



Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update April 26, 2024

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JINSA's [Israel at War](#) webpage is a dedicated resource for analysis, commentary, webinars, and media coverage about the 10/7 attacks and the ensuing conflict between Israel, the Iranian regime, and the regime's proxies. JINSA is releasing the Swords of Iron Update on April 22, April 25, and April 26 this week due to the Jewish holiday of Passover. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below.

Analysis

- During an April 25 JINSA [webinar](#) discussing the latest regional developments, JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror said in reference to the United States passing a law authorizing roughly \$14 billion in military aid to Israel, “we are more than thankful to the Americans for the additional support.”
 - » However, JINSA’s Julian and Jenny Josephson Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish cautioned that Israel still has “immediate needs,” including “air and missile defense stockpiles that have to be replenished,” as well as precision-guided munitions and “other platforms, like different squadrons of F-35s and F-15s, helicopters, and obviously the KC-46s [aerial refueling tankers] that are so relevant right now.”
 - » Amidror outlined that “the main challenge of the government of Israel within the next few months will be in three areas. One is deal or no deal with the hostages, and the Egyptians are probably bringing a new deal that will postpone Rafah.”
 - He continued, “the second decision is how to do Rafah, to do it with all forces as it was done in the north [of Gaza], or to do something that is less to satisfy the Americans and others.”
 - He added, “third, and the most problematic decision, is what to do in the north, and we might find ourselves in a situation in which we don’t have any other choice in spite of the fact that it is not the best situation for us to wage a war against Hezbollah ... because we cannot live in a situation in which 80,000 Israelis are out of their homes.”
 - » Addressing reports of an imminent IDF operation in Rafah, Amidror stated, “it will be [a] two-stage operation. The first stage would be to move more than a million Palestinians from where they are now around Rafah to other places. The Egyptians and the Emirates [will] build some safe havens, more in the center of the Gaza Strip. We provided many, many tents to the people there. The operation [will] begin with a special operation to

move the population, and only then the military intervention will begin, parallel to the moving of the civilians.”

- » Addressing the dire strategic state of affairs in the north, Ayish contended that despite significant tactical achievements, including killing “almost 300 Hezbollah terrorists and commanders” and “destroy[ing] some of the very important assets ... like air defense systems,” Israel still has not achieved its strategic goals.
 - Ayish argued that because tens of thousands of Israelis remain displaced from their homes in northern Israel, “in terms of strategy, we are not there. In fact, we are far from there ... strategically speaking, there is a missing link.”
- » JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG (ret.) Amikam Norkin noted, “since the Russian military deployed the S-300 and S-400 [air defense systems] to Syria, we [have been] dealing with the best Russian technology. I think that maybe the only nation that flies with F-35s almost every day under [this] threat ... is the Israeli Air Force. So, we are on the front [lines], and we are using the best American technology, and we share all the lessons with our best friends, the American Air Force.”

Last 24 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

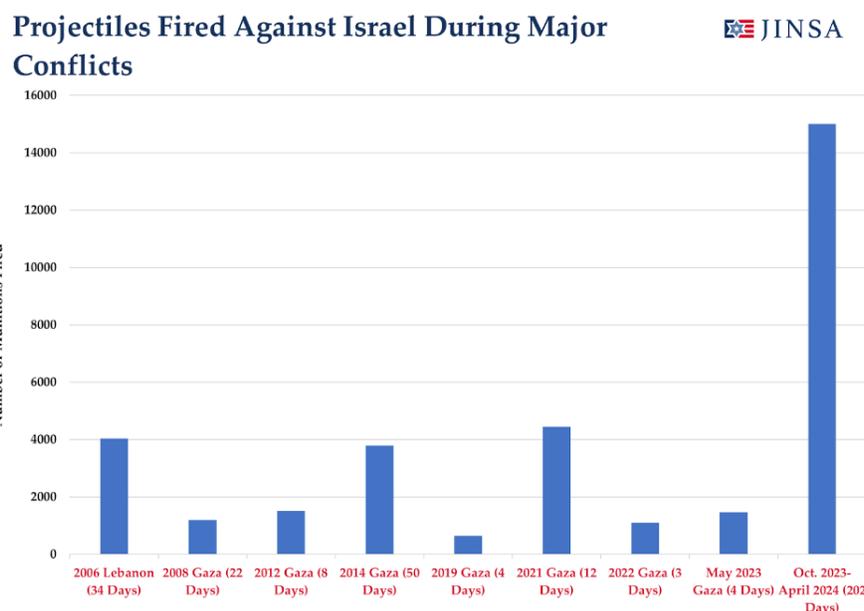
- At least 15,000 rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired at Israel from all fronts combined during the war, according to JINSA data.

Lebanon

- On April 26, the IDF [said](#) that Sharif Suad, an Israeli resident from Sallama in Israel, was killed by a Hezbollah anti-tank missile that struck the Mount Dov area.

West Bank

- On April 26, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades terrorist group [released](#) a video of its operatives shooting toward Bat Hefer in the West Bank and declaring, “at 23:35 we attacked Bat Hefer and fired bullets that hit the homes of settlers,” and “this is just the beginning.”



