

Ynet-News, April 14, 2021 – Wednesday

04.14.21 – We - - - News Placed in Apr 14 spot – Wednesday
Iran destroyed a northern Iraq Kurds Mossad base & killed senior Israeli agent

04.14.21 – We - - - News Placed in Apr 15 spot – Thursday
Vienna lifting Iran sanctions as IR-6 centrifuges reaching 60% enrichment

04.14.21 – We - - -
US proceeding with \$23 billion weapon sales to UAE

04.13.21 – Tu - - -
Israeli-owned ship reportedly attacked off UAE amid Iran tensions

04.13.21 – Tu - - - News Placed in Apr 11 spot – Sunday
Iran blames Israel as explosion cut all power at Natanz uranium enrichment facility

04.12.21 – Mo - - - News Placed in Apr 12 spot – Monday
Shin Bet to investigate leaks to press on attacks that Iran attributes to Israel

04.12.21 – Mo - - - News Placed in May 08 spot – Saturday
Israel's 73rd Independence Day, has population at 9.327 million, 74% Jews

04.08.21 – Th - - - News
Israeli UN ambassador lambasts renewed US aid to UNRWA without reforms

04.08.21 – Th - - - News
US lifted sanctions on ICC court to impose absurd PA claims on Israel

04.08.21 – Th - - -
Arab MK leaves Knesset's Holocaust Day event over Ben-Gvir's speech

04.08.21 – Th - - - News Placed in May 09 spot – Friday
Israeli strikes weapons convoys near Damascus destined for Hezbollah

04.06.21 – Tu - - -
Report: Iranian ship struck by missile in the Red Sea

04.09.21 – Fr - - - News Placed in May 10 spot – Saturday
Britain's Prince Philip, husband of Queen Elizabeth, dies aged 99

03.17.21 – We - - -
Drones 20 at a time in coordinated airspace test for potential deliveries

04.14.21 – We - - -

Iran destroyed a northern Iraq Kurds Mossad base & killed senior Israeli agent

04.14.21

Kurds reject reports of Iranian attack on Mossad base

Kurdistan Regional Government says claims that 'an Israeli information and intelligence center in the Kurdistan Region was targeted and a number of its employees were killed and wounded' were meant to destabilize the region

TPS| Published: 04.14.21 , 17:57

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq rejected reports circulating among the country's media, according to which Iranian troops attacked and destroyed a Mossad base in the area under its governance.

Iraq's Fars News Agency reported that an Israeli Mossad outpost came under attack in Northern Iraq on Tuesday night, and that a senior Israeli intelligence agent was killed, while several other Mossad employees were wounded.

Iraq's Sabereen News meanwhile, claimed that a Mossad center came under attack by "unknown resistance forces," dealing a "heavy blow" to Israel and its secret service agency.

On Wednesday, the Kurdistan Regional Government relayed to several media organizations in the region that the reports of an alleged Iranian attack on a clandestine Mossad base in its region were false.

"We affirm that these reports are completely unfounded and that this is not the first time that the region has been accused of having a special center for Israeli intelligence on its territory," the KRG said in a statement.

"The purpose of publishing such reports is to target a clear conspiracy against the region and its political process."

04.14.21 – We - - -

Vienna lifting Iran sanctions as IR-6 centrifuges reaching 60% enrichment

04.14.21

Iran president calls 60% enrichment an answer to Israel's 'evilness'

Hassan Rouhani says first-generation IR-1 centrifuges, damaged during alleged Israeli attack at Natanz nuclear site, would be replaced by advanced IR-6 centrifuges that enrich uranium much faster

Associated Press| Published: 04.14.21 , 11:23

Iran's president on Wednesday called Tehran's decision to enrich uranium up to 60% after Israeli saboteurs allegedly attacked a nuclear site "an answer to your evilness," linking the incident to ongoing talks in Vienna over its tattered nuclear deal with world powers.

Israel, which hasn't comment on the attack, is suspected of carrying out this weekend's assault at the Natanz nuclear facility, part of an escalating shadow war between the two countries.

