries into war crimes and crimes against humanity. These types of investigations fall under Canada's Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Program (CAHWCP), which is jointly operated by the RCMP, the Department of Justice, the Canada Border Services Agency and the country's immigration and citizenship authority.

Unlike previous high-profile war crimes probes—such as the one focused on the war in Ukraine, which included public calls for testimony, media outreach, a dedicated website and even airport billboards—the Israel-Hamas-related investigation has not been accompanied by a public awareness campaign.

Authorities described the scope as involving "potential war crimes related to the Israel-Hamas conflict," suggesting that Palestinians who have resettled in Canada may also fall under scrutiny. However, prevailing public discourse in Canada has largely focused on alleged Israeli actions in Gaza, prompting concern among pro-Israel groups that the investigation may be disproportionately targeting Israelis.

Many of those under scrutiny are "lone soldiers"—non-Israeli citizens who volunteered for IDF service—and Israeli citizens residing in Canada who traveled to Israel during the war to enlist.

The RCMP said the program's goal is to uphold "Canada's commitment towards international justice and the fight against impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes." According to the *Toronto Star*, the Department of Justice said that the program aims to "deny safe haven to war criminals and seek accountability for alleged atrocities either by sharing evidence with other authorities or trying individuals in Canadian courts."

Within Canada's Jewish and Israeli communities, the response has been marked by anxiety. Some members have voiced concern over potential arrest warrants or subpoenas being issued against Canadians who served in the IDF. "It feels like we're on the brink of a flare-up," said one community source.

In WhatsApp groups for Israelis in Canada, messages reflected rising alarm. "We're moments away from war crimes charges," one user wrote. "Kids with Canadian passports who served in the IDF could face prosecution when they return. This is so serious, people. Lawyers are already working on this—but no one's investigating the Gazans who came here."

Another respondent described the probe as "the mother of all antisemitism." A third said it's causing Israeli families to reconsider sending their children to serve in Israel as lone soldiers. "Canada is becoming more hostile toward us by the day," they wrote. The investigation comes amid broader diplomatic tensions. Last month, Canada joined France and the United Kingdom in threatening sanctions against Israel. In a sharply worded joint statement, the three nations condemned what they called the "intolerable" situation in Gaza and urged Israel to immediately halt military operations and lift restrictions on humanitarian aid.

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Lebanon leaders face pressure from Hezbollah over Israeli collaboration

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Lebanon faces mounting pressure from Hezbollah over war response
State scrambles to rebuild after Israeli strikes and seeks global support, but internal unrest grows; as government aims to disarm Hezbollah, terror group tightens its grip; army enters IDF-vacated zones, and suspected Israeli collaborators detained
Lior Ben Ari|08:21

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam met on Monday with Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri and informed him that the government required over \$7 billion to rebuild the country following the damage caused by the latest war with Israel. Salam said his government is committed to rebuilding "what had been destroyed in the Israeli attacks."

The meeting with the Shiite speaker from the Amal Party, an ally of the Iran-backed Hezbollah, was held after weeks of criticism levied against the prime minister by the terrorist group.

Hezbollah leaders are conditioning any future dialogue with Salam's government on a series of demands, a senior party official said Monday. Hezbollah MP Hassan Fadlallah outlined four preconditions, including a complete Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory, a halt to IDF strikes on Lebanese targets, the release of all Lebanese prisoners of war held in Israel and a national plan to rebuild infrastructure damaged in the fighting.

"We will not discuss anything further with anyone before our demands are met," Fadlallah said, adding that Hezbollah tried to do its part and stand by Lebanese citizens, but as far as the group is concerned, it is the government's responsibility to rebuild.

The campaign against the prime minister was evident last month when Beirut's Camille Chamoun Sports stadium was reopened. During the ceremony, crowds were heard calling Salam a "Zionist." Tensions later simmered after he mentioned a potential normalization of relations with Israel in an interview with CNN.

Hezbollah-aligned media took Salam's quotes out of context, using only part of his answer to allege that he was in support of normalization, but without his demand that any such policy shift would be made only after the establishment of a Palestinian State. The online responses prompted the prime minister's office to issue a clarification. In the statement, the government urged the public to view the entire interview.

"Salam repeated his clear position that the only acceptable peace is one based on the Arab Peace Initiative and a two-state solution," the statement read, referring to a Saudi-backed 2002 outline charting a path toward normalization of ties between Israel and the Arab world. "Salam's positions are clear and cannot be subverted. Lebanon is committed to the Arab position. Normalization can only come after a Palestinian state is established."

A day after the prime minister's meeting with Berri, Salam said he had invited Hezbollah's parliament faction leader Mohamed Raad to meet with him at any time. "My door is always open," he said, but repeated the government's decision to disarm Palestinian refugee camps throughout Lebanon, as well as Hezbollah. Lebanon was also trying to enlist Arab financial support. President Joseph Aoun visited Baghdad on Sunday and thanked the Iraqi government for providing his country with oil.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is due to arrive in Beirut on Tuesday, after a visit to Cairo and U.S. envoy Morgan Ortagus is also expected to arrive in the region after rumors spread that she would soon be leaving her post.

Meanwhile, the IDF continued striking Hezbollah operatives in southern Lebanon. Local outlets reported a strike on a vehicle and in a separate incident, at least one person was killed when his motorbike was attacked.

The Hezbollah-affiliated Al-Akhbar newspaper posted a video showing Lebanese army troops removing a flag of the IDF's Golani brigade, hung in the south. Lebanese security services were also arresting suspected collaborators with Israel, according to reports in the Saudi press, including a hospital administrator in Nabatieh who was arrested by military and Hezbollah forces after allegedly providing Israel with names of the terror group's operatives.

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

Concern in Israel over US removal of pro-Israel advisors

06.03.25 – Tu - Omer 46

Concern in Israel over US administration shakeup of pro-Israel officials

Dismissals of top pro-Israel officials in Washington spark Israeli concern as Trump's 'America First' agenda sidelines allies; Netanyahu allies say figures like Donald Jr. and JD Vance now shape US policy, deepening rift over Iran and Gaza
Itamar Eichner, Lior Ben Ari | 02:54

Israeli officials are expressing growing concern over a series of unexpected personnel changes within the U.S. administration, particularly involving individuals widely seen as strongly supportive of Israel.

The reshuffling comes amid rising tensions between U.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over a potential strike on Iran and the ongoing war in Gaza.

Two senior officials recently removed from their posts are Merav Ceren, a dual U.S.-Israeli citizen who was only recently appointed as head of the Iran and Israel portfolio at the National Security Council, and Eric Trager, who oversees the Middle East and North Africa.

Both had been appointed by former National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, a staunch supporter of Israel, who was himself dismissed by Trump. Their removal was reportedly carried out by Waltz's successor, Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

Another high-profile figure expected to depart is Morgan Ortagus, deputy to special envoy Steve Witkoff and the official handling the Lebanon portfolio. Sources say her departure is not voluntary.

Ortagus, who converted to Judaism and wears a Star of David necklace, is considered one of the strongest supporters of Israel within the administration. She played a key role in ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Lebanon and in persuading the Lebanese government to take a firm stance against Hezbollah and disarm Palestinian refugee camps. Her imminent departure has stunned officials in Jerusalem, where she is viewed as closely aligned with Israeli interests.

Lebanon's Hezbollah-affiliated newspaper Al-Akhbar reported Monday on speculation surrounding Ortagus' future. Citing sources linked to the U.S. embassy in Beirut, the report said Ortagus had recently sought a promotion to a more senior regional post, hoping to take over the Syria portfolio from Thomas Barrack. She is reportedly still awaiting a decision. The paper noted she had "completed her interim mission" and that her responsibilities would soon be reassigned.

Potential successors to Ortagus include Joel Rayburn, or possibly Barrack himself, who may add Lebanon to his existing Syria mandate. The name of Lebanese-American businessman Massad Boulos, father-in-law of Tiffany Trump, was also mentioned as a possible candidate.

"It is unclear whether her replacement will build on Ortagus' understandings or adopt a new policy that resets the file," Al-Akhbar reported. "The Lebanese file has been downgraded in U.S. priorities, with Syria now taking center stage."

Meanwhile, American sources confirmed to Lebanon's MTV network that Ortagus has been dismissed. "The reasons are professional, not related to the Lebanon issue, but stem from her working relationships within the State Department," one source said. Her upcoming visit to Beirut has reportedly been canceled, and Rayburn is expected to be named assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, taking responsibility for Lebanon.

The sources added that Ortagus will not be promoted or assigned to any foreign missions, either in the Middle East or elsewhere. Instead, she is expected to be reassigned to internal tasks within the State Department and will have no further role in Witkoff's team.

Israeli sources familiar with U.S.-Israel relations believe that the spate of removals is driven by Trump's "America First" agenda. According to those sources, the shakeup is not specifically aimed at Israel but reflects a broader effort to curb foreign influence across the board.

They stress that the dismissals were not a result of the officials' views on Israel, but rather part of Trump's ongoing attempt to weaken the National Security Council and consolidate control of U.S. foreign policy in his own hands. This, they say, explains why Trump has left the national security advisor post vacant, with Rubio assuming the responsibilities instead.

