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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update April 19, 2024

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 will release the Swords of Iron Update on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below.

Analysis

- On April 18, reports indicated that Israel had conducted an airstrike at an Iranian air base in Isfahan and struck other Iran-linked targets in Syria and Iraq. The strike, for which Israeli officials have not claimed responsibility, appears to be a limited response to Iran's unprecedented missile and drone attack involving over 300 projectiles on April 13-14. The decision to launch a limited strike at this time appears to indicate that Israel did not want to escalate to a higher-intensity war with Iran but wanted to signal that Iran cannot attack Israel with impunity.
 - » Since Isfahan lies in the center of Iran and hosts both a military base and a nuclear site, the Israeli strike also demonstrated Israel's ability to penetrate Iranian air defenses and reach key Iranian assets, should it decide to launch a larger strike against Iran's nuclear facilities.
- During a [webinar](#) on April 15 about Iran's attack against Israel and how cooperation between the United States, Israel, and other nations thwarted the attack, IDF MG (ret.) Amikam Norkin, the former commander of the Israeli Air Force and a JINSA distinguished fellow, noted that "we all remember that a few years ago, [Iran] destroyed Aramco in Saudi Arabia ... the Saudis lost billions of dollars. Now, [Iran launched] almost 300 [projectiles] ... because of that, I think there is a common interest [for regional nations] to learn from each other and to build a regional plan to support each other, to defend our nations. It's not only about technology, it's about intelligence, training, methods, maintenance ... and to build such an operational capability, it will take years."
 - » JINSA's Randi and Charles Wax Senior Fellow John Hannah argued, "this was a great proof of concept for an effort that I think has been gaining momentum ... I think that now would be the time for the US to really double down on this effort. This is such a great demonstration of how much all of our partners have to gain from deeper cooperation with CENTCOM [U.S. Central Command], from greater integration with Israel. The

possibilities are really almost limitless, provided people can reach a level of trust where they can feel comfortable sharing information in real time.”

- JINSA first recommended that Israel move to CENTCOM’s area of responsibility in 2018 in a [report](#) arguing that such a reorganization would “enable improved strategic and operational coordination among the United States, Israel and our Arab partners throughout the region against Iran and other serious shared threats.”
- In January 2022, JINSA published [A Stronger and Wider Peace: A U.S. Strategy for Advancing the Abraham Accords](#), which recommended that the United States work to build an integrated air and missile defense (IAMD) architecture in the Middle East. After Congress took up JINSA’s proposal by passing the Deterring Enemy Forces and Enabling National Defenses Act (DEFEND Act) of 2022, JINSA released [Build It and They Will Come: A U.S. Strategy for Integrating Middle East Air and Missile Defenses](#), which outlined how concerted U.S. leadership can advance progress toward an IAMD, in particular by developing a shared common operating picture (COP) in the air domain.

Last 48 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.
- On April 18, former Mossad operative Dr. Udi Levi [told](#) Israel’s *Ynet* outlet, “Qatar is at the top of funding terrorism worldwide, even more than Iran,” and “while Iran does it openly and declares it, Qatar does so in a way I call in English ‘killing me softly,’ by softly killing us. On one hand, it sides with the West, and on the other hand, it funds terrorism.”
- On April 17, Hamas [said](#) Iran’s massive April 13-14 projectile attack against Israel was a “legitimate and deserved response to the Zionist entity’s ... targeting of the Iranian consulate building in Damascus,” and “the response from the Islamic Republic of Iran confirms that the time when the Zionist entity could act as it wanted without accountability or punishment has ended.”

Iranian Regime

- On April 18, Israel’s *Channel 12* published a [report](#), citing multiple IDF officials, that extensively detailed Israel’s efforts to thwart the April 13-14 Iranian projectile attack.
 - » According to the report, Iran launched over 350 projectiles, including warheads carrying a total of 60 tons’ worth of explosives, in the attack.
 - » Israel reportedly used its Arrow 3 exoatmospheric air defense system to intercept ballistic missiles and its David’s Sling air defense system to intercept cruise missiles. The Iron Dome and Patriot systems were reportedly used to intercept drones.
 - » Dozens of Israeli intelligence officials reportedly spent “days and nights” gathering intelligence regarding Iranian plans for such an attack following the April 1 strike in Syria that killed several senior IRGC officials.

