



Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update May 10, 2024

Ari Cicurel
Assistant Director of Foreign Policy

Yoni Tobin
Policy Analyst

Zachary Schildcrout
Policy Analyst

Anna Schaftel
Senior Programs and Outreach Associate

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 May 10, 80 retired U.S. generals and admirals [signed a JINSA open letter](#) touting the importance of a strong U.S.-Israel partnership and unconditional support for Israel, a critical U.S. partner. The letter was led by former U.S. Central Command Commander General Frank McKenzie, USMC (ret.), who is a JINSA Distinguished Fellow.
 - » The signatories to the letter argued that “given our experience as retired American military leaders, we are very concerned about the security impacts of increasingly strained U.S.-Israel ties as Israel becomes a growing source of domestic division. We therefore feel compelled to declare that a strong Israel is vital to the United States national security, and it is imperative that America unequivocally stand by this indispensable ally.”
 - » The letter stated, “amid surging antisemitism in America and the world, following the largest one-day loss of innocent Jewish life since the Holocaust, U.S. support for the only Jewish state should be clear, unwavering, and not conditioned. The benefits of this partnership for the American people and this important region are many, and too valuable, to forsake.”
 - » The letter noted that “Israel has traditionally been the source of overwhelming bipartisan support. So it should remain. We can disagree, as all allies do, but signs of public division only embolden the forces of violence, instability, and extremism that threaten both America and Israel. When we stand together, however, peace and regional stability become possible. In these challenging times, we reaffirm our friendship and bond with the State of Israel-and urge all Americans to stand by our close friend and partner.”
 - » JINSA President and CEO Michael Makovsky released a statement about the letter explaining the signatories “understand it’s vital for the United States to have Israel’s back at this dangerous moment in the Middle East, particularly as Israel is engaged in a war of self-defense brought on by the worst single-day murder of Jews since the Holocaust.”

- Following President Biden’s threat during a [CNN interview](#) that aired on May 8 to withhold U.S. weapons transfers to Israel if it expands its operation in Rafah, JINSA President and CEO Michael Makovsky and JINSA Vice President for Policy Blaise Misztal [wrote in the New York Post](#) on May 9 “that the new arms embargo against Israel, which involves precision-guided munitions (PGMs), also makes it more likely Israeli air strikes will cause more collateral damage among Arabs.” They added that “coupled with Biden’s inexplicable recent unfreezing of billions in Iranian assets, the weapons ban reveals significant daylight between America and Israel, emboldening not just Hamas but also Hezbollah and Iran, making a major Middle East war far more likely — precisely what the Biden team sought to avoid.”
 - » They also argued, “if Biden had backed letting Israel destroy Hamas months ago, perhaps the recent antisemitic, anti-Israel, anti-American university encampments might not have sprung up.”
 - » On May 8, Makovsky released a [statement](#) noting that “yesterday, President Biden said ‘Never Again’ means ‘never forget.’ But, ‘Never Again’ means never allowing it to happen again. Allowing the survival and revival of Hamas would pose an existential threat to the survival of the Jewish State. Israel and every other American ally, and enemy, will never forget this betrayal of Israel amid its defensive war against the Iran-led axis by President Biden—undermining American credibility and security.”
 - Makovsky added, “It is even more imperative now for Israel to continue its operations to clear out Hamas from Rafah, and show its enemies that it will do what is necessary to restore its security.”
- During a JINSA [webinar](#) on May 8, IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror argued, “we have to destroy the whole military capability of Hamas. As Benny Gantz said, when you have a fire, you don’t take out 80 percent of the fire and [say], ‘the other 20 percent, it’s only 20 percent.’ No. It’s the beginning of a new fire ... we cannot allow Hamas to regroup in Gaza.”
 - » Amidror also noted that Israel “didn’t hear from the Americans any new idea [of] how we should do the process of dismantling the military capability of Hamas in Rafah ... either you give immunity to Hamas in Rafah ... [or] you say ‘no immunity to Hamas.’” He added, “if the U.S. administration is concerned about potential civilian casualties in a [Rafah] operation, it’s actually going to cause more by cutting off the supply of [precision-guided munitions] to Israel ... less accurate weapon system[s] will reduce the efficiency ... [meaning] more Israelis will be killed, and more Palestinians will be killed.”

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.