The choice of Rubio to remove the two officials has raised eyebrows, given his well-established pro-Israel record. However, insiders note that while Rubio remains supportive of Israel, he is not as closely aligned with the Israeli agenda as his predecessor, Waltz. Above all, they describe Rubio as pragmatic and attuned to the prevailing political winds in Washington. Ultimately, sources say, the push to remove pro-Israel figures is being led by Trump's son, Donald Trump Jr., and Vice President JD Vance.

Officials following the issue do not rule out the possibility that more pro-Israel officials may be removed. In the Trump administration, they note, decisions often come abruptly. These removals are not occurring in a vacuum, but rather reflect a broader distancing between Jerusalem and the Trump administration, which appears to be pursuing its own strategic calculus.

Netanyahu has reportedly confided in closed-door discussions with his confidant, Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, that he misjudged the direction the U.S. was taking on Israel and the broader Middle East.

Senior Israeli officials said Netanyahu did not hide his disappointment with Dermer. "Dermer misread the situation; he was convinced the U.S. would never turn against us," said one source. "He failed to anticipate the shift in U.S. policy toward Israel. Even now, Dermer still believes the U.S. will remain supportive and maintain coordination, but the truth is, he's lost his bearings."

According to those officials, Netanyahu is deeply troubled by developments in Washington, particularly the growing influence of the separatist "White Woke" current within Trump's orbit, and by figures like conservative commentator Tucker Carlson. "These are dangerous people influencing President Trump," one senior official said. "They are sowing suspicion toward Israel and telling Trump that Israel is trying to drag the U.S. into war. This is the new America, and it's deeply concerning to Netanyahu."

The Prime Minister's Office has denied reports that Netanyahu criticized Dermer, calling them "fake news." However, others familiar with the matter say Dermer is operating in a guerrilla-like fashion, running one of the government's most sensitive and critical diplomatic portfolios with a very small team. "He doesn't involve anyone, and it's now clear that something isn't working in the Netanyahu-Trump relationship. Something is off," one source said.

06.02.25 – Mo - Omer 45 Q1 10:41pm

Second day in a row: Missile launch from Yemen intercepted midair

06.02.25 – Mo - Omer 45 Q1 10:41pm

Second day in a row: Missile launch from Yemen sends Israelis to shelters, intercepted midair

A missile launched from Yemen toward Israel triggered defense responses and flight delays, with sirens activated across central regions including Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and surrounding areas; Missile has been intercepted mid-flight

Gilad Meiri|Updated:21:15

IDF Spokesperson announced that a missile launch from Yemen toward Israeli territory was detected, and that defense systems have intercepted the threat.

In addition, the Home Front Command stated that sirens have been activated in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area, the Sharon region, Jerusalem, the Shfela region, and other areas as a result of the launch.

IDF Spokesperson message said: "Following the sirens that sounded a short while ago in several areas in Israel, a missile launched from Yemen was intercepted. Sirens were sounded in accordance with protocol."

06.02.25 – Mo - Omer 45 Q1 10:41pm

Hamas signals willingness for talks, but Israel sees no true changes

06.02.25 – Mo - Omer 45 Q1 10:41pm

Hamas signals willingness for talks, but Israel sees no real shift

Despite public claims of readiness to negotiate, Israeli officials say Hamas' demands contradict the American framework and reflect no genuine compromise; As military pressure grows, the IDF expands operations and revises humanitarian aid routes under mounting global scrutiny

Itamar Eichner|17:47

After effectively rejecting the updated Witkoff framework, Hamas announced its "willingness to immediately begin indirect negotiations." However, Israeli officials made

clear that no delegation would be dispatched to Doha. The decision came after Hamas submitted a list of demands that diverge sharply from the proposal presented by the American envoy. “In practice, Hamas’ position hasn’t changed despite its public statements. The fundamental gaps remain,” said Israeli sources.

One senior Israeli official emphasized, “Israel agreed to the Witkoff framework as proposed. That is our position. Hamas’ reply does not reference the framework at all.” According to Israeli assessments, there have been no meaningful developments, and professional sources noted that the differences remain vast—perhaps insurmountably so. They added that Hamas’ declared openness to negotiations appears purely tactical, meant to shift the narrative and deflect accusations of intransigence.

On Sunday, amid the deadlock in talks, IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir announced the further expansion of ground maneuvers in both the southern and northern Gaza Strip. He also directed the establishment of additional aid distribution and dispersal centers within the enclave—likely in response to mounting international pressure to broaden humanitarian access.

Over the past 24 hours, IDF has carried out dozens of airstrikes against military targets as part of Operation Gideon’s Chariots. In an afternoon briefing, IDF Spokesperson Brigadier General Effie Defrin stated Israeli forces had extended their operations, eliminated militants, and destroyed multiple weapons stockpiles and critical infrastructure above and below ground.

Additionally, IDF and Shin Bet targeted Hamas operatives at a command and control compound in Deir al-Balah, in central Gaza. “The facility was used to plan and execute terror activities against Israeli civilians and military forces,” said the spokesperson. “Prior to the strike, precautions were taken to minimize harm to civilians, including the use of precision-guided munitions, aerial surveillance, and actionable intelligence.”

On the Palestinian side, reports emerged of three fatalities at a “school sheltering displaced persons” in Deir al-Balah. Other claims included 16 killed in an airstrike in Jabaliya and five in Gaza City’s Zeitoun neighborhood. Meanwhile, a newly formed humanitarian supply model is beginning to take hold. This system is based on an international coalition that bypasses both Hamas and the UN, instead working with civilian organizations and unarmed local partners. As part of its response to mediators, Hamas demanded a return to the previous aid mechanism—one that had, in effect, enabled the group to strengthen its hold on the Strip.

Arab and Palestinian media outlets reported again on casualties among Gazans waiting for aid. International headlines followed. After Saturday’s widely circulated claim that IDF had killed 26 civilians at a food distribution site in Rafah—a claim later undercut by video footage showing no irregularities—similar accusations resurfaced on Sunday. This time, foreign news agencies added a key caveat: “We were unable to independently verify the details.”

According to Gaza’s Health Ministry, which is run by Hamas, at least three people were killed and dozens injured near the Rafah distribution center operated by the American humanitarian foundation GHF. Reuters confirmed that Israeli forces were aware of the

incident and reviewed the reports. However, once again, the agency noted it had not independently confirmed the events.

By late Sunday, the ministry claimed the death toll linked to aid distribution sites had risen to 75, with more than 400 people injured. It stated that 52 people had been killed across Gaza over the past 24 hours, and that hospitals had received 503 wounded. Cumulative figures released by the ministry assert that since the outbreak of war on October 7, 2023, 54,470 people have been killed in Gaza, and 124,693 injured. Since the collapse of the ceasefire on March 7, 4,201 people have died and 12,652 have been wounded in renewed fighting.

06.02.25 – Mo - Omer 45 Q1 10:41pm

UN chief calls for probe into Gaza aid deaths amid conflicting claims

06.02.25 – Mo - Omer 45 Q1 10:41pm

UN chief calls for independent probe into Gaza aid deaths amid conflicting claims

Guterres echoes Hamas claim IDF killed dozens at Gaza aid site; Israel, US-backed GHF deny, say Hamas spreading 'massacre' lies

Ynetnews|15:00

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres expressed deep concern on Monday over reports that dozens of Palestinians were killed and injured while seeking food aid in Gaza. He called for an immediate and independent investigation into the incident.

"It is unacceptable that Palestinians are risking their lives for food," Guterres said in a statement. "I call for an immediate and independent investigation into these events and for perpetrators to be held accountable."

The incident occurred on Sunday near a food distribution center operated by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) in Rafah. The Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry reported that over 30 Palestinians were killed and more than 170 injured by Israeli fire as they attempted to collect aid.

The IDF denied the allegations, stating that their preliminary investigation indicated no firing at civilians near or within the aid distribution area. An IDF official acknowledged that warning shots were fired approximately one kilometer away from the distribution site hours before it opened, aimed at individuals approaching Israeli forces.

GHF also refuted claims of casualties during the aid distribution, asserting that the reports were fabricated by Hamas to discredit the organization. The foundation said that its operations proceeded without incident and that only two individuals required medical attention—one for dehydration and another injured by others seeking aid.

"In recent hours, false reports have been spread, including serious allegations against the IDF regarding fire toward Gazan residents in the area of the humanitarian aid distribution site in the Gaza Strip," the military said in a statement.

"Findings from an initial inquiry indicate that the IDF did not fire at civilians while they were near or within the humanitarian aid distribution site and that reports to this effect are false. The IDF is cooperating with the American Civil Organization (GHF) and international aid organizations in order to enable the distribution of aid to the Gazan residents — and not to Hamas. Hamas does everything in its power to undermine food distribution efforts in the Gaza Strip."

GHF said it has distributed nearly 900,000 meals in the Rafah distribution point but warned that the more it succeeds in providing humanitarian aid to the civilians in Gaza, the more Hamas would attempt to spread falsehoods about alleged massacres.

"The more successful GHF's efforts become, the more distressed Hamas will find itself, and accordingly, we will see more and more fake publications of 'massacre' incidents," the fund said in its statement.

