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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update May 8, 2024

JINSA's [Israel at War](#) webpage is a dedicated resource for analysis, commentary, webinars, and media coverage about the 10/7 attacks and the ensuing conflict between Israel, the Iranian regime, and the regime's proxies. JINSA will release the Swords of Iron Update on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below.

Analysis

- Reports that the United States is deliberately holding up arms shipments to Israel to [send a message](#) that it disapproves of Israel's plan to conduct major combat operations in Rafah indicate a policy that is counterproductive and strategically damaging to both countries.
 - » [Reports](#) that the Biden administration is holding up precision-guided munitions (PGMs), including Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) tailkits and Small Diameter Bombs, are particularly concerning, given Israel's need for these munitions not just in Gaza but also to counter Hezbollah in Lebanon.
 - As JINSA's President and CEO Michael Makovsky has [observed](#), Israel's ability to "prevail [over Hezbollah] at acceptable cost" in a full-scale war "will depend on abundant JDAMs and other precision munitions to target [Hezbollah's] rockets and missiles— 130,000-plus in Lebanon alone."
 - » Israel emerging victorious over Hamas, including its Rafah-based battalions, is a vital U.S. strategic interest. Israel's war against Hamas is merely one aspect of a broader, highly consequential geopolitical conflict between Iran, its proxies, and its Russian and Chinese backers, and the United States and its partners and allies.
 - » Though administration officials have cited concern for Palestinian civilians as the reason, as JINSA Policy Analyst Yoni Tobin has previously [noted](#), "JDAM tailkits enable Israel to precisely strike targets. JDAM tailkits add GPS guidance to unguided gravity bombs, converting unguided air-to-ground bombs into PGMs and better enabling precision targeting to limit civilian harm."
- As Israel began limited military operations in Rafah, JINSA Policy Analyst Zac Schildcrout noted in a recent NatSec [brief](#) that "an IDF operation in Rafah is vital to accomplishing Israel's goals of destroying Hamas's ability to constitute itself as a political and military force in Gaza and recovering the hostages who are likely being held there."

- » As JINSA Policy Analyst Yoni Tobin has [noted](#), a major element of the Rafah operation's significance is the need for Israel to detect and eliminate all terror tunnels crossing from Egypt into Gaza, as Rafah is located along the Egypt-Gaza border. Tobin noted that "failure to detect and eliminate all cross-border tunnels would pose a serious threat to Israel's aims of defeating Hamas and demilitarizing Gaza" by enabling arms to continue to enter Gaza.
- » Notably, Israel's [reported](#) plan to hand control of the Rafah Crossing to a private U.S. security firm is in line with recommendations that JINSA and the Vandenberg Coalition's Gaza Futures Task Force put forth in its February 28 [report](#), *The Day After: A Plan for Gaza*.

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 Ein Hashlosha, Kissufim, and Re'im.
- According to a recent Israeli [poll](#) from March published on May 6, two out of three Israeli residents of the Gaza envelope who fled their homes following Hamas's October 7 attack do not yet feel safe enough to return, but 70 percent hope to do so eventually.
 - » 61 percent of respondents said that a demilitarized Gaza would increase perceived safety, and 56 percent said the same for "clear plans for the future." 54 percent endorsed a buffer zone on the Israel-Gaza border, while 43 percent supported bolstering civilian security and police personnel.
- On May 7, the IDF [said](#) that terrorists in Gaza launched 12 rockets toward towns in southern Israel, five of which the Iron Dome shot down. Seven impacted unpopulated areas.
- On May 7, the IDF [said](#) that terrorists in Rafah fired four mortars toward Kerem Shalom in southern Israel and two rockets toward the same area in an earlier barrage. According to the IDF, neither attack inflicted injuries or damage.
- On May 7, the IDF [wrote](#) on X that approximately "18 projectiles were fired from the Rafah area toward the areas of the Kerem Shalom Crossing and Re'im (southern Israel), following the sirens that sounded earlier today. This is the second time in the past few days that projectiles were fired toward the Kerem Shalom Crossing."
 - » The IDF noted that the attacks hinder humanitarian aid deliveries to Gaza but that it will try to achieve the security conditions to allow the crossing to reopen to enable further aid deliveries.
- On May 6, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) [took credit](#) for a barrage of three rockets targeting Sderot in southern Israel. The IDF said that the Iron Dome shot down two of the rockets. According to a spokesperson for the town, shrapnel from the interceptions damaged property.
- On May 6, Hamas took credit for [firing](#) three projectiles toward IDF troops stationed in the east-west Netzarim Corridor in Gaza, inflicting no injuries or damage, according to the IDF.

