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# Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update May 1, 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. JINSA is releasing the Swords of Iron Update on May 1 and 3 this week due to the Jewish holiday of Passover. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below.

## Analysis

- The International Criminal Court (ICC) is reportedly preparing to issue arrest warrants for senior Israeli officials. As U.S. officials have [indicated](#), the ICC does not have jurisdiction over Israel's war in Gaza, and arrest warrants would further undermine efforts to reach a ceasefire and hostage deal by further emboldening Hamas, the Iranian regime, and Israel's other adversaries to strengthen their pressure against it.
- Anti-Israel protesters continue to occupy U.S. college campuses, preventing students from accessing educational facilities and endangering those seeking to enter or pass through the encampments. Opponents of the antisemitic statements and violence issued severe criticism of the protesters' frequently antisemitic rhetoric and violent tactics.
  - » University leaders took different approaches to the growing number of protesters at their schools.
    - Brown University agreed to meet with the protestors and [vote](#) on divestment-related matters in October if they disbanded their encampment.
    - Northwestern University [agreed](#) to protesters' demands to provide funding for Palestinian undergraduates and professors in exchange for the dismantlement of all but one tent at the encampment.
    - The University of Florida chose to [shut down](#) the encampment and arrest those involved.
    - Columbia University initially sought to negotiate with the protesters, stating that it would [suspend](#) those who stayed at the encampment past a deadline and then chose to expel and arrest those who later chose to occupy a university building.
  - » Iranian officials have sought to [exploit](#) the protests by supporting their anti-Israel messaging and highlighting unrest in the United States.

- Reports that Egypt has [submitted](#) a detailed proposal to Hamas for a ceasefire agreement, and Secretary of State Blinken’s [statement](#) during his ongoing trip to Israel that the “only reason that [a ceasefire deal] wouldn’t be achieved is because of Hamas,” suggest a renewed Israeli push to secure a hostage deal as part of a last-ditch effort before the start of major IDF operations in Rafah.
  - » Additionally, [reports](#) that Israel has begun amassing hundreds of tanks on the Israel-Gaza border near Rafah, Hamas’s last remaining stronghold, may be a means of increasing credible leverage against Hamas in the negotiations.
- The Houthis’ [claim](#) that it carried out a missile strike on a moving commercial vessel over 370 miles away on April 26 would, if accurate, represent the longest-such strike against a ship that the terror group has perpetrated to date.
  - » Though Israel has already faced Houthi projectile attacks in the current war, the Houthis’ demonstration of the ability to hit a mobile target at this distance may be an effort to increase pressure on Israel in light of recent revelations of Israel’s tactical [successes](#) against Hezbollah.

## Since April 26

### *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 30, Israel Police [released](#) a video of Hassan Saklanan, 34, a Turkish national, stabbing a Border Police officer near Herod’s Gate in Jerusalem. The victim and another police officer shot and killed the attacker.

### **Gaza**

- On April 29, one rocket [fired](#) at Sderot was intercepted by the Iron Dome, while two other long-range rockets impacted the sea near Ashdod.

### **Lebanon**

- Sirens [sounded](#) in Rosh Hanikra, Shlomi, [Arab al-Aramshe](#), Gornot Hagalil, and [the Meron area](#).
- On April 30, Hezbollah [fired](#) three anti-tank guided missiles towards the Metula area. No injuries were reported.
- On April 29, Hezbollah [fired](#) a barrage of 15 rockets towards the Upper Galilee. No injuries were reported.
- On April 29, Hezbollah [fired](#) three anti-tank missiles toward Metula. No injuries were reported.
- Overnight on April 29-30, the IDF [said](#) that terrorists in Lebanon launched two anti-tank missiles toward the Dovev area in Israel, impacting unpopulated areas.
- On April 29, Hamas in Lebanon [said](#) that it fired a salvo of rockets toward an IDF base near Kiryat Shmona, most of which Israel [intercepted](#). The IDF said that the barrage included 20 rockets, inflicting no reported injuries or damage.
- On April 28, the IDF [said](#) that a barrage of at least 26 rockets was launched from Lebanon, striking open areas near Bar Yohai. No injuries or damage was reported. Hezbollah [took](#)

[credit](#) for the attack, which was purportedly in response to Israeli strikes against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.

- On April 28, the IDF [said](#) that terrorists in Lebanon launched two projectiles toward the area near Mount Dov.
- On April 27, an IDF soldier was lightly [wounded](#) in a Hezbollah missile attack near Manara.
- On April 27, Hezbollah [fired](#) several anti-tank missiles from southern Lebanon toward northern Israel. That day, Israel's air defenses downed a "suspicious aerial target," likely a drone, over northern Israel.
- On April 26, Hezbollah [fired](#) a salvo of 30 [rockets](#) toward northern Israel's Mount Hermon region, inflicting no reported injuries. The Iron Dome shot down several of the rockets, and the others struck unpopulated areas. Hezbollah claimed that it was retaliating for Israeli strikes that killed al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya members Mosab Khalaf and Bilal Khalaf.
- On April 27, Hezbollah's Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem [said](#), "[Israel's Defense Minister Yoav] Gallant threatens us that if we don't stop the attacks, he will attack Lebanon to return the residents of the north to their homes," and "I say to Gallant that this war will not only cause the Zionists to not return to their homes but is likely to end their presence in the northern occupied territories once and for all."