06.02.25 – Mo - Omer 45 Q1 10:41pm

Netanyahu condemns Boulder terror attack; result of blood libel against Israel

06.02.25 – Mo - Omer 45 Q1 10:41pm

Netanyahu condemns Boulder terror attack; 'result of blood libel against Israel'

In a post, the prime minister says he has confidence that the US will prosecute the perpetrator to the fullest extent after the victims were targeted 'simply because they were Jews'

Itamar Eichner, Daniel Edelson, New York, News Agencies|10:21

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday condemned the attack on pro-Israel demonstrators in Colorado, which he said was a result of "blood libels against the Jewish state and people."

At least eight people were hurt, one critically, when they were attacked by a man using a makeshift blowtorch and hurling Molotov Cocktails, causing some to catch on fire, during an event organized by Run for Their Lives, an organization devoted to drawing attention to the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza since the October 7 massacre.

The attack took place on the Pearl Street Mall, a popular pedestrian shopping district in the shadow of the University of Colorado. In a statement, the group said the walks have been held every week since then for the hostages, "without any violent incidents until today."

Netanyahu said the victims were attacked "simply because they were Jews" and that he trusted U.S. authorities would prosecute "the cold-blooded perpetrator to the fullest extent of the law".

This attack was aimed against peaceful people who wished to express their solidarity with the hostages held by Hamas, simply because they were Jews.

In a post to X, a social network, Stephen Miller, U. S. President Donald Trump's deputy chief of staff, said the suspect, identified as a 45-year-old Egyptian national, Mohamed Sabry Soliman, had overstayed his visa and been allowed to work by the previous administration. He said it was further evidence of the need to "fully reverse" what he described as "suicidal migration."

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, a prominent Jewish Democrat, said it was an antisemitic attack. "This is horrifying, and this cannot continue. We must stand up to antisemitism," he said on X. The attack follows last month's arrest of a Chicago-born man in the fatal shooting of two Israeli embassy employees in Washington, D.C. Someone opened fire on a group of people leaving an event hosted by the American Jewish Committee, an advocacy group that fights antisemitism and supports Israel. The shooting fueled polarization in the United States over the war in Gaza between supporters of Israel and pro-Palestinian demonstrators.

06.02.25 – Mo - Omer 45 Q1 10:41pm

At least 8 hurt, one critically in Colorado terror attack targeting pro-Israel march

06.02.25 – Mo - Omer 45 Q1 10:41pm

At least 8 hurt, one critically in Colorado terror attack targeting pro-Israel event
Group marching for hostages is attacked with blowtorch, fire bombs by a man shouting 'Free Palestine' in what FBI chief says was a 'targeted terror attack'

Daniel Edelson, New York, News Agencies | 07:33

Colorado authorities said early on Monday that at least 8 people were hurt, one critically in a terror attack targeting pro-Israel demonstrators in Boulder after they were attacked with firebombs.

Police said a male suspect was taken into custody on Sunday after using a makeshift flamethrower and yelling "Free Palestine" into a group that had assembled to raise attention for Israeli hostages in Gaza.

He was identified as a 45-year-old Egyptian national, Mohamed Sabry Soliman, who was in the United States illegally after his visa expired.

FBI Director Kash Patel described the incident as a "targeted terror attack," and Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser said it appeared to be "a hate crime given the group that was targeted," and the Justice Department denounced it as a "needless act of violence, which follows recent attacks against Jewish Americans."

A Holocaust survivor was among the injured. Brooke Coffman, a 19-year-old at the University of Colorado who witnessed the Boulder incident, said she saw four women lying or sitting on the ground with burns on their legs. One of them appeared to have been badly burned on most of her body and had been wrapped in a flag by someone, she said.

She described seeing a man whom she presumed to be the attacker standing in the courtyard, shirtless, holding a glass bottle of clear liquid and shouting. "Everybody is yelling, 'get water, get water,'" Coffman said.

Lynn Segal, 72, was among about 20 people who gathered Sunday. They had finished their march in front of the courthouse when a "rope of fire" shot in front of her and then "two big flares." She said the scene quickly turned chaotic as people worked to find water to put out flames and find help. "There were people who were burning, I wanted to help," she said. "But I didn't want to be associated with the perpetrator."

Authorities said they believe that he acted alone and that no other suspect was being sought. No criminal charges were immediately announced but officials said they would move to hold Soliman accountable. He was also injured and was taken to the hospital to be treated, but authorities didn't elaborate on the nature of his injuries.

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

IDF: Drone footage shows gunmen in Gaza firing at civilians, then looted aid

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

IDF: Drone footage shows gunmen in Gaza firing at civilians collecting humanitarian aid
Military denies responsibility for Rafah deaths, says video shows armed men targeting Gazans collecting humanitarian aid in Khan Younis; citing initial findings, officials blame Hamas for fabricating the event and obstructing food aid to Gaza residents
Yoav Zitun | 19:41

The IDF on Sunday released drone footage showing armed and masked individuals throwing rocks and opening fire on Gazan civilians attempting to collect looted humanitarian aid in southern Khan Younis.

The military accused Hamas of deliberately obstructing aid distribution and endangering civilians, calling the group "a brutal and murderous terrorist organization that is starving the residents of Gaza."

The footage was published hours after international media reported allegations that IDF troops had killed 30 people near an aid distribution site in Rafah. In an earlier statement, the IDF denied those claims, asserting that no shots were fired, supported by video footage, in or near the distribution zone and that initial findings confirmed this account.

"In recent hours, false reports have been spread, including serious allegations against the IDF regarding fire toward Gazan residents in the area of the humanitarian aid distribution site in the Gaza Strip," the statement said.

"Findings from an initial inquiry indicate that the IDF did not fire at civilians while they were near or within the humanitarian aid distribution site and that reports to this effect are false."

The military said it facilitates the delivery of humanitarian aid by the U.S. nonprofit Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) and other international organizations, ensuring that aid reaches civilians and not Hamas.

"Hamas is a brutal terrorist organization that starves and endangers the population in order to preserve its control over the Gaza Strip," the statement continued. "As part of its brutal behavior and its attempts to disrupt humanitarian aid, Hamas directly harms the residents of Gaza."

An IDF source added that overnight, about one kilometer from the aid site and outside distribution hours, Israeli forces fired warning shots at several individuals who approached them. "There is no connection between this incident and the false allegations being made against the IDF," the source said.

The IDF called on media outlets to be cautious in publishing information originating from Hamas, which the military accused of fabricating events to undermine Israel's efforts to facilitate aid.

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

IDF rejects blame for Rafah deaths, points to Hamas false information manipulation

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

IDF rejects blame for Rafah deaths, points to Hamas manipulation

After global reports accused Israel of killing 30 civilians near an aid site in Rafah, IDF denied firing in the area; Citing initial findings, officials blamed Hamas for fabricating the event and obstructing food aid to Gaza residents

Yoav Zitun|19:41

IDF spokesperson released a comprehensive response to the accusations regarding the killing of 30 people by gunfire at the aid distribution area in Rafah, claiming that no shooting took place in the vicinity of the compound. Hours after the reports had already echoed around the world, the military accused Hamas of spreading lies — similar to the claim made by the American foundation that “the more successful we are, the more Hamas will report ‘fake massacres.’”

"IDF did not fire at civilians near or within the humanitarian aid distribution area. In recent hours, false publications have been circulated containing serious accusations

against the IDF regarding fire toward Gaza Strip residents in the humanitarian aid distribution zone," the statement said, based on the findings of an initial investigation.

It also stated: "The findings indicate that the IDF did not fire at civilians while they were near or within the humanitarian aid distribution area, and these reports are false. The IDF enables the American civil organization (GHF) and international aid agencies to distribute aid directly to Gaza's residents and not to Hamas. Hamas is doing everything it can to sabotage the success of food distribution in Gaza."

"Hamas is a cruel terrorist organization that starves the population and endangers it in order to preserve its control over the Gaza Strip. As part of Hamas's brutal conduct and its attempts to disrupt humanitarian aid, it directly harms the residents of the Strip. The IDF calls on the media to act with caution regarding false information published by the terrorist organization Hamas, as has been proven in several previous incidents."

An IDF source also revealed that during the night, about one kilometer away from the aid distribution area — and not during the distribution hours — "IDF troops operated to prevent several suspects from approaching. During the operation, warning shots were fired toward suspects who were advancing toward the forces. There is no connection between this incident and the false allegations being made against the Israeli military," he concluded.

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

IDF intercepts a ballistic missile fired from Yemen targeting Israel

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

IDF intercepts a ballistic missile fired from Yemen targeting Israel

Sirens warn of incoming missile fire in central Israel, the Jerusalem area, the Central Plains and the West Bank

Ynet|Updated:17:39

Israel came under missile fire from the Houthi rebels in Yemen on Sunday. The IDF said it intercepted one missile targeting the Jerusalem area, the Central Plains and the West Bank.

Millions rush for shelter in the Yemeni rebels attack, days after they last targeted Israel on Thursday.

Ben-Gurion Airport suspended flight takeoffs and landings for a number of minutes during the strike.

All traffic at the airport was to resume, within minutes, including El Al flights from Boston and London.

No injuries were reported .