Lebanon

- Sirens [sounded](#) in Ramot Naftali, Iftach, Malkia, Mevuot Hermon Regional Council, and Dishon.
- On May 8, Hezbollah [launched](#) at least two anti-tank guided missiles at Malkia in northern Israel.
- Hezbollah [said](#) on May 7 that it attacked “enemy officers and soldiers” near Yiftah in northern Israel with drones, starting a fire. The IDF said that Israel intercepted one projectile and that the attack did not inflict casualties.

IDF Operations

- In a May 7 letter to Matanyahu Englman, Israel’s state comptroller, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi [said](#), “your conclusion that the current timing makes it possible to start an audit [into the IDF’s failures before October 7] does not correspond to the security reality and the burden on the IDF,” and “an audit at this time will cause substantial and severe harm to the war efforts.”
 - » The letter also said, “I pledge that the IDF will cooperate fully with the state comptroller, but not at the expense of the complex tasks before us.”

Gaza

- The IDF [said](#) on May 8 that during its limited action in Rafah, it killed numerous gunmen and found tunnels that combat engineers will destroy. The IDF also said that it operated near the Rafah Crossing after receiving “indications and intelligence information that terrorists are taking advantage of the crossing area for terror purposes.”
 - » Addressing the action in Rafah, Prime Minister Netanyahu [said](#) on May 7, “Israel will not allow Hamas to restore its wicked rule in the Strip,” and “Israel will not allow it to rehabilitate its military capabilities in order to keep working toward our destruction.” He referred to the IDF’s control of the Rafah Crossing as “a very important step.”
 - » On May 7, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that Israel’s plan, “according to [a *Ha’aretz*] report, is to transfer control of the key [Rafah] crossing to a private American security firm after the IDF concludes the offensive [in Rafah].” In addition, “Israel has reportedly promised [the United States and Egypt] to only operate in the city’s eastern part, and not to damage border infrastructure.”
 - However, U.S. State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said, “I’m not aware of that at all” when asked about such plans during a press conference.
 - » On May 6, the IDF [said](#) that it began targeting Hamas in eastern Rafah “in a targeted manner,” and subsequent reports [said](#) that “Israeli troops and tanks are nearing the Gazan side of the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the Palestinian enclave after fighting along the so-called Philadelphi Corridor on the Egypt-Gaza border.”
 - On May 7, U.S. National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [said](#) that according to Israel, the limited action in Rafah was geared toward hampering the smuggling of weapons and money into Gaza.
 - Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [said](#) on May 7, “from the Rafah area came the killers who went to Sufa, to Holit, and tried to attack Yated, Yevul, Naveh and other places. We attack and kill those who murdered our children, that should be well remembered,” and “yesterday, I ordered the IDF to enter the Rafah area, seize the

crossing and carry out its missions. This operation will continue until we eliminate Hamas in the Rafah area and the entire Gaza Strip, or until the first hostage returns.”

- Gantz also [said](#), “we are ready to make compromises in order to [release] hostages, but if this option is not available, we will deepen the operation, this will happen all over the Strip, in the south, in the center and in the north. Hamas only understands force, so we will intensify our action, and the military pressure will result in us crushing the Hamas organization.”
- » On May 6, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#) during a press briefing that the Air Force targeted over 50 terrorist sites in Rafah in preparation for ground combat in the city’s east.
- On May 7, as the IDF [continued](#) ongoing operations in its east-west Netzarim Corridor in central Gaza, troops noticed gunmen in a nearby building and called in an airstrike to eliminate the terrorists.
- On May 7, the IDF said that combat engineers from the Yahalom unit and the Gaza Division [destroyed](#) two tunnels in the Beit Hanoun area of northern Gaza.
 - » One of the tunnels was first discovered in 2014 and was used at the time by Hamas to enter Israeli territory to launch attacks. The tunnel was mostly demolished at the time, but one segment, further inside Gaza, remained intact.
 - » The second tunnel, part of a larger tunnel network, extended to around 150 meters from the Israel-Gaza border, but did not cross into Israel.
- On May 7, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets and additional air assets to target numerous terror targets in northern Gaza after PIJ attacked Sderot the prior day. The military also said that it conducted a drone strike against terrorists near Beit Hanoun, among other strikes.