Gaza

- Sirens [sounded](#) in Tel Hai, Kiryat Shmona, Misgav Am, Margalioth, Ma’ayan Baruch, Manara, Metula, Kfar Yuval , Kfar Giladi, Beit Hillel, and [Shlomit](#).
- On May 10, the IDF [said](#) the Iron Dome intercepted two rockets launched from the Rafah area towards the Kerem Shalom area.
- On May 9, three IDF soldiers were moderately [injured](#) by a blast in a booby-trapped tunnel in Rafah.

- On May 9, Israel's *Ynet News* outlet [reported](#) that Hamas has grown in strength in central Gaza's refugee camps and has stepped up its efforts to target IDF soldiers operating in central Gaza.
 - » Hamas's remaining battalions in central Gaza, the Al-Bureij and Nuseirat battalions, reportedly have been joined by "hundreds of Hamas operatives from various regions in Gaza" and are "preparing traps and many explosive fields in recent weeks in anticipation of possible IDF brigades."
 - » Reportedly, Hamas also has been launching mortar attacks targeting IDF troops in the IDF-constructed Netzarim Corridor in central Gaza on a near-daily basis.
 - » In addition, "thousands of Hamas operatives" have reportedly returned to the southern Gazan city of Khan Younis in recent weeks and have reportedly begun to re-establish control of the city.
- On May 8, Hamas [took credit](#) for firing a salvo of eight rockets [toward](#) the Kerem Shalom area from Rafah, triggering sirens in Shlomit and mildly injuring a soldier.

Lebanon

- On May 10, Hebrew media [reported](#) that three anti-tank missiles were fired at Kibbutz Misgav. One of the missiles struck a building, causing some damage, but no casualties were reported.
- On May 9, several rockets were [fired](#) from Lebanon at multiple locations across northern Israel, causing a fire in the northern Israeli town of Shlomi. No injuries were reported.
- On May 9, two drones were [launched](#) from Lebanon towards northern Israel. Both drones were intercepted in Lebanese territory by Israeli fighter jets.
- Israel's *Maariv* outlet [reported](#) on May 9 that Iran has been equipping Hezbollah with suicide drones for use in attacks against northern Israel.
 - » In the last few weeks, Hezbollah has perpetrated several successful attacks against IDF outposts along the Israel-Lebanon border using these drones. Three IDF troops were killed in the attacks.
 - » The drones, which are equipped with explosives, reportedly travel more quickly than an anti-tank missile and have a high degree of accuracy due to the drones' GPS systems.
 - » Israel has reportedly yet to find an effective solution to the drones, as the Iron Dome has not been entirely successful at stopping the drones and directed-energy systems to counter drone attacks are still in development.
- On May 8, Hezbollah [launched](#) several anti-tank guided missiles and mortars from southern Lebanon towards a military outpost in the northern Israeli town of Malkia, [killing](#) an IDF soldier, Staff Sgt. Haim Sabach, 20, of Holon. Another soldier was lightly injured in the attack.

Syria

- Sirens sounded in [Yonatan and Keshet](#).

IDF Operations

- On May 9, Israel's Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi [said](#) of his decision to raid *Al Jazeera's* offices in Nazareth, "we won't allow Hamas's loudspeaker to broadcast from Israel."

- Israel's *Ynet News* outlet [reported](#) on May 6, citing a report from the Accountant General of Israel's Finance Ministry, that of the Defense Ministry's 18 billion shekels-worth of non-planned contracts in the last three months of 2023, "about 7.8 billion shekels (43%) were contracts with American suppliers: 6.9 billion shekels from the U.S. military and an additional 932 million shekels from American companies. The remaining 10.2 billion shekels were contracts made with Israeli companies."
 - » The outlet noted that "some of these contracts will only be fulfilled in the future, which means that Israel's dependence on the U.S. is expected to continue in the coming years under any scenario."

