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## Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update April 5, 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

- International criticism of the Israeli strike that killed seven World Central Kitchen (WCK) humanitarian aid workers on April 1 continued to mount. President Biden, officials in his administration, and leading Democratic politicians indicated that they would consider changing U.S. policy toward Israel if it did not alter its approach toward conducting the war in Gaza and humanitarian aid.
  - » Israel's release of the findings from its probe into the incident, along with the reprimand and firing of IDF officials responsible for not following procedure, may satisfy some of Israel's international partners, but the deadly Israeli attack on April 1 has exacerbated growing tensions between U.S. and Israeli officials about Israel's potential ground operation in Rafah to root Hamas out of its last stronghold in Gaza.
  - » Israel's quick probe into the strike and dismissal of senior IDF officers indicated it has a functional internal review process for evaluating its operations and holding accountable the individuals responsible.
- During a JINSA [webinar](#) on April 4, IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, a JINSA distinguished fellow, explained in reference to strikes that killed senior Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) officers in Syria that "we see the Iranians pushing more and more the proxies ... the more it is happening, the more Israel was pushed to the corner, and we didn't have any other choice but to show the Iranians that they are paying the price."
  - » IDF MG (ret.) Amikam Norkin, also a JINSA distinguished fellow, noted during the webinar that "the bottom line is that we need to destroy any military threat from the Gaza Strip, even inside Rafah ... and also that we need to minimize collateral damage ... so the debate might be at a tactical level how we should do it ... right now ... I am estimating that in the next two weeks we are not going to see any operation in Rafah. It will take time and it will maybe be part of the next phase."

# 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.
- On April 5, Israel Police [said](#) that an attacker wielding a hammer at the Megiddo Junction was “neutralized” and detained. The attacker reportedly did not inflict any injuries.
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 5 that “despite heightened concerns over Ramadan, Friday afternoon prayers at the Temple Mount have passed peacefully over the past three weeks.” However, police said in a statement that they arrested a suspect for attacking police officers and two more suspects after they occupied an area from which security forces removed them earlier. In addition, police arrested eight people that morning who allegedly chanted in support of terrorism.
- On April 4, Israel’s internal security agency Shin Bet [announced](#) that it foiled a major terror plot targeting numerous sites across the country.
  - » Shin Bet officials said they arrested seven Israeli citizens and four residents of the West Bank for their involvement in the wide-ranging plot, which reportedly involved guidance and funding from a Hamas operative in Gaza.
  - » The plot had several components, including: using an RPG to assassinate Israel’s National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir at his home in Kiryat Arba; kidnapping civilians and IDF soldiers across the country; hijacking a bus of IDF soldiers at a bus station in Beersheba; and attacking high-profile sites including Ben Gurion Airport, the Prime Minister’s residence in Jerusalem, and IDF bases.
- On April 4, Israel’s *Walla* outlet [reported](#) that the IDF and Israel’s internal security agency Shin Bet recently foiled a terror plot by Islamic State supporters targeting Teddy Stadium in Jerusalem, the home stadium for two Israeli soccer teams.
  - » According to the report, the planned attack on Teddy Stadium involved explosive devices and shooting attacks and would have also targeted a local police station and other unspecified sites across the city.
- On April 4, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#) during a press briefing, “over the past day, we initiated GPS disruptions in order to neutralize threats. This effort assists in neutralizing some threats, therefore this method was used,” and “we are aware that these disruptions cause inconveniences, but it is a vital and necessary tool in our defensive capabilities.”
- On April 4, announcing that it has paused home leave for every combat soldier, the IDF [said](#), “the IDF is at war and the issue of the deployment of forces is constantly reviewed as needed.” *The Times of Israel* noted that the announcement comes as Israel braces for a possible Iranian attack after several high-ranking IRGC operatives were killed in a recent airstrike in Syria.

## **Gaza**

- Rockets struck [Sderot](#), and sirens [sounded](#) in Sderot, Ashkelon, and [Kfar Aza](#).
- On April 4, the IDF said that terrorists in Gaza [fired](#) two rockets toward Sderot in southern Israel, one of which impacted a road while the Iron Dome intercepted the other. The IDF added that terrorists also launched a rocket toward Ashkelon that Israel intercepted. Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) took credit for the launch. No injuries were reported.

