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## Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update April 3, 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

- An Israeli [strike](#) on April 2 that killed seven World Central Kitchen humanitarian aid workers in Gaza led to more intense allegations that Israel has not done enough to protect civilians, including among the most directly reproachful [remarks](#) that President Biden has expressed since the war began. Israeli officials quickly acknowledged the accidental tragedy and pledged to conduct an investigation into the strike, but international condemnation or dissatisfaction with the eventual findings of Israel's probe into the incident could further strain Israel's relations with key partners, including the United States, and contribute further to mounting international pressure on Israel to terminate its Gaza operations.
- The April 1 reported Israeli strike on an Iranian consulate building in Damascus which [killed](#) Mohamad Reza Zahedi, in charge of overseeing IRGC Quds Force operations in Syria and Lebanon, and several other IRGC leaders was among the most daring strikes on Iranian officials in years.
  - » Zahedi was the [highest-ranking](#) Iranian official killed in nearly five years and among the highest ever killed by Israel. The airstrike also marked the [first time](#) that an Iranian consular building—though a legitimate target, as it was used for military activity—was struck by Israel.
  - » Zahedi's death signals to Iran that, far from Hezbollah being its “insurance policy,” Iran's activities in Lebanon and the continued belligerence of Hezbollah are liabilities that will get top Iranian officials killed.
- A video conference between senior U.S. and Israeli officials on April 1 regarding Israel's plans for a full-scale operation in Rafah did [not satisfy](#) U.S. concerns about Israel's ability to conduct such an operation while minimizing the risks to civilians. More broadly, persistent disagreements between the United States and Israel over the strategic value of an extensive Israeli military operation in Rafah, Hamas's final holdout in Gaza, exacerbate the risk that the terror group's remaining battalions will continue to exist in the city.

- » As JINSA’s Julian and Jenny Josephson Senior Vice President for Israeli Affairs IDF MG (ret.) Yaacov Ayish has [noted](#), “the connection between the Egyptian Rafah and the Palestinian Rafah via the different tunnels—this is a source of supply materials and oxygen for Hamas. This is something we will have to address.”
- Reports that the United States is considering new [arms shipments](#) to Israel, including up to 50 F-15 fighter jets, 30 AIM-120 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles, and a number of Joint Direct Attack Munition tailkits suggest that the United States remains willing to send arms to Israel despite U.S. disagreements with Israel regarding a full-scale operation in Rafah.
  - » Conversely, such reports may simply represent messaging to downplay other recent reports that the United States is intentionally [slow-walking](#) arms to Israel out of [concern](#) that major arms shipments to Israel will increase the likelihood of a full-scale war between Israel and Hezbollah.

## 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.
- At around 1 a.m. on April 3, the IDF [said](#) a suspected drone entered Israeli airspace from the east just north of Eilat, setting off sirens. The IDF fired an interceptor missile, but it is unclear if the projectile was shot down.
- On April 3, four police officers were [injured](#) in a suspected terror ramming attack near Kochav Yair in central Israel. The police said that after ramming the officers, the suspect proceeded to a nearby checkpoint where he tried to stab security force officers, who “neutralized” him.
- On April 2, a suspected drone rigged with explosives, which the IDF called a “suspicious aerial target,” [impacted](#) an unpopulated area in Jordan near the Ramon Airport in Israel, approximately 600 feet from the border. The impact sparked a fire but, according to the Israel Airports Authority, inflicted no injuries or damage.

### **Gaza**

- Sirens [sounded](#) in Shtula, Shomera, Zar’it, and Even Menachem.

