



# Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update April 25, 2024

Yoni Tobin  
Policy Analyst

Zachary Schildcrout  
Policy Analyst

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 is releasing the Swords of Iron Update on April 22, April 25, and April 26 this week due to the Jewish holiday of Passover. An update with the latest information and analysis about the war is below.

## Analysis

- As JINSA recently [argued](#), the \$95.3 billion aid package including military aid for Israel, Taiwan, Ukraine, and humanitarian aid for Gaza that President Biden signed on April 24 will help provide Israel with “the munitions it needs to conduct military operations against not only Hamas but also Iran-backed adversaries in Lebanon and Syria, as well as Iran itself.”
- The resumption of Iran-backed projectile attacks against U.S. forces and personnel in Iraq and Syria underscores the need for a parallel resumption of U.S. military pressure and expressions of U.S. resolve to counter Iranian proxies in both countries and compel Iran to reign in its terror proxies.
  - » As JINSA Director of Foreign Policy Jonathan Ruhe [observed](#) in March, “Iran scans for signals of U.S. intent” when calculating the degree to which its own and its proxies’ activity will incur a forceful U.S. response.
  - » Ruhe noted that after the United States began signaling a willingness to inflict greater costs on Iran and its “Axis of Resistance” in January, “Iran had good reason to fear that” reckless actions by its proxies “could trigger serious blowback on its own personnel, assets, and possibly territory. Top Iranian officials quickly darkened doors in Baghdad and Beirut to insist that these groups reverse rising tensions with the United States and Israel.”
- Israel’s announcement of a series of measures, including [sending](#) the 99th Division into Gaza; [readying](#) two reserve brigades for intensive operations in Gaza, and; reportedly finding [shared ground](#) with the United States on a plan to evacuate Rafah, all suggest that an Israeli offensive in Rafah is imminent.
  - » Alternatively, such measures may be aimed at bolstering Israel’s leverage against Hamas at the negotiating table after hostage release negotiations appeared to stall in recent weeks.
- Germany’s announcement this week that it will [resume](#) funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in light of an independent review panel’s [finding](#) that “UNRWA

remains pivotal in providing life-saving humanitarian aid” in Gaza reveals ongoing fundamental misapprehensions about the organization.

- » As JINSA Policy Analyst Yoni Tobin [noted](#) in January, Israeli intelligence files reviewed by *The Wall Street Journal* and other Western media outlets reveal that “ Hamas operatives—potentially moonlighting as UNRWA staffers—are directly involved in UNRWA’s aid delivery process in Gaza, including coordinating aid transfers,” enabling Hamas to divert aid to itself.
- » Israel’s Foreign Ministry [noted](#) in an April 22 statement, “the problem with UNRWA ... is not a problem of a few bad apples.”
- Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant’s recent [contention](#) that “half of the Hezbollah commanders in south Lebanon have been eliminated” since the war began underscores the importance of continued Israeli military pressure on Iranian military and proxy targets, including but not limited to Hezbollah, in increasing the security of Israeli citizens and U.S. troops in the region.