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Missile launched from Yemen triggers sirens across central Israel, Jerusalem

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Missile launched from Yemen triggers sirens across central Israel, Jerusalem

An IDF spokesperson confirmed a missile was launched from Yemen toward Israel, setting off warning sirens in central regions and delaying inbound flights; Defense systems engaged the threat, and no casualties have been reported, according to emergency services

Gilad Meiri | 17:08

IDF spokesperson announced that a missile was launched from Yemen toward Israel, prompting defense systems to engage in intercepting the threat. As a result, the Home Front Command indicated that alerts may be heard in the greater Tel Aviv area and central Israel, Jerusalem, and Shfela areas.

In response to the missile launch, rocket and missile warning sirens were activated in numerous communities across those specific regions. Additionally, flights scheduled to land at Ben Gurion Airport were delayed due to the situation, including an El Al flight from Boston and another from London.

A statement from Magen David Adom, Israel's premier first aid organization, confirmed that, as of now, there have been no reports of casualties.

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Hamas leader of cell behind 21 IDF soldier deaths in 2024, killed in Gaza

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Hamas leader of cell behind deaths of 21 IDF soldiers in 2024 ambush killed in Gaza
Khalil Abd al-Nasser Muhammad Khatib, a senior Hamas commander tied to a deadly January attack that killed 21 Israeli soldiers, was eliminated in a precision strike following intelligence work by the IDF and Shin Bet in southern Gaza
Elisha Ben Kimon | 14:16

In a joint operation on Friday, the Israel Defense Forces and Shin Bet security service eliminated Khalil Abd al-Nasser Muhammad Khatib, a senior Hamas operative responsible for the deadly January ambush that killed 21 Israeli soldiers.

Khatib, a cell commander in Hamas' Al Mawasi battalion, was targeted during a reconnaissance mission following extensive intelligence gathering. According to the military, troops identified Khatib in the field and directed an aircraft to strike his position.

The IDF said Khatib was behind the January 22 attack in the Al Mawasi area of southern Gaza, where his cell launched anti-tank missiles at buildings housing Israeli troops and at an armored unit securing the perimeter. The incident marked one of the deadliest single days for the IDF since ground operations began in the Gaza Strip.

Military officials said Khatib had been involved in additional attacks throughout the war and was responsible for advancing several plots targeting Israeli forces.

"The IDF and ISA will continue to operate against terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip in order to remove any threat posed to Israeli civilians," the statement read.

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Despite Hamas claims, security camera in Gaza shows no shooting at aid center

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Despite Hamas claims, security camera footage from Gaza aid center shows no shooting
Major outlets are quick to repeat the terror group's accusations, while the U.S.-backed foundation distributing aid says there was no such incident near its distribution center
Einav Halabi, Elisha Ben Kimon|12:17

The IDF on Sunday denied that it had attacked a food line in Rafah after Hamas claimed dozens were killed in an Israeli strike.

The Qatari-based Al Jazeera Network quoted sources in Gaza who said 30 people were killed and over 100 wounded in a strike near the distribution center operated by the American Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF). The Reuters news agency also said dozens were killed, basing their report on the Palestinian news agency Wafa and Hamas-affiliated media.

Other major news outlets, including the BBC, CNN, Sky News, The Washington Post, to name but a few, were quick to repeat the claim.

"The IDF is currently unaware of injuries caused by IDF fire within the Humanitarian Aid distribution site," the military said in a statement. "The matter is still under review."

GHF said there was no IDF fire in the area of the distribution center. GHF CEO John Ackery said on Saturday that there have been no fatalities or injuries in the aid distribution centers his group operates, despite rumors consistently spread. "These false reports harm the work of our teams on the ground. There had not been any cases of deaths since our distribution efforts began," he said.

The IDF said earlier that troops identified three terrorists transporting explosives they intended to use to rig an area in Khan Younis. The force opened fire and killed the terror squad. The military also said its engineering corps destroyed a 700-meter-long (765 yards) underground tunnel dug 30 meters (100 feet) below ground.

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Macron's low credibility, is using Israel ridicule to grow public sentiment

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Macron's domestic woes feed into escalating diplomatic clash with Israel over Gaza. Facing political turmoil at home and a major electoral setback, French President Emmanuel Macron is doubling down on foreign policy—sharpening criticism of Israel's actions in Gaza, possibly to align with public sentiment and ease domestic pressure. Itamar Eichner | 10:33

French President Emmanuel Macron is facing a steep political decline at home while positioning himself as a leading European voice on foreign policy, including sharp criticism of Israel's conduct in Gaza.

Macron's popularity in France has been plummeting for over a year and his centrist coalition suffered a crushing defeat in the European Parliament elections on June 9, losing decisively to far-right leader Marine Le Pen. In a surprising move following the loss, Macron dissolved the French National Assembly and called snap elections.

Those elections, held in two rounds less than a month later, dealt Macron yet another blow. Now leading a minority government, he's forced to rely on political opponents to pass legislation and his domestic credibility is at a low point, with growing public ridicule.

In an apparent attempt to salvage his legacy, Macron has turned to foreign policy. He's launched a series of diplomatic initiatives, one of which targets the Middle East.

Sensing widespread criticism — and even hostility — toward Israel among parts of the French public, Macron has aligned himself with the prevailing sentiment, using it to cast himself as a European leader advocating for tougher measures against Israel.

Macron has also cultivated closer ties with Saudi Arabia, positioning himself as a serious player in the Arab world — not leaving the arena entirely to U.S. President Donald Trump.

Meanwhile, Israel appears to have misread the growing hostility in Europe and failed to respond diplomatically or strategically. The government has placed all its bets on Trump's reelection, while neglecting European relations entirely — both in terms of diplomacy and public messaging.

This vacuum has been filled with aggressive Israeli rhetoric toward European leaders, especially Macron, exacerbating Israel's negative image across the continent. The tensions peaked with an unprecedented statement from the Foreign Ministry, accusing Macron of launching a "crusade" against Israel and of seeking to "reward jihadist terrorists with a Palestinian state."

The statement ended with the words, “There’s no doubt its national holiday will be October 7.” The ministry also claimed that Macron “isn’t interested in the facts” and accused him of promoting sanctions against a country “under multi-front attack in an attempt to destroy it.”

The Israeli statement came in response to Macron’s remarks during a press conference in Singapore, where he said, “It’s now clear that the current situation cannot continue. The humanitarian blockade has created an unbearable reality on the ground.

“If a solution isn’t provided within hours or days, we’ll need to toughen our collective stance and implement the standards we’ve set — meaning ending processes that require respect for human rights, which isn’t the case right now and imposing sanctions.”

This wasn’t Israel’s first public rebuke of Macron. Some 10 days earlier, Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar criticized a joint statement by France, the UK and Canada threatening sanctions on Israel, linking it to Macron’s push for unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state.

“This war is being used as a pretext to promote Macron’s plan,” Sa’ar said. “Macron even banned Israel from participating in Paris defense exhibitions. That’s already a form of sanctions. Let me be clear to all countries — especially those with colonial pasts — we’re a free, proud and independent nation fighting for its survival. We won’t accept foreign dictates regarding our national security.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also accused Macron of siding with a “murderous Islamist terror group” and “amplifying its false propaganda while falsely accusing Israel of war crimes.” In his sharply worded statement, Netanyahu wrote: “Israel is fighting a multi-front war for its existence after the October 7 massacre committed by Hamas, including the murder and abduction of dozens of French citizens.”

Sa’ar added: “Instead of standing with the democratic West against Islamist terror groups and calling for the hostages’ release, Macron is once again asking Israel to surrender and reward terror.”

Defense Minister Israel Katz escalated further: “We remember what happened to Jews in France when they couldn’t defend themselves. President Macron should stop lecturing us. A true friend of Israel should support us in our war against Hamas and the Iranian axis of evil threatening to wipe Israel off the map — not try to block our right to self-defense.”

'An open question in Europe'

Macron later harshly criticized Israel’s conduct in Gaza during a televised interview, accusing it of creating “an unprecedented humanitarian disaster.” He called the situation “unacceptable—a disgrace, a scandal.” However, he stressed that any next steps must include the release of hostages and the disarmament of Hamas.

Throughout the interview, Macron refrained from using the term “genocide” but underscored, “It’s a humanitarian disaster and it’s shocking.” He described a recent visit to the Egypt-Gaza border, where he saw “injured children and women, one with a shattered spine who hadn’t been treated for six months.”

He claimed massive humanitarian aid from multiple countries had been blocked by Israel: “The aid was there, blocked by the Israelis—that’s unacceptable.” Macron placed direct

blame on Netanyahu for the situation: “I’ll say this clearly—what Netanyahu’s government is doing today is unacceptable.”

He added that “since March, all humanitarian routes have been closed. There’s a complete blockade. No water, no medicine, no evacuations, no doctors allowed in. It’s a horrifying situation.”

When asked why France hasn’t imposed sanctions on Israel, Macron responded that decisions had already been made to scale back offensive military support, saying France only provided military equipment, “mainly against attacks from Iran.”

He added that broader European action might be necessary: “We can’t continue as if nothing happened—we’ll need to ramp up pressure. It’s an open question in Europe.” Despite his criticism, Macron reiterated France’s recognition of Israel’s right to defend itself after the October 7 attack, noting it was the deadliest assault on French civilians since the Nice terror attack.