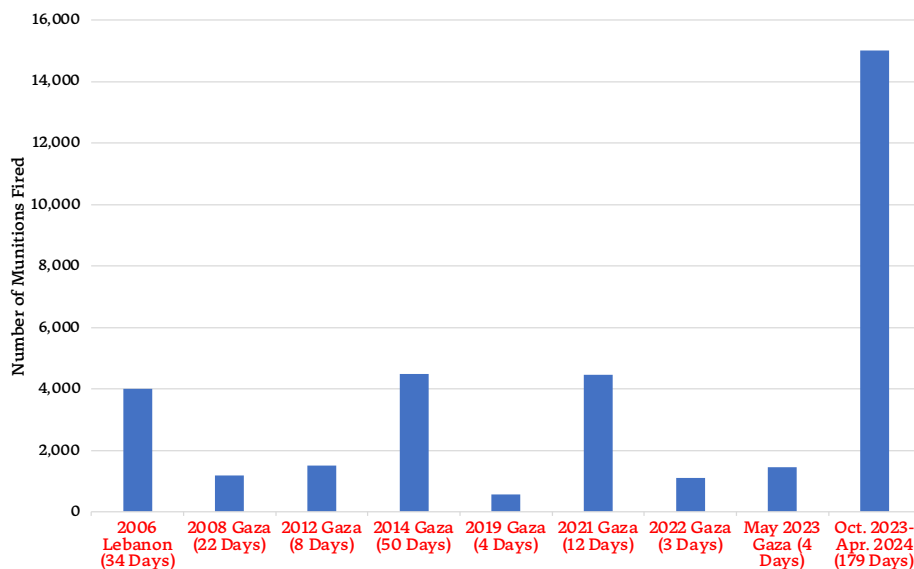
### **Lebanon**

- Sirens sounded in [Margalioth and Nahariya](#).
- On April 2, the IDF [said](#) that terrorists in Lebanon fired approximately 10 rockets toward Israel’s Western Galilee region, some of which the Iron Dome intercepted, causing no reported injuries. Earlier, Hezbollah [said](#) that it fired a Katyusha rocket toward the area.

### **Syria**

- Sirens sounded in the [southern Golan Heights](#).
- On April 2, the IDF [said](#) that Israel intercepted a “suspicious aerial target” over Syrian airspace that was flying toward Israel from the direction of Syria, triggering sirens in the southern Golan Heights.

## Projectiles Fired Against Israel During Major Conflicts



### IDF Operations

- On April 1, *The New York Times* [reported](#) that “Israeli lawmakers passed a law [that day] allowing the government to temporarily shutter foreign media outlets that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has determined undermine the country’s national security,” which Netanyahu indicated he will use to block *Al Jazeera* in Israel.
  - » Netanyahu wrote on X, “the terrorist channel Al Jazeera will no longer broadcast from Israel. I intend to act immediately in accordance with the new law to stop the channel’s activity.”
  - » *Al Jazeera* said, “The network stresses that this latest measure comes as part of a series of systematic Israeli attacks to silence Al Jazeera,” and added that the law will not “deter us from continuing our bold and professional coverage.”

### Gaza

- On April 3, the IDF [detailed](#) its ongoing operations against Hamas in the southern Gazan city of Khan Younis, which involved confiscating weapons, destroying the terror group’s infrastructure with airstrikes, and killing and arresting terrorists in the city’s al-Amal neighborhood.
- Israel’s *i24 News* outlet [reported](#) on April 2 that “in a recent operation in southern Gaza, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) arrested dozens of terror operatives attempting to leave Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis.” The report also indicated that the IDF transferred the fighters to the Shin Bet internal security agency and the Military Intelligence Directorate’s Unit 504 personnel for questioning.
  - » The IDF said that it captured the terrorists to make sure that Hamas does not reconstitute in medical facilities.
- On April 1, an IDF drone strike in central Gaza near Deir al-Balah [killed](#) seven World Central Kitchen (WCK) employees, [prompting](#) the organization to pause its regional operations.