Gaza

- On May 10, the IDF revealed that troops from the Nahal Brigade [found](#) weaponry in classrooms in Gaza City's Zeitoun neighborhood, including assault rifles.
- On May 10, IDF troops in Rafah [located](#) several tunnel shafts and killed gunmen in close-quarters combat. Israel also conducted several airstrikes in Rafah that targeted sites Hamas had used to launch rockets and mortars at Israel.
 - » That day, Reuters [reported](#) that the IDF captured the main road bifurcating eastern and western Rafah, "effectively encircling the eastern part of the city."
- During an interview with Dr. Phil that was [released](#) on May 9, Prime Minister Netanyahu responded to President Biden's threat during a *CNN* interview to stop weapons transfers to Israel, saying that "we often have our agreements but we've also had our disagreements. We've been able to overcome them. I hope we can overcome them now, but we will do what we have to do to protect our country."
 - » Netanyahu added that Israel has "no choice" but to destroy Hamas's remaining battalions in Rafah because "if we do not destroy them, if we leave them alone they'll come back. They'll emerge from the tunnels, they'll take over Gaza again, and they'll do what they promised to do: They'll do October 7 — this enormous massacre — again, again and again."
- On May 9, Israel's Ambassador to the United States, Michael Herzog, [stated](#) that President Biden's threat during the *CNN* interview to stop weapons transfers to Israel "is very unfortunate." He added, "it sends the wrong message to Hamas and to our enemies in the region." Herzog also argued, "it puts us in a corner because we have to deal with Rafah one way or the other."
 - » He noted that "nobody presented to me or to us a strategy of defeating Hamas without dealing with Rafah."
- On May 9, Israel's *Ynet News* outlet [reported](#) that "for the first time in operational activity, the IDF is employing unmanned D9 bulldozers in the ongoing war in Gaza, the military reported Thursday. This marks the world's first significant involvement of such ground robotic tools in combat."
- On May 9, Israel's *Ynet News* outlet [reported](#) that the IDF is beginning to expand the scope of its presence in the Gaza Strip.
 - » According to *Ynet News*, the IDF "recently completed the construction of four large outposts along the [IDF-constructed] Netzarim Corridor, for the relatively comfortable and permanent stay of hundreds of soldiers."
 - The Netzarim Corridor is an east-west axis the IDF has established in central Gaza to prevent the large flow of Palestinians northward in the Gaza Strip, and from which to conduct limited operations.

- » A reserve IDF brigade is also reportedly tasked with “securing the construction of the new port” that the United States is constructing on Gaza’s coast for aid.
- » Reportedly, the IDF has begun deploying troops “in temporary outposts across an undefined strip of land about three kilometers wide,” along which a road has been constructed to facilitate aid flows from the U.S.-constructed port.
 - The road reportedly stretches from near Gate 96 on the Gaza-Israel border in northern Gaza to a checkpoint near the pier, which is currently under construction.
- On May 9, the IDF [said](#) that it is carrying out strikes against Hamas in central Gaza.
 - » Concurrently, “Palestinian media [reported] a series of airstrikes and the advancement of tanks into Gaza City’s Zeitoun neighborhood overnight,” [according to](#) *The Times of Israel*.
 - » The IDF subsequently [confirmed](#) on May 9 that it began a targeted operation in Zeitoun to further “the continued dismantling of terror infrastructure and eliminating terrorists in the area.”
- Seemingly in response to the U.S. threat to withhold munitions for Israel if it advances an operation in Rafah, Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) at Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust memorial museum, on May 9, “today, we again confront enemies bent on our destruction,” and “I say to the leaders of the world — no amount of pressure, no decision from any international forum, will stop Israel from defending itself.”
 - » He added, “if Israel is forced to stand alone, Israel will stand alone,” and “countless decent people around the world support our just cause.”
 - » He pledged, “we will defeat our genocidal enemies,” and “never again is now.”
- On May 9, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [stated](#), “the IDF has armaments for the missions it is planning, and also for the missions in Rafah. We have what we need.”
 - » Regarding President Biden’s threat to restrict offensive weapons to Israel if it conducts an offensive in Rafah, Hagari said, “even when there are disagreements between us, we resolve them behind closed doors.”
- On May 9, a senior Israeli source [told](#) journalist Amit Segal, “we have enough means to enter Rafah and conquer it without US aid,” and “Rafah will be conquered regardless.” The source added, “the main problem is the message that this sends to Hezbollah and Iran - that Israel will come to the clash in the north seemingly without weapons. Biden has made a grave mistake - both ethically and politically.”
- On May 9, Israel’s *Walla* outlet [reported](#), citing Israeli security sources, that Israel will likely have to turn control of the Rafah Crossing on the Egypt-Gaza border over to the Palestinian Authority, which would operate the crossing under U.S. supervision.
 - » The sources alleged that a political decision must be made soon regarding the crossing, or Israel risks facing pressure from the United States to make decisions about control of the crossing that are not in Israel’s interests.
 - » *Walla* quoted one security source as saying, “a security check of the goods, equipment and people moving through the crossing is required. If there is no supervision of those entering and leaving the crossing, we will return to the days before October 7.”
 - » According to a source cited by *Walla*, Israel is currently in discussions with U.S. officials to construct an underground wall to thwart weapons smuggling from Egypt into Gaza.
 - Israeli officials cited in the report said they prefer that Egypt and the United States take the lead in addressing smuggling threats, as they fear that a prolonged Israeli

presence on the border to address cross-border tunnels will make IDF troops a target for terrorist ambushes.