The escalation in enrichment could see further retaliation as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed never to allow Tehran to obtain a nuclear weapon. His country has twice preemptively bombed Mideast nations to stop their atomic programs.

Speaking to his Cabinet, an impassioned President Hassan Rouhani said damaged first-generation IR-1 centrifuges at Natanz would be replaced by advanced IR-6 centrifuges that enrich uranium much faster.

"You wanted to make our hands empty during the talks but our hands are full," Rouhani said.

He added: "60% enrichment is an answer to your evilness... We cut off both of your hands, one with IR-6 centrifuges and another one with 60%."

Iran announced Tuesday it would enrich uranium to its highest level ever in response to the weekend attack at Natanz.

Officials initially said the enrichment would begin Wednesday. However, an early Wednesday morning tweet from Iran's envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency IAEA, Kazem Gharibadadi, suggested it might come later.

He wrote the enrichment would be handled by only two cascades of IR-4 and IR-6 centrifuges at Natanz. A cascade is a group of centrifuges working together to enrich uranium more quickly.

"Modification of the process just started and we expect to accumulate the product next week," Gharibadadi wrote.

Iran insists its nuclear program is peaceful, though the West and the International Atomic Energy Agency say Tehran had an organized military nuclear program up until the end of 2003. However, the nuclear deal prevented it from having enough of a uranium stockpile to be able to pursue a nuclear weapon.

An annual U.S. intelligence report released Tuesday maintained the American assessment that "Iran is not currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities that we judge would be necessary to produce a nuclear device."

The talks in Vienna are aimed at reviving America's role in that agreement, which former President Donald Trump abandoned, and lifting the sanctions he imposed. Rouhani in his comments Wednesday insisted Iran still seeks a negotiated settlement in Vienna over its program.

"The U.S. should return to the same conditions of 2015 when we signed the nuclear deal," Rouhani said.

04.14.21 – We - - -

US proceeding with \$23 billion weapon sales to UAE

04.14.21

Biden administration proceeding with \$23 billion weapon sales to UAE

State Department spokesperson the administration would move forward with the deal, orchestrated by Trump and which includes the sale of advanced F-35 jets, while continuing 'to review details and consulting with Emirati officials'

Reuters| Published: 04.14.21 , 08:31

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration has told Congress it is proceeding with more than \$23 billion in weapons sales to the United Arab Emirates, including advanced F-35 aircraft, armed drones and other equipment, congressional aides said on Tuesday.

A State Department spokesperson said the administration would move forward with the proposed sales to the UAE, "even as we continue reviewing details and consulting with Emirati officials" related to the use of the weapons.

The Democratic president's administration had paused the deals agreed to by former Republican President Donald Trump in order to review them. The sales to the Gulf nation were finalized right before Trump left office.

The Trump administration told Congress in November it had approved the U.S. sale to the UAE as a side deal to the Abraham Accords, a U.S.-brokered agreement in September in which the UAE agreed to normalize relations with Israel.

In the last months of the Trump administration, Israel reached deals with the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco as part of the accords.

The \$23.37 billion package contained products from General Atomics, Lockheed Martin Corp and Raytheon Technologies Corp, including 50 F-35 Lighting II aircraft, up to 18 MQ-9B Unmanned Aerial Systems and a package of air-to-air and air-to-ground munitions.

Some U.S. lawmakers have criticized the UAE for its involvement in the war in Yemen, a conflict considered one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters, and worried that the weapons transfers might violate U.S. guarantees that Israel will retain a military advantage in the region.

"We will also continue to reinforce with the UAE and all recipients of U.S. defense articles and services that U.S.-origin defense equipment must be adequately secured and used in a manner that respects human rights and fully complies with the laws of armed conflict," the statement said.

The Biden administration is also reviewing its policy for military sales to Saudi Arabia, including some Trump-era weapons deals, in light of the Saudi involvement in Yemen and other human rights concerns.

It has not released the results of that review. In February, U.S. officials told Reuters the administration was considering cancelling past deals that posed human rights concerns and limiting future sales to “defensive” weapons.

