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Police deploy & disallow Jews for last week of Ramadan expecting 20k Muslims

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Saudi Arabia has resumed relations with Iran & chilled US & Israel agreements

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Netanyahu greeted by leftist protesters who forgot what it meant to be Jewish

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PA using Telegram's anonymous feature, to video train terrorists against IDF

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Police deploy & disallow Jews for last week of Ramadan expecting 20k Muslims

4.13.23

Security forces on alert ahead of Muslim's last Friday of Ramadan

Police deploy 2,000 police and Border Police troops to the capital and its surroundings as the military remain on high alert in the West Bank as tens of thousands expected to pray at al Aqsa; Hamas calls on Palestinians to 'protect holy site'

Yoav Zitun, Einav Halabi Elisha Ben Kimon, Meir Turgeman, Gilad

Cohen|Updated:Yesterday | 18:18

Jerusalem police deployed thousands of troops to the city in preparation the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan which is expected to bring thousands of worshippers to the al -Aqsa mosque, while security agencies warn of violence in the capital and in the West Bank.

Although the past few days have been relatively calm, clashes on Temple Mount last week set off rocket attacks in the north and in the south as well as deadly terror strikes that killed four people.

The police said they intend to allow freedom of worship for the many who will visit the holy sites, while maintaining security.

Over 2,000 police officers and Border Police troops will spread around Jerusalem early on Friday while others will be deployed to the outskirts of the capital, and the Old City. A senior police official said the force dealt successfully with the challenges of the holiday for the three main religions and enabled everyone to safely arrive to worship. "We also foiled a stabbing attack when we apprehended a suspect thanks to the vigilance of police officers," he said.

"We will on Friday, allow the tens of thousands of Muslims to pray at the Temple mount but will not allow any incitement, violence or disruption to the order. We will use all means, covert or visible including technical tools to first and foremost prevent any violence," he said.

Certain roads leading to and around the Old City will be closed to traffic as of 6 am and until the afternoon hours. Traffic will also be averted in some areas of West Jerusalem. The Hamas terror group has called on Muslims to arrive at al Aqsa to join a mass prayer at dawn on Friday, "and renew the oath to protect the holy site from the occupiers," the Islamist group said. "We are calling on our people in the occupied territories to come and achieve victory for Jerusalem and to foil the Zionist enemy's plans to desecrate our holy sites," Hamas said.

The riots at al Aqsa caused a drop in the number of worshipers. One woman who regularly prays there said that last year, "there were 40,000 people in the last days of the holy month but now there were maybe 20. It is very sad," she said.

The government's decision to disallow Jews from visiting the Temple Mount compound during the end of Ramadan seems to preserve calm and is considered by Muslim religious authorities and the Jordanians as a move to prevent further violence.

Dozens of indictments were handed down on Thursday, for rioting at al-Aqsa and others were still under investigation, according to the police.

IDF forces remain on high alert in the West Bank in light of continued intelligence indicating plans to carry out terror attacks. At the same time the military is still in pursuit of the terrorist who murdered three members of the Dee family from the settlement of Efrat last week and battled with two terror squads at least one of which was set to launch an attack near the northern West Bank city of Jenin, and two other terrorists who fired gunshots at a military post near the settlement of Elon Moreh.

The military said the identity of the assailants in the Dee family murder was known to them and their capture was near.

First published: 23:57, 04.13.23

4.13.23

Saudi Arabia has resumed relations with Iran & chilled US & Israel agreements

4.13.23

Israeli efforts to advance Saudi relations slow amid increased violence
Wall Street Journal quotes officials in Jerusalem and Riyadh cite clashes, West Bank settlement policy and ministers' comments as reasons for Saudi condemnation which has spiked since Netanyahu's return to power
Ynet|11:13

Israel's efforts to forge diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia have slowed recently the Wall Street Journal reported earlier this week, quoting Saudi and Israeli officials.

The change was prompted by increased tensions with Palestinians, Israel's policies on the West Bank, IDF raids to apprehend terror suspects, and statements made by Israeli officials, including ministers, which have drawn international condemnation.

Israelis had voiced optimism earlier in the year, assessing that an agreement with the Gulf nation was mere months away, with U.S. mediation. They cited concerns over Iran as a reason for such a diplomatic shift, but now one source said, "circumstances have had a chilling effect."

Officials both in Israel and the Gulf explained that as altercations with Palestinians increased and the right-wing and religious coalition government pushed for more settlement construction, Saudi Arabia became less eager to advance ties. They added that quiet cooperation on security matters, intelligence and business continues, but the efforts to expand Israeli-Saudi relations as well as ties with other Sunni states, have slowed considerably. A tell tail sign of Saudi's discontent over Israel's policies was the slew of official condemnations of Israel since Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu returned to power last December. Since then 12 such condemnations were made over matters ranging from West Bank settlements to statements of Finance Minister Bezalet Smotrich who said the Palestinian town of Huwara should be wiped off the map. There were only two official condemnations made in Riyadh in 2022.