## Last 72 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**

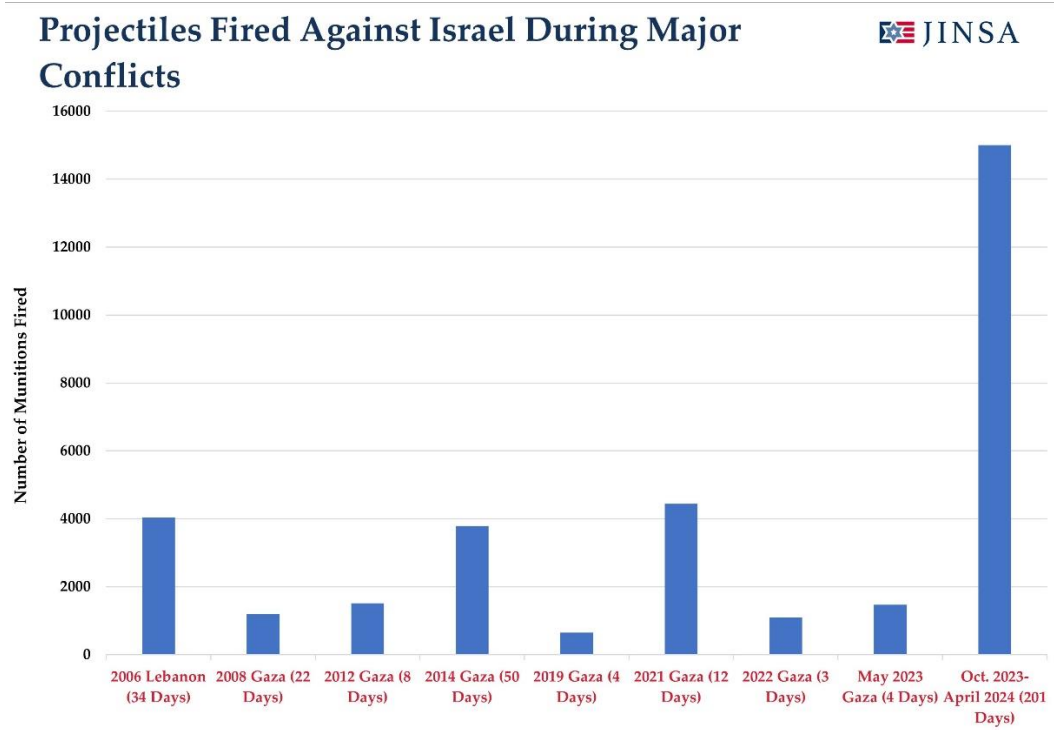
- Sirens sounded in [Zikim, Sderot, and Nir Am](#).
- On April 25, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that terrorists in Gaza “launched mortars at an under-construction pier for a US-led project to bring aid into the Palestinian enclave yesterday,” according to the IDF.
- According to an April 25 [report](#) from Israel’s *Channel 12*, in the past two months, over 70 rockets launched from Gaza have struck the southern Israeli town of Sderot or surrounding areas.
- On April 24, the IDF [said](#) that the Iron Dome shot down one rocket that terrorists in Gaza launched toward Israel, triggering sirens in Sderot and the surrounding area.
  - » Israel’s *Channel 12* [reported](#) that shrapnel from the intercepted rocket struck a warehouse and caused a fire.
- On April 23, Abu Obeida, Hamas’s military spokesperson, [said](#) in a recorded speech that Iran’s April 13-14 attack on Israel “set new rules, drew important equations, and confused the enemy and those behind it.” He also said that the West Bank and Jordan are “one of the most important Arab fronts.”
  - » He said further, “we call on the Jordanian people to step up their actions and raise their voices,” and “the government of the occupation [Israel] is stalling in reaching a hostages-swap deal and is trying to obstruct efforts by the mediators to reach a ceasefire agreement.”
- On April 23, Israel’s Iron Dome air defense system shot down four projectiles that terrorists in Gaza [fired](#) toward Sderot, according to the IDF.
- On April 23, two rockets, one of which the Iron Dome intercepted, triggered sirens in Zikim, the IDF [said](#).

### **Lebanon**

- Rockets struck [Avivim](#), and sirens [sounded](#) in Shlomi, Rosh HaNikra, Arab al-Aramshe, Metzuba, Lehman, Ya'ara, Hanita, Gornot HaGalil, Goren, Betzet, Eilon, Adamit, Safed, Kadita, [Mazra'a](#), Lohamei HaGeta'ot, Regba, [Metula](#) (a [false alarm](#)), [Acre](#) and other nearby towns, [Margaliot](#), [Shomera](#), [Zarit](#), [Shtula](#), [Kiryat Shmona](#), and [Majdal Shams](#).
- On April 25, the IDF [urged](#) northern Israeli residents in several towns to seek shelter amid infiltration of a hostile aircraft but said several minutes later that “the incident has ended.”
- On April 24, terrorists in Lebanon [struck](#) two homes in Avivim with anti-tank missiles, inflicting no injuries.
- On April 23, the IDF [said](#) that “suspicious aerial targets” triggered sirens near Acre and Krayot in Israel because of worries about injuries from falling shrapnel from the interceptions. Shortly before that, Israel intercepted a likely drone near Nahariya.
- The IDF [said](#) on April 23 that it downed three targets over the Mediterranean Sea near the cities of Acre and Nahariya.
  - » Hezbollah claimed that day that the terror group launched several drones at the IDF’s Shraga army base just north of Acre.
- On April 23, Hezbollah [said](#) that it fired dozens of projectiles toward Margaliot in response to IDF operations in Lebanon. According to the IDF, 10 rockets were fired.
- On April 22, the IDF [said](#) that terrorists in Lebanon launched approximately 35 rockets toward Ein Zeitim and Safed in northern Israel, triggering sirens but inflicting no injuries.

**West Bank**

- On April 24, Rescuers Without Borders [said](#) that IDF soldiers “neutralized” a Palestinian woman who tried to stab people near Kiryat Arba in the West Bank. The IDF subsequently [said](#) that the attacker attempted to stab troops, and “the troops engaged and opened fire at the terrorist who held a knife and charged toward the force,” killing her.