Still, he stressed, “A democracy must fight differently. The answer is not to attack Gaza indiscriminately.” He concluded by reaffirming his stance that the only solution is political: the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, mutual recognition and security for both peoples.

With tensions rising between Paris and Jerusalem, the upcoming international conference in New York—initiated by France and Saudi Arabia—could further strain relations. Much depends on the outcome of the summit and whether Macron “goes the extra mile” and formally recognizes a Palestinian state.

If he does—and that remains uncertain—Israel is preparing retaliatory measures, including imposing sovereignty over Area C of the West Bank and taking punitive actions against France, such as shutting down the French consulate in Jerusalem. France is not expected to remain passive in the face of such a move and is likely to respond with equally harsh measures, raising the risk of a serious diplomatic clash.

A deterioration in France-Israel ties could also impact other European countries. Macron is unlikely to be the only European leader to clash with Israel—others may draw conclusions and follow with sanctions of their own.

Former Israeli ambassador to France Daniel Shek commented on the tensions, saying, “This is a textbook case of Israel turning a friendly president—an ally who defended our right to self-defense and worked on the hostage issue more diligently than our own government—into an enemy.”

Shek stressed, “Even now, he’s not an enemy. He’s a friend of Israel who disagrees with the Israeli government. Anyone who thinks the world will patiently wait through 20 months of war, destruction and blockade until we finish leveling Gaza is mistaken.”

Shek added that “this erosion of patience isn’t just a French phenomenon—it’s happening across Europe. We must recognize that we’ve reached a point where threats of sanctions could materialize.

“Israel bears responsibility for this deterioration, as it treats every call to end the war as if it were a call to destroy the country. What Macron and many others are actually saying is that it’s time to end the war and release the hostages. That, in the eyes of our government, is apparently his biggest ‘crime.’”

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Still embroiled in war, Israel may find itself with no Shin Bet chief in two weeks

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Still embroiled in a multifront war, Israel finds itself with no Shin Bet chief. Israel faces a looming security gap as Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar steps down without a confirmed successor, amid legal battles over Prime Minister Netanyahu's contested appointment and investigations into his aides linked to the Qatargate affair. Itamar Eichner|09:13

Outgoing head of the Shin Bet security agency, Ronen Bar, will be resigning in two weeks and no replacement has been confirmed, leaving Israel without someone in the critical role.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu named outgoing IDF general David Zini as his choice to take over the leadership of the Shin Bet despite a ruling in the Supreme Court that Netanyahu could not be involved in appointing his replacement because he was in a conflict of interest over the Qatargate scandal, the promotion of the interests of Doha during the war, from inside the Prime Minister's Office.

Bar's resignation came after the government tried to dismiss him, claiming a loss of confidence, while opponents of the prime minister said his dismissal was because he was investigating close Netanyahu aides.

The confirmation process for a new security chief requires the commission that approves high-level positions, and is headed by former Supreme Court Justice Asher Grunis, who is traveling and will be outside the country until June 20, five days after Bar leaves office. The committee is also short two members required for it to convene and vote and they have not been appointed by the government.

One sitting member, Professor Talia Einhorn, a staunch supporter of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, must recuse herself because she is the mother of the prime minister's close advisor, Israel Einhorn, who is wanted for questioning by the police for his involvement in the Qatargate. He has not returned to Israel since the scandal broke.

Two other close aides are under investigation by Shin Bet and are suspected of subverting national security, including Einhorn's business partner, Netanyahu's media advisor, Jonathan Urich.

Bar would have to extend his tenure or be replaced by a temporary Shin Bet chief, which is ill-advised at times of war.

Netanyahu also named Yehuda Cohen to step in as interim head of Israel's Public Service Commissioner, who must, by law, advise the commission before approving any candidate for the Shin Bet.

But Cohen is himself under investigation by the Public Service Commission and therefore, his appointment even as interim commissioner would likely be struck down by the Supreme Court. Without a commissioner in place, the authority must be transferred to a sitting Supreme Court justice.

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Syria's new president signals openness to Israel: We have common enemies

06.01.25 – Su - Omer 44

Syria's new president signals openness to Israel: 'We have common enemies'
Speaking to Jewish outlet, Ahmad al-Sharaa calls to revive 1974 Disengagement Agreement with Israel, signals openness to talks with Jerusalem but demands airstrikes end; praises Trump as 'a man of peace' and vows to 'make Syria great again'
Lior Ben Ari | 00:42

Syria's new president, Ahmad al-Sharaa—formerly known by his nom de guerre Abu Mohammed al-Golani—signaled in an interview with the Jewish Journal this week that he is open to dialogue with Israel, even suggesting the two countries share common enemies.

However, he urged Israel to cease its ongoing airstrikes in Syrian territory. “Let me be clear,” al-Sharaa said. “The era of endless tit-for-tat bombings must end. No nation prospers when its skies are filled with fear.”

Al-Sharaa's remarks, published Wednesday, have stirred sharp criticism from supporters of the Iran-led Shiite axis, a longtime ally of ousted Syrian president Bashar Assad, whose rule was overthrown by al-Sharaa and his forces. Though careful not to endorse normalization, al-Sharaa's tone marked a notable departure from his predecessors. Responding to questions about future relations with Israel, al-Sharaa said that airstrikes must stop but acknowledged that “we have common enemies — and we can play a major role in regional security.” Over the weekend, Israel reportedly carried out another round of airstrikes in Syria.

Disengagement Agreement with Israel—not just as a ceasefire line, but as a framework for mutual restraint and protection of civilians, particularly the Druze communities in southern Syria and the Golan Heights. “Syria's Druze are not pawns. They are citizens — deeply rooted, historically loyal, and deserving of every protection under the law. Their safety is non-negotiable,” he said.

While stopping short of calling for immediate normalization with Israel, al-Sharaa signaled openness to future negotiations grounded in international law and sovereignty. “Peace must be earned through mutual respect, not fear,” he said. “We will engage where there is honesty and a clear path to coexistence — and walk away from anything less.”

Al-Sharaa also praised U.S. President Donald Trump, whom he met earlier this month at a historic summit in the Gulf. He described Trump as a man of peace, saying, “However the media portrays him, I see him as a man of peace. We’ve both been shot at by the same enemy. Trump understands leverage, strength and outcomes. Syria needs an honest broker who can reset the conversation. If there is a possibility of alignment that helps bring stability to the region — and security to the U.S. and its allies — I am ready to have that conversation. He is the only man capable of fixing this region, bringing us together, one brick at a time.”

At one point in the interview, al-Sharaa invoked Trump’s signature slogan, saying his own vision is to “make Syria great again.” He added, “I did not seek this position to rule, I accepted it because Syria must turn the page. And I would rather help write that history — with others — than watch it be torn apart again. We have no option but to succeed.”

The article described al-Sharaa’s vision for Syria as multicultural and pluralistic, with support for the right of return for all Syrians—Jews, Druze, Christians and others—whose property was confiscated by the former regime.

When asked if people would trust a government rising from the ashes of dictatorship, al-Sharaa replied, “I don’t ask for trust, I ask for patience — and for scrutiny. Hold me accountable. Hold this process accountable. That is how trust will come. Asked what Syrians need most now, he answered, “Dignity through work. Peace through purpose.”

His remarks come amid reports of behind-the-scenes contact between Israel and Syria aimed at easing tensions and preventing conflict along their shared border. However, Western and Israeli officials have voiced caution, warning that al-Sharaa—once a jihadist linked to al-Qaeda and Islamic State—may be presenting a moderate image only to stabilize his rule before turning Syria back into a state sponsor of terror.

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Israel delivers hundreds of aid trucks to Gaza via alternate Hamas-free route

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Israel delivers hundreds of aid trucks to Gaza via Hamas-free route

Exclusive: IDF launches new aid routes bypassing Hamas, delivering over 340 UN trucks to Gaza civilians in humanitarian zones; Israel sees early signs of success, including falling flour prices and reduced civilian reliance on Hamas

Yossi Yehoshua | 23:37

The IDF has launched a new operation aimed at bypassing Hamas control over humanitarian aid distribution and alleviating the bottleneck caused by the United Nations’ logistical delays, Ynet learned on Saturday.

The initiative, approved by the political echelon, redirects aid through alternative routes that avoid Hamas-controlled areas and deliver supplies directly to civilians in designated humanitarian zones within Gaza. Due to military censorship, the exact routes cannot be disclosed.

Over the past two weeks, more than 340 UN aid trucks have traveled through these alternative corridors under full coordination with the IDF and under strict military supervision. The strategy is designed to minimize the risk of Hamas intercepting humanitarian convoys and ensure aid reaches those in need.

According to defense officials, the new routes offer several advantages. First, they run through areas under IDF control, restricting Hamas access. Second, the trucks are able to reach civilian zones directly. Third, the use of these new paths adds flexibility to existing supply lines—such as the enclave’s main north-south highway, Salah al-Din Road—allowing Israel to circumvent key Hamas checkpoints and expand delivery options.

Field reports indicate the initiative is already yielding results. Aid deliveries via these alternative routes have led to a significant drop in flour prices in southern Gaza. Just weeks ago, a single sack of flour cost over 1,000 shekels (\$290); today, a kilogram sells for about 30 shekels (\$9).

