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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update March 20, 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 Israel-Hamas conflict. 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

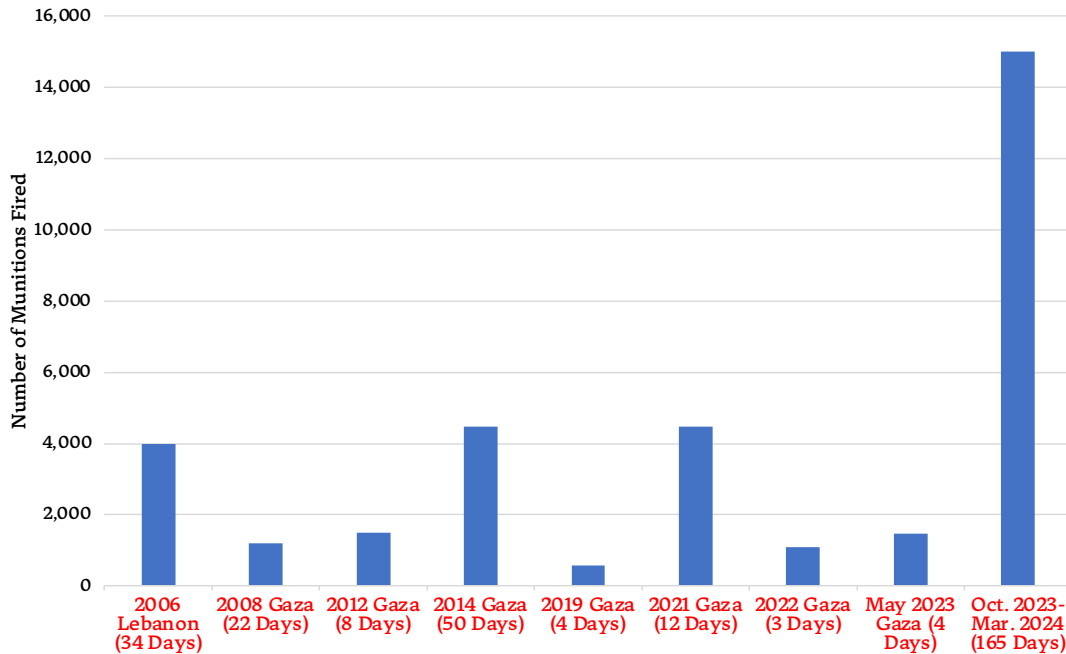
- A phone call between President Biden and Prime Minister Netanyahu on March 18, as well as [remarks](#) from U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan later that day expressing the Biden administration's disapproval of a full-scale ground operation in Rafah, revealed the widening gulf between U.S. and Israeli leaders as Israel prepares to possibly conduct a major ground operation in Rafah.
 - » President Biden's request for an Israeli delegation that will soon visit Washington to discuss plans for Israeli operations in Rafah could help repair tensions and close the gap between U.S. and Israeli views. However, U.S. pressure on Israel to conduct a more limited operation in Rafah would likely further exacerbate this rift and undermine Israel's ability to fulfill its objectives of destroying Hamas and recovering the remaining hostages.
- A Houthi cruise missile that hit an unpopulated area of Israel north of Eilat—marking the first [strike](#) by the group to impact Israeli territory—underscores the significant capabilities of the Iran-backed terrorist group in Yemen not only to target ships in nearby waters but also Israel.
- [Reports](#) that Israel has formed a team to search for terror tunnels in the West Bank after residents in an Israeli border town along the West Bank heard digging noises underscores the range of threats Israel faces and Israel's sense of urgency to suppress any emergent, close-by terror activity in the wake of the October 7 massacre and prevent October 7-style attacks. A security official told an Israeli media outlet that "terrorist organizations [in the West Bank] are trying to mimic some of the combat methods in Gaza."
- Bret Stephens highlighted in his *New York Times* [column](#) on March 19 that "[a long and useful report](#) by the Vandenberg Coalition and the Jewish Institute for National Security for America makes the case for an International Trust for Gaza Relief and Reconstruction, with a 'realistic pathway to an eventual two-state solution.'"

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.

Projectiles Fired Against Israel During Major Conflicts



Lebanon

- Sirens [sounded](#) in Zar'it, Manara, and Yiftach.
- The IDF [said](#) on March 19 that Hezbollah wounded two Israeli soldiers in a rocket attack targeting the region near Menara in northern Israel. The soldiers are said to be in light and moderate condition and undergoing medical treatment.
- On March 19, the IDF [said](#) that terrorists in Lebanon targeted additional areas in Israel near the border with projectiles and that it intercepted a “suspicious aerial target,” likely a drone, above the border region.