04.13.21 – Tu - - -

Israeli-owned ship reportedly attacked off UAE amid Iran tensions

04.13.21

Israeli-owned ship reportedly attacked off UAE amid Iran tensions

Vessel, identified as Hyperion Ray, attacked just hours after Iran FM pointed accusing finger at Israel for blast at key nuclear site and vowed to avenge; ship sustains minor damage

Liad Osmo,Ahiya Raved,Ron Ben-Yishai| Published: 04.13.21 , 19:19

An Israeli-owned ship has been attacked close to the UAE emirate of Fujairah, the Hezbollah-aligned Lebanese Al-Mayadeen network reported on Tuesday.

The report has identified the vessel as Hyperion Ray that sails under the Bahamas flag and belongs to Israeli businessman Rami Ungar.

The vessel has sustained minor damage.

The reported incident came shortly after Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif pointed an accusing finger at Israel for the explosion at its key nuclear site and vowed revenge for the attack

Tehran's top diplomat said that the incident was a “very bad gamble” that would strengthen the Islamic Republic's hand in talks to revive a 2015 nuclear deal with major powers.

Earlier on Tuesday, an Iranian official announced that Tehran will begin enriching uranium to 60% purity, higher than the program ever has before though still short of weapons grade.

Both Israel and Iran have been reported to be locked in a covert maritime standoff in recent months amid a host of attacks on Israeli- and Iranian-owned vessels.

The latest such attack took place last week when the Iranian-flagged ship "Saviz" was struck by a missile in the Red Sea off the coast of Eritrea.

Officially, Iran says the ship is used for commercial purposes but according to international media reports, it serves the Revolutionary Guards as an intelligence reconnaissance vessel and guarding oil shipments in the Red Sea.

Late last month, Channel 12 reported that Iran fired a missile at an Israeli-owned ship in the Arabian Sea.

The container ship, which was said to be on its way from Tanzania to India, was hit by a small projectile and sustained minimal damage, Channel 12 said. The ship was identified

as the LORI, which is owned by Israeli businessman Udi Angel and is registered in Liberia.

In February, Israel claimed **Iran was behind an attack on the ship Helios Rays** — also owned by Unger — **off the shores of Oman**.

04.13.21 – Tu - - -

Iran blames Israel as explosion cut all power at Natanz uranium enrichment facility

04.13.21

Iranian FM: Israel made 'very bad gamble' by sabotaging Natanz site

Mohammad Javad Zarif points finger at Jerusalem reported explosion that cut all power at uranium enrichment facility, says incident will **strengthen Tehran's position in Vienna talks** with world powers on revival of 2015 nuclear agreement

Reuters| Published: **04.13.21** , 11:06

Iran's top diplomat said on **Tuesday** that an **attack on** its **Natanz nuclear facility** which it **blames on Israel** was a "very bad gamble" that would strengthen Tehran's hand in talks to revive a 2015 nuclear deal with major powers.

Tehran has said an **explosion on Sunday** at its key nuclear site was an act of **sabotage by** arch-foe **Israel** and vowed revenge for an attack that appeared to be latest episode in a long-running covert war.

"Israel played a very bad gamble if it thought that the attack will weaken Iran's hand in the nuclear talks," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told a joint news conference with his Russian counterpart in Tehran.

"On the contrary, it will strengthen our position."

Israel, which the Islamic Republic does not recognize, **has not** formally **commented** on the incident.

But IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi also appeared to allude to Iran in a comment Sunday about Israeli military operations, hours after Tehran reported the Natanz incident.

The IDF's "operations in the Middle East are not hidden from the eyes of the enemy," Kochavi said at a memorial service in Jerusalem for fallen soldiers.

"They are watching us, seeing [our] abilities and weighing their steps with caution," Kochavi said.

Iran and the global powers held what they described as constructive talks last week to salvage the 2015 nuclear accord, which Israel fiercely opposed, after the United States under former president Donald Trump abandoned it three years ago.