- Addressing the U.S. decision to withhold certain munitions to Israel, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations Gilad Erdan [said](#) to Israeli media on May 8, "it's a very disappointing decision, even frustrating," and "you can't win the war without allowing Israel to win it."
- On May 9, *The Times of Israel* [reported that](#) Israel's war cabinet and security cabinet would meet amongst themselves that night to strategize in the wake of the U.S. threat to withhold ammunition to Israel.
- On May 9, an Israeli official [said](#) to Israel's *Kan* broadcaster that the United States' choice to stall shipments of certain weapons to Israel might compel Israel to change its war plans and take greater pains to conserve ammunition.
- On May 8, the IDF [said](#) that during its limited operation in Rafah, it has targeted approximately 100 terrorist sites, captured the Palestinian side of the Rafah Crossing between Gaza and Egypt, [killed](#) approximately 50 gunmen, and discovered 10 tunnel shafts. The IDF also said that approximately 150,000 civilians had fled eastern Rafah ahead of the operation.
 - » On May 9, Israel's *i24 News* outlet [reported](#) that the IDF released "footage of ground maneuvers as its forces occupy the eastern neighborhoods of" Rafah, and "Israeli troops have begun extensive searches for terrorist tunnels and weapons in these areas."
- Former IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Lt. Gen. (ret.) Kochavi [said](#) on May 8, "we understood perfectly what's going on there [in Gaza], their underground facilities and the number of rockets, it did not come as a surprise," but "Iran was the top priority, we were preparing the military vis-à-vis Iran."
 - » He added, "we did not perceive the Gaza Strip and Hamas as an existential threat, the grand strategy was to focus on Iran and the northern arena, to prepare the military and to do whatever we can to pacify the other arenas, that is to say, Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] and the Gaza Strip ... to sustain and contain the threats from the Gaza Strip via other methods and other means."
 - » Referencing past attempts to kill Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar and Mohammed Deif, he said, "it's hard, in a very densely populated, heavily built-up areas — it's very hard, so we had been working for months in order to procure the operation but we couldn't."
 - » Kochavi also said, "I don't think we can achieve complete victory in months, forget it, it will take years."
- On May 8, the IDF and Israel's internal security agency Shin Bet [announced](#) in a joint statement that the commander of Hamas's naval forces in Gaza City, Ahmed Ali, was killed in a recent airstrike. The IDF said Ali was involved in advancing attacks against Israel and IDF troops in the Gaza Strip, and in recent weeks had been involved in attacks on IDF troops operating in the Netzarim Corridor in central Gaza.

Lebanon

- On May 10, the IDF [said](#) it used fighter jets to strike buildings and other infrastructure belonging to Hezbollah in the southern Lebanese towns of Kafr Kila, Alma ash-Shab, and Yaroun.
- On May 10, the IDF [said](#) that the Air Force attacked two Hezbollah combatants in Yaroun in southern Lebanon.
- On May 9, the IDF [said](#) it used fighter jets to strike a building used by Hezbollah in Ayta ash-Shab in southern Lebanon.

- On May 9, Lebanon’s civil defense [said](#) that an Israeli airstrike killed four people, who, according to security sources, were members of Hezbollah.
- On May 8, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) [announced](#) three of its members had been killed in an Israeli airstrike in southern Lebanon. PIJ said they were Syrian fighters who were part of PIJ’s Ali al-Aswad Brigade.
- On May 8, the IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes on a building belonging to Hezbollah’s elite Radwan force in Jabal Rezlane in southern Lebanon. The IDF said fighter jets struck additional buildings belonging to Hezbollah in Khiam, Odaisseh, Blida, Maroun al-Ras and Ayta ash-Shab.
- On May 8, the IDF [said](#) it used fighter jets and artillery to strike more than 20 Hezbollah targets in Ramyeh in southern Lebanon, including buildings and other infrastructure. The IDF said it identified secondary blasts after the strikes, indicating munitions were stored at these locations.
 - » The IDF said it also struck Hezbollah sites in Marwahin and Kafr Kila.
- On May 8, Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [said](#) to IDF soldiers in northern Israel, “we have pushed Hezbollah away from the lines of contact to significant distances, but this does not mean that it has disappeared,” and “to return the residents safely, an agreement process or an operational process is needed. I am determined to return the residents to their homes safely and to rebuild the things that were destroyed.”
 - » He added, “we have very significant, very heavy firepower, and we will make sure to activate it if there is a need and a reason,” and “you have proven yourselves until today, I think in an impressive way.” He warned, “now you have to prepare for the upcoming [missions], and this summer could be a hot summer.”