West Bank

- On March 19, two officers in Israel's Shin Bet security agency were [injured](#) in a shooting attack during a routine operation near the Gush Etzion junction. The officers [returned fire](#) and neutralized the attacker, Ziad Hamran, a 30-year-old Jenin resident, according to the Shin Bet and the IDF.

Red Sea

- On March 18, the Houthis [launched](#) a cruise missile that struck an unpopulated region north of Eilat after it traveled over the Red Sea. According to the IDF, Israel tracked the target throughout the incident.
 - » This marks the first time that a Houthi projectile struck Israeli territory.

- According to a March 20 report from Reuters, roughly half of the workers at the Eilat Port are on the precipice of [losing](#) their jobs due to port revenue shortfalls stemming from Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea.
 - » The report, which cited Israel’s labor union agency Histadrut, alleged that the southern Israeli city of Eilat’s port, which is on the Red Sea, has taken a major financial hit due to Houthi attacks on shipping.
 - » Port management reportedly announced the imminent layoff of around half of the 120 port employees. According to the report, activity at the port declined by 85 percent in the first few weeks of the Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping.

IDF Operations

Gaza

- On March 20, the IDF [said](#) that more than 90 Hamas gunmen had been killed so far during the ongoing raid of Gaza City’s Shifa Hospital.
 - » The IDF also said that more than 300 terror suspects had been questioned at the hospital complex, 160 of whom were taken to Israel for further interrogation.
- On March 20, the IDF confirmed that a [strike](#) in the southern Gazan city of Rafah on March 18 killed three members of Hamas’s emergency committee, Sayyid Qutb Hashash, Osama Hamad Dhahir, and Hadi Abu al-Rous. Muhammad Awad al-Malalhi was also wounded in the strike.
 - » Hashash, Dhahir, and al-Malalhi were the heads of Hamas’s emergency committee in north and east Rafah, and al-Rous was the emergency committee’s operations officer.
- On March 19, the IDF announced that it [concluded](#) an operation that began earlier this month against Hamas operatives in the Hamad Town residential complex in the southern Gazan city of Khan Younis.
 - » During the operation, which was conducted primarily by the Egoz and Maglan commando units, troops killed over 100 gunmen and destroyed buildings used by Hamas.
- While speaking with AIPAC’s political leadership on March 18, Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#), “the description [from Washington] is you have an outlier prime minister with some extreme fringe groups and that’s what’s driving the policy. False. I would say deliberately false. They know it’s false. But that falsehood is perpetrated and it’s wrong.”
 - » Netanyahu added that when he informs people, including President Biden, that Israelis are unified in the goal of destroying Hamas and securing the release of the hostages, “they keep saying that local politics is interfering with this. They may be right. On which side of the pond?”
- On March 19, Netanyahu [said](#) to a committee in the Knesset, Israel’s parliament, “we have a disagreement with the Americans about the need to enter Rafah,” but “not about the need to eliminate Hamas—the need to enter Rafah. We do not see a way to eliminate Hamas militarily without destroying these remaining battalions. We are determined to do it.”
 - » He added, “I made it clear to the [U.S.] president in our [March 18 phone] conversation, in the clearest way, that we are determined to complete the elimination of these battalions in Rafah” and that “there is no way to do it, except by going in on the ground.”