### West Bank

- On April 30, a group of students at Birzeit University near Ramallah in the West Bank [harassed](#) Oliver Owczar, Germany's representative to the Palestinian Authority, screaming "get out!" at him and chasing him.
- Overnight on April 27, two Palestinian gunmen [opened fire](#) at the northern West Bank's Salem checkpoint. The IDF said both attackers were shot dead by troops.

### IDF Operations

- According to Israel's *Channel 12* outlet on April 28, 30 IDF paratrooper reservists have [declined](#) call-ups for service amid a possibly forthcoming operation in Rafah due to lack of confidence in their ability to perform their duties, highlighting burnout from the war, the report argues.
- On April 26, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#), "under my leadership, Israel will never accept any attempt by the International Criminal Court in the Hague to undermine its basic right to defend itself," and "while decisions made by the court in the Hague will not affect Israel's actions, they will set a dangerous precedent that threatens soldiers and public figures."

### Iranian Regime

- On April 29, Israel's *Channel 12* outlet [reported](#), citing the U.K.-based *Iran International* outlet, that Israel recently killed an official in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) inside Iran in a covert operation.
  - » The report, which did not name the official or the date of the killing, said that Israel killed the individual because he was involved in an attempted terrorist attack targeting Jews in Germany that was foiled in December.
  - » According to the report, the official was killed by bullets, but no further details regarding the killing were provided.

## Gaza

- On May 1, the IDF [detailed](#) its continued combat operations in central Gaza, including airstrikes against numerous terror sites over the prior day.
  - » The IDF said it struck Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) weapon depots, terror facilities, and rocket and mortar launching posts.
  - » In addition, troops from the 99th Division called in airstrikes against terror operatives launching rockets at the troops and planting improvised explosive devices.
  - » Troops from the 99th Division's Yiftah Brigade also discovered weapons caches, military equipment, and intelligence materials.
- Israel's *Maariv* outlet [reported](#) on May 1, citing Lebanon's Hezbollah-affiliated *Al-Akhbar* outlet, that Israel has amassed roughly 1,000 military vehicles, including armored personnel carriers and tanks, on the Israel-Gaza border near Rafah.
  - » Israel is planning to launch an offensive into Rafah by entering southern Gaza from two locations on the Israel-Gaza border, the Sufa Crossing and the Kerem Shalom Crossing, according to the report.
  - » The report further stated that Egyptian officials fear that Hamas will detonate explosives along the Gaza-Egypt border, enabling many Palestinians to enter Egypt, if Israel initiates a major operation in Rafah.
- On April 30, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that the IDF's "98th and 162nd divisions have been carrying out intensive preparations in recent days for future offensives in the Gaza Strip, including the looming Rafah operation." The IDF said, "the division commanders have completed the approval of plans for the next missions, and are now continuing to increase readiness."
- On April 30, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [told](#) families of hostages, "the idea that we will stop the war before achieving all its aims is not an option," and "we will enter Rafah and we will eliminate the Hamas battalions there—whether or not there is a deal—in order to achieve total victory."
- Reports from April 30 [said](#) that IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi approved plans for an operation in Rafah and other areas in central Gaza that can be amended in real time should hostage negotiations advance.
- On April 30, the IDF [said](#) it carried out airstrikes on tunnel shafts, anti-tank missile launch posts, and other infrastructure from which rockets were fired at Ashdod and Sderot the previous day.
- On April 28, the IDF [detailed](#) its ongoing operations against terrorists in Gaza, which included airstrikes against terrorists' infrastructure, rocket launchers, observation posts, and operatives.
- On April 27, the IDF [said](#) that it conducted airstrikes against approximately 25 terrorist targets in Gaza during the previous day, including a rocket launcher that had been used to attack Ashdod in southern Israel, a rocket launcher in Khan Younis, and a terrorist cell in central Gaza.
- On April 29, the IDF [said](#) that combat engineers had demolished two attack tunnels belonging to Hamas and PIJ in Beit Hanoun in recent weeks. The IDF said the tunnels had been under "continuous intelligence and technological surveillance" since their discovery, and that they did not cross into Israeli territory.