## IDF Operations

### Gaza

- On April 25, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that “Israel’s war cabinet is meeting at the Kirya military headquarters in Tel Aviv, ahead of an expanded meeting of the security cabinet later this afternoon” to discuss the forthcoming operation in Rafah, according to other Israeli media outlets.
  - » That day, *The Times of Israel* also [reported](#) that the military’s “Nahal Brigade has been withdrawn from the Gaza Strip for it to prepare with the rest of the 162nd Division for future operations, including Israel’s looming offensive in Rafah.”
- On April 25, Israel’s *Walla* outlet [reported](#), citing Israeli officials, that the IDF’s 162nd Division left the Gaza Strip that day and was replaced by the 99th Division in preparation for a Rafah operation.
- On April 25, Israel’s *Channel 12* [reported](#), citing Israeli officials, that Israel has formulated a detailed plan for evacuating civilians from Rafah in coordination with the United States and other countries.
  - » The plan reportedly involves large aid flows into Gaza followed by the restoration of infrastructure in the areas to which Palestinians sheltering in Rafah will be evacuated as part of the plan, including the city of Khan Younis and areas in central Gaza.
  - » In addition, the IDF is reportedly working to restore Gaza’s medical facilities, including hospitals and field clinics. The report asserts that six field hospitals currently are in operation across Gaza, and that an additional four are expected to be operational prior to a Rafah offensive.
  - » The final pillar of the plan is the construction of large tent camps near Khan Younis and in southwestern Gaza’s Mawasi humanitarian zone. These tent camps are reportedly sponsored by the United Arab Emirates.
    - According to the report, “tens of thousands of tents ... have already [entered] the Gaza Strip” as part of the plan.
    - As part of the initiative, Israel is reportedly purchasing an additional 40,000 tents to be used for the Palestinians evacuating Rafah.
- On April 24, Reuters [reported](#) that according to an unnamed defense official, the IDF “has conducted all necessary preparations to take Gaza’s southernmost city of Rafah and can launch an operation the moment it gets government approval.”
- On April 24, the IDF [announced](#) that it was readying two reserve brigades for deployment in the Gaza Strip under the 99th Division.
  - » The IDF said the 679th “Yiftah” Armored Brigade and the 2nd “Carmeli” Infantry Brigade, both of which had been stationed along Israel’s border with Lebanon, have been preparing for “their mission in the Gaza Strip” in recent weeks.
- On April 24, *Axios* [reported](#), citing three senior Israeli officials, that several of Israel’s top intelligence and military officials traveled to Cairo that day to meet with Egypt’s intelligence chief and other top Egyptian officials to discuss an IDF operation in Rafah.
  - » According to the report, head of Israel’s internal security agency Shin Bet Ronen Bar and IDF Chief of Staff Lt Gen Herzi Halevi were among the Israeli officials who traveled to Cairo.

- » The report stated, “Israeli officials said close military and diplomatic coordination with Egypt is one of the basic conditions for Israel's military action in Rafah, especially in light of Israel's intention to take control of the Philadelphi corridor, which is adjacent to the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt.”
- » The *Axios* report asserted, citing senior Israeli officials, that Egypt and the United Arab Emirates have set up large tent shelters between Rafah and Khan Yunis as well as in the coastal Muwasi safe zone established early in the war.
  - The Associated Press [reported](#) on April 23 that satellite images “appear to show a new compound of tents being built near Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip as the Israeli military continues to signal plans of an offensive targeting the city of Rafah.”
- On April 24, *Axios* [reported](#), citing a senior U.S. official, that “plans that the IDF presented to the U.S. Department of Defense in recent weeks included a slow and gradual operation in Rafah — neighborhood by neighborhood — and not an all-out invasion of the entire city.”
- On April 24, the IDF announced that it [conducted](#) airstrikes against approximately 50 terror targets across the Gaza Strip in the prior 24 hours.
- Reports from April 23 [indicated](#) that “ Hamas officials in Gaza [claimed] to ‘discover’ a mass grave with more than 200 bodies at a hospital in Khan Yunis.” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk [urged](#) international investigations, and European Union (EU) spokesperson Peter Stano [said](#), “this is something that forces us to call for an independent investigation of all the suspicions and all the circumstances, because indeed it creates the impression that there might have been violations of international human rights committed.”
  - » However, *The Times of Israel* [noted](#) that “the mass grave was not suddenly ‘discovered,’ as it has been documented that Palestinians buried their dead at the hospital grounds both before and while Israeli troops operated in the area.” The IDF [said](#) to the outlet on April 23 that “the claim that the IDF buried Palestinian bodies is completely baseless.”
- On April 23, IDF Arabic-language spokesperson, Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee, [wrote](#) on X that residents of Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza “are in a dangerous combat zone” and noted areas from which civilians should evacuate amid the IDF’s operations against “terror infrastructure.”
- On April 23, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that the IDF’s Netzah Yehuda Battalion, among other troops, “launched a new pinpoint operation in northern Gaza’s Beit Hanoun just before Passover began yesterday,” destroying terrorist infrastructure, according to the IDF.
- The IDF [said](#) on April 23 that troops from the Nahal Brigade [launched](#) a pinpoint operation involving targeted raids against Hamas in order to “deep[en] the achievements” in the central Gaza Strip’s Netzarim Corridor.
  - » Troops called in airstrikes to eliminate gunmen and [killed](#) several other gunmen with sniper fire during the operation, which the IDF said began earlier this week.
  - » The IDF also [conducted](#) an airstrike to eliminate several terror operatives that had gathered near a civilian shelter in the Bureij area of central Gaza.
- On April 23, the IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes against two Hamas rocket launching posts in southern Gaza.
  - » The airstrikes were conducted based on newly obtained Israeli intelligence, enabling the IDF to eliminate the posts before the launchers were used.
- On April 22, *The New York Times* [reported](#), citing an Israeli military intelligence official, that Israel has destroyed about 70 percent of Hamas’s strategic terror tunnel complexes and “most of the key nodes [in the tunnel network] that Hamas has used to command its forces.”