- » He also said, “we need to complete the military elimination of Hamas,” and “there is no substitute for that, you can’t go around it, you can’t say ‘we’ll destroy 80% of Hamas, we’ll [leave] 20%,’ because that 20% will reorganize and retake the Strip, and of course they will pose a renewed threat to Israel, and of course it will also be a victory for the broader axis that threatens us—the Iranian axis.”
- » Netanyahu [insisted](#), “the Americans asked that we not do an operation in Rafah, but there is no other choice. We need control over the Philadelphi Route [adjacent to Gaza’s border with Egypt].”
- On March 19, Netanyahu [said](#) that he is sending Israel’s Strategic Affairs Minister and former JINSA Distinguished Fellow Ron Dermer and National Security Council leader Tzachi Hanegbi to the United States to discuss the operation in Gaza and to focus on the Biden administration’s worries about an Israeli operation in Rafah while probing alternatives.
- On March 18, the IDF published a video of Navy Shayetet 13 troops [fighting](#) Hamas combatants in Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, during which the troops killed approximately 20 terrorists in the complex and 20 in the adjacent area.
 - » IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari also said to reporters that day that troops detained over 200 suspects during the operation, and the IDF later [announced](#) on March 19 that it had detained around 300 suspects. A March 20 report from Israeli outlet *Arutz Sheva* said that Israel had [detained](#) approximately 350 terrorists.
 - The *Arutz Sheva* report also quoted a military source telling Israel’s *Army Radio*, “we are sitting on a gold mine,” and it said that Israel detained Izz a-Din al-Haddad, a Hamas brigade commander, and also recovered sensitive information that Hamas stole from Israel’s Erez crossing into Gaza during the October 7 attack. The report added that detained suspects expressed surprise that the IDF returned to the hospital.
 - » According to the IDF, the detained individuals are suspected members of Hamas’s propaganda unit and Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s (PIJ) rocket unit. They are also suspected of orchestrating terrorist attacks in the West Bank. The IDF also published a video of weapons that troops discovered near the hospital director’s office.
 - » *Al-Jazeera* [said](#) on March 18 that Israel released the outlet’s correspondent, Ismail Alghoul, after Israel detained him during the operation at the hospital. Alghoul said that, along with additional detained journalists, he was handcuffed, blindfolded, and deprived of clothing for 12 hours.
- Confirming on March 18 that Israel successfully killed high-ranking Hamas leader Marwan Issa in an airstrike, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan [said](#) during a press conference, “the rest of the top leaders are in hiding, likely deep in the Hamas tunnel network, and justice will come for them too. We are helping to ensure that.”
 - » He added that during a March 18 phone call between President Biden and Prime Minister Netanyahu, the former emphasized “his bone-deep commitment to ensuring the long-term security of Israel and [reaffirmed] ... that Israel has a right to go after Hamas, the perpetrators of the worst massacre of the Jewish people since the Holocaust.”
 - » Sullivan also noted that “Israel has made significant progress against Hamas. They’ve broken a significant number of Hamas battalions and killed thousands of Hamas fighters including senior commanders.”

Lebanon

- On March 20, the IDF [released](#) footage of a recent airstrike against a Hezbollah weapons depot that it says was “in the heart of a civilian neighborhood deep in Lebanon” showing “further proof of Hezbollah’s modus operandi, in which it stores explosives and dangerous chemical substances in civilian villages.”
- The IDF announced the [creation](#) of a new regional brigade on Israel’s borders with Syria and Lebanon, called HeHarim Brigade, or the Mountains Brigade, on March 19.
 - » The brigade, which replaces the existing 810th Regional Brigade, will have responsibility for the Mount Hermon and Mount Dov regions of northern Israel and will begin activity in the coming weeks.
 - » According to an IDF press release, the brigade was formed “as part of the operational response to the situation on the northern border and in accordance with the situational assessment.”
 - » HeHarim Brigade troops will “specialize in combat in difficult terrain and warfare in mountainous areas,” according to the IDF.
- In response to projectile attacks against Israel on March 19, the IDF [said](#) that it launched airstrikes against Hezbollah buildings in Ayta ash-Shab, Mays al-Jabal, and Odaisseh, as well as other terror targets in Naquora and Kafr Kila.
- On March 19, the IDF said it [struck](#) a Hezbollah operative spotted at an observation post in Marwahin.
- On March 18, the IDF [conducted airstrikes](#) against Hezbollah facilities in the southern Lebanese towns of Mays al-Jabal and Odaisseh, eliminating several terror operatives.

Syria

- On March 20, Israeli outlet *Arutz Sheva* [noted](#) a March 19 report from Saudi Arabia’s *Al-Hadath* outlet that said that five commanders of Iran-backed militias were killed in a strike in Al Mayadin in eastern Syria. The Saudi outlet did not attribute responsibility for the strike. According to *Arutz Sheva*, the U.K.-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that aircraft were flying above locations where Iran-backed militias are known to operate and also reported explosions near the area.
- Lebanon’s *Al Mayadeen* outlet, a Hezbollah-affiliated network, reported on March 18 that explosions were heard near the Syrian capital city of Damascus. Local media outlets reported that an Israeli airstrike [targeted](#) military outposts northeast of the city.