U.S. President Joe **Biden is committed to rejoining the deal if Iran returns to full compliance** with restrictions on nuclear fuel production.

The White House said on Monday the United States was not involved in Sunday's attack and had **no comment on speculation about the cause** of the incident.

Iranian authorities say uranium enrichment has not stopped at the site, which Tehran has said was hit by an explosion.

"I assure you that in near future **more advanced** uranium enrichment **centrifuges will be placed in the Natanz facility**," Zarif told Tuesday's news conference.

04.12.21 – Mo - - -

Shin Bet to investigate leaks to press on attacks that Iran attributes to Israel.

04.12.21

Gantz asks Shin Bet to **open an investigation into security leaks**
Defense minister **requests attorney general look into intelligence** officials quoted by Israeli, foreign press **on strike at Iran's Natanz nuclear site and against a vessel in the Red Sea**, both actions widely attributed to Israel

Yoav Zitun | Published: 04.12.21 , 19:09

Defense Minister Benny Gantz Monday **ordered the Shin Bet** security agency to open an **investigation into recent security leaks to the press regarding recent attacks on Iran** that have been **attributed to Israel**.

His office said the request was sent to Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit in accordance with protocol.

Gantz referred to the recent blackout at the Natanz nuclear facility and the strike last week on an Iranian vessel in the Red Sea believed to be used by the Islamic Republic's Revolutionary Guard Corps.

"I am not talking about a specific operation, but I do want to talk about the chatter issue," Gantz said.

"It is a severe issue and I turned to the Shin Bet and the IDF's Information Security Department to open an investigation into it. **We can't operate when everyone is babbling.** We **can't accept** these winkings and these 'Western **sources**' stories."

"It **harms our troops**, our **security**, and the interest of the State of Israel, and I think that there should be a thorough investigation," he added.

Gantz also **hinted that the leaks came from** the political echelon and the **Mossad** intelligence **agency** against Israel's policy of ambiguity regarding its activities against Iran, and that **they have led Tehran to seek revenge** against Israel.

Asked whether the country's policy of ambiguity had changed, **Gantz** said that "there was no **discussion** about it. I **think** that **it is irresponsible behavior** — and **if it comes from personal or political interests, it is even worse.**"

"I don't know where it comes from," he added, "but I know where it is not coming from. I hope that the prime minister has great experience in the diplomatic-security field, and am not belittling it. I think that all other considerations should be pushed aside, and I hope that this is what he is doing," he said.

04.12.21 – Mo - - -

Israel's 73rd Independence Day, has population at 9.327 million, 74% Jews

04.12.21

Ahead of 73rd Independence Day, Israel's population now at 9,327,000 million
Annual Central Bureau of Statistics report reveals the country's population grew by 1.5% after 167,000 babies have been born over the past year; some 16,300 new immigrants have arrived; about 50,000 Israelis have died
Yaron Druckman | Published: 04.12.21 , 15:47

Israel's population has reached 9,327,000 million, the Central Bureau of Statistics said Monday in its annual report, published ahead of the country's 73rd Independence Day.

According to the report, some 74% of the population (6,894,000) are Jews, about 21% of the population (1,966,000) are Arabs, while 5% of the population (467,000) are non-Arab Christians, those from minority religions and people listed as non-religious in the census.

The report added that since Israel's 72nd Independence Day a year ago, the country's population has increased by 1.5% or 137,000 people.
Additionally, over the past year some 167,000 babies have been born, about 16,300 new immigrants have landed in the country, and more than 50,000 Israelis have died.

The report also states that during the establishment of the State of Israel, on May 14, 1948, the country's population stood at about 806,000 people. Around that time, the percentage of Jews was about 82%.
Since 1948, about 3.3 million immigrants arrived in Israel, of whom about 1.5 million after 1990.

The CBS report also revealed that about 28% of Israelis are under the age of 14 and about 12% are over 65.

The CBS estimates that by 2030, Israel's population will reach 11.1 million people, by 2040, it is set to reach 13.2 million and by Israel's 100th Independence Day, which will take place in 2048, the population set to reach some 15.2 million people.