Despite operational success, Israeli officials note ongoing challenges with UN cooperation. The UN has resisted establishing structured distribution sites and has struggled to manage the aid already delivered. More than 450 trucks were reportedly stalled on the Palestinian side of the Kerem Shalom crossing last week, awaiting collection and distribution.

Security officials emphasized that while some isolated looting incidents have occurred, they appear to be the work of local civilians rather than organized Hamas operatives. “Aid is now reaching civilians directly, weakening their dependence on Hamas,” an IDF source said. “The more we steer aid through Hamas-free channels, the more we erode the group’s political and economic grip on Gaza.”

A senior IDF officer said cutting off Hamas from humanitarian aid could be a “game changer” in the war and potentially lead to the terrorist group’s collapse. Hamas, the officer noted, is now at its weakest point in terms of governance since taking control of Gaza in 2007.

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Britain cannot be on the side of Hamas: UK turns on Israel, courting the Muslim vote

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

'Britain cannot be on the side of Hamas': As the UK turns on Israel, one leader stands firm

Sanctions floated by the UK, France and Canada have deepened tensions with Jerusalem; behind the shift: British politics and polling; Israel warns of a harsh response; Tory leader Badenoch defends Israel, calling its fight 'proxy war on behalf of the UK'

Itamar Eichner | 23:19

The United Kingdom's new Labour-led government, which came to power in July after 14 years of Conservative rule, initially signaled continuity in its relationship with Israel, despite the ongoing war in Gaza. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's administration stated that security and intelligence cooperation with Israel would continue, even amid global criticism over the war.

But something has shifted since. The UK, one of Israel's key trade partners with bilateral commerce worth £9 billion, its fourth-largest, has pivoted sharply. Alongside France and Canada, both long-standing allies of Israel, Britain threatened sanctions earlier this month if the war in Gaza continues. Within 24 hours, London suspended free trade agreement talks with Israel, summoned Israeli Ambassador Tzipi Hotovely for a formal rebuke and announced sanctions on several West Bank settlers.

This turn follows a partial arms embargo announced by the UK in September. Yet according to a report published this month in The Guardian, British firms continued supplying military-related goods, including ammunition, to Israel between September 2024 and March 2025. The data, compiled by pro-Palestinian groups, relied on Israeli customs records.

While the arms embargo garnered attention, the recent threat of broader sanctions is seen as far more consequential. Domestic politics are also playing a significant role. During last year's election, approximately 30 constituencies had majority Muslim populations, giving the Muslim vote considerable weight. By the next election, slated for 2029, that number is projected to rise to between 50 and 70 constituencies, further influencing the UK's stance on Israel—regardless of developments in Gaza.

Labour's declining approval ratings also add pressure. Less than a year after taking office, the government is facing mounting public frustration over immigration, the ailing British economy and a strained healthcare system.

As Labour struggles, the right-wing Reform UK party, led by Brexit figurehead Nigel Farage, is gaining ground in the polls. Farage, who recently reentered Parliament, has declared his next political mission is to defeat Labour—a move that could further reshape Britain's foreign and domestic policy landscape.

Courting the Muslim vote

Criticizing Israel has become political low-hanging fruit in Britain. When it comes to government scrutiny, Labour politicians often find it easiest to target Israel—an approach some say is aimed at appealing to key voter blocs. Since Labour returned to power, Gaza has been mentioned in 9,278 parliamentary queries, far outpacing references to major domestic issues such as immigration (5,742 mentions) or healthcare (5,321).

The disproportionate focus is widely attributed to Labour's courtship of the Muslim vote in various constituencies. Images from Gaza resonate strongly across the UK, and as the war drags on with no clear end in sight, global patience is wearing thin. But in Britain, political calculus is accelerating the shift in tone.

By contrast, criticism of Israel in Germany, while present, follows a different trajectory. Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Foreign Minister Johann Wadepul have expressed deep

concern over the humanitarian toll, and some voices within the coalition have even called for an arms embargo—though none has materialized. Notably, sanctions are not on the table.

Observers familiar with UK-Israel relations say the British government's approach is driven primarily by domestic politics. Lord Ian Austin, a former Labour member who left the party during Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, voiced concerns as early as last year for what he termed as an "obsession" with Israel, urging politicians to focus on local problems instead. He questioned why, in constituencies grappling with inflation and job insecurity, so many lawmakers remain fixated on a conflict "3,000 miles away."

Who will lead?

A turning point in UK-Israel relations came with the unprecedented joint statement issued by France, Britain and Canada criticizing Israel. According to diplomatic observers, the shift is rooted primarily in political motivations, but also reflects Britain's desire to maintain its leadership role. London, wary of falling behind France—which has taken a leading role in Europe's anti-Israel stance and efforts to advance recognition of a Palestinian state—is aligning more closely with Paris to reinforce its European credentials.

Israeli officials viewed Hamas' swift praise for the joint statement as the most telling response. To them, it underscores the view that Britain has chosen to align with Hamas and "the wrong side of history."

Following the threat of sanctions, the UK formally announced it was halting negotiations for a future free trade agreement with Israel. British Foreign Secretary David Lammy used the occasion to deliver a sharp condemnation of Israel and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich. "The UN and WHO have issued stark warnings of the threat of starvation hanging over hundreds of thousands of civilians," Lammy said in a statement to the House of Commons, calling the situation "abominable."

He then criticized Smotrich directly, referencing recent remarks in which the Israeli minister spoke of Israeli forces "cleansing" Gaza, "destroying what's left" and of resident Palestinians "being relocated to third countries."

"We must call this what it is. It is extremism. It is dangerous. It is repellent. It is monstrous. And I condemn it in the strongest possible terms," Lammy said. "Whatever Israeli ministers claim, this is not the way to bring the hostages safely home." His comments drew cries of "Shame!" and "Genocide!" from members of the British Parliament.

Sources familiar with UK-Israel relations said Lammy's speech was primarily directed at his domestic political base, and expressed shock at its tone and content.

A hostage deal and ceasefire in Gaza would undoubtedly ease tensions and reduce the scope of the crisis. Despite recent diplomatic strains, Britain is still regarded in Israel as a friendly nation and continues to cooperate on security and intelligence matters.

However, internal British politics are increasingly dictating its foreign policy. London, Israeli officials say, has clearly taken sides—and gone so far that there are growing concerns in Jerusalem that the UK may move toward recognizing a Palestinian state.

While much depends on developments in Gaza, Israel has already warned the UK it would respond strongly, including potentially annexing Area C of the West Bank—

territory under full Israeli security and civil control. The intended message: recognition of a Palestinian state would be seen as a reward for Hamas.

Israeli officials believe that the French-led push for sanctions and Palestinian state recognition is not yet final and may still be reconsidered. Nevertheless, in Jerusalem, there is a sense that Britain has “crossed the line” and effectively “left the room.” “They won’t be part of the process or play a role moving forward, given their conduct,” a senior Israeli official said.

The only friend left?

Amid the current diplomatic crisis between Israel and the United Kingdom, one rare bright spot, perhaps the only one, has emerged: Kemi Badenoch, the new leader of the British opposition. Elected last November to head the Conservative Party, Badenoch is the fourth woman to lead the Tories, following in the footsteps of Margaret Thatcher, Theresa May and Liz Truss—all of whom served as prime minister.

Badenoch, like many in her party, is a staunch supporter of Israel. Throughout the war in Gaza, she has fiercely defended Israel’s right to fight Hamas and free its hostages. Known for her candid style and unfiltered communication, the 45-year-old has been described as a different kind of politician—one who speaks directly to the public.

In an interview this week with Sky News, Badenoch echoed Israeli criticism of the joint statement by the UK, France, and Canada, calling it a de facto endorsement of Hamas. “If Hamas is praising your actions, you’ve probably done something wrong,” she said.

“Hamas is a terrorist group that is making the lives of the people in Gaza horrible. Israel is fighting a war where they want to get 58 hostages who have not been returned. That is what all of this is about, and they said that there won’t be a ceasefire until they get their people back. What we need to make sure is that we’re on the side that is going to eradicate Hamas.”

“Hamas is a terrorist group. They are not our friends,” Badenoch added, responding to a question about why she didn’t criticize Israel’s actions, as the three governments did.

“It’s all related. Who funds Hamas? Iran, an enemy of this country. Israel is fighting a proxy war on behalf of the UK, just as Ukraine is on behalf of Western Europe against Russia. We have to get serious. There was a terrorist plot in London against the Israeli embassy. We saw two Jewish members of the Israeli embassy in D.C. killed. Whose side are we on?”

She acknowledged the suffering of Palestinian civilians and said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was right to voice concern over what he sees as a misguided move by Western leaders. “He has every right to say that. What I want to see is Keir Starmer making sure that he is on the right side of British national interest. That cannot be on the side of Hamas.”

Badenoch also rejected accusations that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. “It is not a genocide, as people are saying,” she said. “There are a lot of things which we can criticize Israel on, which I have done, in terms of how they may carry out some of these actions. But the bottom line is they are fighting a terrorist group that is trying to destroy that country.”

She concluded the interview by saying, “I do not want to be in a position where a terrorist group is praising my actions. And that is where Keir Starmer has found himself... an Iran-backed terrorist organization is not one that we should be getting praise from.”