Syria

- On May 9, Syrian state-run SANA broadcaster [reported](#) that Israeli fighter jets had struck a building on the outskirts of Damascus, causing “some material losses.” The reports also claimed that some of the Israeli missiles were downed by Syria’s air defense.

West Bank

- On May 8, the Shin Bet [announced](#) it had detained a Palestinian accused of setting up an explosive-laden Palestinian flag on the side of a highway in April, which injured an Israeli man. The suspect is 22-year-old Muhammad Attullah Abu Alia from Mughayir.

Humanitarian Efforts

- According to Israel’s Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories ([COGAT](#)), from the beginning of the war to May 8, there have been 530,500 tons of humanitarian aid that entered Gaza on 27,753 trucks.
- On May 10, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Senior Emergency Coordinator in the Gaza Strip Hamish Young [stated](#) that “for five days, no fuel and virtually no humanitarian aid entered the Gaza Strip ... if not corrected, the lack of fuel could grind humanitarian operations to a halt.”
- Amid the death of two people who “died when an aid parachute fell on the roof of a warehouse where residents had gathered to collect relief supplies,” according to AFP and *The Times of Israel*, Hamas media chief Salama Marouf [said](#) on May 9, “we reiterate that airdrops pose a real danger to the lives of citizens and do not provide a real solution to alleviate the food crisis plaguing northern Gaza.”

- » He also said, “we call for an immediate halt to the delivery of aid in this ineffective and erroneous manner, and we call for the full activation of the land crossings to deliver humanitarian aid to northern Gaza.”
- On May 8, the IDF said it [received](#) reports that assailants targeted a vehicle with Palestinian workers inside with gunfire on the Gazan side of the Kerem Shalom Crossing. Several wounded Palestinians were treated by IDF medics in the area.
- Addressing planned aid shipments to the U.S.-built pier off the coast of Gaza, Cyprus government spokesperson Konstantinos Letymbiotis [said](#) on May 8, “we are completing the loading of aid onto a US vessel now in Larnaca, and once the platform is in place, this part of the process [shipment] can commence.”
 - » Reuters [reported](#) on May 9 that “a vessel carrying aid to a pier built by the United States off Gaza set sail from Cyprus on Thursday, Cypriot officials said.”
- On May 8, World Health Organization (WHO) head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus [said](#) on X, “the closure of the border crossing continues to prevent the UN from bringing fuel. Without fuel all humanitarian operations will stop. Border closures are also impeding delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Hospitals in the south of Gaza only have three days of fuel left, which means services may soon come to a halt.”
- On May 8, *The Times of Israel* [noted](#) that although U.S. State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said that logistical issues prevented humanitarian aid shipments from transiting the Kerem Shalom crossing to Gaza that day, the IDF publicized footage hours earlier showing the contrary.

Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations

- On May 10, Hamas [said](#), “the [Hamas] negotiating delegation left Cairo heading to Doha. In practice, the occupation (Israel) rejected the proposal submitted by the mediators and raised objections to it on several central issues,” and “accordingly, the ball is now completely in the hands of the occupation.”
- On May 9, *CNN* [reported](#), “in its most recent ceasefire counterproposal on Monday, Hamas demanded Israel agree upfront to an initial 12-week pause in fighting rather than six weeks, creating a major obstacle in the negotiations,” according to three sources, and “Israeli officials are staunchly opposed to agreeing to the longer request, as they believe it would be no different than agreeing to an effective end to the war.”
- On May 9, Hamas official Izzat al-Rishq [stated](#) that Israel’s operations in Rafah and at the border crossing “aim to obstruct the efforts of the mediators.”
- On May 8, former IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. (ret.) Aviv Kochavi [said](#), “I don’t think there is a way to bring back the hostages without halting for the time being the war.”

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 615 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 267 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - As of May 6, 1,609 IDF soldiers have been [injured](#) during ground combat in Gaza, including at least 310 who have been [severely](#) injured.