- » José Andrés, the group’s founder, [said](#) on X on April 1 that he is “heartbroken and grieving for their families and friends and our whole WCK family,” and “the Israeli government needs to stop this indiscriminate killing. It needs to stop restricting humanitarian aid, stop killing civilians and aid workers, and stop using food as a weapon.”
- » On April 1, WCK [posted](#) on X, “we are aware of reports that members of the World Central Kitchen team have been killed in an IDF attack while working to support our humanitarian food delivery efforts in Gaza. This is a tragedy. Humanitarian aid workers and civilians should NEVER be a target. EVER.”
- » On April 2, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [addressed](#) the incident, saying, “last night, an incident took place in Gaza that resulted in the tragic death of World Central Kitchen employees as they fulfilled their vital mission of bringing food to people in need,” and “as a professional military committed to international law, we are committed to examining our operations thoroughly and transparently.”
  - He also said, “I just spoke to WCK founder Chef Jose Andres, and expressed the deepest condolences of the Israel Defense Forces to the families and the entire World Central Kitchen family,” and he reiterated the IDF’s “sincere sorrow to our allied nations who have been doing and continue to do so much to assist those in need.”
  - Hagari added, “we have been reviewing the incident at the highest levels to understand the circumstances of what happened and how it happened” and noted that the IDF’s General Staff Fact-Finding Assessment Mechanism will investigate the incident to “help us reduce the risk of such an event from occurring again.”
  - Hagari added further, “for the last few months, the IDF has been working closely with the World Central Kitchen to assist them in fulfilling their noble mission of helping bring food and humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. WCK also came to help Israelis after the massacre of October 7th; they were one of the first NGOs here.”
  - Hagari further stated, “the work of WCK is critical; they are on the frontlines of humanity,” and “we will get to the bottom of this and we will share our findings transparently.”
- » IDF Chief of Staff Lt Gen Herzl Halevi also [addressed](#) the mistake on April 3, saying, “last night, seven employees of the World Central Kitchen were killed,” and “WCK is an organization whose people work across the globe, including in Israel to do good in difficult conditions. The IDF works together closely with the World Central Kitchen and greatly appreciates the important work that they do.”
  - He added, “it was a mistake that followed a misidentification, at night, during a war, in very complex conditions. It shouldn’t have happened,” and noted that Israel had no “intention of harming WCK aid workers.”
  - Halevi noted further that Israel [set up](#) a humanitarian command center “to improve the way we coordinate aid distribution in Gaza,” and “we will continue taking immediate actions to ensure that more is done to protect humanitarian aid workers.” He also stressed that an “independent” investigation will take place.
  - *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that the new command center will enhance the IDF’s communication with the Defense Ministry’s Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), in order to better coordinate humanitarian activity in the Gaza Strip.

- Halevi further stated, “this incident was a grave mistake. Israel is at war with Hamas, not with the people of Gaza,” and “we are sorry for the unintentional harm to the members of WCK. We share in the grief of their families as well as the entire World Central Kitchen organization from the bottom of our hearts.”
- Halevi reiterated the IDF’s position that “we see great importance in the continued delivery of humanitarian aid, and we will keep working to facilitate this vital effort.”
- » On April 2, Prime Minister Netanyahu [said](#), “unfortunately, yesterday there was a tragic incident in which our forces accidentally struck innocent people in the Gaza Strip,” and “this happens in war, we are thoroughly investigating it, we are in contact with the relevant parties and will do everything to ensure that this sort of thing doesn’t happen again.”
- » On April 2, the office of Israel’s President Isaac Herzog said that the president [expressed](#) “deep sorrow and sincere apologies” directly to WCK founder José Andrés, stressed Israel’s commitment to investigating the strike, and “affirmed Israel’s commitment to delivering and upgrading humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza.”
  - Herzog also thanked WCK for its “commitment to the wellbeing of Israelis and Palestinians, and to the values of humanity.”
- » Israel’s *Haaretz* outlet [reported](#) on April 2 that Israel launched the drone strike “because of suspicion that a terrorist was [traveling] with the convoy” and that, according to anonymous defense sources, “the war room of the unit responsible for security of the route that the convoy [traveled] identified an armed man on the [aid] truck and suspected that he was a terrorist.”
  - However, sometime after, three cars originally escorting the aid truck left a warehouse without the truck, and without the presumably armed man.
  - According to an Israeli defense source cited in the report, “the war room of the unit responsible for security of the route ordered the drone operators to attack one of the cars with a missile.”
- On April 2, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to strike over 25 targets in Gaza during the past day, and it detailed its ongoing operations against terrorists in Khan Younis in southern Gaza. According to the IDF, troops have killed numerous gunmen in Khan Younis and directed airstrikes against terror cells in al-Qarara, a Khan Younis suburb.
- On April 1, Israeli media [reported](#) that an Israeli helicopter pilot hit the wrong button and accidentally fired on Israeli soldiers in Gaza but did not hit any troops. The pilot was reportedly the high-ranking Ramon Air Force Base commander, who is known as Colonel “Y.”
  - » The IDF spokesperson’s unit later released a statement indicating that “the incident is being investigated. The soldiers continued their mission, and there were no injuries from the accident.”