West Bank

- According to a March 19 [report](#) from Israel’s *Ynet* outlet, the IDF has established a special unit consisting of engineers, intelligence forces, and other forces to investigate and locate any terror tunnels in the West Bank.
 - » The report stated that the unit’s creation was spurred by residents of Bat Hefer, an Israeli town bordering the West Bank, reporting to authorities that they heard digging noises near their houses.
 - » Security forces have reportedly found five shafts in Jenin and Nur al-Shams during weekly raids throughout the West Bank since the war began, but the shafts did not lead to tunnel passages. Forces located a terror tunnel used as a hideout in a July 2023 raid in Jenin, according to the report.

- » An Israeli security official quoted in the report stated, “we have already seen the use of underground facilities for concealment and storage of weapons, and we understand that terrorist organizations are trying to mimic some of the combat methods in Gaza. This issue concerns us greatly.”

Humanitarian Efforts

- On March 20, Britain’s foreign ministry [said](#) that more than 2,000 tons of British food aid had crossed into Gaza. The delivery was facilitated by Jordan and is being distributed by the United Nations World Food Program (WFP).
- While speaking to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on March 19 during a closed meeting, Prime Minister Netanyahu [said](#) that Israel is exploring “private companies” for distributing food shipments to Gaza, and “from Israel’s standpoint, there is nothing preventing Gazans from leaving, but there aren’t countries in the world that are ready to receive them.”
 - » He also said that a new crossing into Gaza at Kerem Shalom that Israel is constructing will “replace the Rafah Crossing [into Egypt]” and will be under Israeli control.
- On March 19, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk [said](#), “the extent of Israel’s continued restrictions on entry of aid into Gaza, together with the manner in which it continues to conduct hostilities, may amount to the use of starvation as a method of war, which is a war crime.”
 - » Turk’s spokesperson Jeremy Laurence said, “Israel, as the occupying power, has the obligation to ensure the provision of food and medical care to the population commensurate with their needs and to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations to deliver that assistance.”
 - » Vedant Patel, the U.S. State Department’s deputy spokesperson, [said](#) on March 19 that Israeli restrictions on aid to Gaza constituting war crimes “is not something that we’ve observed or witnessed,” and “we’re seeing aid and food ... enter Gaza,” adding that a greater quantity of aid at an increased shipment speed with more effective distribution is necessary.
- On March 19, a spokesman for the IDF’s Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) [said](#), “we don’t believe that there is starvation in the Gaza Strip. That’s not to say that there aren’t difficulties in some areas, but that we are doing everything we can to facilitate large amounts of aid.”
 - » He added that Israel has placed “absolutely no limit” on the amount of aid that enters Gaza, but that the real problem is distribution.
- According to [reports](#) from March 19, citing Hamas and other Palestinian sources, men from various clans and factions have begun protecting aid shipments at Hamas’s behest.
- Prime Minister Netanyahu [promised](#) President Biden during a phone call between the two leaders on March 18 that he would push Israel’s government to allow more aid into Gaza, according to U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan.

Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations

- On March 19, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh [accused](#) Israel of “endeavor[ing] to sabotage ongoing negotiations” to secure a hostage release deal by conducting operations at Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.
 - » Haniyeh further stated that the “actions of the Zionist occupation forces at Shifa Medical Complex confirm their intent to obstruct the recovery of life in Gaza and dismantle essential aspects of human existence.”
- Reports on March 19 indicated that U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will [visit](#) Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel later this week to [discuss](#) a possible ceasefire and hostage deal, as well as plans for post-war Gaza.

Post-War Planning

- On March 19, incoming Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa presented his plan for PA reform in a [mission statement](#), in which he said he would appoint a “non-partisan, technocratic government that can gain both the trust of our people and the support of the international community.”
 - » He promised a “zero tolerance” policy for corruption.
 - » Mustafa indicated that he would seek to reunify the West Bank and Gaza and create an “independent, competent and transparent agency for Gaza’s recovery and reconstruction, and an internationally managed trust fund to raise, manage and disburse the required funds.” The mission statement did not mention Hamas.

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 594 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 251 IDF soldiers have been killed during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - The IDF [announced](#) the death of Warrant Officer (res.) Sebastian Haion, 51, from Rosh Ha’ayin.
 - 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 31,923 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 74,096 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](#) 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, 436 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 4,700 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, [seven](#) 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 [34](#) 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 March 19, the Houthis claimed to have [launched](#) missiles at the *MADO*, a Marshall-Islands flagged liquefied petroleum gas tanker, in the Red Sea.