Netanyahu considered expanding peace agreements to more countries as a central aim of his government, which could bolster Israel's response to Iran's military ambitions and reduce international support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. Upon resuming his position as prime minister, Netanyahu said forging diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia was at the top of his priorities.

"I want to go big and we can do that with Saudi Arabia he said. But sometimes a long road requires small steps, and that is not a problem, he said. "Things are already underway," he said.

The WSJ reported last month, that the Saudis demanded security guarantees from Washington as well as assistance in developing a civilian nuclear program including uranium enrichment.

Riyadh expressed concern about a deal with Israel, that would come under fire in the Arab world and exacerbate tensions with Iran, the paper said.

One day after the report was published, Iran and Saudi Arabia announced they were resuming diplomatic relations severed in 2016 and would reopen embassies in Tehran and Riyadh.

4.12.23

Netanyahu greeted by leftist protesters who forgot what it meant to be Jewish

4.12.23

Netanyahu greeted by protesters at Hedera Mimouna

Hundreds gather outside to protest judicial overhaul clashing with mounted police forces, blocking city road; dozens of supporters of the prime minister demonstrate as well; Netanyahu says unity in Israel will prevail

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attended a celebration of the Mimouna holiday in Hedera on Wednesday where he was first greeted by hundreds of protesters demonstrating against his legislative push to overhaul the judiciary.

A small group of supporters of the prime minister's agenda were also present to confront the protesters who occasionally blocked roads in the northern city and clashed with police.

Netanyahu said he was moved and happy to be at the celebration with his wife Sara. "It is a celebration of an Israeli tradition and of faith in Israel's future," the prime minister said. "I have enormous faith in the strength of our people in the face of those who seek to destroy us," he said. "When we are united, there is no force that can defeat us."

A couple identified as Dalit and Ronen, residents of Hedera said they were asked when they arrived at the celebrations, whether they were Likud voters and when they said they were not, were told to leave. "We have been residents of this neighborhood for over 50 years," they said. "It is a terrible feeling. It brings tears to our eyes," they said.

Over the past two decades, Mimouna has transformed into a national festival that has quickly gained widespread popularity. Netanyahu had attended the celebrations since taking power in the 1990s and has positioned himself the leader of the Sephardi communities, especially those from North Africa, in Israel, who are predominately traditional or religious and lean to the right of the political spectrum.

He famously told a spiritual leader of such a community in 1997, that the leftists in Israel forgot what it meant to be Jewish.

Other political leaders from Netanyahu's party as well as from parties in the opposition were also guests in Mimouna celebrations around the country.

4.12.23

Police curb the number of Orthodox Church crowds in Jerusalem for Easter

4.12.23

Israeli curbs on Orthodox Church crowds in Jerusalem for Easter draw ire
Church leaders say Israeli decision is part of what they consider long-standing efforts by Israel to restrict the rights and freedoms of the local Christian community, say after 'heavy-handed' measures, would not cooperate with police
Reuters|12:03

Israeli police will curb the number of worshippers in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem for safety reasons during Orthodox Easter ceremonies on Saturday, drawing anger from church leaders who said they would not cooperate.

With huge crowds expected in the cramped alleyways of the Old City, the restrictions - which will slash the number of worshippers to one-fifth its size in recent years - are aimed at ensuring safety for thousands of Christian worshippers, as well as Muslims and Jews holding their own celebrations, police said.

However, the decision to limit access on Saturday to the Holy Fire, the most important Easter celebration for the Eastern Orthodox Church, angered church leaders who saw it as part of what they consider long-standing efforts by Israel to restrict the rights and freedoms of the local Christian community.

Complaining of "heavy-handed" measures, they said they would not cooperate with police. "We shall continue to uphold the Status Quo customs, and the ceremony will be held as customary for two millennia and all who wish to worship with us are invited to attend," the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, the Custody of the Holy Land and the Armenian Patriarchate said in a joint statement.

In contrast to previous years, when as many as 10,000 worshippers packed into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, only 1,800 will be allowed inside this year, with another 1,200 outside. Additional checkpoints around the Old City will also restrict access to the area around the church.

This year, the sensitivity around religious festivals in the Old City has been particularly high, with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the Jewish Passover holiday and Easter coinciding at a time of heightened Israeli-Palestinian tensions.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that Jewish visitors would not be allowed into the Al-Aqsa mosque compound for the last 10 days of Ramadan after a police raid last week set off a furious reaction from the Arab world and exchanges of cross-border fire with Gaza, Lebanon and Syria.