Badenoch sees Israel as a beacon of freedom and democracy and admires its entrepreneurial spirit. While Foreign Secretary Lammy recently announced the suspension of trade agreement talks with Israel, it was Badenoch, during her tenure as international trade secretary in the previous government, who pushed to initiate those negotiations. She also maintains a close relationship with Israeli Ambassador to the UK Tzipi Hotovely, whom she once joined for a Shabbat dinner—an experience that moved her deeply as they lit Sabbath candles together.

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Hamas response to ceasefire totally unacceptable, only takes us backward

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Witkoff says Hamas response to ceasefire proposal 'totally unacceptable, only takes us backward'

Israeli officials say **terror group's new proposal**, which **includes a 7-year ceasefire**, full **IDF withdrawal** from areas seized since March and **end to current aid distribution model**, strays **far from US plan** and amounts to de facto rejection

Itamar Eichner, Reuters | 21:38

U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff on Saturday **dismissed Hamas' response to the latest ceasefire proposal** as “**totally unacceptable**” and added that it “**only takes us backward**,” reinforcing Israel’s position that the **terrorist group’s demands fall far outside the agreed framework** and amount to a **rejection of the deal**.

According to a senior official familiar with the negotiations, **Hamas is calling for a ceasefire of up to seven years**, a **full withdrawal of Israeli forces** from all territory captured since March and a **reversal of the new humanitarian aid model** managed by the **U.S.-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF)**. **Hamas demands a return to the previous system of aid distribution**, which Israel has criticized as **vulnerable to exploitation by the terrorist group**. “This isn’t a response—it’s a shut door,” the official said.

Earlier in the day, **Hamas** announced that it had **submitted its reply to Egyptian and Qatari mediators**, but **did not clarify** whether the proposal had been **accepted**. In its statement, the terrorist group **claimed that Witkoff’s outline aims to achieve a permanent ceasefire**, a **full Israeli withdrawal** from the Gaza Strip and a **guarantee** of continuous humanitarian aid to Gaza. Hamas also said it agreed to release 10 living hostages and the bodies of 18 others in exchange for an agreed number of Palestinian prisoners. An Israeli official said in response that **Hamas** had effectively **rejected Witkoff’s proposal** and instead **presented its own revised version with new conditions**.

Earlier reports in Saudi media had already suggested that Hamas was likely to offer only a conditional agreement, which would include caveats and modifications.

Israeli officials maintain that the plan must be accepted as proposed, warning that any additions or changes would necessitate further negotiations.

According to Saudi broadcaster Al Hadath, Palestinian factions in Gaza have reportedly urged Hamas to accept the proposal, viewing it as an opportunity to halt the war and alleviate the humanitarian crisis, despite its shortcomings. One faction reportedly said, "This proposal could stop the hunger and displacement."

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Saudi outraged after Israel blocks Arab minister's Ramallah visit for PA statehood

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Saudi officials outraged after Israel blocks foreign minister's Ramallah visit

'A serious Harassment': Senior Saudi officials say Israel's move to block FM bin Farhan's visit 'unexpected and negative'; planned trip, initiated by crown prince, excluded Israel; delegation planned to arrive by helicopter, but Israel denied passage
Smadar Perry | 17:56

Saudi officials expressed frustration Saturday over Israel's move to block a planned visit by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan and a delegation of Arab foreign ministers to the West Bank, which was scheduled to take place Sunday in Ramallah.

Two senior Saudi officials told Ynet that Israel's decision came as an unwelcome surprise, describing it as "unexpected and negative." The officials said the visit had been a personal initiative of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and did not involve any coordination with Israel. "Israel was never a target or a party to this initiative," they said.

The Israeli government's message, conveyed from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office to Hussein al-Sheikh, the Palestinian Authority's (PA) civil affairs minister and deputy to PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, said that Israel would not allow helicopters carrying the delegation to cross via the Allenby Bridge into the West Bank.

A senior Israeli official labeled the planned visit as "provocative." Had it taken place, it would have marked the highest-level Saudi visit to Ramallah since the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan. The visit had been coordinated secretly with Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey, the Saudi officials said.

They noted that Saudi Arabia has refrained from sending high-level envoys to the Palestinian territories under both Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas. "We believed we were nearing agreements, but it all fell apart," one official said.

There was no indication that the initiative included an attempt to coordinate with Netanyahu's office. When asked why no meeting was sought with Netanyahu, the Saudi officials responded, "This was Bin Salman's initiative—Israel was not part of the plan."

The officials also pointed to a deterioration in Israeli-Saudi relations, attributing it to IDF operations in Gaza and the West Bank. “You in Israel know well that relations have deteriorated due to military actions,” they said.

According to the Saudi officials, the Palestinian Authority was also caught off guard by Israel’s refusal. Al-Sheikh reportedly threatened to appeal to Arab states to pressure Israel to reverse its decision.

Foreign Minister bin Farhan ultimately canceled the visit after being informed that access to Ramallah would be denied and he was said to be angered by the development. “There is no reason to face such rigidity,” one official said. “For us, this is serious Israeli harassment. Ramallah is under Palestinian sovereignty. Israel allows Abbas and his advisers to fly to Arab countries—why deny entry to official representatives from Arab states?”

The visit was also intended as a symbolic prelude to a broader diplomatic effort, including a planned June announcement at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, where Saudi Arabia and other Arab states are expected to support a Palestinian bid for statehood. Palestinian sources said the visit was designed to generate media momentum and bolster Arab backing for the Abbas-led initiative.

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Barcelona city council votes to cut ties with Israel over the Gaza War

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Barcelona city council votes to cut ties with Israel over the Gaza War

Motion backed by the governing Socialist party and supported by far-left and pro-independence factions calls for ending cooperation with companies and entities tied to the government

Itamar Eichner | 14:08

The Barcelona city council voted on Friday to cut all ties with the current Israeli government, “until respect for international law” and the “basic rights of the Palestinian people” are restored.

The city also suspended its friendship agreement with Tel Aviv that was restored last year by Mayor Jaume Collboni, who reversed his predecessor's decision to sever the twin city agreement that had been in place since 1998 over the war in Gaza.

“The suffering and death in Gaza over the past year and a half, and recent attacks by the Israeli government, make any relationship unviable,” Collboni said.

Hamas issued a statement congratulating the Spanish city for its decision after a motion backed by the governing Socialist party and supported by far-left and pro-independence factions.

The city council's decision includes certain economic measures that are meant to block cooperation with "companies and entities connected to the government in Israel, and identified by the UN as carrying out illegal activity in the occupied territories, while contradicting the Palestinians' civil, economic and cultural rights.

Israeli vendors will not be able to attend the Fira de Barcelona trade fare and the city's port will be asked to ban ships carrying weapons for Israel from docking there.

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

IDF kills Hezbollah missile commander rebuilding military north of the border

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

IDF kills Hezbollah operative rebuilding military capabilities

Strike targets Mohammad Ali Jamou, commander of the Iran-backed terror group's South Lebanon missile array as he travels in his car 40 kilometers north of the border

Lior Ben Ari | 11:50

Israel eliminated a commander of Hezbollah's rocket array in South Lebanon on Saturday, the military said. Mohammad Ali Jamoul "advanced numerous projectile attacks toward Israeli civilians and IDF troops and was involved recently in efforts to reestablish Hezbollah's terrorist infrastructure in the area," the IDF said in a statement.

Jamoul was killed in a targeted strike in the Sunni village of Deir ez-Zahrani, some 40 kilometers north of the Israel-Lebanon border, in the pre-dawn hours, while he was traveling in his car.

According to the military, he had been working to rebuild Hezbollah's military capabilities, destroyed during the war with Israel and had been violating the ceasefire terms which ended the war.

On Friday, Israel attacked the IDF carried out strikes on Hezbollah military sites and infrastructure in various locations in Lebanon. The military said among targets hit were Hezbollah infrastructure containing weapons in the area of Sidon where terror group was attempting to rebuild its military strength

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Aid convoy of 110 trucks looted in Gaza; another 65 trucks turned back due to fighting

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Humanitarian aid convoy looted in Gaza

Crowds in Khan Younis raided some 110 World Food Program trucks carrying flour; COGAT slams UN, claiming more civilians would receive aid if the international organization would join distribution efforts
Einav Halabi, News Agencies | 11:06

Crowds in Khan Younis raided some 110 World Food Program trucks carrying flour on Saturday, a day before it was to be distributed to civilians in the Strip.

"The catastrophic situation in Gaza is the worst since the war began," U.N. spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in New York on Friday. "Any aid that gets into the hands of people who need it is good," he said, adding that the aid deliveries so far have had "very, very little impact."

The U.N. and international aid groups have refused to work with the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) an American foundation distributing food to the civilian population in dedicated distribution areas set up by Israel, claiming that it is not neutral and has a distribution model that forces the displacement of Palestinians.

The U.N. says that in the past 12 days, it has only managed to transport some 200 truckloads of aid into the Strip, hindered by insecurity and Israeli access restrictions. It was not immediately clear how much of that aid reached those in need. It said some trucks and a World Food Program warehouse have also been looted by desperate, hungry people.

U.N. officials have also criticized Israeli limitations on what kind of aid they can provide. "Israeli authorities have not allowed us to bring in a single ready-to-eat meal. The only food permitted has been flour for bakeries. Even if allowed in unlimited quantities, which it hasn't been, it wouldn't amount to a complete diet for anyone," said Eri Kaneko, U.N. humanitarian affairs spokesperson.