## Lebanon

- On May 1, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to target Hezbollah sites overnight in Khiam, Kafr Kila, Blida, Odaisseh, and Mays al-Jabal.
- On April 30, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to target numerous Hezbollah buildings in southern Lebanon.
- On April 30, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to target Hezbollah sites in Kafr Kila and Khiam. The IDF also said that it fired artillery toward the site of an overnight anti-tank missile attack against the area near Dovev in Israel.
- On April 29, the IDF [said](#) that it launched airstrikes against Hezbollah targets in Blat, Jebbayn, Khiam, Ayta ash-Shab, and Tayr Harfa in southern Lebanon. The IDF also said that it fired artillery toward a target in Chebaa to neutralize threats.
- On April 29, the IDF [said](#) that it fired artillery toward the source of Hamas's barrage of 20 rockets from Lebanon.
- On April 29, the IDF [said](#) that it carried out airstrikes against Hezbollah rocket launchers and buildings in Rachaya al-Foukhar and Khiam and that it fired artillery toward targets in Ayta ash-Shab.
- On April 29, the IDF [said](#) that it carried out airstrikes overnight against Hezbollah targets in Jabal Blat and Marwahin.
- On April 28, the IDF [conducted](#) a series of airstrikes against Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon. These targets included a Hezbollah facility in Maroun al-Ras and Hezbollah infrastructure in Tayr Harfa and Yarine.
- On April 28, the IDF [said](#) that it used a fighter jet to carry out an airstrike against a building in Ayta ash-Shab in which a Hezbollah operative was identified that day.
- On April 27, the IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes against Hezbollah infrastructure in Markaba and Srebbine.
- On April 27, the IDF published [video](#) of an airstrike targeting two Hezbollah fighters in a building in Kafr Kila. The IDF also said that overnight, it targeted Hezbollah sites in Rihan, Kfarchouba, and Chebaa. The IDF added that it fired artillery toward targets in Aalma ash-Shab.
- On April 26, the IDF [said](#) that it killed Mosab Khalaf, a high-ranking al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya member who "led and advanced many attacks" against Israel, in a drone strike in southern Lebanon.
- On April 26, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to target buildings in which Hezbollah fighters hid in Tayr Harfa and Ayta ash-Shab and that it fired artillery toward threats in Yarine and Dhayra.

## Humanitarian Efforts

- According to Israel's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories ([COGAT](#)), from the beginning of the war to April 28, there have been 468,790 tons of humanitarian aid that entered Gaza on 24,790 trucks.
- On May 1, Israel's *Maariv* outlet [reported](#), citing a report that day from the IDF's *Army Radio*, that the IDF will declare a new "safe zone" in central Gaza in the coming days for Palestinians sheltering in Rafah to relocate to, and also expand an existing safe zone.

- » The newly established zone will reportedly be located in central Gaza on the outskirts of the al-Bureij and Nuseirat areas.
- » According to the report, the new zone will emulate the Mawasi safe zone established early in the war in western Gaza. The Mawasi zone absorbed large numbers of Palestinians throughout the fighting and has been almost entirely shielded from combat.
- » The report alleged that as part of the initiative, the Mawasi safe zone itself will be enlarged to extend eastward to the southern Gazan city of Khan Younis and northward toward the area of Deir al-Balah in central Gaza.
- On April 30, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) [released](#) images of the pier it is building southwest of Gaza City to expedite humanitarian aid shipments in Gaza.
- On April 30, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres [said](#) in New York, “a major obstacle to distributing aid across Gaza is the lack of security for humanitarians and the people we serve. Humanitarian convoys, facilities and personnel, and the people in need, must not be targets.”
  - » He added, “we must do everything possible to avert an entirely preventable, human-made famine,” and “we have seen incremental progress recently, but much more is urgently needed.”
  - » He also said, “in northern Gaza, the most vulnerable – from sick children to people with disabilities – are already dying of hunger and disease” and called for international pressure on Israel to forgo a military operation in Rafah.
- On April 28, the World Central Kitchen (WCK) [announced](#) that it would resume its aid operations in Gaza the following day. The WCK had suspended operations in Gaza on April 11 following the death of seven of its aid workers in an accidental IDF airstrike.
- On April 28, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#), “over the last few weeks, the amount of humanitarian aid going into Gaza has significantly increased. In the coming days, the amount of aid going into Gaza will continue to scale up even more. Food, water, medical supplies, shelter equipment, and other aid. More of it is going into Gaza than ever before.”
  - » He also said, “this increase in aid is a result of increased effort, among them: Opening the Israeli port of Ashdod; and a new crossing that was opened into northern Gaza; and increasing the amount of aid coming from Jordan—through Israel—entering Gaza through the Kerem Shalom humanitarian aid crossing. We also facilitated the opening of dozens of bakeries in the north and south of Gaza, together with the World Food Program.”
  - » He added, “together with the United States Central Command, we are working on a temporary maritime pier, known as JLOTS, which stands for Joint Logistics Over-the Shore. This temporary pier will provide a ship-to-shore distribution system that will further increase the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza.”
  - » Hagari continued, “as part of the efforts to get more aid into Gaza, we are also expanding the designated humanitarian zones in Gaza, where the aid will be reaching and streamlining the distribution efforts, together with international aid organizations, for increased efficiency,” and “getting aid to the people of Gaza is a top priority” “because our war is against Hamas, not against the people of Gaza.”
  - » In addition, he said, “we seek to help alleviate the suffering of the civilians in Gaza that has resulted from the war that Hamas started on October 7, when it massacred and kidnapped Israelis.”