IDF Operations

Gaza

- On April 25, the Associated Press [reported](#) that the IDF “has massed dozens of tanks and armored vehicles along its border with the southern Gaza Strip in what appears to be preparations for an invasion of the border city of Rafah.”

Lebanon

- The IDF [said](#) on April 26 that it targeted Hezbollah sites in Kfarchouba and Markaba and that it fired artillery toward the site of an earlier anti-tank missile attack toward the Mount Dov region. The military also said that it launched tank fire toward a rocket launcher in Chebaa.

West Bank

- On April 26, the IDF [said](#) that it arrested two Palestinians planning to conduct a terrorist attack at the Makouk Farm near Wadi as-Seeq in the West Bank. One of the suspects was carrying an ax, and the military also said that it discovered other axes and knives in their vehicle.

Humanitarian Efforts

- According to Israel’s Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories ([COGAT](#)), from the beginning of the war to April 24, there have been 479,150 tons of humanitarian aid that entered Gaza on 25,326 trucks.
- On April 25, U.S. Department of Defense spokesperson Major General Pat Ryder [said](#) to reporters, “I can confirm that U.S. military vessels ... have begun to construct the initial stages of the temporary pier and causeway [to enable aid deliveries to Gaza] at sea.”
- On April 25, the IDF [said](#), “the IDF will operate to provide security and logistics support for the [U.S.] JLOTS initiative, which includes the establishment of a temporary floating pier to deliver humanitarian aid from the sea into Gaza,” and “the IDF’s involvement in the JLOTS initiative is one of many humanitarian aid efforts, further demonstrating the IDF’s commitment to working with the international community to ensure the continuous entry of humanitarian aid to the civilian population in the Gaza Strip.”

Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations

- On April 26, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that “an Egyptian delegation expected in Israel today to continue talks to reach a temporary ceasefire and hostage release deal in the ongoing war in Gaza is reportedly headed by Abbas Kamel, head of Egypt’s Intelligence Directorate.”
- According to [reports](#) citing an anonymous Israeli senior official from April 25, Israel is considering a hostage deal that would free 33 captives whom Hamas holds.
- On April 25, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that according to an unnamed source’s correspondence with Israel’s *Ynet News* outlet, “Israel would be willing to reconsider its planned operation in Rafah if there’s ‘a real offer’ for hostages-for-truce agreement with Hamas, but won’t ‘compromise on ending the war.’”

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.

- » 606 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 261 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - As of March 15, 1,480 IDF soldiers have been [injured](#) during ground combat in Gaza, including 310 who have been severely injured.

Numerous foreign nationals have been killed in the war, including at least 34 [American nationals](#), 34 [Thai](#) nationals, 39 [French](#) nationals, 19 [Russian](#) nationals, 12 [British](#) nationals, 10 [Nepalese](#) nationals, 9 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 6 [Canadian](#) nationals, 4 [Philippines](#) nationals, 4 [Austrian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 4 [Chinese](#) nationals, 3 [Brazilian](#) nationals, 3 [Belarusian](#) nationals, 3 [Italian](#) nationals, 3 [Peruvian](#) nationals, a [Cambodian](#) national, a [Chilean](#) national, an [Irish](#) national, a [Spanish](#) national, an [Australian](#) national, an [Azeri](#) national, a [Honduran](#) national, a [Swiss](#) national, a [Tanzanian](#) national, and a [Turkish](#) national.

- According to unverified figures from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry, at least 34,356 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 77,368 have been injured during the war.
 - » On October 25, 2023, President Biden [cautioned](#) against trusting Gaza Health Ministry casualty figures, stating: “I have no notion that the Palestinians are telling the truth about how many people are killed ... I have no confidence in the number that the Palestinians are using.”
 - » On March 21, Senator Josh Hawley (R-MO) [said](#) that during a virtual meeting that day with Senate Republicans, Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu assessed that the number of people killed in Gaza was approximately 28,000.
 - » Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) on March 10 that Israel has killed approximately 13,000 Hamas operatives over the course of the war.
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, at least 488 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 4,974 have been [wounded](#) in the West Bank.
- The IDF [claims](#) that it has killed at least 1,500 infiltrators from Gaza since the start of the war.
- So far, [105](#) hostages in Gaza have been released, [three](#) have been rescued by the IDF, [eight](#) [have](#) been [found dead](#), three have been [mistakenly](#) killed by the IDF, and one was [killed](#) during an IDF attempt to rescue him.
 - » 81 Israeli hostages have been released.
 - » 46 hostages with foreign nationalities—some also holding Israeli citizenship—have been released.
 - Thus far, 23 [Thai](#) nationals, 6 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 5 [German nationals](#), 3 [French](#) nationals, 4 [Russian nationals](#), 1 [Dutch](#) national, 1 [Filipino national](#), 1 [Mexican](#) national, 1 [Uruguayan](#) national, and 1 [American](#) national have been released.
 - Hamas has released [36 children](#) and still holds two as hostages.
- Israel has said that terrorists in Gaza currently [hold](#) 134 hostages and deceased hostage bodies.
 - » Israeli officials have confirmed the [deaths](#) of at least [35](#) of the 134 hostages captured on October 7, as well as two additional hostages who were abducted prior to October 7.
 - » Many of the hostages are foreign or dual nationals, including up to 5 [American](#) nationals, 6 [German](#) nationals, 13 [Thai](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 3 [British](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals.