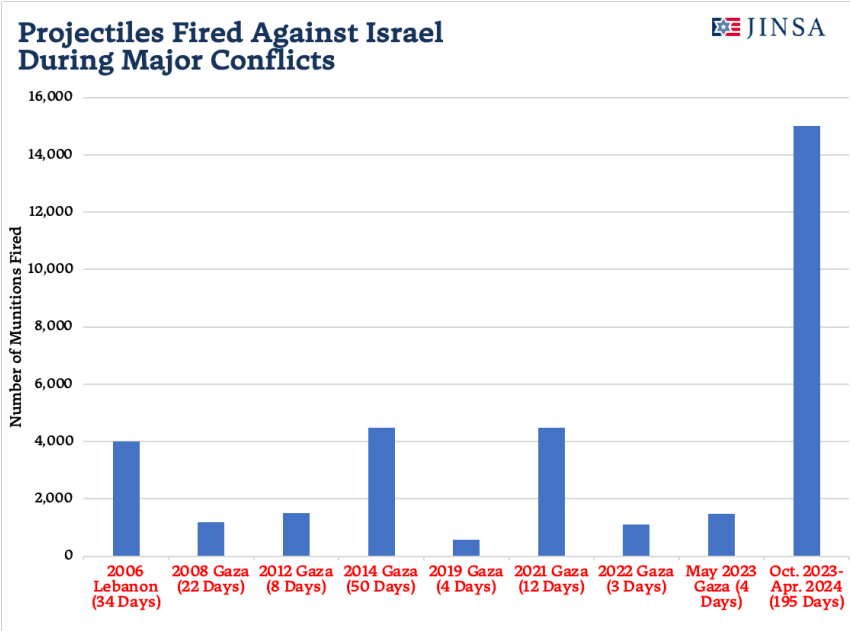
Gaza

- Rockets [struck](#) Ashkelon, and sirens [sounded](#) in Ashkelon and Kibbutz Mefalsim.

- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 18 that Israeli security officials are anticipating the arrival of the Turkish organization Humanitarian Relief Foundation’s (IHH) flotilla—the same organization that organized the 2010 flotilla whose occupants engaged in a deadly fight with IDF troops—but hope its arrival will be postponed.
- On April 18, one rocket [fired](#) from the Gaza Strip targeting Ashkelon struck an open area, according to the IDF. No injuries were reported.
- On April 18, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that an independent group investigating accusations that several United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) employees participated in the October 7 attacks will release its findings on April 20.

Lebanon

- Rockets [struck](#) Metula, and sirens sounded in [several](#) northern Israeli communities, [including](#) Eilon, Hanita, Zarit, Even Menachem, Gornot HaGalil, Adamit, Shtula, Ya’ara, Goren, Arab al-Aramshe, Shomera, [HaGoshrim](#), Beit Hillel, Ma’ayan Baruch, [Margalioth](#), Kiryat Shmona, and Metula.
- On April 18, Hezbollah [targeted](#) the IDF’s Mount Meron air traffic control base in an anti-tank guided missile attack and released footage of the strike. The IDF said there were no injuries in the attack.
- Hezbollah’s April 17 projectile attack against Arab-al-Aramshe [injured](#) 14 IDF soldiers, six seriously, two moderately, and six mildly, according to the military. *The Times of Israel* noted that a drone struck a community center in the town in which soldiers may have been gathering.



IDF Operations

- Overnight on April 18 (April 19 local time), several reports emerged that Israel had launched airstrikes against targets in Iran, Syria, and Iraq.
 - » *CBS News* [reported](#) that, according to two unnamed U.S. officials on April 18, an Israeli missile impacted inside Iran. The outlet also noted *The Washington Post’s* correspondence with an unnamed Israeli official, who said that Israel’s strike “was

intended to signal to Iran that Israel can attack its territory.” An anonymous Iranian official told Reuters that Iran did not have plans to retaliate.