04.08.21 – Th - - -

Israeli UN ambassador lambasts renewed US aid to UNRWA without reforms

04.08.21

Palestinian refugees welcome U.S. decision to restart aid

Israeli ambassador to the UN lambasts renewed funding to UNRWA without reforms to the organization, saying the agency's schools 'regularly use materials that incite against Israel'

Reuters| Published: 04.08.21 , 17:57

Palestinian refugees on Thursday welcomed the U.S. announcement that it will renew humanitarian aid, marking a break from the Trump era.

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration said on Wednesday that it will provide \$235 million to the Palestinians and restart funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which assists 5.7 million registered Palestinian refugees.

It was the clearest sign yet of Biden's apparent intent to repair ties with the Palestinians, who boycotted the Trump White House for most of his tenure, accusing him of pro-Israel bias.

"We are happy," said Ahmed Odeh in Bethlehem's Deheisheh refugee camp in the West Bank. "The former American administration tried to stop these funds to the Palestinian people."

"Any funding for the refugee camps and the refugees is out of goodwill and is good for us ... people are not working or making money, especially during the pandemic," said Subhi Allian, 71, outside an UNRWA clinic in Far'a refugee camp near Tubas.

Most UNRWA-registered refugees are descendants of 700,000 Palestinians who were driven out of their homes or fled fighting in the 1948 war that led to Israel's creation.

Many want the right to return to their families' former lands in pre-1948 Palestine, lands which now lie in Israel. Israel rejects any such right as a demographic threat to its Jewish majority.

Israel strongly opposes renewing funding for @UNRWA, an anti-Semitic agency that incites against Israel and uses a twisted definition of who is a "refugee." Rather than solving the conflict, UNRWA perpetuates it. Any return to funding it must be contingent on essential reforms. pic.twitter.com/52oHtv0prz

In a Twitter video late on Wednesday, Ambassador to the United States and the United Nations Gilad Erdan voiced "disappointment and objection" about the renewal of funding to the refugee agency without reforming it.

"UNRWA schools regularly use materials that incite against Israel and the twisted definition used by the agency to determine who is a refugee only perpetuates the conflict," he said. "It should not exist in its current form."

The Biden plan will provide \$150 million to UNRWA and agency officials hope it will lead to more donations from the United States and others.

However, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini told Reuters that the agency would "still struggle" amid reduced donations from elsewhere and cuts to their overseas development budgets by Australia and Britain.

04.08.21 – Th - - -

US lifted sanctions on ICC court to impose absurd PA claims on Israel

04.08.21

Israel tells ICC it does not recognize court's authority

Jerusalem opts to not cooperate with court's pending probe into alleged war crimes against Palestinians following a round of consultations between senior government and defense officials

Itamar Eichner | Published: 04.08.21 , 17:30

Israel does not recognize the authority of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and will not cooperate with its investigation into alleged Israeli war crimes against the Palestinians, senior government officials decided at the end of a Thursday meeting.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a round of consultations with Defense Minister Benny Gantz and Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit, as well as several other higher-ups in the defense establishment ahead of a Friday deadline to respond to an ICC notification letter.

Israel could have opted to launch an independent probe, but senior military officials warned that such a move could create a precedent, effectively recognizing ICC Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda's authority to investigate the Jewish state and forcing it to report to the court on the status of the investigation every six months.

Israel is not a party to the Rome Statute that established the ICC and therefore by definition not a party to the court.

Israeli officials could have also requested to postpone its reply to the court's letter due to technical difficulties as the country grapples with a political deadlock following four indecisive election cycles in just two years and lack of a permanent government.

The Israeli decision comes against the backdrop of the United States lifting sanctions on the court imposed by former president Donald Trump — a move that went against Israeli requests to keep the sanctions in place at least until after Bensouda's departure in June. In a speech on Wednesday marking Holocaust Remembrance Day, Prime Minister Netanyahu launched a scathing attack on the court, accusing it of "trampling human rights."