- He elaborated, “the [IDF] operates according to international law. We make vast efforts to minimize harm to the civilians that Hamas is hiding behind—because we see the suffering of civilians as a tragedy, while Hamas sees the suffering of civilians as a strategy. That’s why Hamas intentionally hides among civilians; that’s why Hamas wages war from within civilians; and that’s why Hamas has been stealing aid meant for civilians in Gaza.”
- » Hagari insisted, “we will continue to pursue Hamas everywhere in Gaza. We will continue doing everything in our power to bring back home our hostages. We will continue to fulfill our mission: Free our hostages from Hamas and free Gaza from Hamas.”
- On April 27, a flotilla that had planned to deliver aid to Gaza [halted](#) in Turkey after Guinea Bissau decided to remove its flag from two of the three vessels in the flotilla.

### *Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations*

- On May 1, Israel’s *Channel 12* outlet [reported](#), citing Lebanon’s Hezbollah-affiliated *Al Akhbar* outlet, that Egypt submitted a detailed proposal to Hamas for a deal involving the release of all hostages held in Gaza. According to the report, Israel expects Hamas to respond to the deal within a day or two.
  - » According to the report, the proposal would involve a number of incremental phases over three broad stages. In the first stage, which would last 40 days with the possibility of being extended, Israel and Hamas would agree to a ceasefire along with a massive influx of humanitarian aid into Gaza, including fuel and pre-specified numbers of aid trucks.
  - » As part of the first stage, Israel would reportedly withdraw almost all its forces to eastern Gaza along the Israel-Gaza border, while retaining a presence in central Gaza, as hostages are released in phases in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli custody.
    - After seven days, Hamas would release all women in captivity, and Israel would withdraw its forces from the main north-south road in Gaza, Salah al-Din Road, enabling “unarmed” Palestinians to return to northern Gaza.
    - After 22 days, Hamas would release two-thirds of all hostages in return for Israel relocating all its forces from central Gaza to areas in eastern Gaza along the Israeli border.
    - The first stage would reportedly involve the release of all civilian women and children (ages 19 and under) hostages in return for 20 female and children Palestinian prisoners each and Hamas releasing all sick, wounded, and elderly (ages 50 and over) hostages in exchange for Israel releasing 20 sick, wounded, and elderly (ages 50 and over) Palestinians prisoners each.
    - During this phase, Hamas would release Israeli female soldiers in exchange for Israel releasing 40 Palestinian prisoners for each.
  - » During the second stage, Hamas would reportedly release all surviving male hostages in exchange for the release of additional Palestinian prisoners, a full IDF withdrawal from Gaza, and the beginning of reconstruction efforts in Gaza.
  - » In the third and final stage, all bodies “on both sides” would be returned, and a detailed five-year plan for the comprehensive reconstruction of Gaza would begin to be implemented.

- The report asserts that as part of the reconstruction effort, Palestinians would not import any equipment or materials that could be used for military purposes or the construction of terror infrastructure.
- The report does not specify who would be responsible for the reconstruction effort.
- On May 1, *CNN* [reported](#), “U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken began another round of high-stakes talks in Israel on Wednesday as the US seeks to ratchet up the pressure on Hamas to accept a ceasefire and hostage release deal, while also seeking to forestall an Israeli military offensive in Rafah and further address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.”
  - » While meeting with Israel’s President Isaac Herzog, Blinken said, “we’re determined to get a ceasefire that brings the hostages home, and to get it now,” and the “only reason that wouldn’t be achieved is because of Hamas.”
  - » He also said, “we also have to be focused on the people in Gaza who are suffering” and on “getting them the assistance they need, the food, the water, the medicine, the shelter.”
  - » Blinken said on April 30 that an agreement is “achievable because the Israelis put a strong proposal on the table,” and Israel “demonstrated that they’re willing to compromise, and now it’s on Hamas.” He added that the potential agreement “is the best way, the most effective way, to really deal with the suffering of people and also to create an environment in which we can hopefully move forward to something that’s really sustainable.”
- On April 30, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#), citing an Israeli official, that “Israel has gone above and beyond in showing flexibility to reach a deal,” including expressing a willingness to permit Palestinians to return to northern Gaza without Israeli security checks, previously a key demand of Israel’s.
- On April 30, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#), citing Israel’s *Channel 12* outlet, that “Israel is willing to release 900 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for between 20 and 33 hostages, which would translate to 27 to 45 prisoners per hostage.”
  - » According to a report from *The Wall Street Journal* cited in *The Times of Israel* report, one proposal would include the release of at least 20 hostages over three weeks, followed by a 10-week ceasefire to be potentially extended up to a year.
- On April 29, *The New York Times* [reported](#), citing three Israeli officials, that Israel has dropped its demand that Hamas release at least 40 hostages for a hostage release deal to be secured.
  - » According to the report, “the change was prompted partly by the fact that Israel now believes that some of the 40 have died in captivity, according to one of the [Israeli] officials.”
- On April 26, an unnamed Israeli official [said](#) to Israeli media that hostage negotiations are “very good, focused, held in good spirits and progressed in all parameters,” and the official said to Israel’s *Ynet News* outlet that Egypt appears willing to push Hamas to accept an agreement and that “in the background, there are very serious intentions from Israel to move ahead in Rafah.”
  - » The official also said to Israel’s *Channel 12* that “this is the last chance before we go into Rafah,” and Israel is ready to accept a deal that facilitates the release of only 33 living hostages in the initial stage, among other concessions.