Lebanon

- On May 8, the IDF [said](#) it used fighter jets and artillery to strike more than 20 Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon’s Ramyeh, including buildings and infrastructure used by the terror group. The IDF said it identified secondary blasts after the strikes, which indicated the sites were used to store munitions.
 - » Lebanese media [reported](#) a large wave of Israeli airstrikes in southern Lebanon on May 8, including in the Ayta ash-Shab, Ramyeh, Marwahin, and Jabal Blat areas.
- On May 8, the IDF [conducted airstrikes](#) overnight targeting Hezbollah positions across six locations in Lebanon, including Kafr Kila, Ayta ash-Shab, Khiam, Houla, Aitaroun, and Maroun al-Ras.
 - » The IDF also announced that troops conducted operations to remove terror threats near Jebbayn and Tayr Harfa.
- On May 7, the IDF [said](#) it used fighter jets to strike several buildings used by Hezbollah in Blida, Maroun al-Ras, Yaroun, and Khiam. The IDF said it also struck Hezbollah infrastructure in Kfarhamam and a rocket launcher in Ayta ash-Shab.

Iraq

- The night of May 6, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to shoot down a drone before it crossed into Israel’s airspace that originated from the “eastern direction.” The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed the attack, which purportedly targeted a military base.

West Bank

- On May 7, the IDF and Israel's Border Police [announced](#) that they concluded an operation in Tulkarem in the West Bank that lasted 20 hours during which they killed a gunman, arrested six wanted individuals, and confiscated weapons, among other operational successes.

Humanitarian Efforts

- According to Israel's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories ([COGAT](#)), from the beginning of the war to May 7, there have been 528,550 tons of humanitarian aid that entered Gaza on 27,668 trucks.
- On May 8, Israel [reopened](#) the Kerem Shalom border crossing on the Israel-Gaza border to humanitarian aid convoys. The crossing had previously been closed since May 5 following a Hamas rocket and mortar attack that killed four IDF troops.
- On May 7, Israel's *Walla* outlet [reported](#) that Israel is planning to entrust Palestinian elements not affiliated with Hamas with managing aid operations on the Palestinian side of Rafah Crossing along the Egypt-Gaza border in the coming weeks.
 - » These elements will reportedly be tasked with both managing the transfer of aid from Egypt into Gaza and distributing the aid.
 - » According to the report, Israel taking control of the Rafah Crossing following a military operation on May 7 struck a major strategic blow to Hamas by eliminating its control of the border crossing, one of its "main governance capabilities."
 - The report asserts that Hamas had "collected a tax" from every aid truck that entered Gaza through the border crossing, enabling it to finance its terror activity.
- On May 7, Jens Laerke, a spokesperson for the UN's United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], [said](#), "we currently do not have any physical presence at the Rafah crossing as our access ... has been denied by COGAT," and "we have been told there will be no crossings of personnel or goods in or out for the time being. That has a massive impact on how much stock ... we have."
 - » Laerke added, "there's a very, very short buffer of one day of fuel available."
 - » Laerke also said, "as fuel only comes in through Rafah, the one day buffer is for the entire operation in Gaza," and "it would be a very effective way of putting the humanitarian operation in its grave." He added, "currently, the two main arteries for getting aid into Gaza are currently choked off."
- On May 7, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that "evacuated residents of northern Israel [expressed] anger at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after he reportedly told the cabinet that it would not matter if they only returned home a few months after the September 1 start of the new school year."
 - » Netanyahu reportedly said during a cabinet meeting, "who said September 1 is the goal date," and "why do we keep talking about this date, what will happen if they go back a few months later?"
 - » Shlomi resident Matan Davidayan said to Israel's *Channel 12*, "only someone who has never lived in a 27-square-meter room with four children for the past 7 months could be so disconnected," and Upper Galilee Regional Council head Giora Zaltz said, "we can't wait for a decision from someone who never decides."