"The court seeks to investigate Israel on absurd claims. There is no one more ethical than our soldiers and commanders. IDF commanders are fighting Iran — and we're the ones being condemned. What hypocrisy," Netanyahu said.

"The Hague court's founding was inspired by the Nuremberg tribunal, which tried Nazi war criminals after World War Two. But a body set up to defend human rights became a body that, effectively, protects those who trample on human rights."

04.08.21 – Th - - -

Arab MK leaves Knesset's Holocaust Day event over Ben-Gvir's speech

04.08.21

Arab MK leaves Knesset's Holocaust Day event over Ben-Gvir's speech

While the traditional ceremony in the Knesset is characterized by speeches from high-profile officials, which this year included Rivlin, Netanyahu and Hayut, other MKs are allowed to take the stand to read out victims' names, including the far-right lawmaker Ynet reporters| Published: 04.08.21 , 15:21

A co-leader of the predominantly Arab Joint List stormed off the Holocaust Remembrance Day event in Knesset on Thursday in protest of radical right-winger Itamar Ben-Gvir being given a platform to speak.

Israelis on Thursday observed two-minute silence and held a host of official ceremonies in remembrance of the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

The event in Knesset kicked off shortly after the main ceremony at Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial museum, with almost no restrictions as Israel's coronavirus outbreak continues to die out with over half of its population now vaccinated.

The ceremony at Knesset is characterized by the reading of Holocaust victims' names as well as speeches from high-profile officials, which this year included President Reuven Rivlin, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Supreme Court Chief Justice Esther Hayut.

Other lawmakers are also given a podium for a chance to read out loud some of the names of the victims, among them the firebrand parliament member. The moment his name was called — as a cue for him to take the stand — Joint List co-leader MK Ahmad Tibi stormed off the event.

Ben-Gvir in response called Tibi "a supporter of terrorism, who shouldn't be in Knesset". Hayut, for her part, dedicated her speech to her relatives, and especially her grandmother who perished in the Nazi genocide and whom she was named after.

"These are the names of my relatives who perished in the Holocaust. My grandmother after whom I am named, Esther, and her children Malchala and Monique, my father's brother — were all executed in Poland. Sima and Yerachmiel, my maternal grandparents who perished after being deported to Auschwitz. The parents and grandfather of Yehuda Strolovich, the partner of my late mother, who was a partisan and a survivor. May they rest in peace."

Rivlin, meanwhile, dedicated his speech to his wife Nechama, who passed away two years ago. He said since she passed away in June of 2019, he made it his duty to read out the names of her relatives who perished in the Holocaust during ceremonies.

04.08.21 – Th - - -

Israeli strikes weapons convoys near Damascus destined for Hezbollah

04.08.21

Syria: Israeli strikes near capital Damascus wound 4 troops

State news agency quotes an unidentified military official as saying that Syrian air defenses were able to shoot down most of the missiles; Hezbollah said one of the Syrian air defense missiles exploded near the Lebanon-Syria border

Associated Press| Published: 04.08.21 , 09:44

Israel carried out a missile attack near the Syrian capital of Damascus and its southern suburbs early Thursday that wounded four soldiers, Syria's state media said.

State news agency, SANA, quoted an unidentified military official as saying that Syrian air defenses were able to shoot down most of the missiles before they hit their targets. SANA said some of the missiles were fired by Israeli warplanes flying over neighboring Lebanon.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, reported that the Israeli strikes targeted military posts near Damascus. It gave no further details.

Al-Manar TV of Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group said one of the Syrian air defense missiles exploded near the Lebanon-Syria border and was heard in parts of southern Lebanon. It later said the missile crashed near the Lebanese border village of Houla. Many residents in Israel's Galilee area also reported hearing echoes of explosions in the area. A spokesman for the Kiryat Shmona municipality reassured the residents that "at this stage the routine in Kiryat Shmona continues and there is no reason to worry." There was no fall in our territory," he said.

Israel has launched hundreds of strikes against Iran-linked military targets in Syria over the years but rarely acknowledges or discusses such operations.