- » Other [reporting](#) from April 26 indicated that Israel has expressed an ultimatum to Egypt that this is the “last moment” to strike an agreement before Israel initiates an operation in Rafah.

### *Post-War Planning*

- On April 30, Reuters [reported](#) that Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian stated that Hamas and the Palestinian Authority’s ruling party, Fatah, have “expressed political will on realizing reconciliation through dialogue.” Jian stated that representatives from both Hamas and Fatah recently visited Beijing to hold a dialogue “on promoting Palestinian reconciliation.”

### *Casualties and Hostages*

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
  - » 608 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
    - 263 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
    - An IDF investigation into the deaths of Master Sgt. (res.) Ido Aviv, 28, and Master Sgt. (res.) Kalkidan Meharim, 37, on April 28, [found](#) that the two reservists were killed by friendly fire. According to *The Times of Israel*, the two were “hit by shelling from a tank that had opened fire outside of its designated boundaries.”
    - 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 34,568 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 77,765 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, over 490 people have been [killed](#), and an additional over 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 30, the Houthis claimed to be responsible for an [attack](#) against the *MSC Orion* 600 kilometers (373 miles) off the coast of Yemen in the Arabian Sea that occurred on April 26. The attack marked the Houthis' longest successful strike against a moving ship in open waters.
- On April 29, between 10:00 a.m. and 5:20 p.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) three anti-ship ballistic missiles and three drones from Yemen over the Red Sea towards the MV *Cyclades*, a Malta-flagged, Greece-owned vessel.
- On April 29, at 7:49 a.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) one drone from Yemen toward the USS *Philippine Sea* and USS *Laboon* in the Red Sea. U.S. forces destroyed the drone.
- On April 28, between 1:48 and 2:27 a.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) five drones from Yemen over the Red Sea. U.S. forces intercepted the drones.
- On April 27, the Houthis claimed to have [downed](#) a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drone using a surface-to-air missile.
  - » U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Bryon J. McGarry, a Defense Department spokesperson, confirmed that “a U.S. Air Force MQ-9 drone crashed in Yemen.”
- On April 27, Iranian media reported that Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian had [indicated](#) that the crew of the *MSC Aries*, a Portuguese-flagged ship that Iran had seized in the Strait of Hormuz on April 13, had been granted consular access and were expected to be freed.
- On April 26, at 5:49 p.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) three anti-ship ballistic missiles from Yemen over the Red Sea near the MV *MAISHA*, an Antigua/Barbados-flagged, Liberia-operated vessel and the MV *Andromeda Star*, a UK-owned and Panamanian-flagged,

Seychelles-operated vessel. The MV *Andromeda Star* reported minor damage but continued its voyage.

- On April 26, security firm Ambrey [said](#) that three missiles that the Houthis likely fired landed near a Panamanian-flagged, Seychelles-registered tanker in the Red Sea that was “engaged in Russia-linked trade.” The Associated Press said, “those details corresponded to a tanker called the *Andromeda Star*, which had been previously broadcasting its location off Mocha, Yemen, according to ship-tracking data.”

### *U.S. and International Response*

- On May 1, Israel’s President Isaac Herzog [said](#), “our enemies and other elements are trying to undermine the entire process by using international legal forums that were established in order to have a world order that pursues peace, and pursues the values and norms that we all believe in in the modern world,” “especially the efforts done at the International Criminal Court.”
  - » He noted, “Israel has a very strong legal system, very strong adjudication and law enforcement system, and it has pursued legal steps from the highest authorities in this land [against] any other citizen.”
  - » He warned that the court “is a clear and present danger to democracies and to free peace-loving nations who pursue the norms of international law, and I call upon all our allies and friends to object and reject any such efforts.”
- On April 30, at approximately 1:52 p.m. local time, the United States [struck](#) a Houthi drone in Yemen that was prepared to target vessels in nearby waters.
- On April 30, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) stated that it would not [impose](#) provisional measures against Germany’s arms sales to Israel. However, the ICJ also stated it would not dismiss a case that Nicaragua had brought before the court accusing Germany of war crimes for providing arms to Israel.
- During an interview with *Time Magazine* released on April 30, former President and current presidential candidate Donald Trump [criticized](#) Prime Minister Netanyahu, noting that the October 7 attack “happened on his watch.”
  - » Trump added, “they have the most sophisticated equipment. They had—everything was there to stop that. And a lot of people knew about it, you know, thousands and thousands of people knew about it, but Israel didn’t know about it, and I think he’s being blamed for that very strongly, being blamed.”
- According to a Harvard CAPS Harris [poll](#) of registered American voters conducted from April 24-25 and released on April 29, 72% of respondents said that Israel should “move forward with an operation in Rafah,” while 28% said that Israel should back off now and allow Hamas to continue running Gaza.”
  - » In the poll, 80% of respondents indicated that they identified with Israel more than Hamas, with 20% stating the reverse.
- On April 29, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [told](#) the Gulf Cooperation Council ministers during a meeting in Riyadh that Iran’s attack against Israel “highlights the acute and growing threat from Iran, but also the imperative that we work together on integrated defense.”