- On May 7, Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh [told](#) journalists that “as of today, the construction of the two portions of the JLOTS [Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore]—the floating pier and the Trident pier—are complete and awaiting final movement offshore.” However, weather conditions have made it unsafe to move it into place.

Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations

- On May 8, CIA Director Bill Burns [met](#) in Israel with Prime Minister Netanyahu, Mossad head David Barnea, Israel’s Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, who is a former JINSA Distinguished Fellow, and other senior Israeli officials to discuss the ceasefire and hostage negotiations.
- According to a May 7 [report](#) from *The Times of Israel* citing Israel’s *Channel 12*, the ceasefire deal that Hamas agreed to on May 6 was substantially different from the most recent Israel-backed proposal that was offered to Hamas.
 - » According to the report, Hamas agreed to release 33 Israeli hostages, either alive or dead, a key difference from Israel’s reported acceptance of a deal in which 33 living hostages would be released.
 - A *New York Times* [report](#) on May 7 indicated that Hamas told mediators that some of the 33 hostages it would release as part of the first phase of a deal would include the remains of dead hostages.
 - » The report further alleged that Hamas continued to insist on allowing Palestinians to return to their homes in northern Gaza without Israel administering security checks, which Israel has consistently opposed.
 - » The deal Hamas agreed to also reportedly did not include Israel’s demand that it be able to exercise veto power over Palestinian prisoners’ release from Israeli prisons, and instead would enable Hamas to unilaterally choose which prisoners would be released.
 - » Hamas also reportedly agreed to a deal which would see more Palestinian prisoners released in exchange for each hostage and see Israeli hostages released at a slower rate than what Israel had agreed to.
 - » Prime Minister Netanyahu [said](#) on May 7 that Hamas’s proposal was “meant to sabotage the entry of our forces into Rafah,” which “did not happen.” He also said, “we already proved in the previous hostage release—military pressure on Hamas is a precondition for the return of the hostages” and that Hamas’s terms were “very far from Israel’s vital demands.”
 - He insisted that “Israel cannot accept a proposal that endangers the safety of our citizens and the future of our country” and that Israeli negotiators in Cairo must “stand firmly” on Israel’s demands.
- On May 7, Israel’s Minister without portfolio Benny Gantz [said](#) in a filmed statement, “yesterday, we started a military operation in the Rafah area, which will continue and expand as necessary. I wish to encourage all the IDF soldiers as always. I am convinced that they will fulfill their mission and I pray for their safe return,” and “at any stage where we can reach an outline for the return of our hostages, we will do so. This task has the highest priority.”
 - » He added, “the negotiating team that went to Cairo doesn’t just have a mandate to listen—it has an obligation to turn over every stone and act to bring about an outline. We are all working to make this happen, day by day,” and “we will never despair and we will never allow political considerations to be brought into this sacred issue.”

- » Gantz also said, “we are not waging a tactical battle against one regiment or another,” and “our achievements, even if they take a long time to achieve, must be strategic—and the return of our hostages is the first strategic goal, alongside the need to remove the threat of Hamas and make sure that such a threat does not reemerge.”
- On May 7, U.S. State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller [stated](#) that “Hamas seemed to make clear in their public statements that they accepted that offer yesterday. That is not what they did. They responded with amendments or a counter-proposal, and we’re working through the details of that now.”
 - » Miller also noted that Israel had made a “generous” offer and “that’s the offer that was on the table,” not the one that Hamas claimed to accept.
- On May 7, Egypt’s *Al-Qahera News*, a site linked to Egyptian intelligence services, [cited](#) an Egyptian official as stating that “all parties have agreed to return to the negotiating table.”
 - » On May 6, the office of Prime Minister Netanyahu [released](#) a statement that the deal Hamas stated it accepted was “far from Israel’s essential demands” but that Israel would continue negotiations “to exhaust the possibility of achieving an agreement on terms that are acceptable to Israel.”