## Lebanon

- On April 2, the IDF [said](#) that it conducted an airstrike near Hamoul in southern Lebanon against terrorists who fired approximately 10 rockets toward the Nahariya area in the Western Galilee that evening. Earlier, the IDF had [said](#) that it fired artillery toward the site of the attack.
- On April 1, the IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes against several Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon, including terrorist facilities in Hanine, Aytash-Shab, and the Hamames

mountains. The IDF also conducted artillery shelling against the source of earlier rocket fire from Menara and Mount Dov in Lebanon.

## Syria

- On April 1, three commanders in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force (IRGC-QF) were [killed](#) in an airstrike on an Iranian diplomatic building in Damascus. The strike, which was reportedly conducted by Israel, killed Mohamad Reza Zahedi, who oversaw Iran's proxy group activities in Lebanon and Syria.
  - » Along with Zahedi, two other IRGC-QF generals, Hossein Aminollahi and Mohammad Hadi Haj Rahimi, were reportedly killed in the strike.
  - » According to a report from *The New York Times*, Zahedi was "the senior most commander to be killed since the U.S. assassination of Qassim Suleimani in 2020," and he "coordinated the Iranian-backed armed groups and selected targets in their attacks on U.S. and Israeli interests in the region."
  - » The report also quoted an IRGC-QF official as saying the Iranian leadership was "in shock" over the strike, and asserted that the strike "was a significant blow to Iran's military operations in the Middle East."
  - » Israel's *Maariv* outlet reported that Zahedi, in addition to overseeing Iranian proxy activities in Syria and Lebanon, also [helped](#) coordinate activities for Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen.

## Humanitarian Efforts

- According to Israel's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories ([COGAT](#)), from the beginning of the war to April 2, 379,860 tons of humanitarian aid have entered Gaza on 20,285 trucks.
- On April 2, the UN's top official for the coordination of humanitarian aid in Gaza, Jamie McGoldrick, released a statement [alleging](#) that "at least 196 humanitarians had been killed" in Gaza between October 2023 and March 20.
  - » McGoldrick said, "this is nearly three times the death toll recorded in any single conflict in a year."
- On April 2, the World Bank and the United Nations released a [joint report](#) assessing the extent of damage in the Gaza Strip.
  - » The report found that the total cost of damage to critical infrastructure in Gaza is estimated to be around \$18.5 billion.
  - » According to the report, an estimated 26 million tons of rubble will need to be cleared during rebuilding.
  - » The report also found that 92 percent of primary roads in Gaza are destroyed or damaged, 84 percent of medical facilities are destroyed or damaged, and Gaza's water and sanitation systems are delivering 5 percent of their previous output before the war.
- On April 2, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that an unnamed senior Emirati official told the outlet that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has suspended its work with the maritime aid corridor for Gaza until a full investigation into the strike that killed WCK workers takes place and until Israel provides guarantees that it will safeguard aid workers.

- » The UAE and Cyprus said in a joint statement, “the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza requires the adoption of such a collective international approach to immediately mitigate the threat to innocent lives, by ensuring urgent, safe, unhindered, and sustainable delivery of aid.”
- On April 2, Cyprus’s President Nikos Christodoulides [called](#) for an immediate investigation into the deaths of the seven aid workers from World Central Kitchen and said, “we need to double down on efforts to get aid to Gaza.”
  - » Referring to the maritime route from which humanitarian aid has been transported from Cyprus to the Gaza Strip, Christodoulides said, “the Amalthea initiative will continue as long as the humanitarian needs are there.”
- On April 2, aid organization Anera [said](#) it was suspending its operations in Gaza, releasing a statement that said, “after six months of constant bombing and flagrant violations of international law, and with consultation from our Gaza team, Anera has concluded it is best to pause our operations.”
- On April 2, Japan’s Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa [said](#) that Japan will lift its suspension of funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), [adding](#) that the \$35 million of funding it had planned to send prior to its suspension is ready to be released.