Iranian Involvement and Response

- On April 26, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) [said](#) that the previous day, “one anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) was launched from Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist-controlled areas of Yemen into the Gulf of Aden. There were no injuries or damage reported by U.S., coalition, or commercial ships.”
- On April 25, Houthi spokesperson, Yahya Sarea, [said](#) that the group attacked the MSC *Darwin* in the Gulf of Aden.

U.S. and International Response

- On April 26, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#), citing Israel’s *Kan* network, that U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is expected to arrive in Israel that day to discuss a potential IDF offensive in Rafah and hostage release negotiations.
- On April 26, Secretary Blinken [said](#) in Beijing, “I think the relationships that China has can be positive in trying to calm tensions [in the Middle East], to prevent escalation, avoid the spread of the conflict.”
- Reports from April 26 [indicated](#) that the United States will not sanction the IDF’s Netzah Yehuda battalion as previously speculated.
- CENTCOM [said](#) on April 26 that it destroyed an unmanned surface vessel and an unmanned aerial vehicle in a Houthi-controlled area in Yemen that “presented an imminent threat to U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels in the region.”
- On April 25, the U.S. Treasury Department [announced](#) sanctions against more than 12 entities, individuals, and naval vessels involved in financing Iran’s drone industry.
 - » That day, the United Kingdom [said](#) that it and Canada were, along with the United States, implementing sanctions targeting four businesses and two directors that enable Iran’s drone industry.
 - » Britain’s Foreign Secretary David Cameron said, “the Iranian regime’s dangerous attack on Israel risked thousands of civilian casualties and wider escalation in the region,” and “today the UK and our partners have sent a clear message — we will hold those responsible for Iran’s destabilizing behavior to account.”
- On April 25, U.S. State Department Arabic-language spokesperson Hala Rharrit [announced](#) her resignation “in opposition to the United States’ Gaza policy,” according to a statement Rharrit posted online.
- On April 25, addressing the United Kingdom’s HMS *Diamond*’s interception of a Houthi missile launched toward a merchant ship, Britain’s Defense Secretary Grant Shapps [said](#), “the UK continues to be at the forefront of the international response to the Iranian-backed Houthis’ dangerous attacks on commercial vessels, which have claimed the lives of international mariners.”
- On April 25, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian Territories Francesca Albanese [said](#), “at this point, Israel has reneged on its international obligations to a degree that warrants a call for sanctions,” and she urged “an immediate ceasefire, an end to Israel’s illegal control of Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and a protective presence to ensure peace and stability in the region.”
 - » She added, “the pace and intensity with which this violence has spread to the rest of the occupied territory confirms that no Palestinian is safe under Israel’s unfettered control.”

Rising Antisemitism, Protests, and Attacks

- According to [reports](#) from April 26, anti-Israel protesters congregated in a building affiliated with the Institute of Political Studies in Paris, and other similar protests, some reportedly violent, were said to have occurred throughout Paris.
- On April 26, *The New York Times* [reported](#), “seven rabbis and peace activists were arrested on Friday near the border with Gaza after they tried to bring food supplies into the territory, according to two participants and the campaign group that organized the effort.” The U.S.-based organization Rabbis for Ceasefire orchestrated the effort.
- On April 25, 33 people were [arrested](#) at an anti-Israel protest at Indiana University, where students had set up a tent encampment.
- On April 25, the University of Southern California [canceled](#) its graduation ceremony, citing safety concerns in light of anti-Israel protests that have “rocked” the campus, according to *The Washington Post*.

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- Jacob Olidort, “[Israel’s Response to Iran’s Attack Requires U.S. Follow-Through](#),” *Real Clear Defense*, April 20, 2024
- Gen Philip M. Breedlove, USAF (ret.) and GEN. James D. Thurman, USA (ret.), [Tragic Mistakes are Common During War](#), April 19, 2024
- Jacob Olidort, Jonathan Ruhe, and Ari Cicurel, [Israel Strikes Back: U.S. Must Show ‘No Daylight’](#), April 19, 2024
- John Hannah, “[U.S., Israeli, Arab Coordination in Mideast Against Iran Comes to Fruition](#),” *Defense News*, April 18, 2024
- Webinar: [Iran’s Attack Against Israel: Air Defense Cooperation and Israel’s Response](#), with IDF MG (ret.) Amikam Norkin, John Hannah, and Ari Cicurel, April 18, 2024
- Jonathan Ruhe and Ari Cicurel, [Iran’s Failed Kill Shot Leaves It Vulnerable](#), April 18, 2024