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 614 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 267 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - The IDF [announced](#) the deaths of two soldiers killed in a one-way drone attack claimed by Hezbollah near Metula on May 6; Master Sgt. (res.) Dan Kamkagi, 31, from Kfar Oranim, and Master Sgt. (res) Nahman Natan Hertz, 31, from Elazar.
- 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 8, Border Police Chief Inspector Yitav Lev Halevi, 28, [succumbed](#) to his wounds after he was critically injured during a May 4 battle with Palestinian gunmen during a raid in Dayr al-Ghusun in the West Bank. He is the son of the former Jerusalem District chief Deputy Commissioner (ret.) Yoram Halevi.
 - » 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 34,844 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 78,404 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, at least 498 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 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 [35](#) of the 134 hostages captured on October 7, as well as two additional hostages who were abducted prior to October 7.
 - » On May 7, Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak [announced](#) that resident Lior Rudaeff, 61, who was presumed to be held hostage in Gaza, had been killed in Hamas's October 7 massacre and his body taken into Gaza.
 - Rudaeff had responded to calls from the kibbutz emergency squad to protect the community on October 7 and later sent a message to his family saying that he had been hurt in battle for the kibbutz, and that he loved his wife and four children. That was the last communication he sent.
 - » 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 8, Israel's *Channel 12* outlet [reported](#) that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander Esmail Qaani has traveled to Iraq and Lebanon in recent weeks in an effort to facilitate increased Iranian proxy attacks against Israel.
 - » According to the report, Qaani met with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah during his visit to Lebanon to discuss "future steps" regarding Hezbollah's attacks against Israel.
- On May 7, at approximately 5:02 a.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) an anti-ship ballistic missile from Yemen over the Gulf of Aden. The missile did not cause any reported damage or injuries.
- On May 6, at approximately 10:47 a.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) one drone from Yemen over the Red Sea. U.S. forces later intercepted the drone.

- On May 6, between approximately 11:02 p.m. and 11:48 p.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) three drones from Yemen over the Gulf of Aden. A coalition ship intercepted one drone, U.S. forces neutralized the second drone, and the final drone crashed in the Gulf of Aden.

U.S. and International Response

- On May 7, reports citing U.S. officials indicated that the Biden administration had put on hold the [shipment](#) to Israel of 1,800 2,000-pound bombs and 1,700 500-pound bombs to [signal](#) concerns that Israel might use the weapons during an operation in Rafah. The Biden administration is still considering whether to send Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) tailkits.
 - » A U.S. official [told](#) reporters that “none of these cases involve imminent transfers. They are about future transfers.”
 - » According to a [U.S. official](#), “as Israeli leaders seemed to approach a decision point last month on such an operation, we began to carefully review proposed transfers of particular weapons to Israel that might be used in Rafah.”
 - » U.S. officials stated that the United States has not paused all arms shipments to Israel and noted that the Biden administration recently [approved](#) the transfer of \$827 million of weapons and equipment.
 - » On May 8, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari downplayed the hold on the weapons shipment and stressed, “there is something more important than security assistance and that is operational support.”
- On May 7, the Biden administration notified Congress that a [report](#) on whether Israel had violated U.S. and international law during the war that was due to be released on May 8 would be “briefly delayed.”
 - » According to a May 7 [report](#) from *Politico*, on May 6, “185 lawyers, including 27 currently in the administration, sent a letter first to top U.S. officials saying that sending weapons to Israel is illegal,” according to a copy of the letter obtained by *Politico*.
- On May 7, Nate Evans, a spokesperson for the U.S. mission to the UN, [stated](#) that “it remains the US view that the path toward statehood for the Palestinian people is through direct negotiations ... We are aware of the resolution [to recognize the Palestinians as qualified for full UN statehood] and reiterate our concerns with any effort to extend certain benefits to entities when there are unresolved questions as to whether the Palestinians currently meet the criteria under the Charter.”
 - » Israel’s Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan stated, “if it is approved, I expect the United States to completely stop funding the UN and its institutions, in accordance with American law.”
- On May 7, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#), citing Israel’s *Channel 12*, that “the Biden administration, for its part, reportedly told Israeli officials that it viewed the May 6 Hamas ceasefire proposal as ‘a kind of counter-offer.’”
 - » According to the report, “very tense discussions” between U.S. and Israeli officials have taken place in recent days regarding Hamas’s most recent ceasefire proposal.