Israel views Iranian entrenchment on its northern frontier as a red line, and it has repeatedly struck Iran-linked facilities and weapons convoys destined for Hezbollah.

04.06.21 – Tu - - -

Report: Iranian ship struck by missile in the Red Sea

04.06.21

Report: Iranian ship struck by missile in the Red Sea

Foreign media says 'Israel might have been involved' in attack on Revolutionary Guards intelligence-gathering vessel as both nations are believed to have been locked in a maritime standoff in recent months

Daniel Salami| Published: 04.06.21 , 22:18

An Iranian-flagged ship was struck by a missile in the Red Sea off the coast of Eritrea, foreign media reported on Tuesday.

Officially, Iran says the ship "Saviz" is used for commercial purposes but according to international media reports, it serves the Revolutionary Guards as an intelligence-gathering vessel and guarding oil shipments in the Red Sea.

The Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya news channel said that "Israel might have been involved in the attack."

Israel's defense establishment so far remains mum in regard to the attack.

This may sign an escalation in the IDF's response actions against the Islamic Republic after two Israeli-owned cargo vessels have been attacked in recent months.

The Israeli Navy has ramped up its maritime presence in the Red Sea, deploying missile cutters and submarines to the area.

Late last months, Channel 12 reported that Iran fired a missile at an Israeli-owned ship in the Arabian Sea.

04.09.21 – Fr - - -

Britain's Prince Philip, husband of Queen Elizabeth, dies aged 99

04.09.21

Britain's Prince Philip, husband of Queen Elizabeth, dies aged 99

With 'deep sorrow,' Buckingham Palace announces death of Duke of Edinburgh at Windsor Castle; President Rivlin sends his 'deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathy' to the queen

Reuters| Published: 04.09.21 , 15:36

Prince Philip, the husband of Queen Elizabeth and a leading figure in the British royal family for almost seven decades, has died aged 99, Buckingham Palace said on Friday.

The Duke of Edinburgh, as he was officially known, had been by his wife's side throughout her 69-year reign, the longest in British history. During that time he earned a reputation for a tough, no-nonsense attitude and a propensity for occasional gaffes.

"It is with deep sorrow that Her Majesty The Queen announces the death of her beloved husband, His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh," the palace said in a statement.

"His Royal Highness passed away peacefully this morning at Windsor Castle. Further announcements will be made in due course. The Royal Family join with people around the world in mourning his loss."

A Greek prince, Philip married Elizabeth in 1947. He went on to play a key role in modernizing the monarchy in the post-World War Two period, and behind the walls of Buckingham Palace was the one key figure the queen could turn to and trust. "He has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years," Elizabeth said in a rare personal tribute to Philip, made in a speech marking their 50th wedding anniversary in 1997.

Philip spent four weeks in hospital earlier this year for treatment for an infection to have a heart procedure, but returned to Windsor in early March.

His charm and disinclination to tolerate those he regarded as foolish or sycophantic earned him a position of respect among some Britons. But to others, his sometimes brusque demeanor made appear him rude and aloof. He was a delight to newspaper editors keen to pick up on any stray remark at official events.

The former naval officer admitted he found it hard to give up the military career he loved and to take on the job as the monarch's consort for which there was no clear-cut constitutional role.

"Like the expert carriage driver that he was, he helped to steer the royal family and the monarchy so that it remains an institution indisputably vital to the balance and happiness of our national life," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said.

President Reuven Rivlin also paid tribute to the prince, sending his "deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathy" to the queen. The president lost his own spouse of 48 years, Nechama Rivlin, in 2019.

My deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathy to HM Queen Elizabeth II, HRH The Prince of Wales, the @RoyalFamily and the people of the United Kingdom on the death of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. May his memory be a blessing.

Philip's mother, Princess Alice of Greece, is counted as one of the Righteous Among the Nations, an honor bestowed by Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial on non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

She is buried at the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Mary Magdalene just outside the Old City of Jerusalem.

In 1994, Philip planted a tree in her honor during the Yad Vashem ceremony to recognize her actions.