#### *Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations*

- On April 2, an Israeli delegation of negotiators [returned](#) from Cairo after putting together an “updated proposal for Hamas to address,” according to Prime Minister Netanyahu’s office. According to *The Times of Israel*, some progress was made in negotiations.
  - » The delegation was reportedly a “mid-level negotiating team” that was “made up of Mossad, Shin Bet and IDF officials,” according to *The Times of Israel*.
  - » Reportedly, talks are largely still stuck because Hamas has not shown flexibility regarding its demand that northern Gazans be permitted to return to their homes and its demands that Israel withdraw all forces from Gaza.

#### *Casualties and Hostages*

- Over 1,200 people have been [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
  - » 600 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
    - 256 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.
  - » 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 32,900 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 75,400 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.
  - » 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, 455 people have been [killed](#), and an additional 4,750 have been wounded, in the West Bank.
- The IDF [claims](#) it has killed at least 1,500 infiltrators from Gaza into Israel 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 April 3, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas’s Fatah party released a [statement](#) that “external interference, particularly by Iran, has no other objective than to sow chaos in the Palestinian internal arena, which will only benefit the Israeli occupation and the enemies of our people.” The statement added, “we will not allow our sacred cause and the blood of our people to be exploited for suspicious plots that have nothing to do with them.”
- On April 2, Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei [stated](#) that “Israel will be punished” for striking Iran’s consulate in Damascus.
- On April 2, Iran’s President Ebrahim Raisi [claimed](#) that Israel’s attack against Iran’s consulate in Damascus was a “cowardly crime [that] will not go unanswered.”



## *U.S. and International Response*

- On April 3, chef José Andrés, founder of World Central Kitchen, argued in an [op-ed](#) for Israel's *Ynet* news outlet that "Israel is better than the way this war is being waged. It is better than blocking food and medicine to civilians. It is better than killing aid workers who coordinate their movements with the IDF ... It's time for the best of Israel to show up. You cannot save the hostages by bombing every building in Gaza. You cannot win this war by starving an entire population."
  - » Andrés noted, "from day one [of the war], we have fed Israelis as well as Palestinians. All across Israel, we have served more than 1.75 million hot meals. We have fed families displaced by Hezbollah rockets in the north. We have fed grieving families from the south. We delivered meals to the hospitals where hostages were reunited with their families. We have called consistently, repeatedly and passionately for the release of all the hostages."
  - » He added, "we know Israelis. Israelis, in their heart of hearts, know that food is not a weapon of war ... Israel is better than the way this war is being waged. It is better than blocking food and medicine to civilians. It is better than killing aid workers who coordinated their movements with the IDF."
  - » Andrés argued, "the Israeli government needs to open land routes to food and medicine today. It needs to stop killing civilians and aid workers today. It needs to start the long journey to peace today."
- Reports on April 3 [indicated](#) that U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan postponed a trip that was [scheduled](#) for this week to Saudi Arabia to meet with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.
  - » Sullivan is [reportedly](#) suffering from a cracked rib.
- On April 2, President Biden released a [statement](#) indicating that he was "outraged and heartbroken by the deaths of seven humanitarian workers from World Central Kitchen, including one American, in Gaza yesterday. They were providing food to hungry civilians in the middle of a war. They were brave and selfless. Their deaths are a tragedy."
  - » The statement added, "Israel has pledged to conduct a thorough investigation into why the aid workers' vehicles were hit by airstrikes. That investigation must be swift, it must bring accountability, and its findings must be made public."
  - » Biden argued, "even more tragically, this is not a stand-alone incident. This conflict has been one of the worst in recent memory in terms of how many aid workers have been killed. This is a major reason why distributing humanitarian aid in Gaza has been so difficult—because Israel has not done enough to protect aid workers trying to deliver desperately needed help to civilians. Incidents like yesterday's simply should not happen. Israel has also not done enough to protect civilians."
    - He further noted that "the United States has repeatedly urged Israel to deconflict their military operations against Hamas with humanitarian operations, in order to avoid civilian casualties."
- On April 2, following the deaths of the World Central Kitchen humanitarian aid workers, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [criticized](#) "the record number of humanitarian workers who have been killed in this particular conflict" and noted that "they have to be protected ...