- » Israeli officials fear that the U.S. officials have conveyed a message to Hamas that the terror group’s proposal “would indeed constitute an end to the war,” according to the report.
- » The report asserts that “senior Israeli officials urged their US counterparts not to be publicly supportive of the Hamas terms, it says, while the US ‘didn’t quite accept that message.’”
- On May 6, U.S. State Department Spokesperson Mathew Miller [stated](#) that the Biden administration would not support the Rafah operation “currently envisioned by Israel” because it has not seen a credible and implementable plan to protect the civilians located there.
 - » Miller explained, “the problem now is there are such limited places for them to go inside Gaza and there is no effective way to distribute aid to them and make sure they have access to shelter, access to sanitation, in the places that they would go.”
- On May 6, U.S. State Department Spokesperson Mathew Miller [stated](#) that “we think *Al Jazeera* ought to be able to operate in Israel, as it does in other countries in the region.”
 - » Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt have all banned *Al Jazeera*.
- On May 6, a dozen Republican senators wrote a [letter](#) to International Criminal Court chief prosecutor Karim Khan warning the court, “target Israel, and we will target you.” The letter noted that any arrest warrants the ICC would issue for Israeli officials would be “illegitimate and lack legal basis, and if carried out will result in severe sanctions against you and your institution.”
 - » The letter explained, “the ICC is attempting to punish Israel for taking legitimate actions of self-defense against their Iranian-backed aggressors. In fact, in your own words, you witnessed ‘scenes of calculated cruelty’ conducted by Hamas in Israel following the October 7 attacks. These arrest warrants would align the ICC with the largest state sponsor of terrorism and its proxy. To be clear, there is no moral equivalence between Hamas’s terrorism and Israel’s justified response.”
 - » The letter further noted, “the ICC is also prohibited by its charter from proceeding in any case unless the relevant government is unwilling or unable to police themselves. You yourself have said that ‘Israel has trained lawyers who advise commanders and a robust system intended to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law.’ By issuing warrants, you would be calling into question the legitimacy of Israel’s laws, legal system, and democratic form of government.”
 - » The senators cautioned, “if you move forward with the measures indicated in the report, we will move to end all American support for the ICC, sanction your employees and associates, and bar you and your families from the United States.”
- On May 7, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres [claimed](#) that a potential ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas “is an opportunity that cannot be missed, and a ground invasion in Rafah would be intolerable because of its devastating humanitarian consequences, and because of its destabilizing impact in the region.”
- On May 7, Josep Borrell, the EU’s top diplomat, [told](#) journalists that “the Rafah offensive has started again, in spite [of] all the requests of the international community, the US, the European Union member states, everybody asking [Israeli Prime Minister] Netanyahu not to attack ... I am afraid that this is going to cause again a lot of casualties, civilian casualties. Whatever they say.” He added, “there are no safe zones in Gaza.”

- On May 7, Germany’s Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock [posted](#) on X that she “warn[s] against a major offensive on Rafah. A million people cannot simply vanish into thin air. They need protection. They urgently need further humanitarian aid. To achieve this, the Rafah and Kerem Shalom border crossings must be reopened immediately.”
- On May 7, Turkey’s Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz [posted](#) on X, “by carrying out a ground attack on Rafah, just a day after Hamas approved Qatar and Egypt’s proposal for a ceasefire deal, Israel has added another to the war crimes it has committed in Palestinian territories since October 7.”
- On May 6, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk [claimed](#) that Israel’s order for Palestinians to evacuate Rafah was “inhumane. It runs contrary to the basic principles of international humanitarian and human rights laws, which have the effective protection of civilians as their overriding concern.”