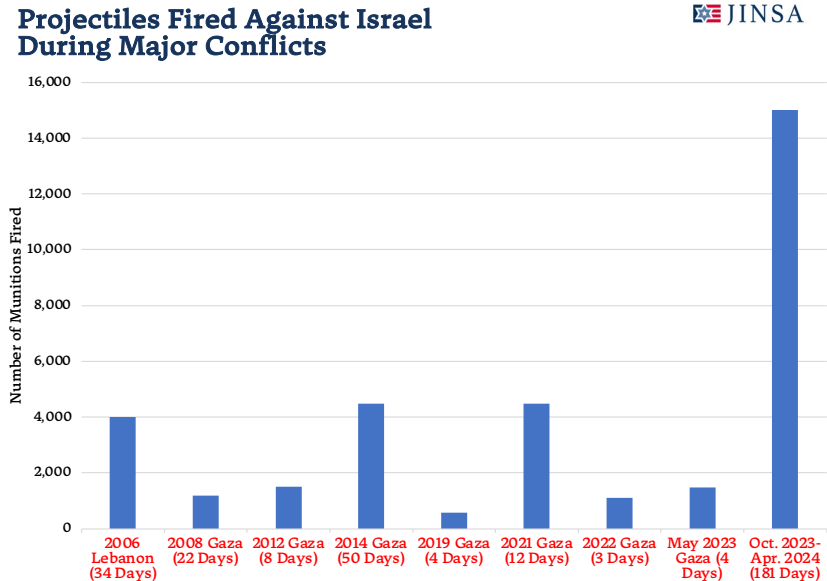
- On April 4, the IDF [said](#) that terrorists in Gaza launched two rockets toward Netivot in southern Israel, which the Iron Dome intercepted. No injuries were reported.
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 4 that “the IDF is progressing with its internal investigations into the military’s failures in the lead-up to the Hamas terror group’s October 7 massacre,” and “the findings are expected to be presented to IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi by the beginning of June, according to the military.”

**Lebanon**

- Rockets struck [Shlomi](#) and the [Western Galilee](#), and sirens [sounded](#) in Avdon, Eilon, Idmit, Arab al-Aramshe, Goren, Ya’ara, Hanita, [Keshet](#), [Betzet](#), and the [Achziv](#) industrial zone.
- On April 5, suspected drone infiltration sirens [sounded](#) in Kiryat Shmona, Beit Hillel, Kfar Giladi, Kfar Yuval, Metula, Margaliot, Misgav Am, Tel Hai, and Dafna.
  - » The IDF later announced that the Iron Dome system [intercepted](#) a suspicious aerial target, likely a drone, in the Western Galilee region that day.
- On April 5, Hezbollah [fired](#) an anti-tank missile at Zarit. No injuries or damage were reported.
- Overnight on April 5, Hezbollah [fired](#) an anti-tank missile at Metula, lightly injuring an IDF soldier. Hezbollah also fired seven rockets at Malkia.
- On April 4, terrorists in Lebanon [targeted](#) the Western Galilee region in Israel with numerous projectiles, damaging a home in Shlomi. Hezbollah took credit for the attack and claimed that it was targeting the IDF.
- On April 3, terrorists in Lebanon [fired](#) projectiles from Kfarhamam in southern Lebanon toward the area of Mount Dov in northern Israel.

**West Bank**

- On April 5, Israel Police [said](#) that during an operation in Tulkarem to detain three terror suspects, “a terrorist was eliminated by the undercover force after he threw an explosive device in their direction.”
- Fatah, the Palestinian Authority’s chief political party, [said](#) on April 3 that it would not permit “our sacred cause and the blood of our people to be exploited” by outside powers, including Iran.