- On April 29, Secretary of State Blinken met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh during which they [discussed](#) humanitarian efforts in Gaza, efforts to reach a ceasefire and return the hostages, initiatives to expand regional integration, and the Houthi attacks against shipping.
- On April 29, a White House spokesperson [claimed](#), “the ICC [International Criminal Court] has no jurisdiction in this situation,” following [reports](#) that Israeli officials believe that the ICC is preparing to issue arrest warrants for senior Israeli officials on charges related to the war in Gaza.
  - » On April 29, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) released a [statement](#) arguing that “it is disgraceful that the International Criminal Court is reportedly planning to issue baseless and illegitimate arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and other senior Israeli officials.”
  - » On April 29, *Axios* [reported](#) that members of Congress from both political parties criticized the ICC’s potential decision and have begun preparing undisclosed legislation that would respond to arrest warrants for Israeli officials.
- On April 29, U.S. State Department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel [said](#) to journalists that four of five IDF units that the United States has determined committed “gross violations of human rights” outside of Gaza prior to October 7 adequately addressed the transgressions. Israel and the United States are still engaged in discussions about the fifth unit in question.
- On April 28, President Biden spoke over the phone with Prime Minister Netanyahu and “reviewed ongoing talks to secure the release of hostages together with an immediate ceasefire in Gaza,” according to a White House [readout](#) of the call. The readout also stated that “the leaders discussed Rafah and the President reiterated his clear position,” without elaborating on Biden’s previous opposition to Israeli plans for an operation in Rafah.
- On April 28, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [told ABC News](#) that Israel has “assured us that they won’t go into Rafah until we’ve had a chance to really share our perspectives and our concerns with them.”
- On April 27, Reuters reported that four State Department bureaus [claimed](#) that Israel’s assurances that it was complying with a U.S. National Security Memorandum (NSM) not to use U.S. weapons to violate U.S. or international law were “neither credible nor reliable.”
  - » The Democracy Human Rights & Labor; Population, Refugees and Migration; Global Criminal Justice; and International Organization Affairs bureaus filed a joint report to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken indicating “serious concern over non-compliance” with international humanitarian law during Israel’s war in Gaza.
  - » A submission by the Political and Military Affairs bureau, which handles U.S. military assistance and arms transfers, warned that suspending U.S. aid to Israel would undermine its ability to address threats and force Washington to reassess “all ongoing and future sales to other countries in the region.”
  - » Blinken must report to Congress by May 8 whether he finds Israel’s assurances to be credible.
- On April 30, *The Guardian* [reported](#) that Saudi Arabia is pushing for a “plan B” to achieve a limited defense pact with the United States that would exclude normalization with Israel, which had been reportedly part of the previous discussions for a U.S.-Saudi agreement.

- On April 30, Turkey [indicated](#) that it would join South Africa’s case alleging Israeli war crimes at the ICJ.
- On April 29, U.K. Foreign Minister David Cameron [stated](#) that “all the pressure in the world and all the eyes in the world should be on [ Hamas ] today saying ‘take that deal’, accept the generosity of the offer of a ceasefire that has been negotiated with [Israel](#).” He added that for a “political horizon for a two-state solution,” the “people responsible for October 7, the Hamas leadership, would have to leave Gaza and you’ve got to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in Gaza.”
- On April 29, senior Hamas official Mousa Abu Marzouk [told](#) Iran’s *Al-Alam* TV network that “any potential relocation [of Hamas leadership from Qatar], which is not currently happening, would be to Jordan.”
- On April 29, Lebanese news outlet *Al-Akhbar* reported that France [dropped](#) its demand for Hezbollah to withdraw behind the Litani River and that the new French proposal calls for an unspecified “repositioning” of Hezbollah’s forces.
- On April 26, UN officials [investigating](#) allegations by Israel that 12 United Nations Relief and Works Agency [UNRWA] staff members participated in the October 7 attack closed one case and suspended three more.
  - » For the closed case, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said, “no evidence was provided by Israel to support the allegations against the staff member” and that the UN is “exploring corrective administrative action to be taken in that person’s case.”
  - » He also indicated that the three cases were suspended “as the information provided by Israel is not sufficient for OIOS [Internal Oversight Services] to proceed with an investigation.”
- On April 26, Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan [denied](#) reports that Turkish radars helped neutralize Iran’s attack against Israel on April 13. Erdogan explained, “the radar center in Kurecik [Malatya province] does not and cannot have any relationship, bond or contact with any state other than the security of our country and our alliance.”
- On April 26, Russia’s Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu met in Kazakhstan with Iran’s Defense Minister Gharaei Ashtiani and told him that Russia was prepared to [expand](#) military and technical support with Iran, according to Russia’s *RIA* state news agency.