- On May 9, the IDF [announced](#) the death of Staff Sgt. Haim Sabach, 20, from Holon, who was killed in a Hezbollah mortar and missile attack near Malkia.
- On May 9, Israel’s *Ynet News* outlet [reported](#) that “the Defense Ministry and the National Insurance Institute of Israel said on Thursday that since the beginning of the war on October 7, 822 civilians were murdered, and 711 soldiers, police officers, and Shin Bet personnel were killed.”
- » 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, more than 34,900 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 78,500 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.”
 - » Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) as of 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, nearly 500 people have been [killed](#), and an additional approximately 4,900 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](#) 133 hostages and deceased hostage bodies.
 - » Israeli officials have confirmed the deaths of at least [36](#) of the 134 hostages captured on October 7, as well as two additional hostages who were abducted prior to October 7.
 - » On May 9, *The Washington Post* [reported](#) that “of the 128 hostages taken on Oct. 7 who are still held in Gaza, 36 are now confirmed dead, bringing the estimated number of living hostages to 92.”

- » 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 May 10, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) [reported](#) a failed hijack attempt of a ship 195 nautical miles east of Yemen's Aden port. Five or six people on a small watercraft attempted to board the vessel using a ladder. It was not clear whether the hijackers were Houthi fighters or unrelated pirates.
- On May 10, Israel's *Maariv* outlet [reported](#), citing Lebanon's Hezbollah-affiliated *Al Akhbar* outlet, that Iran has given Hezbollah orders to escalate attacks against Israel even at the risk of starting an all-out war.
- On May 10, Israel's *Channel 12* outlet reported that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) operates a facility in the Sayyidah Zeinab neighborhood of Damascus, Syria, to facilitate weapons smuggling into the West Bank.
 - » Israel has reportedly targeted the facility, which is used to coordinate operations with Palestinian terrorist organizations like Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and has also been used as a weapons depot in recent weeks.
- On May 9, Kamal Kharrazi, an advisor to Iran's supreme leader, [stated](#), "we have no decision to build a nuclear bomb, but should Iran's existence be threatened, there will be no choice but to change our military doctrine." He added, "in the case of an attack on our nuclear facilities by the Zionist regime, our deterrence will change."
- On April 9, Portugal's foreign ministry released a statement that Iran has [released](#) seven of the 25 crew members of the *MSC Aries*, a container ship that Iran seized on April 13.
- On May 8, IRGC leader Hossein Salami [threatened](#) to expand attacks against Israel and block of access to the Mediterranean Sea during a speech honoring IRGC General Mohammad Reza Zahedi, who was responsible for IRGC activities in Syria and Lebanon until he was killed in an alleged Israeli airstrike on April 1.

U.S. and International Response

- On May 10, *Axios* reported that Secretary of State Antony Blinken is [expected](#) to submit a report to Congress as soon as that day that criticizes Israel but does not claim it has violated the terms of use for U.S.-made weapons by violating U.S. or international law or impeding the delivery of humanitarian aid.
 - » The State Department had set its own May 8 deadline for submitting the report, which it missed.
- On May 9, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [called for](#) Israel to allow the Rafah Crossing on the Egypt-Gaza border to be re-opened for aid shipments, stating, "we want to see all humanitarian assistance continue to go through Rafah and all other crossings as soon as possible."
- On May 9, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [stated](#) that an Israeli offensive in Rafah would benefit Hamas.
 - » Kirby said, "our view is that Rafah operations—certainly any kind of major Rafah ground operation—would actually strengthen Hamas's hands at the negotiating table, not Israel."