- » On April 19, Israel’s *Channel 12* outlet [reported](#) that Israel targeted an Iranian air force base in Isfahan that was used to launch Iran’s April 13-14 missile and drone attack against Israel.
 - According to the report, the strike was conducted at around 3:30 a.m. Israel time and involved the use of three drones, although *The Jerusalem Post* [reported](#) that long-distance aircraft were used against Iranian Air Force targets in Isfahan.
 - The *Channel 12* report alleged that no nuclear facilities were targeted in the strike, and [several outlets](#) reported that, according to their sources, Israel did not target Iranian nuclear facilities. The UN’s International Atomic Energy Agency [said](#) on April 19 that Iran’s nuclear facilities were not damaged.
- » An unnamed analyst [told](#) Iran’s *State TV* on April 19 that air defenses based in Isfahan in Iran shot down mini drones operated by “infiltrators from inside Iran.”
- » According to an April 19 [report](#) from Israel’s *Maariv* outlet citing a Syrian military official, Israel conducted airstrikes against at least three Syrian air defense sites in southern Syria. The official said the airstrikes caused “substantial losses.”
- » Soon after reports of the strike emerged, photos allegedly showing “Israeli armaments” near Baghdad [circulated](#).
- » On April 19, *The Times of Israel* [cited](#) reporting from *NBC News* and *Bloomberg* indicating that the United States did not take part in the strike and that Israel gave the United States notice on April 18 that it planned to launch a strike within the next one or two days, respectively. Both outlets cited unnamed sources. However, the IDF and the office of Israel’s Prime Minister [did not confirm](#) that Israel carried out the strikes.
- Reuters [reported](#) on April 17 that “the [Israeli] cabinet has approved a five-year, NIS 19 billion (\$5 billion) plan to rebuild and strengthen communities near the Gaza border after the October 7 attack,” according to Prime Minister Netanyahu’s office.
- During a cabinet meeting on April 17, Netanyahu [said](#) of his recent meetings with British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and other UK and German representatives, “they have all sorts of suggestions and advice, I appreciate it, but I want to make clear, we’ll make out decisions myself, and the [State] of Israel will do what it needs to defend itself.”
 - » *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that day that during his meetings with Germany’s Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and British Foreign Minister David Cameron, Netanyahu told them that Israel has the right to defend itself after Iran’s massive projectile attack. He also thanked the leaders for the “unprecedented” support to frustrate Iran’s attack and said in a statement released by his office, “Israel is going above and beyond on the humanitarian situation.”

Iranian Regime

- On April 18, Israel’s Foreign Minister Israel Katz [wrote](#) on X, “President Biden has called on all G7 partners to take the same path [sanctioning Iranian entities that the United States and Britain did],” and “this is our opportunity to form a global front and a regional coalition against Iran, together with the US, the EU, and moderate Arab states, to stop the serpent’s head that threatens global stability. We must stop Iran now before it’s too late.”
- *Axios* [reported](#) on April 17 that Israel called off a strike on Iran planned for the night of April 15 “for operational reasons,” two unnamed Israeli officials said.

Gaza

- On April 19, the IDF [said](#) Israeli aircraft had struck 25 targets in the Gaza Strip in the past day, including buildings, observation posts, rocket launch sites, and other infrastructure used by Hamas.
 - » One of the sites struck was a launch site in Beit Lahiya from where rockets were fired at Ashkelon on the evening of April 18, as well as a nearby weapons depot.
- On April 18, the IDF announced that it [completed](#) its weeklong operation in Nuseirat.
 - » Soldiers from the IDF's 401st Armored Brigade and other troops from the 162nd Division eliminated over 100 Hamas sites and killed around 40 terror operatives.
 - Soldiers uncovered and destroyed an additional four terror tunnel networks, including a tunnel network that stretched from Nuseirat to Gaza City. A total of 17 tunnel shafts were demolished in the operation.
 - » During the operation, IDF soldiers expanded the east-west Netzarim corridor which bifurcates Gaza. The corridor is used to launch limited IDF operations and prevent Gazans from returning to northern Gaza.
- On April 18, "the Defense Ministry and IDF [said] they have seized a total of NIS 29 million (\$7.6 million) in cash in the Gaza Strip, and 'forfeited' it to the state," *The Times of Israel* [reported](#). According to the ministry, IDF troops discovered the money in Hamas bastions and terrorists' houses.
- On April 18, the IDF and Shin Bet [said](#) that the head of interrogations in Hamas's internal security in Beit Hanoun, Yousef Shabat, was killed in an airstrike this week. Shabat also served as an officer in the intelligence division of Hamas's military wing in the Beit Hanoun Battalion, according to the IDF.
- The IDF [said](#) on April 17 that it finished a precision operation targeting Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operatives in two schools in Beit Hanoun in which terrorists were "using the civilians sheltering there as a human shield."