In private, the prince was regarded as the unquestioned head of his family, but protocol obliged the man dubbed "the second handshake" to spend his public life literally one step behind his wife.

"There was no precedent. If I asked somebody 'what do you expect me to do?', they all looked blank - they had no idea, nobody had much idea," he said in an interview to mark his 90th birthday.

After completing more than 22,000 solo appearances, Philip retired from public life in August 2017, although after that he occasional appeared at official engagements.

His last appearance was last July at a military ceremony at Windsor Castle, the royal palace to the west of London where he and the monarch have resided during COVID-19 lockdowns.

The **queen, who is 94, came to the throne in 1952** and the couple, who were third cousins, married at Westminster Abbey on Nov. 20, 1947.

They had four children, Prince Charles, the heir to the throne, Princess Anne, and Princes Andrew and Edward.

They celebrated their 72nd anniversary on the same day that Andrew stepped down from public duties over the controversy surrounding his association with the disgraced late U.S. financier Jeffrey Epstein, one of a number of recent crises the family have faced.

The death of the queen's husband and closest confidant will raise questions over whether she might consider abdication, but royal commentators say there is little or no chance than this will happen.

In recent years, the queen has cut the number of official engagements she carries out and has passed many royal duties and patronages onto Prince Charles, his son William and other senior royals. But she still carries out the most symbolic of the monarchy's state duties, such as the opening of parliament.

While he officially played second fiddle to his wife, Prince Philip regarded as the private head of the family.

Some royal watchers have said that his absence from this role in recent years with declining health has played a role in some of the monarchy's recent travails, such as the crisis of Charles' younger son Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, and the decision that saw them give up their royal roles.

"The main lesson that we have learned is that tolerance is the one essential ingredient of any happy marriage," **Philip said in a speech in 1997.**

"It may not be quite so important when things are going well, but it is absolutely vital when things get difficult. You can take it from me that the queen has the quality of tolerance in abundance."

03.17.21 – We - - -

Drones 20 at a time in coordinated airspace test for potential deliveries

03.17.21

Israeli town abuzz with delivery drones in coordinated airspace test

The cheap flyers and their potential for ferrying anything from pizzas to prescription drugs between businesses and homes have caused them to rise in popularity, but has also stirred fears over risks of mid-air collisions or crashes

Reuters| Published: **03.17.21** , 18:19

The skies above the Israeli town of Hadera were abuzz with delivery drones on Wednesday as national authorities tested a central control room for safely coordinating the small pilotless aircraft with each other as well as with planes and helicopters.

The popularity of the cheap, low-flying drones, and their potential for ferrying anything from pizzas to prescription drugs between businesses and homes, has stirred fears of mid-air collisions or crashes that could cause casualties on the ground.

“This is an opportunity for the regulators to learn what is needed to establish delivery drones as a daily reality, and for the drone operators to learn what is expected of them in turn,” said Hagit Lidor of the Israel Innovation Authority, one of several state agencies involved in the test.

In the first live trial of a two-year test phase launched in January, rural Hadera’s airspace was turned over to five private firms that flew drones on criss-cross runs designed to test the responses of a control room in the city of Haifa, 56 km (35 miles) away.

To keep the drones - which went up 20 at a time - no more than 120 meters (yards) above ground and no less than 60 meters (yards) apart, the control-room staff sent alerts and rerouting instructions to their operators electronically.

“For the first time, we are managing airspace as a single entity, synthesizing drone operators with established civil and military aviation,” said Lidor.

She added regulated commercial drone deliveries in Israel were unlikely before 2023, when the testing is due to end and related matters like legislation would have to be addressed.

Organizers said helicopters or planes were not a planned part of Wednesday’s trial but may be involved in a follow-up in June. Piloted aircraft more commonly seen at low altitudes around Hadera are crop-dusters and paragliders. The drones were told to steer clear of these by at least 1 km (half a mile).

All of the drones were equipped with parachutes, to ensure safe landings should they suffer malfunctions, Lidor added.