U.S. and International Response

- On March 19, President Biden [posted](#) a statement on X about his [phone call](#) with Prime Minister Netanyahu on March 18 indicating that he “continued to affirm that Israel has a right to go after Hamas, a group of terrorists responsible for the worst massacre of the Jewish people since the Holocaust. And I reiterated the need for an immediate ceasefire as part of a deal to free hostages, lasting several weeks, so we can get hostages home and surge aid to civilians in Gaza.”
 - » He also noted that he asked Netanyahu “to send a team to Washington to discuss ways to target Hamas without a major ground operation in Rafah.”
- On March 19, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [claimed](#) that “according to the most respected measure of these things, 100 percent of the population in Gaza is at severe levels of acute food insecurity. That’s the first time an entire population has been so classified.”

- Israel's *Channel 12* [reported](#) on March 19 that Prime Minister Netanyahu signaled his frustration with the Biden administration by blocking Shin Bet head Ronen Bar and IDF military intelligence chief Maj. Gen Aharon Haliva from meeting with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf.
- A Reuters [report](#) on March 19 indicated that U.S. congressional leaders and the Biden administration had reached an agreement for a massive funding bill for the military, State Department, and other government programs, which will continue a ban on U.S. funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) until March 2025.
- On March 19, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) [met](#) with leaders from major Jewish organizations to discuss his recent speech calling for new Israeli elections. Schumer repeated his claim that Prime Minister Netanyahu is a danger to Israel but clarified that he was not telling Israelis how to vote and that the elections should occur when the war in Gaza winds down.
- On March 19, over 450 actors, producers, and photographers [signed](#) a "Statement from Jewish Hollywood Professionals" criticizing the "Zone of Interest" filmmaker Jonathan Glazer for his Oscars acceptance speech. The letter stated that the signatories "refute our Jewishness being hijacked for the purpose of drawing a moral equivalence between a Nazi regime that sought to exterminate a race of people, and an Israeli nation that seeks to avert its own extermination."
 - » During Glazer's Oscars acceptance speech, he had stated, "we stand here as men who refute their Jewishness and the Holocaust being hijacked by an occupation which has led to conflict for so many innocent people. Whether the victims of October—whether the victims of October the 7th in Israel or the ongoing attack on Gaza, all the victims of this dehumanization, how do we resist?"
 - » According to [Variety](#), the initial list of signatories included "actors (Debra Messing, Tovah Feldshuh), executives (Gary Barber, Gail Berman), creators (Amy Sherman-Palladino), directors (Eli Roth, Rod Lurie), producers (Lawrence Bender, Amy Pascal, Hawk Koch, Sherry Lansing) and representatives (UTA's Jake Fenton, Gersh's Jeffrey Greenberg, attorney Craig Emmanuel)."
 - » Roughly 500 individuals added their names to the letter after it was first published.
- During a press conference on March 18, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan [claimed](#) that "a major ground operation [in Rafah] would be a mistake. It would lead to more innocent civilian deaths, worsen the already dire humanitarian crisis, deepen the anarchy in Gaza, and further isolate Israel internationally."
 - » Sullivan [argued](#) that "the key goals Israel wants to achieve in Rafah can be done by other means."
 - » Sullivan added that Biden [asked](#) Netanyahu during their phone call to send an interagency team to Washington "to lay out an alternative approach that would target key Hamas elements in Rafah and secure the Egypt-Gaza border without a major ground invasion."
 - » He further [criticized](#) "the strawman (argument) that raising questions about Rafah is the same as raising questions about defeating Hamas. That's just nonsense. Our position is that Hamas should not be allowed a safe haven in Rafah or anywhere else."
 - » Sullivan outlined the Biden administration's opposition to an Israeli ground operation in Rafah as [concern](#) about the civilian population, which he said has "nowhere else to go. Gaza's other major cities have largely been destroyed, and Israel has not presented us

or the world with a plan for how or where they would safely move those civilians, let alone feed and house them and ensure access to basic things like sanitation.”