Lebanon

- Hezbollah [said](#) on April 18 that Israeli strikes killed Ali Hamada and Muhammad Shami, operatives of the terror group.
- On April 18, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to target a Hezbollah cell gathered in a building in Blida that the IDF's Golani Brigade spotted.
- According to [reports](#) from April 17, Israel carried out airstrikes in Lebanon's northeastern Baalbek District near laa.
- On April 17, the IDF [confirmed](#) that it conducted an airstrike against a Hezbollah air defense site in the Baalbek region of Lebanon that evening.
- The IDF [said](#) on April 17 that it finished a substantial military exercise in the north with the 91st "Galilee" Regional Division that was part of "accelerating the IDF's readiness for defense and a strong attack in the northern arena."

Syria

- Syrian state media [reported](#) that Israel struck Syria's air defense systems in southern Syria overnight on April 19, causing "material losses."

West Bank

- Four IDF troops were [injured](#) in an overnight raid on April 19 that killed several Palestinian gunmen in Nur Shams. The IDF also said several wanted Palestinians were detained and explosive devices were found.
- On April 18, Israel Police [said](#) that they arrested a Palestinian in Beitunia in the West Bank affiliated with ISIS who was orchestrating an attack to be carried out in the near future.

Humanitarian Efforts

- According to Israel's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories ([COGAT](#)), from the beginning of the war to April 17, there have been 453,370 tons of humanitarian aid that entered Gaza on 24,017 trucks.
- On April 19, two Israeli officials told *The Times of Israel* that Israel will [open](#) a third humanitarian aid crossing into northern Gaza later in April.
- On April 18, State Department Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel [stated](#), “there has been some measurable progress that we’ve seen when it comes to humanitarian aid getting into Gaza.” He added, “but the circumstances within Gaza continue to be dire and more absolutely needs to be done. The crisis that we’re seeing demands rapid expansion of these efforts.”
- On April 17, the IDF [announced](#) that eight trucks carrying UN-supplied flour that arrived through and were examined at Israel's Ashdod Port entered the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing. This was the first time that aid processed at the Ashdod Port reached Gaza.
- Amid emerging images of bustling market scenes and Palestinians enjoying Gaza beaches, Israel's *Channel 12* [quoted] Gaza photographer Ayman Amriti as saying that the price of a 25-kilogram (55-pound) sack of flour has come down from NIS 1,800 (\$475) at the peak of the war to NIS 95 (\$25)—though most people are struggling financially,” *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 18.

Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations

- On April 18, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that according to an unnamed senior Arab official, “an Israeli strike last week that killed three of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh’s children and four of his grandchildren contributed to the ongoing deadlock in hostage negotiations between the terror group and Israel.”
- Qatar’s Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani [said](#) during a press briefing on April 17, “Qatar is in the process of a complete re-evaluation of its role because there has been damage to Qatar,” and there was a “misuse of this mediation for narrow political interests.”
 - » This comes on the heels of a U.S. member of Congress, Steny Hoyer (D-MD), urging the United States to “reevaluate” its relations with Qatar and the Gulf state’s U.S. embassy’s subsequent [criticism](#) of Hoyer’s argument.
 - » *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 18, citing an unnamed Arab official, that “criticism of Qatar by a growing number of U.S. lawmakers from both sides of the aisle contributed to Qatar’s decision ... to announce a re-evaluation of its role as mediator” in hostage negotiations.