Some of the recipients of GHF aid said the packages include some rice, flour, canned beans, pasta, olive oil, biscuits and sugar.

"More aid would actually get to the people if you would collect the aid waiting for you by the crossings," COGAT, the Israeli military aid coordination agency, said to the U.N. in a posting on X on Friday.

However, the U.N. said that on Tuesday the Israeli military denied all its requests to access Kerem Shalom to pick up the aid. And on Thursday, when 65 trucks of aid managed to leave the crossing, all but five turned back due to intense fighting. Five trucks of medical aid managed to reach the warehouses of a field hospital, but "a group of armed individuals stormed the warehouses... looting large quantities of medical equipment, supplies, medicines and nutritional supplements that was intended for malnourished children," Dujarric said.

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Israel blocks Saudi delegation of Arab ministers to Ramallah, to recognize a PA state

05.31.25 – Sa - Omer 43

Israel blocks Saudi minister's Ramallah visit

A delegation of Arab foreign ministers scheduled a visit to the West Bank to meet with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas as part of the efforts by Saudi Arabia to promote international recognition of a Palestinian State

Itamar Eichner|05.30.25 | 07:39

Israel informed Palestinian Authority (PA) Deputy Chairman Hussein al-Sheikh that it would not allow a delegation of Arab foreign ministers, including Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan to visit the PA and meet with President Mahmoud Abbas, Ynet has learned. The meeting was scheduled to take place on Sunday.

According to a report on CNN, the visit was part of an effort by Saudi Arabia to secure international recognition of a Palestinian state after Riyadh was frustrated over Israel's refusal to end the war. Saudi Arabia, along with France, has been leading the initiative to convene an international committee at the UN in New York next month

"The Palestinian Authority, which to this day refuses to condemn the October 7 massacre, intended to host a defiant meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Ramallah to discuss the establishment of a Palestinian state," a diplomatic source said.

"Such a state would certainly become a terrorist state in the heart of Israel. Israel will not cooperate with moves designed to harm it and its security. The Palestinian Authority must stop violating its agreements with Israel on all levels."

The planned visit by the Saudi minister would require passage into the West Bank, through the Allenby Border Crossing from Jordan, which is under Israeli control. CNN said an Israeli official confirmed to the network that the government was informed of the planned visit but would block it.

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Ynet-News, May 30, 2025 – Friday

Sivan 3rd Month; Omer 42

05.30.25 – Fr - Omer 42

IDF strikes missile depots in Syria's Latakia region in rare coastal attack

05.30.25 – Fr - Omer 42

Trump says Gaza deal very close, announcement possibly today or tomorrow

05.30.25 – Fr - Omer 42

Hamas still reviewing Witkoff proposal: Consulting with Palestinian factions

05.30.25 – Fr - Omer 42

Israel accuses Macron of launching a crusade against the Jewish state

05.30.25 – Fr - Omer 42

Israel believes France will not recognize Palestinian state in upcoming summit

05.30.25 – Fr - Omer 42

Hamas yet to respond: The 13 clauses of Witkoff's new hostage and ceasefire deal

05.30.25 – Fr - - News Placed in May 30 spot – Friday - Omer 42

IDF shuffles North Gaza mass to move West immediately to evacuate combat areas

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

There can be no good nuclear deal with Iran, they refuse to dismantle

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

Houthi missile fire on Tel Aviv during soccer cup finals & rock concert, intercepted

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

Saudi media says Israel, Hamas agree on ceasefire, to be announced 8am Friday

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

IDF laser air defense system performed well, intercepted 35+ Hezbollah drones

05.29.25 – Th - - News Placed in May 29 spot – Thursday - Omer 41

Israel accepts US Gaza ceasefire, 10 living hostages, half of deceased, a week apart

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

Witkoff plan: What's at stake and who decides which hostages come home first

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

Gaza aid resumes as IDF urges civilians to expel Hamas from distribution centers

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

IDF scotches women's infantry training after candidates fail to meet fitness standards

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

Cabinet approves 22 West Bank settlements along Jordan border, push for annexation

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

With IDF approval: Bedouin Israeli company helping supply aid to Gaza

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

Lebanon changed the game, succeeded in disarming Hezbollah in the south

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

Farming in crisis: Leket Israel supports agriculture & sustains logistical barriers

05.29.25 – Th - Omer 41

Musk leaving, but DOGE is here to stay as it becomes a way of life

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

Israel battles global media with budget delays, fighting diplomat backlash over Gaza

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

Police seize luxury cars, millions in cash from Galilee Arab crime families

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

Hamas claim progress in hostage talks, as Israel dispute new terms

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

Rafael's Iron Beam laser developed over decades, shot down Hezbollah drones

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

Gazans loot food warehouse, five shot dead; claim aid center is an arm of Israel

05.28.25 – We - - News Placed in May 28 spot – Wednesday - Omer 40

UAE miffed at Jerusalem Day Flag March, MKs raised Israeli flag on Temple Mount

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

Italy joins condemnation of Israel's Gaza offensive

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

Israel will expel citizens convicted of terror, receiving PA stipends

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

From Gaza to Yemen, this is what it looks like for Israel after 600 days of war

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

Mystery funding for Gaza aid sparks further speculation of Israeli involvement

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

Without warning: IDF again attacks Yemen's Sanaa capital airport

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

600th day of war in Gaza marked with demonstrations, call for elections

05.28.25 – We - Omer 40

US concerned Israel will attack Iran nuclear sites with short notice

05.27.25 – Tu - Omer 39

IDF general encouraged border residents to learn first line defense

05.27.25 – Tu - - News Placed in May 27 spot – Tuesday - Omer 39

Cabinet approved 22 West Bank settlements; blocking PA land registration in Area C

05.27.25 – Tu - Omer 39

Chaos at Gaza aid site as crowds overwhelm distribution efforts; staff evacuated

05.27.25 – Tu - Omer 39

Security forces seize \$2 million in West Bank terror fund raids

05.27.25 – Tu - Omer 39

US envoys tell hostage families, progress in negotiations could come soon

05.27.25 – Tu - Omer 39

Orthodox factions demand visible progress on draft exemption before Shavuot

05.27.25 – Tu - Omer 39

IDF report of Oct. 7 attack on Kibbutz, cites lack of preparedness for a large attack

05.27.25 – Tu - Omer 39

Two Yemen missiles intercepted in three hours; shrapnel fell near Hebron

05.26.25 – Mo - - News Placed in May 26 spot – Monday - Omer 38 New Moon

Gaza aid center closed due to looting & death of convoy's security personnel

05.26.25 – Mo - Omer 38 New Moon

Trump message to PM, deadline is set for Iran: may be good news on Iran

05.26.25 – Mo - Omer 38 New Moon

MK Malinovsky set up office at UNRWA site in Jerusalem, celebrating UN removal

05.26.25 – Mo - Omer 38 New Moon

IDF strikes hit deep inside Lebanon, in Tyre, and in several southern villages

05.26.25 – Mo - Omer 38 New Moon

Three Arab Israeli youths plot ISIS-inspired terror attacks; filmed building bombs

05.26.25 – Mo - Omer 38 New Moon

Germany says Gaza war no longer justified as defense; ending arms to Israel

05.26.25 – Mo - Omer 38 New Moon

Israel opens aid hub in southern Gaza; Foundation CEO resigns from GHF

05.26.25 – Mo - Omer 38 New Moon

Israel rejects absurd Witkoff ceasefire plan: essentially a surrender to Hamas

05.26.25 – Mo - Omer 38 New Moon

Three projectiles fired from Gaza, one intercepted

05.25.25 – Su - - News Placed in May 25 spot – Sunday - Omer 37

Israel Gaza escalation as talks stall; US urges delay in full takeover of strip

05.25.25 – Su - Omer 37

IDF outline of Hamas defeat; Gaza playing games - will hold hostages

05.25.25 – Su - Omer 37

600 days after Oct. 7, Gaza border families struggle with trauma and job loss

05.25.25 – Su - Omer 37

IDF chief rebukes incoming Shin Bet head: This is not an endless war - we'll shorten it

05.25.25 – Su - Omer 37

US firm over Gaza aid also conducting intelligence operations

05.25.25 – Su - Omer 37

Israel controls 77% of Gaza territory, Hamas claims

05.25.25 – Su - Omer 37

Israel prepares to expand Gaza aid distribution under armed US guards

05.25.25 – Su - Omer 37

Israel behind funds for US contractors COGAT, set to deliver aid to Gaza

05.25.25 – Su - Omer 37

Rioting West Bank settlers clash with Palestinians; terrorist home & car set on fire

05.24.25 – Sa - - News Placed in May 24 spot – Saturday - Omer 36

Hamas facing worst financial crisis ever since Israel restricted cash flows into Gaza

05.24.25 – Sa - Omer 36

Aid distribution in Gaza delayed by persistent chaos and fierce looting

05.24.25 – Sa - Omer 36

Late night Hamas-propaganda phone calls, prompting cyber investigation

05.24.25 – Sa - Omer 36

Houthi intensify daylight missile strikes after US-Yemen agreement