We shouldn't have a situation where people who are simply trying to help their fellow human beings are themselves at grave risk."

- » Blinken added that the United States urged Israel to conduct "a swift, a thorough, an impartial investigation to understand exactly what happened."
- » Blinken argued that Israel must do more "to protect innocent civilian lives."
- White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [said](#) during an April 2 press conference, "we were outraged to learn of an IDF strike that killed a number of civilian humanitarian workers yesterday from the World Central Kitchen, which has been relentlessly working to get food to those who are hungry in Gaza," and "we hope that those findings [of an Israeli investigation into the incident] will be made public, and that there is appropriate accountability held."
  - » Kirby [stated](#) that "there is no evidence" Israel deliberately targeted aid workers in the strike.
    - Kirby also stated that Israel's investigation into the incident "shouldn't need to be a long, drawn-out, weeks-long investigation," adding that "something like this can probably be resolved in a matter of days."
  - » Kirby also cited UN figures that over 200 aid workers have been killed in the fighting and argued that the strike is "emblematic of the larger problem and evidence of why distribution of aid in Gaza has been so challenging."
  - » Kirby said that the IDF "must do much more to improve deconfliction processes" but noted that the strike did not seem intentional. He stressed that the United States "will continue to press Israel to do more" to protect aid workers.
  - » Addressing U.S. plans to build a pier in Gaza to deliver aid, he said that force protection is the "first and foremost" concern, and "we're under no illusion that Gaza isn't a war zone."
  - » White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre also noted that President Biden offered condolences to WCK founder José Andrés over the phone.
- On April 2, *The Times of Israel* [quoted](#) an anonymous U.S. official as saying, "people aren't exactly lining up to [deliver aid to Gaza], and [Israel] just took out one of the few groups that has volunteered [WCK]," and "they don't want UNRWA involved? Fine. But they have to be ... sure that the rest of the humanitarian workers are protected."
  - » The official also said, "if [WCK] doesn't come back, and other groups follow suit, the onus is going to fall on Israel to provide aid to the Palestinians," and "to not have proper de-confliction mechanisms put in place six months into the war is inexcusable."
  - » The official added, "the IDF is talking about improving communications between the Southern Command and COGAT. How is this mechanism only being put in place now?" *The Times of Israel* also reported that the official warned "that the strike could have implications for continued fighting in Gaza as well as the hostage negotiations."
- On April 2, U.S. officials denied that the United States was involved in or had foreknowledge of a strike against an Iranian consular building in Damascus, Syria that killed several senior IRGC officials.
  - » White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [stated](#) at a press conference, "let me make it clear. We had nothing to do with the strike in Damascus ... We weren't involved in any way."

- » Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh [noted](#), “we were not notified by the Israelis about their strike or the intended target of their strike in Damascus.”
- On April 1, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Israel’s Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, who is a former JINSA distinguished fellow, and Israel’s National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi held a [video conference](#) to discuss Israel’s plans for an operation in Rafah.
  - » Israel’s *Channel 12* news outlet [reported](#) Hebrew translations of quotes attributable to the U.S. officials that indicated they were very concerned about the threat of famine and critical of Israel’s plans for an operation in Rafah. According to those translated quotes:
    - Sullivan claimed, “you’re going to be responsible for the third famine crisis of the 21st century. That is not something we can accept as partners. The [Rafah] evacuation plan you’ve presented thus far is not impressive and is not implementable.” He reportedly added, “if you don’t have a proper plan for the day after, nothing will help you to advance the dismantling of Hamas. Not [operating in] Rafah, and not anything else.”
    - Blinken argued, “according to the pace of your operations, it will take you four months to evacuate Rafah.”
  - » A joint [statement](#) after the call indicated that the U.S. officials “expressed its concerns with various courses of action in Rafah,” and the Israeli officials “agreed to take these concerns into account and to have follow up discussions between experts.”
- On April 1, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre [stated](#) that Israel’s parliament passing a law authorizing the government to ban foreign networks that it deems to pose a threat to national security, which Prime Minister Netanyahu plans to use to ban *Al Jazeera*, is “concerning.”
  - » Jean-Pierre stated, “a move like this is concerning. We believe in the freedom of the press. It is critical. It is critically important. And the United States supports the critically important work journalists around the world do. And so—and that includes those who are reporting in—in the conflict in Gaza.”
- On April 1, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller [said](#) that Israel’s need to re-enter Shifa Hospital to clear it of terrorists underscores the “need for Israel to have a sustainable, long-term strategy when it comes to Gaza,” adding that “it’s not enough to just clear certain neighborhoods or hospitals or any other geographic areas or buildings of Hamas.”
  - » Miller further stated that Israel needs “a long-term, sustainable strategy that is not just a security strategy but also a political strategy if they really want to secure the future of Israel against the terrorist threat that has to date emanated from Gaza.”
- Reports on April 1 [indicated](#) that the United States was [considering](#) approving an \$18 billion sale to Israel of up to 50 new F-15 fighter jets, 30 AIM-120 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles, and a number of Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) kits, which provide precision capabilities to unguided munitions.
  - » The sale is still pending U.S. approval and would take years to arrive in Israel, but in late January, the Biden administration reportedly informally notified the House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations committees of the F-15 sale.