- » Sullivan also [clarified](#) that Biden did not threaten Netanyahu with consequences if Israel launches a major ground operation in Rafah during their phone call. Instead, he claimed that “what the president said today was, ‘I want you to understand, Mr. Prime Minister, exactly where I am on this. I am for the defeat of Hamas. I believe that they are an evil terrorist group with not just Israeli, but American blood on their hands. At the same time. I believe that to get to that (defeat), you need a strategy that works, and that strategy should not involve a major military operation that puts thousands and thousands of civilian, innocent lives at risk in Rafah. There is a better way. Send your team to Washington, and let’s talk about it. We’ll lay out for you what we believe is a better way.’”
- Although Israel’s *Walla* news site and [Axios](#) reported last week that Defense Minister Yoav Gallant signed a letter pledging that Israel will abide by international law, Sullivan indicated during his press conference on March 18 that Israel has [not yet provided](#) this letter to the Biden administration, although he “anticipate[d] they will.”
 - » Sullivan noted that what Israel has “to do by Sunday is just provide credible and reliable assurances that they will abide by their international obligations—not obligations we have imposed upon them, but obligations they have freely accepted with respect to international humanitarian law, which includes not arbitrarily impeding the flow of humanitarian assistance where they can control that.”
 - » The letter was part of a new U.S. policy that the Biden administration put in place on February 8 requiring all recipients of U.S.-made weaponry to provide written assurances that they will abide by international law or else risk [jeopardizing](#) their access to U.S. arms exports.
- Sullivan also [alleged](#) during his press conference on March 18 that Israel involves itself in U.S. politics more than the United States involves itself in Israeli politics, amid outrage in Israel after Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) called for new Israeli elections to replace Prime Minister Netanyahu.
- Sullivan also [noted](#) during his press conference on March 18 that “Israel cleared Shifa [Hospital] once. Hamas came back into Shifa, which raises questions about how to ensure a sustainable campaign against Hamas so that it cannot regenerate, cannot retake territory.”
- On March 18, between 1:00 p.m. and 7:40 p.m. local time, the United States [struck](#) seven Houthi anti-ship missiles, three drones, and three weapons storage containers in Yemen.
- According to a March 19 [report](#) from Israel’s *Channel 12*, Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Melanie Joly told Canadian outlets that Canada is ending its arms exports to Israel. The Canadian parliament [passed](#) non-binding legislation the previous day calling for the government to “cease the further authorization and transfer of arms exports to Israel.”
 - » The report stated that Canada has provided Israel with “telecommunications equipment, encryption equipment, protective equipment, simulators and electronic components, firearms and ammunition.”
- On March 19, China’s Foreign Ministry [confirmed](#) a meeting between Chinese diplomat Wang Kejian and the head of Hamas’s political bureau, Ismail Haniyeh, in Qatar over the weekend. This was the first publicly acknowledged meeting between a Chinese and Hamas official.

- On March 19, South Africa’s Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor [claimed](#) that Israel was setting a precedent for nations to ignore the International Court of Justice because “the provisional measures have been entirely ignored by Israel.”
- On March 18, the European Union foreign ministers unanimously [approved](#) sanctions against Israeli settlers who have allegedly harassed Palestinians in the West Bank.
- On March 18, the UN Security Council [released](#) a statement condemning “in the strongest terms” the Houthi attacks on shipping in the Red Sea.

Rising Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Protests, and Attacks

- On March 19, the House Education and Workforce Committee [launched](#) an inquiry into antisemitism at the University of California, Berkeley. Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), the Committee’s chairwoman, said the investigation would look into the school’s “response to antisemitism and its failure to protect Jewish students” and that the committee has “grave concerns regarding the inadequacy of UC Berkeley’s response to antisemitism on its campus.”

Recent and Relevant JINSA Products About Israel at War

- Jonathan Ruhe, [Egypt Must Do More to Aid Gazans](#), March 19, 2024
- Webinar: [Report Rollout: The Day After: A Plan for Gaza](#), with John Hannah, Elliott Abrams, Lewis Libby, Rob Danin, and Jonathan Ruhe, March 15, 2024
- Webinar: [Gaza Update 3/14](#), with IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish, and Jonathan Ruhe, March 14, 2024
- Webinar: [Until They All Come Home: Congressional Efforts to Help Free U.S. Hostages in Gaza](#), with Senator Ted Budd (R-NC) and Michael Makovsky, March 13, 2024
- Yoni Tobin and Myles Behar, [Egypt-Gaza Tunnels Pose Threat to Israel’s War Aims](#), March 12, 2024
- John Hannah, Elliott Abrams, and Lewis Libby, “[The Day After: A Plan for Gaza](#),” *Fox News*, March 7, 2024
- The Gaza Futures Task Force, [The Day After: A Plan for Gaza](#), February 29, 2024
- The Gaza Futures Task Force, [The Day After Action Plan](#), February 29, 2024