### *Rising Antisemitism, Protests, and Attacks*

- Protesters continued occupying U.S. college campuses, putting students at risk and prompting both condemnation and support from officials in the United States and abroad.
  - » On May 1, police began [removing](#) an anti-Israel encampment at the University of Wisconsin’s Madison campus. According to local news outlet *WISC-TV*, at least 10 protesters were escorted away by police in zip-ties.
  - » On May 1, New York City Mayor Eric Adams [stated](#) on *CBS* that the New York City Police Department (NYPD) took around 300 people into custody at the City College of New York and Columbia University on April 30, but Adams stated that he believes most were not university students at either institution.
  - » Overnight on May 1, police quelled [violent clashes](#) between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israel protesters around the anti-Israel encampment at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

- » On April 29-30, dozens of anti-Israel protesters [forcibly took over](#) a Columbia University academic building, Hamilton Hall. Protesters blocked doors with makeshift barricades using tables, chairs, locks, and zip ties, and occupied the building.
  - The demonstrators [unfurled](#) a banner with the word “intifada” and another with the phrase, “Gaza Calls Columbia Falls.”
  - Four facilities workers were [trapped](#) inside the building against their will for an unspecified period, including one who stated he was “held hostage” inside the building during the takeover. On the night of April 30, the school [issued](#) a “shelter in place” order, citing students’ safety.
  - The protesters were [cleared](#) from the building and arrested by the NYPD. According to police sources cited by *ABC News’s* local affiliate, roughly 50 people were arrested, most of whom were not students.
  - The NYPD also [cleared](#) all demonstrators that remained in tent encampments on the campus, following an April 29 [deadline](#) that the school imposed for individuals to leave the encampment. Columbia University announced that it had [suspended](#) an unspecified number of demonstrators involved in the encampment.
  - On April 30, an anonymous Jewish student at Columbia University filed a [lawsuit](#) against the school for inadequately protecting Jewish students.
  - During an April 30 press briefing, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [stated](#) in reference to the building takeover, “the president believes that forcibly taking over a building on campus is absolutely the wrong approach. That is not an example of peaceful protest ... hate speech and hate symbols have no place in this country.”
- » On April 29, over 100 anti-Israel protesters were [arrested](#) at University of Texas in Austin. Demonstrators called for their release outside the Travis County jail.
  - Texas Governor Greg Abbott tweeted, “no encampments will be allowed. Instead, arrests are being made.”
- » On April 29, nine anti-Israel protesters were [arrested](#) at the University of Florida’s campus in Gainesville.
  - University spokesperson Steve Orlando said, “This is not complicated: The University of Florida is not a daycare, and we do not treat protesters like children—they knew the rules, they broke the rules, and they’ll face the consequences ... For days UPD patiently and consistently reiterated the rules. Today, individuals who refused to comply were arrested after UPD gave multiple warnings and multiple opportunities to comply.”
  - Orlando also said that many of the protesters were outside agitators.
- » At Yale University’s encampment, “over 200 pro-Palestinian protesters have gathered on the campus, forming chains reportedly to block pro-Israel demonstrators from entering the encampment,” *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 29.
- » Reports from April 29 [indicated](#) that pro- and anti-Israel protesters at UCLA engaged in skirmishes with one another, reportedly injuring at least one person. According to Reuters, some people involved in the altercations were not affiliated with the university.
- » On April 28, Jill Stein, a Green Party presidential candidate, was [detained](#) by police at an anti-Israel protest at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