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 604 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 360 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, 33,970 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 76,770 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, 466 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 4,800 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 19, Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi [said](#) during a speech that Iran's April 13-14 projectile attack against Israel "showed our authority, our people's will of steel and our unity."
- On April 19, a senior Iranian official [told](#) Reuters, "the foreign source of the incident has not been confirmed. We have not received any external attack, and the discussion leans more towards infiltration than attack."
- On April 18, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander who runs Iran's nuclear security, Ahmad Haghtalab, [said](#), "a review of our nuclear doctrine and politics as well as considerations previously communicated is entirely possible" amid a possible Israeli response to Iran's massive April 13-14 projectile attack against Israel.
- At the United Nations Security Council on April 18, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian [said](#), "in case of any use of force by the Israeli regime and violating our sovereignty, the Islamic Republic of Iran will not hesitate a bit to assert its inherent rights to give a decisive and proper response to it to make the regime regret its actions."
- On April 18, [Bloomberg reported](#) that Iran's *Beshad* frigate, which has reportedly assisted the Houthis conduct strikes on ships in the Red Sea, sailed from its position offshore of Yemen on April 4 and then stopped broadcasting its position on April 18.
- On April 18, Houthi leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi said during a speech that "the group has launched 14 operations in two weeks in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea and even reaching the Indian Ocean," Reuters [reported](#). He also said, "there is no danger to maritime traffic related to (ships linked to) European countries that are not heading to Israel."
- Iran's military leader, Maj. Gen. Abdolrahim Mousavi, [said](#) during an April 17 military parade, "currently, we are in a state of readiness to deal with possible evils, and what we displayed throughout the country today was a small part of our capabilities."

U.S. and International Response

- On April 19, [The Wall Street Journal reported](#) that the Biden administration is considering providing Israel with more than \$1 billion in new weapons, which would include "\$700 million in 120 mm tank ammunition, \$500 million in tactical vehicles and less than \$100 million in 120 mm mortar rounds." This package would be separate from the military aid bills that Congress is considering.
- On April 19, Secretary of State Antony Blinken [stated](#) that the United States was "not involved in any offensive operation" and that the United States is [committed](#) to Israel's security. Blinken added, "I'm not going to speak to these reported events ... all I can say is for our part, and for all the members of the G7, our focus is on de-escalation."
- On April 18, the U.S. Treasury Department [announced](#) sanctions against sixteen individuals and two entities tied to Iran's drone, testing, and proliferation program. The Treasury Department also sanctioned five companies responsible for supplying steel to Iran's Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC), which is a U.S.-designated entity. The United States also

sanctioned Iranian automaker Bahman Group and three of its subsidiaries, which have materially supported the IRGC.

- » In a [statement](#) announcing the sanctions, President Biden noted, “less than a week ago, Iran launched one of the largest missile and drone attacks the world has ever seen against Israel. Together with our allies and partners, the United States defended Israel. We helped defeat this attack. And today, we are holding Iran accountable—imposing new sanctions and export controls on Iran.”
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 18 that U.S. and Israeli officials, including U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, Israel’s Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, and Israel’s National Security Council head Tzachi Hanegbi, met that day to discuss possible Israeli military action in Rafah, according to an unnamed American official.
- On April 18, a White House spokesperson [told](#) Israel’s *i24 News* that despite earlier reports in Arab media, the Biden administration had not agreed to approve an Israeli operation in Rafah in exchange for Israel only conducting a limited response against Iran for its attack on April 13-14.
- On April 18, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that the Biden administration has launched a renewed push to reach a normalization deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Discussions have included the United States agreeing to a more formal defense agreement, assistance with civil nuclear power, and a push for Palestinian statehood.
- On April 17, House Republicans submitted a [bill](#) that would provide \$26.38 in military aid to Israel, including \$4 billion to replenish Iron Dome and David’s Sling air defense interceptors, \$4.4 billion for resupplying other Israeli arms, and \$3.5 billion for procuring advanced weapons systems. The bill also includes \$2.4 billion to fund U.S. forces operating in the Middle East since the war began and \$1.2 billion in funding for the Iron Beam laser air defense program.
 - » Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) said that he [expected](#) the House of Representatives to pass the bill on April 20, along with three other bills providing funding for Ukraine, Taiwan, and other efforts to confront Russia, Iran, and China.
 - » That day, President Biden released a [statement](#) that “I strongly support this package to get critical support to Israel and Ukraine, provide desperately needed humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza, and bolster security and stability in the Indo-Pacific. Israel is facing unprecedented attacks from Iran, and Ukraine is facing continued bombardment from Russia that has intensified dramatically in the last month. The House must pass the package this week and the Senate should quickly follow. I will sign this into law immediately to send a message to the world: We stand with our friends, and we won’t let Iran or Russia succeed.”
- On April 17, the *Wall Street Journal* [published](#) an op-ed by President Biden arguing that “the House [of Representatives] must pass urgent national-security legislation for Ukraine and Israel, as well as desperately needed humanitarian aid for Palestinians in Gaza.”
 - » The president argued that “both Ukraine and Israel are under attack by brazen adversaries that seek their annihilation. Mr. Putin wants to subjugate the people of Ukraine and absorb their nation into a new Russian empire. The government of Iran wants to destroy Israel forever—wiping the world’s only Jewish state off the map,” and “America must never accept either outcome—not only because we stand up for our friends, but because our security is on the line, too.”