- » Kirby added that Hamas’s leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, could “cast Israel in the worst possible way because of the way they’re behaving” if Israel initiated such an operation.
- » Kirby further stated that Sinwar “can just say, well, clearly they’re just not interested in a good faith way to get to a ceasefire, look at what they’re doing inside Rafah ... it just gives him more ammunition for his twisted narrative.”
- On May 8, President Biden told *CNN*’s Erin Burnett during an [interview](#), “civilians have been killed in Gaza as a consequence of [U.S.-supplied] bombs and other ways which they go after population centers. I made it clear that if they go into Rafah ... I’m not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah, to deal with the cities, to deal with the problem.”
 - » He argued, “we’re not walking away from Israel security, we’re walking away from Israel’s ability to wage war in those areas.”
 - » Biden also stated, “it’s just wrong. We’re not going to supply [Israel] the weapons, the artillery shells ... they’re not going to get our support if in fact they go [into] these population centers.”
 - » Asked if ongoing limited IDF operations in eastern Rafah constitute Israel going into Rafah, Biden responded, “they haven’t gone into the population centers. What they did was right on the border.”
 - » During the interview, Biden also called on Prime Minister Netanyahu to outline his post-war plan for governance in Gaza.
 - » Biden recalled during the interview that when he visited Israel after October 7, he told Netanyahu, “we’ll help you get [Hamas leader in Gaza Yahya] Sinwar,” and “we will help you focus on getting the bad guys” but cautioned, “don’t make the same mistake we made in America [after 9/11].”
 - » Several Democrats and Republicans criticized President Biden’s statement.
 - Former president and current presidential candidate Donald Trump [stated](#) that “if any Jewish person voted for Joe Biden, they should be ashamed of themselves.” He added, “what Biden is doing with respect to Israel is disgraceful. He’s totally abandoned Israel. I guess he feels good about it because he did it as a political decision. You have to do the right decision, not the political decision.”
 - Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) [argued](#) that the decision was “devastating” and that it would “embolden Iran and its terrorist proxies.”
 - Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) [stated](#), “if we stop weapons necessary to destroy the enemies of the State of Israel at a time of great peril, we will pay a price.” Graham added, “this is obscene. It is absurd. Give Israel what they need to fight the war they can’t afford to lose.”
 - Senator John Fetterman (D-PA) [posted](#) on X, “Hard disagree and deeply disappointing.”
 - Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY) told [Axios](#) that it appeared Biden was “pandering to the far left.” He added, “it looks like election year politics was driving it. That’s my impression,” he added. “I’d like the president to do right by Israel and recognize that the far left is not representative of the rest of the country.”
 - » Biden administration officials later pushed back against criticism of President Biden’s threat.

- On May 9, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre [clarified](#) that President Biden “does not want certain categories of American weapons used in a particular type of operation in a particular place.”
- On May 9, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [claimed](#), “the argument that somehow we’re walking away from Israel flies in the face of the facts.” He added, “everybody keeps talking about pausing weapons shipments. Weapons shipments are still going to Israel. They’re still getting ... the vast, vast majority of everything that they need to defend themselves.”
- Kirby further [claimed](#) that “we believe that [Israel has] put an enormous amount of pressure on Hamas and that there are better ways to go after what is left of Hamas in Rafah than a major ground operation.”
- On May 8, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [testified](#) during a [hearing](#) of the Senate Appropriations Committee’s defense subpanel that “we are currently reviewing some near-term security assistance shipments in the context of unfolding events in Rafah.”
 - » Austin stated, “we’ve been very clear ... from the very beginning that Israel shouldn’t launch a major attack into Rafah without accounting for and protecting the civilians that are in that battlespace. And again, as we have assessed the situation, we have paused one shipment of high payload munitions.” He added, “we’ve not made a final determination on how to proceed with that shipment.”
 - » On May 9, U.S. Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) wrote a joint [letter](#) to President Biden stating that “these recent press reports and pauses in critical weapons shipments call into question your pledge that your commitment to Israel’s security will remain ironclad.”
- On May 8, Director of the U.S. Treasury Department’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network Director Andrea Gacki [released](#) a statement explaining that “as we witness continuing instability and violence in the Middle East, we are issuing this Advisory to help financial institutions protect the financial system from abuse by terrorists and to encourage financial institutions to stay vigilant in identifying and reporting related suspicious activity.”
 - » The advisory details the ways that terrorist groups raise funds and how to identify those methods, including fake charities and front companies.
- On May 10, the United Nations General Assembly is [expected](#) to vote on a symbolic measure to recognize the Palestinians as qualified for full UN member statehood.
- On May 10, the EU’s foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, [indicated](#) that Spain, Ireland, and other European Union member countries plan to recognize a Palestinian state on May 21.
 - » Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez noted that “this is a symbolic act of a political nature. More than a state, it recognizes the will for that state to exist.”
- On May 9, Israel’s *Globes* news site [reported](#) that Turkey has authorized limited and temporary trade permits to Israel for three months, despite a trade ban being in effect.
- On May 9, Slovenia began procedures to [recognize](#) a Palestinian state by mid-June.
- On May 8, the United Arab Emirates [released](#) a statement that it “strongly condemns” Israel’s taking over of the Gaza side of the Rafah Crossing on the Egypt-Gaza border.

Rising Antisemitism, Protests, and Attacks

- Addressing anti-Israel protests on college campuses, President Biden [said](#) during an interview with *CNN* that aired May 8 that he “absolutely” hears the protesters’ messages,

and “there’s a legitimate right to free speech and protest ... There’s not a legitimate right to use hate speech; there’s not a legitimate right to threaten Jewish students; there’s not a legitimate right to block people’s access to class. That’s against the law.”