- » The report also cited Israeli officials as asserting that the IDF has killed “as many as 13,000 Hamas members” throughout the course of the war.

## Lebanon

- On April 25, the IDF [said](#) that it struck Hezbollah targets in Maroun al-Ras, Markaba, and Aalma ash-Shab.
- The IDF [said](#) on April 24 that it targeted the rocket launcher used to attack Shomera the prior day and that it struck a building in which Hezbollah members hid. The IDF also said that it struck Hezbollah targets in Markaba, Ayta ash-Shab, and Marwahin overnight, as well as in Chihine and Kfarchouba.
  - » Lebanese media sources [reported](#) that over a dozen Israeli airstrikes were conducted in the vicinity of the southern Lebanese towns of Ayta ash-Shab and Ramyeh that day.
- On April 24, Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [said](#), “half of the Hezbollah commanders in south Lebanon have been eliminated ... and the other half hide and abandon south Lebanon to IDF operations,” and “we are dealing with a number of alternatives in order to [return displaced northern Israeli residents to their homes], and the coming period will be decisive in this regard.”
- On April 24, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#), “in an unusual statement, the IDF announces that it is carrying out strikes against Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon.” The outlet noted that “the IDF generally announces strikes in Lebanon after they have been carried out.”
- The IDF [said](#) on April 24 that it struck approximately 40 Hezbollah targets in Ayta ash-Shab as “part of the effort to destroy the organization’s infrastructure in the border area.”
- On April 24, the IDF [said](#) that it fired artillery toward the area from which terrorists fired anti-tank missiles toward Avivim.
- The IDF [said](#) on April 23 that it struck Hezbollah sites in Yaroun.
- According to [reports](#) from April 23, one person near Adloun in Lebanon was killed in an Israeli airstrike against a car. The IDF [said](#) later that day that it killed Hussein Azqul, an operative in Hezbollah’s air defense unit, in the strike, as well as Radwan force operative Muhammad Attiya in another airstrike overnight.
- The IDF [said](#) on April 23 that it targeted Hezbollah infrastructure in Ayta ash-Shab, Blida, and Markaba.
- Palestinian reports [said](#) on April 23 that Israel killed two people in a strike against a building in Hanine in southern Lebanon.
- On April 22, the IDF [said](#) that it fired artillery toward the site of a rocket barrage against Ein Zeitim and Safed.

## West Bank

- On April 23, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that “Palestinian health authorities [said] Israeli forces killed a Palestinian man during raids in the West Bank city of Jericho and nearby refugee camps.” Subsequent [reports](#) indicated that Shadi Jalaita, 44, was killed, and an Israel Police spokesperson told *The Times of Israel* that police conducted a counterterrorism operation there overnight.

## Humanitarian Efforts

- According to Israel’s Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories ([COGAT](#)), from the beginning of the war to April 24, there have been 479,150 tons of humanitarian aid that entered Gaza on 25,326 trucks.

- On April 25, UN humanitarian official Sigrid Kaag [said](#) that Israel has enabled improvements in aid shipments to Gaza despite necessary additional measures, specifically increasing “the quality and quantity of assistance.”
- On April 23, *Al-Monitor* [reported](#) that “the Biden administration’s point person for humanitarian issues in the Gaza Strip, David Satterfield, will leave his post at the end of the week but stay on as a senior adviser” and be replaced by Lise Grande, president and CEO of the U.S. Institute of Peace, according to two unnamed sources.
  - » The outlet also reported, “a source said Satterfield is leaving the position after roughly six months on the job because of a statutory requirement that special envoys get Senate confirmation after 180 days.”
- On April 22, a spokesperson for Israel’s Foreign Ministry [said](#) in a statement, “if more than 2,135 UNRWA employees are members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and 1/5 of the principals of UNRWA schools are Hamas activists, the problem with UNRWA-Gaza is not a problem of a few bad apples,” and “it is a poisoned and rotten tree whose roots are Hamas.”
  - » The statement also said that a forthcoming report of the results of an independent investigation of UNRWA “ignores the severity of the problem and offers cosmetic fixes,” and “this is what a desire to avoid the problem and not call it by its name looks like.”
  - » The review of UNRWA said, “Israel has yet to provide supporting evidence for its claim – based on a staff list it was given in March – that a significant number of UNRWA staff are members of terrorist organizations,” Reuters [reported](#) on April 22.
  - » German ministers [announced](#) on April 24, “the German government will soon continue its cooperation with UNRWA in Gaza, as Australia, Canada, Sweden and Japan, among others, have already done,” a decision that Israel’s Foreign Ministry [called](#) “regrettable and disappointing.”