Rising Antisemitism, Protests, and Attacks

- On May 8, police in New York City [arrested](#) Reuven Kahane, the cousin of the extremist rabbi Meir Kahane who was convicted of terrorism, after he allegedly rammed anti-Israel protesters with his car in Manhattan.
 - » Kanane allegedly hit one protester, Maryellen Novak, after an argument broke out near the home of a Columbia University board of trustees member’s home. Police also arrested Novak, in addition to one other protester.
- According to an [Axios poll](#) of college students released on May 7, 8 percent of respondents have participated on either side of the protests about the war and 13 percent said it was a major issue for them.
 - » When asked who was responsible for the current situation, 34 percent of respondents blamed Hamas, 19 percent blamed Prime Minister Netanyahu, 12 percent blamed the Israeli people, and 12 percent blamed President Biden.
 - » 81 percent of students supported holding protesters accountable, with 67 percent saying its unacceptable to occupy a campus building and 58 percent saying it is unacceptable to refuse an order to disperse. 90 percent of students said it is unacceptable to block pro-Israel students from parts of campus.
 - » When asked whether they support or oppose the encampments, 45 percent said they support them strongly or a little bit, 30 percent were neutral, and 25 percent were strongly or a little opposed.
- During a [speech](#) on October 7 about antisemitism and the Holocaust, President Biden noted that “now here we are, not 75 years later, but just seven and a half months later, and people are already forgetting ... that Hamas unleashed this terror ... I have not forgotten, nor have you. And we will not forget.”
- On May 7, police in Berlin, Germany, [broke up](#) an anti-Israel protest at Berlin’s Free University, dispersing several hundred protesters who had set up 20 tents which they had encircled in a human chain.
- On May 7, Dutch riot police [cleared](#) an anti-Israel protest at the University of Amsterdam, arresting around 125 people in clashes that turned violent, and using bulldozers to remove an encampment on campus.

- » Local media showed footage of the protesters shooting fireworks at police officers. Videos also [showed](#) the anti-Israel protesters beating pro-Israel counter protesters with wooden planks and throwing chairs and gas tanks at them.
- On May 7, Israeli police [arrested](#) six people who blocked roads between the West Bank settlement of Ma'ale Adumim and the entrance to Jerusalem in an effort to stop an aid convoy from reaching Gaza. The protesters damaged several trucks and the cargo inside them.
 - » U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken “strongly condemned” the incident during a [call](#) with Jordan’s Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi.
 - » Saudi Arabia’s foreign ministry [released](#) a statement claiming “that the repetition of these attacks is the result of the Israeli occupation forces’ failure to carry out their responsibilities under international humanitarian law.” The statement added, “this is considered a systematic collusion to prevent the arrival of necessary humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.”
- On May 6, an anti-Israel group in Portland, Oregon, [posted](#) a statement claiming its members had broken into a police training facility and set 17 vehicles on fire in what it called a “Preemptive May Day Attack Against PPB [Portland Police Bureau].” Law enforcement said they were investigating the statement.
- On May 6, anti-Israel protesters [removed](#) police barricades and marched towards the Met Gala, an annual fundraiser at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art attended by many high-profile celebrities. Police arrested an unspecified number of protesters, in what organizers had called a “Citywide Day of Rage for Gaza.”
- On May 6, a group of 13 conservative federal judges, all appointees of President Trump, [wrote](#) a letter to Columbia President Minouche Shafik and Columbia Law School Dean Gillian Lester stating that they would not hire law students or undergraduate students from Columbia University, which they called an “incubator of bigotry.”
- 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. School officials at campuses across the county have begun clearing out the encampments in accordance with their codes of conduct.
 - » Early in the morning of May 8, police in Washington, D.C., [began clearing](#) the anti-Israel encampment at George Washington University and made several arrests. A spokesman for the D.C. police, Thomas Lynch, said the encampment had grown in recent days and “became more volatile.”
 - The intervention of D.C. police came just hours before the mayor and police chief were due to testify on Capitol Hill as to why they had declined requests from the university for nearly two weeks to clear the anti-Israel encampment.
 - » On May 7, anti-Israel protesters at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) [broke through](#) a police barricade to reach the encampment on campus, linking arms, encircling the remaining tents, and chanting “long live the intifada” and “we are the intifada.” Police did not make any arrests.
 - » On May 7, police [cleared](#) the anti-Israel encampment at the University of Chicago after campus administrators warned protesters on May 3 that they needed to leave or face removal.

- » On May 7, 40 anti-Israel protesters were [arrested](#) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).
 - UCLA Chancellor Gene Block announced that day that the school would open an investigation aimed at identifying and prosecuting individuals who “led a violent attack on pro-Palestinian demonstrators last week,” according to *The Times on Israel*.
- » On May 7, 64 people, including 40 students, were arrested when police [cleared](#) an encampment at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD).

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