The hilltop site, holy to both Muslims and Jews, who know it as Temple Mount, has been among the most sensitive points during the decades-long conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

After the bout of rocket attacks and air strikes last week, the situation has been calmer over the past few days but Israeli officials said the potential for trouble remained.

"When I look ahead, Ramadan is still a sensitive period," said Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari, adding that the coming Friday, which could be the last Friday during the Ramadan fasting month depending on the lunar calendar, was being watched particularly closely. "We are in full readiness," he said.

The issue of access to the Old City for Christian worshippers was not directly connected to the tensions between Muslims and Jews at Al-Aqsa mosque, where Jews are allowed to visit but not pray.

But it reflected complaints from Christians that they are being gradually but systematically shut out of the Old City by Israeli authorities, who they say are upsetting longstanding status quo arrangements between the three communities.

The churches say the Holy Fire ceremony on the Saturday before Orthodox Easter, when a light is held to emerge from the tomb of Jesus, has been held safely for centuries with five times as many worshippers as the authorities are allowing.

Police say a deadly stampede at an Orthodox Jewish festival in northern Israel two years ago, when 45 people were killed, underlined the risks of large crowds of worshippers gathering in restricted spaces.

4.12.23

Iran exploits quake relief to bring weapons & military equipment into Syria

4.12.23

Iran exploits quake relief mission to fly weapons to Syria, sources say

Flights reportedly continued for seven weeks, bringing supplies that included advanced communications equipment, radar batteries, and spare parts required for a planned upgrade of Syria's Iran-provided air defense system; Israel reportedly mounts aggressive campaign to counter arms flow

Reuters|01:21

Iran has used earthquake relief flights to bring weapons and military equipment into its strategic ally Syria, nine Syrian, Iranian, Israeli and Western sources said.

The sources told Reuters that the goal was to buttress Iran's defenses against Israel in Syria and to strengthen Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Reuters is the first to report this development.

After the Feb. 6 earthquake in northern Syria and Turkey, hundreds of flights from Iran began landing in Syria's Aleppo, Damascus and Latakia airports bringing supplies, and this went on for seven weeks, the sources said. More than 6,000 people died in all of Syria, according to the United Nations.

The supplies included advanced communications equipment and radar batteries and spare parts required for a planned upgrade of Syria's Iran-provided air defense system in its civil war, said the sources, two regional sources and a Western intelligence source said. Reuters spoke to Western intelligence officials, sources close to the Iranian and Israeli leadership as well as a Syrian military defector and a serving Syrian officer about the flights for this article.

When asked if Iran had used humanitarian relief planes after the earthquakes to move military equipment to Syria to enhance its network there and help Assad, Iran's mission to the United Nations in New York said: "That's not true."

Syria's government did not respond to a request for comment.

Regional sources told Reuters that Israel quickly became aware of the flow of weapons into Syria and mounted an aggressive campaign to counter it.

Brigadier General Yossi Kuperwasser, an insider and former head of research in the Israel army as well as ex-general director of the Strategic Affairs Ministry said Israeli air strikes against the shipments relied on intelligence so specific that Israel's military knew which truck in a long convoy to target.

'Significant movements'

An Israeli defense official, who asked to remain anonymous, told Reuters: "Under the guise of shipments of earthquake aid to Syria, Israel has seen significant movements of military equipment from Iran, mainly transported in parts."

He said the aid was mainly delivered to Syria's northern Aleppo airport. Shipments were organized, he said, by the Unit 18000 Syrian division of the Quds Force, the foreign espionage and paramilitary arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, led by Hassan Mehdoui. Ground transportation was handled, by the Quds Force's Transport Unit 190 led by Bahanem Shahariri, he said. Reuters was unable to reach Mehdoui and Shahariri for comment. The Revolutionary Guards declined comment.

"Israel's strikes also targeted a meeting of commanders of Iranian militias and shipments of electronic chips to upgrade weapons systems," said Syrian military defector Colonel Abduljabbar Akaidi, who retains army contacts. Akaidi did not say where the meeting was held.

Aleppo's runway was hit by Israel just hours after two Iranian cargo planes had landed with arms shipments under the pretext of aid relief, said a regional source, information that was confirmed by two other Western intelligence sources.

Brigadier General Esmail Qaani, head of the Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force, was the first foreign official to set foot in Syria's quake zone, a few days before Assad himself arrived. Reuters could not reach Qaani for comment. The Revolutionary Guards declined comment.

In the event of a humanitarian catastrophe, UN relief planes are allowed to seek landing rights from local authorities and humanitarian goods are exempt from sanctions. In this case, Syrian authorities have granted landing rights to direct flights coming from Russia and Iran.

"The quake was a sad disaster but at the same time, it was God's help to us to help our brothers in Syria in their fight against their enemies. Loads of weapons were sent to Syria immediately," said a regional source close to Iran's clerical leadership.