- » On April 27, police in riot gear [cleared](#) an anti-Israel encampment on Northeastern University's campus in Boston. The university said antisemitic slurs, including "kill the Jews" were used and that the demonstration had become "infiltrated by professional organizers" with no affiliation to the university.
- » On April 27, Arizona State University [said](#) that 69 anti-Israel protesters were arrested and charged with criminal trespass. The university released a statement that said, "a group of people – most of whom were not ASU students, faculty or staff – created an encampment and demonstration."
- » On April 27, the Indiana University police department [said](#) that 23 anti-Israel protesters were arrested on charges of criminal trespass and resisting arrest after refusing to remove their tents from campus.
- » On April 30, the Northwestern University administration struck a deal with students who constructed a "Gaza solidarity encampment" that involves dismantling all but one tent in the encampment in exchange for "several steps to expand student engagement in the school's financial investments," *The Times of Israel* [reported](#).
  - The report also said that as part of the agreement, the school will "fund the tuition of five Palestinian undergraduates and hire two visiting Palestinian faculty members in addition to providing a temporary space on campus for Middle Eastern and Muslim students until their existing house finishes renovation."
  - In response, the Israeli Consulate in Chicago wrote on X, "today, Northwestern University declared itself a safe space for antisemitism," and "we are appalled by Northwestern's decision to turn its back on Jewish and Israeli students who have been targets of hateful harassment and intimidation. This decision rewards the pro-terror, anti-Israel, and anti-America aggressors on campus."
- » According to an April 30 [statement](#) from Andrew Bates, White House deputy press secretary, President Biden "condemns the use of the term 'intifada,' as he has the other tragic and dangerous hate speech displayed in recent days," and "President Biden respects the right to free expression, but protests must be peaceful and lawful."
  - The statement also said, "forcibly taking over buildings is not peaceful – it is wrong. And hate speech and hate symbols have no place in America."
- » On April 28, John Kirby [said](#) to ABC, "we certainly respect the right of peaceful protests," but "we absolutely condemn the antisemitic language that we've heard of late and certainly condemn all the hate speech and the threats of violence out there."
- » On April 28, Representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN) [stated](#) that, "I think it is really unfortunate that people don't care about the fact that all Jewish kids should be kept safe and that we should not have to tolerate antisemitism or bigotry for all Jewish students, whether they are pro-genocide or anti-genocide."
  - CEO of the Anti-Defamation League Jonathan Greenblatt [posted](#) on X that "it is patently false and a blood libel to suggest that ANY Jewish students are 'pro-genocide.' It is gaslighting to impute that Jewish people are somehow at fault for being harassed and menaced with signs and slogans literally calling for their own extermination. It is abhorrent that a sitting member of Congress would slander an entire group of young people in such a cold, calculated manner. This is how people get killed."
- » During a speech on April 28, Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi [stated](#), "today, thanks to the blessing of pure blood of the oppressed martyrs of Gaza ... the true face of Western

civilization has become more and more clear to the people of the world that the claim to support freedom of expression do not adhere to anything other than maintaining their domination.”

- » On April 28, Qatar’s Ambassador to the United States Meshal Hamad Al-Thani rejected claims that his nation was funding the protests by [posting](#) on X that “Qatar is not a large donor to US universities. The Qatar Foundation pays the costs for six US universities to maintain faculty and operate campuses in Qatar, educating and awarding degrees to women and men from Qatar and others who wish to study there. These are not donations. Qatar does not influence these universities, and we have nothing to do with anything that happens on their home campuses in the US.”
- » On April 27, Iraqi cleric Moqtada Sadr [said](#), “we call for a halt to the crackdown on voices advocating for peace and freedom,” and “the voice of American universities demanding an end to Zionist terrorism is our voice.”
- » On April 26, Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff reportedly [held calls](#) with two Jewish leaders at Columbia University to discuss ongoing anti-Israel protests at the school.
  - The individuals were reportedly Rabbi Eli Buechler, the director of the Orthodox Union-Jewish Learning Initiative (OU-JLIC), and Brian Cohen, director of Columbia’s Hillel branch.
- » On April 26, Secretary of State Blinken [noted](#) that “it’s a hallmark of our democracy that our citizens make known their views, their concerns, their anger, at any given time, and I think that reflects the strength of the country, the strength of democracy.” He added, “it is also notable that there is silence about Hamas, as if it wasn’t even part of the story.”
- On April 29, Paris police removed dozens of pro-Palestinian [protesters](#) that had camped out for three days at the Sorbonne University in Paris.
- On April 28, the London Metropolitan Police [announced](#) that it had opened an investigation into an attempted kidnapping of an ultra-Orthodox Jewish man in London on April 26.
  - » The kidnapping attempt, which was captured on video, involved four men attempting to force the man into the trunk of their vehicle.
- On April 27, hundreds of anti-Israel protesters [gathered](#) outside of the annual White House correspondents’ dinner in Washington, D.C., shouting, “shame on you!” at guests as they arrived, and chanting, “Western media we see you, and all the horrors that you hide.”
- On April 27, thousands of anti-government protesters and the Jerusalem branch of the Hostages and Missing Families Forum [marched](#) in Israel to demand a hostage deal.
- On April 25, five teenagers in Sydney, Australia, were [charged](#) after they allegedly plotted to buy guns to attack Jewish people. According to Sydney police, the teenagers all “adhered to a religiously motivated, violent extremist ideology,” and were part of a network that included the 16-year-old charged with stabbing a Bishop in a Sydney church on April 15.
- On April 28, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that “police have arrested five far-right activists in Israeli settlements in the West Bank on suspicion of ‘nationalist crimes,’” specifically violence after the murder of 14-year-old Israeli Benjamin Achimeir.

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