#### *Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations*

- On April 25, a statement organized by the Biden administration and endorsed by Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Thailand, and the United Kingdom [said](#), “we call for the immediate release of all hostages held by Hamas in Gaza for over 200 days. They include our own citizens. The fate of the hostages and the civilian population in Gaza, who are protected under international law, is of international concern.”
  - » The statement also said, “we emphasize that the deal on the table to release the hostages would bring an immediate and prolonged ceasefire in Gaza, that would facilitate a surge of additional necessary humanitarian assistance to be delivered throughout Gaza and lead to the credible end of hostilities.”
  - » It said further, “Gazans would be able to return to their homes and their lands with preparations beforehand to ensure shelter and humanitarian provisions,” and “we strongly support the ongoing mediation efforts in order to bring our people home. We reiterate our call on Hamas to release the hostages and let us end this crisis so that collectively we can focus our efforts on bringing peace and stability to the region.”
- On April 25, a senior Biden administration official told reporters in a briefing that Israel has [agreed](#) to Hamas’s demand that Palestinians be allowed to return to northern Gaza without any restrictions.
  - » The official stated that certain conditions must first be met to enable Palestinians to return to northern Gaza in order to ensure their safety, including shelter, humanitarian assistance, and a “[United Nations] mission to make sure things are ready.”

- A Hamas source [told](#) the U.K.-based *Al-Araby Al-Jadeed* on April 24, “it is not possible, of course, to accurately determine the number of living prisoners, but what is certain is that it is higher than the numbers being circulated in the Hebrew media,” and 30 “generals and Shin Bet officers” are in “highly secured locations” that are inaccessible, although *The Times of Israel* asserted that the claim that the terror group holds 30 generals and Shin Bet personnel is false.
  - » *The Times of Israel* also reported that “the source also asserts that Hamas’s Gaza leader Yahya Sinwar, who has been hunkering down in tunnels for months and is Israel’s number one target, recently emerged from the underground to inspect areas where the terror group clashed with the IDF, and that he has held talks with Hamas’s leaders abroad to provide them ‘field reports’ of the ‘strength and solidity’ of the terror group.”
  - » The outlet reported further, “in a separate interview with the Dubai-based *Asharq News*, Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya claims the terror group has shown ‘flexibility’ in the Cairo negotiations, reducing the number of Palestinian prisoners it demands to free in exchange for every Israeli ‘soldier’ (male or female) from 500 to 50.”
- U.S. State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller [said](#) on April 23 that Hamas has “moved the goal post” in its demands during negotiations.

### *Post-War Planning*

- On April 25, Israel’s *Maariv* outlet [reported](#) that Hamas deputy political bureau chief Khalil al-Hayya recently alleged that Israel intends to retain a permanent presence in approximately 20 percent of the Gaza Strip.
  - » Al-Hayya, the head of Hamas’s delegation at hostage release negotiations, asserted in an interview with a Saudi press outlet that Israel stipulated during negotiations that it must retain a presence in certain specified areas of Gaza after the war.
  - » These areas, according to Al-Hayya, include central Gaza’s east-west Netzarim Corridor, a kilometer-wide zone in both Gaza’s east and north, an area between the southern Gazan cities of Rafah and Khan Younis, and an unspecified area in northwestern Gaza.
  - » Al-Hayya also [told](#) the Associated Press that day that Hamas would accept “a fully sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the return of Palestinian refugees in accordance with the international resolutions” along Israel’s pre-1967 borders as part of a hostage release deal.
- Israel’s *Arutz Sheva* outlet [reported](#), citing an Arab diplomatic source, that Turkey “offered several Arab countries ... a plan for a security arrangement, which would include the deployment of joint [Arab] forces in Gaza” after the conclusion of the war.
  - » According to the report, the Arab countries courted by Turkey rejected the Turkish proposal on the grounds that it was inadvisable for Arab forces to be stationed in Gaza.
  - » However, the report asserts that Egypt and other unnamed Arab countries are now open to having their forces stationed in Gaza and the West Bank as part of a two-state solution.

### *Casualties and Hostages*

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
  - » 606 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
    - 261 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
    - As of March 15, 1,480 IDF soldiers have been [injured](#) during ground combat in Gaza, including 310 who have been severely injured.