Pinpoint Israeli intelligence

Israel has for years carried out attacks against what it has described as Iran-linked targets in Syria, where Tehran's influence has grown since it began supporting Assad in the civil war that began in 2011.

A Syrian army officer who asked not to be named said the Israelis were stepping up efforts to defeat Iran in Syria.

"Why now? Simply because they have information that something is being developed quickly. They must stop it and hit it to slow it. The quake created the right conditions. The chaos that ensued allowed Iranian jets to land with ease," he said.

In the aftermath of further earthquakes on April 3, Israeli targets have included weapons warehouses in the Jabal Manea Kiswa mountain range south of Damascus where Iranian troops and Lebanon's Hezbollah have built what is probably their most fortified military site in Syria, a regional security source and two Western intelligence sources said.

A radar station used for drones was also hit on April 3, the regional source added, corroborating what two Western intelligence sources had told Reuters.

"We believe that Iranian militias have transferred huge quantities of ammunition — they have restocked quantities lost in previous Israeli drone strikes," a Western intelligence source said, referring to Iranian flights since the Feb. 6 earthquake.

4.12.23

PA using Telegram's anonymous feature, to video train terrorists against IDF

4.12.23

Palestinian Telegram group teaches how to stab IDF soldiers, make home-made explosives

Online antisemitism monitor infiltrates group training potential terrorists to grab weapons from Israeli troops on platform that has become a hotbed for illicit activities due to its advanced security features, lack of regulation, and users' ability to remain anonymous
Itamar Eichner|04.10.23 | 15:10

An online antisemitism monitor managed to infiltrate a closed Telegram group ostensibly used to promote terrorist activity against Jews and IDF soldiers, as it revealed that hundreds of users exchange "tips" for carrying out terrorist attacks, including "how to stab a soldier and grab his weapon."

A member of Fighting Online Antisemitism (FOA) says that terrorist elements are using instant messaging app Telegram as a platform to teach potential terrorists how to avoid detection prior to conducting attacks.

Additionally, the group provides guidance on creating improvised explosive devices, stealing weapons from soldiers, and using them against the troops, as well as suggesting various methods to further obscure and conceal their identity on Telegram, in addition to other precautions.

FOA chief Tomer Aldubi said that "the special team we have established is based on volunteer activity and deals with monitoring online antisemitic groups and Islamic terrorist organizations and gathering intelligence on their operations, with an emphasis on the Telegram network. The team constantly monitors their online presence and communications with users."

Aldubi added that "we are expanding our activities in other groups and scenes, with the help of activists from all over the world, in order to shut down every such group."

He noted that Telegram has become a hotbed for illicit activities due to its advanced security features, lack of regulation, and the ability of users to remain anonymous. "Thanks to our activities, Telegram has begun to close down antisemitic groups and block users who spread hateful content against Jews. However, we call on Telegram to immediately remove these groups that encourage terrorism," he said.

Fighting Online Antisemitism is an Israeli nonprofit organization that monitors and reports online antisemitic content and Holocaust denial.

The movement is one of the few organizations in the world that report on these issues daily and hourly in multiple languages and on various social media platforms, with the help of hundreds of volunteers from Israel and around the world. The movement also works to raise awareness of online hate speech through educational activities for children and youth.

Israeli chef Gal Ben-Moshe retains Michelin star for fourth consecutive year
Despite being awarded one of the highest honors in the culinary world, celebrity cook cannot help but feel a twinge of disappointment as it was only one star and not two
Ynet News

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Ynet-News, April 09, 2023 – Friday

Passover started Sundown April 4 Tu, & First Fruits April 12 We

4.09.23 – Su- - - News Placed in April 08 spot – Saturday

Lapid called for Heritage Minister Eliyahu's dismissal for incitement against security

4.09.23 – Su- - - News Placed in April 09 spot – Sunday

Lebanon PM says Thursday rockets launched by PA people, not Lebanese

4.09.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday

US leaks; Mossad encouraged junior employees to participate in protests

4.07.23 – Fr- - - News Placed in April 07 spot – Friday

Ben-Gvir spar with Gantz & Lapid; you would host the PA terrorist in your home

4.07.23 – Fr- - - News – Friday

One dead, six injured in car-ramming attack at Tel Aviv beach promenade

4.07.23 – Fr- - - News – Friday

Two daughters dead, mother seriously hurt in a West Bank drive-by shooting

4.06.23 – Th- - - News Placed in April 06 spot – Thursday

Lebanon city Tyre fired dozens of rockets onto Galilee; rockets were intercepted

4.06.23 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Finland, the 31st member of NATO Tuesday, buying Israeli anti-missile system

4.05.23 – We- - - News – Wednesday Pesach

Released: The 13 detainees on the way to a Passover sacrifice on Temple Mount