- » The United States has reportedly been [reviewing](#) the possible sale of 25 F-15s, which would likely be included in the larger arms package, to Israel since Israel requested to purchase them in January 2023.
  - Quick delivery of the F-15s was reportedly among Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant’s major requests during his visit to Washington last week.
- On April 2 and 3, foreign leaders responded to the killing of World Central Kitchen humanitarian aid workers.
  - » On April 3, Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk [posted](#) on X that “the vast majority of Poles showed full solidarity with Israel after the Hamas attack. Today you are putting this solidarity to a really difficult test. The tragic attack against volunteers and your reaction are generating an understandable anger.”
  - » On April 2, U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak [told](#) Netanyahu that he was “appalled” by the killings and demanded “a thorough and transparent independent investigation.”
  - » On April 2, European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell [posted](#) on X, “I condemn the attack and urge an investigation. Despite all the demands to protect civilians and humanitarian workers, we see new innocent casualties.
- On April 2, Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez [told](#) journalists on April 2 that his country will recognize a Palestinian state by July.
- After the strike against Iran’s consulate in Damascus, Syria, on April 2, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres released a [statement](#) that called on “all concerned to exercise utmost restraint and avoid further escalation” and “cautions that any miscalculation could lead to broader conflict in an already volatile region.”
- On April 2, the Palestinian UN envoy, Riyad Mansour, [relaunched](#) the Palestinians’ effort to become a full UN member state by writing a letter to Secretary-General Guterres that an application for full status dating back to 2011 should be reconsidered. The letter was transmitted to the UN Security Council, and the Palestinians have requested that the issue be considered this month.
- On April 2, Fitch Ratings [removed](#) Israel from rating watch negative and affirmed Israel’s A+ credit rating. Israel has maintained an A+ credit score rating since the war began, but Fitch put the score on rating watch negative status due to the outbreak of the war.

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

- On April 2, thousands of protesters [rallied](#) outside the Knesset for the third night in a row, calling for new Israeli elections.
  - » Anti-government protesters and family members of hostages [led](#) a march from the Knesset to Netanyahu’s private home. Police erected barricades in an unsuccessful effort to redirect protesters, at least some of whom managed to protest in front of the Prime Minister’s house.

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- [Michael Makovsky](#), Rep. Don Davis, Rep. August Pfluger, “[Conditioning U.S. Aid to Israel Would Be a Mistake](#),” *Washington Examiner*, March 27, 2024
- Jonathan Ruhe, “[The Biden Administration Has an Opportunity to Rein In Iran](#),” *The Dispatch*, March 27, 2024
- Sander Gerber, “[How is the PA’s Agenda not Genocide?](#)” *Jewish News Syndicate*, March 26, 2024
- Ari Cicurel and Jacob Olidort, [U.S. Abstention at the UN Undermined Support for Israel—And Stated U.S. Policy](#), March 26, 2024