- On April 23, the IDF [said](#) that Sgt. First Class (res.) Salm Alkreshat, 43, was killed in northern Gaza the prior day.
- » 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, 34,305 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 77,293 have been injured during the war.
  - » On October 25, 2023, President Biden [cautioned](#) against trusting Gaza Health Ministry casualty figures, stating: “I have no notion that the Palestinians are telling the truth about how many people are killed ... I have no confidence in the number that the Palestinians are using.”
  - » On March 21, Senator Josh Hawley (R-MO) [said](#) that during a virtual meeting that day with Senate Republicans, Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu assessed that the number of people killed in Gaza was approximately 28,000.
  - » Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) on March 10 that Israel has killed approximately 13,000 Hamas operatives over the course of the war.
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, 489 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](#) 134 hostages and deceased hostage bodies.
  - » Israeli officials have confirmed the [deaths](#) of at least [35](#) of the 134 hostages captured on October 7, as well as two additional hostages who were abducted prior to October 7.
  - » Many of the hostages are foreign or dual nationals, including up to 5 [American](#) nationals, 6 [German](#) nationals, 13 [Thai](#) nationals, 4 [Portuguese](#) nationals, 3 [British](#) nationals, 2 [Italian](#) nationals, 4 [Romanian](#) nationals, and 2 [Mexican](#) nationals.
- On April 22, Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) on X, “as we gather around the Seder table to commemorate and celebrate our journey from slavery to freedom, our hearts are heavy with the plight of the 133 Israelis who remain in captivity in Hamas’ terror

tunnels,” and “tonight, we think of those who cannot join their families at the Seder table. Their absence strengthens our resolve and reminds us of the urgency of our mission. We will not rest until each one is freed.”

- » He also noted that “the genocidal terrorist organization Hamas” has refused hostage deal proposals, and he pledged to implement “increased military and diplomatic efforts to secure the freedom of our hostages.”
- » Netanyahu said further, “Israel’s strength, both defensive and offensive, has been recently displayed. There is more to come. We will prevail.”

#### *Iranian Involvement and Response*

- On April 25, the Associated Press [reported](#), “a Peruvian judge has ordered 18 months of preventative detention for an Iranian and two Peruvian men while they are investigated for allegedly attempting to kill two Israelis living in the South American country.”
- On April 24, AFP [reported](#) that “Iran has reduced its military footprint in Syria after a succession of strikes blamed on Israel, a source close to Iran-backed Hezbollah says.”
- Houthi spokesperson Yahya Sarea said on April 24 that the group targeted Maersk’s *Yorktown* vessel and an American destroyer in the Gulf of Aden, as well as the Israeli MSC *Veracruz* in the Indian Ocean, Reuters [reported](#).
  - » U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) [said](#) that day that an anti-ship ballistic missile fired from Houthi areas in Yemen “was likely targeting the MV *Yorktown*, a U.S.-flagged, owned, and operated vessel with 18 U.S. and four Greek crew members.” According to CENTCOM, a coalition vessel intercepted the missile.
- On April 24, North Korea’s state-run media [reported](#) that a North Korean delegation led by North Korea’s minister for international trade traveled to Iran that day.
  - » Reuters [observed](#) that the announcement was a “rare public report” of an interaction between the two countries, who are believed to have “military ties.”
  - » JINSA [noted](#) in a recent NatSec Brief that Iran likely maintains an “illicit proliferation network” with North Korea.
- On April 23, AFP [reported](#), citing a U.S. defense official, that the United States was targeted in an attack on Al-Asad Air Base in western Iraq on April 22. The attack marked, according to the official, “the second attack against U.S. forces [in the Middle East] since February 4.”
  - » According to an April 23 Associated Press [report](#), the attack involved at least two drones, which were shot down.
  - » The previous attack, in which approximately five missiles [targeted](#) a base in Rumalyn, Syria that houses U.S. troops, occurred on April 21 and was reportedly launched from Iraq.
- During an April 23 speech in Pakistan, Iran’s President Ebrahim Raisi [vowed](#) that an Israeli attack on Iranian soil could lead to nothing being left of the “Zionist regime.” Raisi also stated, “the Islamic Republic of Iran will honourably continue to support the Palestinian resistance.”

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

- On April 24, President Biden [stated](#) that humanitarian aid allocated for Palestinians in Gaza, which Congress approved as part of a large aid package Biden signed into law that day, will be “immediately secure[d] and surge[d] into Gaza.”