- » He noted, “if Congress passes military aid for Ukraine and Israel, we won’t write blank checks. We’d send military equipment from our own stockpiles, then use the money authorized by Congress to replenish those stockpiles—by buying from American suppliers.”
- » He clarified, “I’ve been clear about my concerns over the safety of civilians in Gaza amid the war with Hamas, but this aid package is focused on Israel’s long-term defensive needs to ensure it can maintain its military edge against Iran or any other adversary.”
- On April 17, the United States [vetoed](#) a draft UN Security Council resolution to make the Palestinian Authority (PA) a full member of the UN. Twelve of the fifteen members of the Security Council supported the resolution, with the United Kingdom and Switzerland abstaining.
 - » Alternate Representative of the United States for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations Robert A. Wood stated after the vote that, “the U.S. has worked vigorously to support Palestinian statehood in the context of an agreement that would solve the Israel-Palestinian conflict. We have been clear that premature actions in New York, even with the best intentions, will not achieve statehood for the Palestinian people. As members of the security council, we have a special responsibility to ensure our actions further the cause of international peace and security, and are consistent with the requirements of the UN charter.”
- On April 17, State Department Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel indicated that the Biden administration was [concerned](#) by claims in a UN report that Israel detained UNRWA staff, who claimed that Israel subjected them to beatings, treatment similar to waterboarding, threats of rape and electrocution, and other forms of abuse.
- On April 19, after Israel’s alleged strike against Iran, the G7 released a [statement](#) that “we urge all parties to work to prevent further escalation. The G7 will continue to work to this end.”
- On April 19, Jordan’s Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi [stated](#), “we warn against the danger of regional escalation. We condemn all actions that threaten dragging the region into war. Israeli-Iranian retaliations must end. The inhumane war on Gaza must end now. The focus of the world must remain on ending the catastrophic aggression on Gaza.”
- On April 19, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [stated](#), “it is absolutely necessary that the region remains stable and that all sides restrain from further action.”
- On April 19, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov [said](#) that “there have been telephone contacts between the leadership of Russia and Iran, our representatives and the Israelis. We made it very clear in these conversations, we told the Israelis that Iran does not want escalation.”
- On April 19, China’s foreign ministry spokesperson, Lin Jian, [stated](#), “China opposes any actions that further escalate tensions and will continue to play a constructive role to de-escalate the situation.”
- On April 19, Oman’s Foreign Ministry [posted](#) on X that it “condemns the Israeli attack this morning on Isfahan ... it also condemns and denounces Israel’s repeated military attacks in the region.”
- On April 19, the PA [condemned](#) the U.S. veto of a UN Security Council draft resolution that would have provided it with full UN member status. PA President Mahmoud Abbas’s office released a statement that the U.S. veto “represents a blatant aggression against international law and an encouragement to the pursuit of the genocidal war against our

people... which pushes the region ever further to the edge of the abyss.” The statement added that the U.S. decision was “unfair, unethical and unjustified.”