- » He also said, “I made a speech on Holocaust Day and pointed out that it took seven decades to get to the place where after the Holocaust occurred, and there’s still antisemitism. Look what’s happened in seven [months] ... Everybody’s sort of forgotten about what happened in Israel. Those 1,200 young kids murdered. I saw pictures ... [of] a mother and her daughter being roped together and then kerosene poured and burned to death. Nothing like this has happened to the Jewish community since the Holocaust.”
- On May 9, Dutch riot police [clashed](#) with anti-Israel protesters as officers sought to clear the barricades that had been erected at the University of Amsterdam.
 - » Dutch police said they arrested 32 people for “violence, destruction, assault and incitement” at the University of Amsterdam, and that the protesters included people “who were not affiliated to the university and were deliberately seeking conflict with the police.”
- On May 9, thousands of pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel protesters [gathered](#) in Malmö, Sweden hours before Israel’s contestant in the Eurovision Song Contest, Eden Golan, performed. Golan had been [booed](#) during her rehearsal and made it through her semifinal into the [grand final](#) on May 11.
 - » A reporter from Israel’s *Ynet News* outlet [reported](#) that he was struck with a blunt object during the protests.
- On May 9, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency [UNRWA] [stated](#) that it had temporarily shut its East Jerusalem headquarters after extremists set fire to the perimeter.
- On May 9, activists in Israel attempted to [prevent](#) humanitarian aid trucks near Eilat and Mitzpe Ramon on their way to Gaza.
- On May 8, over 300 Jewish students at Columbia University and Barnard College [signed](#) an open letter decrying antisemitism under the guise of anti-Zionism on campus.
 - » In the letter, the students wrote, “we would like to speak in our name ... Most of us did not choose to be political activists. We do not bang on drums and chant catchy slogans. We are average students, just trying to make it through finals much like the rest of you. Those who demonize us under the cloak of anti-Zionism forced us into our activism and forced us to publicly defend our Jewish identities.”
- On May 8, police in Washington, D.C., [arrested](#) 33 anti-Israel protesters while clearing an encampment at George Washington University. The protesters were arrested on charges including assault on a police officer and unlawful entry.
- On May 8, more than 100 staff members of European Union institutions [staged](#) an anti-Israel protest in front of the European Commission’s head office in Brussels, Belgium.
 - » The staffers displayed three rolled-up white sheets with red stains on them, apparently to represent Palestinian casualties, and wrote the words “International Law,” “EU Treaties,” and “Genocide Convention” on them. The display also included a cross with the words “Never Again” written on it.
- On May 8, Hungarian Jewish organizations and the Embassy of Israel in Hungary [condemned](#) Ludovika University of Public Service, a public university in Budapest, for inviting Iran’s former president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, to an academic meeting later this week.

- On May 8, *The Jewish Chronicle* [reported](#) that, in April, delegates at a U.K. National Union of Students (NUS) conference approved a non-binding resolution to stop recognizing their Jewish members' main representative body, the Union of Jewish Students (UJS).

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- [“Open Letter from Retired U.S. Military Leaders in Support of Israel,”](#) May 10, 2024
- Michael Makovsky and Blaise Misztal, [“Biden’s Israel arms embargo will go down as one of the worst American betrayals,”](#) *New York Post*, May 9, 2024
- Michael Makovsky, [“Statement on Biden’s Threat to Withhold Offensive Weapons to Israel,”](#) May 8, 2024
- Matthew Kenney, Zac Schildcrout, and Yoni Tobin, [Biden Threatens to Stop Arms Shipments to Israel, Harming Both Countries,](#) May 8, 2024
- Gabriel Noronha and Yoni Tobin, [ICC Lacks Moral and Legal Authority to Issue Israel Arrest Warrants,](#) May 8, 2024
- Webinar: [Gaza War Update 5/8/24,](#) with IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror and Blaise Misztal, May 8, 2024
- Zac Schildcrout, [Israel Begins Limited Military Operation in Rafah,](#) May 7, 2024
- Ari Cicurel, [Monthly Iran Projectile Tracker: April 2024,](#) May 7, 2024
- Yoni Tobin and Daniel Bahat, [U.S. Must Defeat Houthis’ Asymmetric Warfare Strategy,](#) May 6, 2024
- VADM Michael Connor, USN (ret.), Lt Gen Eric Fiel, USAF (ret.), and LtGen Richard Mills, USMC (ret.), [“Israel Must Act: Leaving Hamas In Rafah Is Simply Not An Option,”](#) *19FortyFive*, May 1, 2024