- » Biden stated, “Israel must make sure all this aid reaches the Palestinians in Gaza without delay.” Biden specified that the aid will include “food, medical supplies, [and] clean water.”
- » Biden further stated, “this bill significantly -- significantly -- increases humanitarian assistance we’re sending to the innocent people of Gaza who are suffering badly. They’re suffering the consequences of this war that Hamas started, and we’ve been working intently for months to get as much aid to Gaza as possible.”
- On April 23, the U.S. Senate [voted](#) 79-18 to approve a \$95.3 billion aid package including military aid for Israel, Taiwan, and Ukraine as well as humanitarian aid for Gaza. President Biden [signed](#) the bill into law the following day.
  - » President Biden said in a [statement](#), “this critical legislation will make our nation and world more secure as we support our friends who are defending themselves against terrorists like Hamas.”
  - » As JINSA previously [noted](#), the aid for Israel includes \$5.2 billion toward replenishing and expanding Israel’s missile and rocket defense system; \$3.5 billion for purchasing advanced weapons systems; \$1 billion to enhance weapons production, and; \$4.4 billion for other defense supplies and services provided to Israel.
- On April 23, President Biden [said](#) to reporters, “I condemn the antisemitic protests [on college campuses]. That’s why I’ve set up a program to deal with that,” and “I also condemn those who don’t understand what’s going on with the Palestinians and how they’re being...” before “trailing off,” *The Times of Israel* reported.
- Addressing the recently released 2023 human rights report from the State Department, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [said](#) on April 22, “Hamas’s horrific attacks on Israel on October 7 last year and the devastating loss of civilian life in Gaza as Israel exercises its right to ensure that those attacks never happen again, have raised deeply troubling human rights concerns.”
  - » He also said, “we continue to work every day to bring the fighting to an end, to secure the release of hostages held by Hamas and other groups, to uphold international humanitarian law, to prevent further suffering, to create a path toward a more peaceful and secure future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.”
  - » Blinken also [said](#) that day, “as this report makes clear, we apply the same standard to everyone, and that doesn’t change whether the country in question is an adversary, competitor, a friend or an ally,” and “the case of Ukraine is totally different than in Gaza. The Ukrainians are not in any way a legitimate target the way Hamas is in Gaza. [Hamas is also] embedding themselves among civilians, hiding in and underneath apartment buildings, mosques, hospitals — you name it.”
    - He added, “in the case of Ukraine, when Russian forces withdrew from Bucha we were able to see very plainly what had happened. Each of these situations is different,” and “Israel has demonstrated the capacity to look at itself. This is what separates democracies from ... other countries — the ability, the willingness, the determination to look at themselves.”
    - He also said, “it’s my understanding that they have many open investigations based on reports that have come forward with allegations about abuses of human rights.”
  - » The report [notes](#) that during the October 7 attack, terrorists killed “an estimated 1,200 individuals, injuring more than 5,400, and abducting 253 hostages,” and “Israel responded with a sustained, wide-scale military operation in Gaza, which had killed more than 21,000 Palestinians and injured more than 56,000 by the end of the year, displaced the vast majority of Palestinians in Gaza, and resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis.”

- On April 24, Secretary of State Antony Blinken [stated](#), “I think you’ll see in the days ahead that we will have more to say, so please stay tuned on that,” in response to a reporter’s question about “upcoming punitive action from [the] U.S.” against the IDF’s Netzah Yehuda battalion.
- On April 24, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [stated](#) that “in terms of our funding of UNRWA [the United Nations Relief and Works Agency], that is still suspended. We’re gonna have to see real progress here before that gets changed.”
  - » Kirby’s remarks followed the release of a report by an independent review panel into Israel’s assertions that a large percentage of UNRWA’s staffers in Gaza maintain ties with terrorist organizations. The panel alleged that Israel has failed to substantiate its claims.
    - Kirby stated, “we welcome the results of this report and strongly support the recommendations in the report.”
- On April 24, State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson for the United States Vedant Patel [criticized](#) Israel’s Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich’s reported push to legalize nearly 70 outposts in the West Bank.
  - » Patel stated, “these reports about directives to support illegal outposts in the West Bank, we believe that to be dangerous and reckless. Our policy, U.S. policy, remains that settlements are counterproductive to the cause of peace and the Government of Israel’s program is inconsistent with international law.”
- On April 23, Pentagon Press Secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder [said](#) that the United States is “positioned to begin construction very soon” on a pier off the coast of Gaza to facilitate greater aid flows into Gaza.
- On April 22, State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller [said](#), “we don’t want to see Palestinians evacuated from Rafah unless it is to return to their homes,” and “we don’t think there’s any effective way to evacuate 1.4 million Palestinians. There’s no way to conduct an operation in Rafah that would not lead to inordinate civilian harm and severely hamper the delivery of humanitarian assistance.”
  - » He added, “we do want to see people able to leave Rafah to return to their homes — if they exist — and to their neighborhoods and to begin rebuilding their homes. We want to see the Palestinian people in Gaza start to restart their lives and rebuild their lives and ultimately bring this conflict to a close.”
- On April 23, AFP [reported](#) that the United States designated “four people and two companies it says were ‘involved in malicious cyber activity’ on behalf of [Iran’s] military.” According to a U.S. Treasury Department statement, “these actors targeted more than a dozen US companies and government entities through cyber operations, including spear phishing and malware attacks.”
- On April 24, CENTCOM [said](#), “a coalition vessel successfully engaged one anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) launched from Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist-controlled areas in Yemen over the Gulf of Aden,” and “between 12:07 pm and 1:26 pm, [CENTCOM] successfully engaged and destroyed four airborne unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) over Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.”
- On April 23, Vice President Kamala Harris and Israel’s President Isaac Herzog held a phone call. According to an Israeli [readout](#), the two discussed antisemitism on U.S. college campuses, U.S. aid to Israel, and Herzog’s “strong opposition” to the possibility of the United States imposing sanctions against the Netzah Yehuda IDF battalion.