- On April 19, ratings agency S&P Global cut Israel’s long-term credit [rating](#) from AA-minus to A-plus and stated that “we forecast that Israel’s general government deficit will widen to 8% of GDP in 2024, mostly as a result of increased defense spending.”
- On April 18, the United Kingdom [levied](#) sanctions against 13 Iranian military entities or individuals, including Iran’s General Staff of the Armed Forces and the IRGC Navy. The United Kingdom elected not to sanction the IRGC as a whole.
- On April 18, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that Jordan’s King Abdullah asked President Biden to press Israel not to use Jordanian airspace during an attack against Iran.
- Reuters [reported](#) on April 17 that “French President Emmanuel Macron says Europe should widen its sanctions regime on Iran, adding that sanctions should target entities involved in the production of drones and missiles in particular.”
 - » In addition, “Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani says European foreign ministers also want to impose new sanctions on those who arm Israel’s foes and those who attack ships in the Red Sea,” the report said.
 - Tajani said, “there was a unanimous consensus that sanctions should be imposed on all those who give drones, weapons and missiles to those who attack Israel and those who attack ships in the Red Sea.”
 - » The report indicated that European Union (EU) leaders are scheduled to meet on April 17 to discuss bolstering sanctions against Iran.
- On April 17, a conversation in Israel among Germany’s Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and Prime Minister Netanyahu and Israel’s Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, a former JINSA distinguished fellow, [reportedly](#) became heated over discussions about humanitarian aid in Gaza, according to Israel’s *Channel 13*. When Baerbock asked to show the Israelis photos on her phone of Gazans allegedly facing famine, Netanyahu responded, “come and see the pictures of the markets in Gaza, the beaches in Gaza, there’s no famine there.”
 - » Baerbock reportedly advised Israel to stop showing photos of conditions in Gaza improving “as they don’t portray the real situation in Gaza. There is hunger in Gaza.” The report indicated that Netanyahu raised his voice and claimed, “it’s real. It’s reality. It’s not like what the Nazis staged, we’re not like the Nazis who produced fake images of a manufactured reality.”
 - » On April 17, Baerbock [said](#) before leaving Israel, “everyone must now act prudently and responsibly,” and “a spiraling escalation would serve no one, not Israel’s security, not the many dozens of hostages still in the hands of Hamas, not the suffering population of Gaza, not the many people in Iran who are themselves suffering under the regime, and not the third countries in the region who simply want to live in peace.”
- On April 17, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres [called for](#) “maximum restraint” from Israel and Iran, and UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric argued that rhetoric in the Middle East is “increasingly dangerous.” He added that the Middle East and beyond “cannot afford another open conflict.”
 - » On April 18, Guterres [said](#), “the Middle East is on a precipice. Recent days have seen a perilous escalation—in words and deeds,” and “one miscalculation, one miscommunication, one mistake, could lead to the unthinkable—a full-scale regional conflict that would be devastating for all involved.”

- On April 17, Reuters [reported](#) that “Turkey’s Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan met Hamas terror group politburo chief Ismail Haniyeh during a visit to Qatar on Tuesday, a Turkish diplomatic source says” to discuss humanitarian aid deliveries to Gaza, efforts to achieve a ceasefire, and the hostages.

Rising Antisemitism, Protests, and Attacks

- On April 18, New York police [made](#) more than 100 arrests for trespassing at an anti-Israel protest encampment at Columbia University that had lasted more than 30 hours.
- During a House Education and Workforce Committee hearing on April 17, Columbia University President Nemat Shafik [said](#), “we condemn the antisemitism that is so pervasive today,” and “antisemitism has no place on our campus, and I am personally committed to doing everything I can to confront it directly.”
 - » She added, “we brought in extra security expertise and had regular contact with NYPD and the FBI,” and “I have spent most of my time since becoming president on these issues, holding over 200 meetings with groups of students, faculty, alumni, donors, parents, some of whom are here, and 20 meetings with other university presidents to learn from each other.”
 - » During the hearing, Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC) said, “Columbia stands guilty of gross negligence at best and, at worst, has become a platform for those supporting terrorism and violence against Jewish people.”
 - » Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY) said, “despite claims otherwise, Columbia’s leadership refuses to enforce their own policies and condemn Jewish hatred on campus, creating a breeding ground for antisemitism and a hotbed of support for terrorism from radicalized faculty and students.”
 - » Rep. Stefanik also [questioned](#) Shafik regarding why Columbia had hired Dr. Mohamed Abdou as a visiting scholar for the spring 2024 term. On October 11, Abdou posted on social media, “I’m with Hamas & Hezbollah & Islamic Jihad.”
- On April 17, the Palestine Football Association [sent](#) a proposal to 211 International Association Football Federation (FIFA) members calling for “appropriate sanctions, with immediate effect, against Israeli teams.”

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