- On April 25, the European Union’s parliamentary body, the European Parliament, [adopted](#) a resolution condemning Iran’s April 13-14 missile and drone attack against Israel and calling for further sanctions to be levied against the Iranian regime. The resolution passed by a margin of 357-20.
- On April 25, Belgium’s development minister, Caroline Gennez, [said](#), “it is with deep sadness and horror that we learn of the death of our colleague Abdallah Nabhan (33) and his seven-year-old son Jamal, last night, following a bombardment by the Israeli army in the eastern part of the city of Rafah.” She also said, “the indiscriminate bombing of civilian infrastructure and innocent civilians goes against every international and humanitarian law and the rules of war.”
- According to a [report](#) from April 23, “Britain’s High Court agree[d] to hear a legal challenge later this year over continued UK arms exports to Israel during its war against the Hamas terror group in Gaza.”
- According to [reports](#) from April 23, Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan does not think that Hamas officials will leave Qatar. Reports later that day [indicated](#) that Qatar believes Hamas’s presence in the country is justifiable amid ongoing hostage negotiations that Qatar is helping to mediate.
- On April 23, addressing Hamas’s lack of inclusion in a UN report noting organizations suspected of wartime sexual violence, Israel’s Foreign Minister Israel Katz [said](#) that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is standing “shoulder to shoulder with the rapists and murderers of Hamas” and has “refused to acknowledge Hamas’s responsibility for the grave sexual crimes that appear in the Patten report and to declare it a terrorist organization.”
  - » He argued further, “I am convinced that if the crimes of the Nazi regime came up for discussion during his tenure, he would refuse to condemn them as well if his political interests demanded that,” and “Guterres has turned the UN into an extremely antisemitic and anti-Israel institution, and his time in office will be remembered as the darkest in the organization’s history.”

### *Rising Antisemitism and Protests*

- On April 22, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that “pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel protest encampments are springing up at several US universities following unrest around mass student demonstrations at Columbia University in recent weeks amid the ongoing war in Gaza.”
  - » On April 25, the Associated Press reported that 34 people had been [arrested](#) as part of an anti-Israel protest at the University of Texas, Austin.
  - » On April 24, Columbia University [extended](#) a deadline for protesters to leave a tent encampment on campus after students “committed to dismantling and removing a significant number of tents.”
    - The deadline had previously been [set](#) at April 23 at midnight.
  - » That day, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) and several other members of Congress [traveled](#) to Columbia University and delivered a speech expressing support for Jewish students on campus.
    - Rep. Johnson stated that Columbia University President Minouche Shafik should resign “if she cannot bring order to this chaos” and called for the National Guard to be sent in if “this is not contained quickly and if these threats and intimidation are not stopped.”

- » On April 23, protesters [clashed](#) with New York police officers as the latter tried to clear the so-called “liberated zone” on the New York University campus, and over 130 people were [arrested](#), students and faculty among them.
  - According to a [report](#) from *The Washington Post* citing a senior New York Police Department official, 10 to 15 New York University faculty members were involved in the protests and were “the most aggressive” protesters.
- » On April 22, Columbia University announced that it would be [canceling](#) all in-person classes for the remainder of the semester at its main campus due to the ongoing protests and unrest on and nearby campus.
- On April 24, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#), “over 100 pro-Palestinian protesters have been arrested outside the home of Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer in New York City, The New York Times and New York Post report.”
- According to a [report](#) from April 23, “the leader of far-left MPs in the French parliament [Mathilde Panot] is summoned for questioning by police in an investigation into suspected justification of terrorism over comments on the October 7 onslaught by Hamas.”
  - » The party, France Unbowed (LFI), said in a statement on October 7 that Hamas’s massacre was “an armed offensive by Palestinian forces” that happened “in a context of intensification of the Israeli occupation policy.”
- On April 23, a woman [accosted](#) actor Alec Baldwin in New York, saying, “Alec can you please say ‘Free Palestine’ one time?,” and “Free Palestine, Alec, just one time, and I’ll leave you alone.” She also said, “F\*ck Israel, f\*ck Zionism.”

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