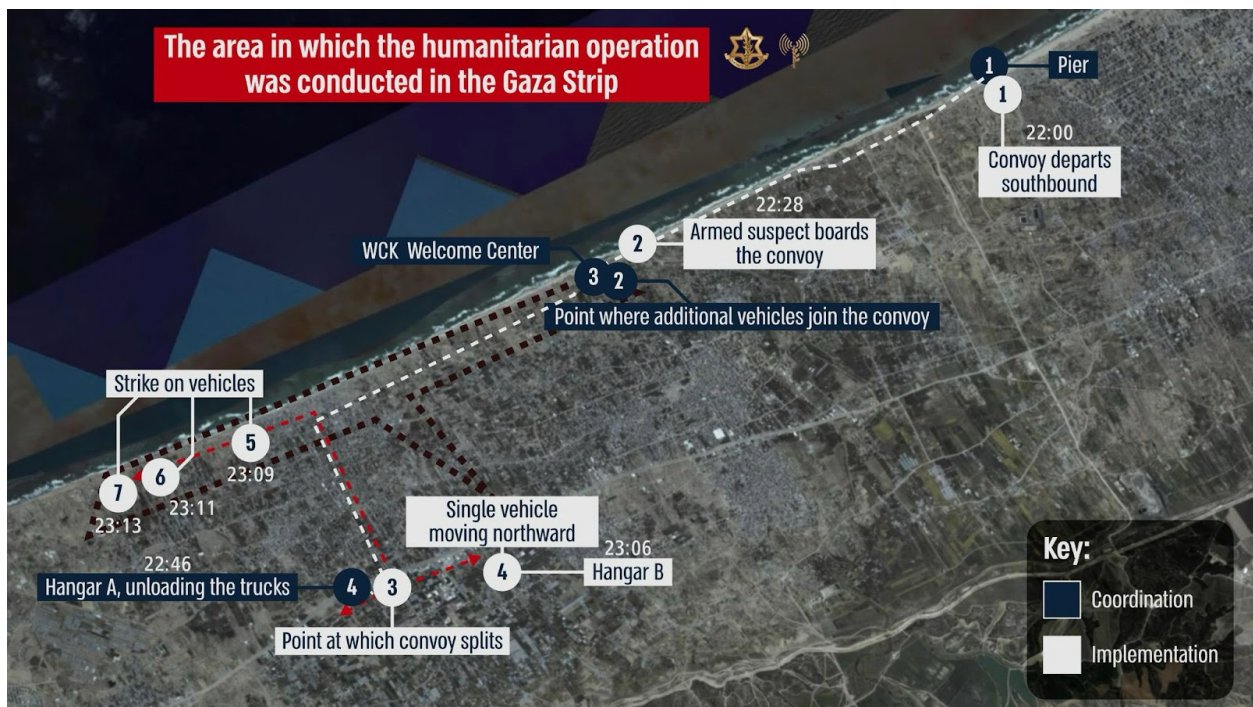
## *IDF Operations*

- On April 4, Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant's office [said](#) that he held a "multi-front situational assessment" with IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar, Mossad Director David Barnea, and Director General of the Defense Ministry Eyal Zamir, among others.
- On April 3, on the heels of recent airstrikes in Syria that killed several high-ranking IRGC members and Iranian threats to retaliate against Israel, the IDF [said](#) that it has called up reserves to reinforce Israel's air defense array.
- On April 3, Israel's Minister without portfolio, Benny Gantz, [said](#) during a briefing, "we must agree on a date for elections in September, about a year from the war," and "setting such a date will allow us to continue the military effort while signaling to the citizens of Israel that we will soon renew their trust in us."
  - » The Likud party, to which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu belongs, subsequently [said](#), "at this fateful moment for the State of Israel and in the midst of a war, Benny Gantz must stop engaging in petty politics just because his party is disintegrating," and "early elections will inevitably lead to paralysis (in the war) and (societal) division in addition to harming (the IDF's goal to invade) Rafah and dealing a fatal blow to the chances of a hostage deal."
  - » Meanwhile, Israel's Opposition Chairman Yair Lapid said, "this government needs to go home as soon as possible so that we can return the hostages, return the evacuees home, defeat Hamas, and make sure that someone takes care of the Israeli middle class."
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 3 that "the army has begun calling up ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students this week following the expiration of a legally dubious temporary regulation instructing conscription authorities not to draft Haredim."

## **Gaza**

- Citing the results of an investigation by the independent General Staff Fact-Finding Assessment Mechanism, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 5 that "the strike was ordered against the convoy of [World Central Kitchen] vehicles after officers suspected they carried Hamas gunmen, despite a low level of confidence," and "the officers did not identify the vehicles as belonging to WCK when the strike was ordered, according to the investigation."
  - » IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi removed the Nahal Infantry Brigade's chief of staff, Col. (res.) Nochi Mendel, due to the brigade's implication in the deadly strike.
  - » Halevi also "reprimanded the commander of the Southern Command, Maj. Gen. Yaron Finkelman, for his 'overall responsibility for the incident,' as well as the commander of the 162nd Division, Brig. Gen. Itzik Cohen, and the commander of the Nahal Brigade, Col. Yair Zukerman," *The Times of Israel* reported.
  - » The investigation into the strike found that the IDF saw a gunman on a WCK truck and thought another gunman was nearby, and that a commander incorrectly assessed that the gunmen were Hamas operatives and traveling in the vehicles escorting aid trucks after workers unloaded aid in a warehouse.
  - » The IDF claimed that troops did not realize that the escort vehicles were affiliated with WCK and said, "the attack on the three vehicles was carried out in serious violation of the relevant orders and instructions."

- The IDF also said that the strike “could have been prevented, and at the same time, those who approved the attack were convinced that they were attacking armed Hamas operatives and not WCK members.”
- The military added, “the attack on the aid vehicles is a serious mistake, which stemmed from a serious failure, as a result of wrong identification, a mistake in decision-making and an attack contrary to the orders and open-fire regulations.”
- The IDF reiterated “our deep sorrow for the loss, and share in the grief of the families and the WCK organization” and said that “vital humanitarian activity of the international aid organizations” is of “utmost importance.”
- The IDF insisted that “we will continue to work to coordinate and assist their activities, while ensuring their safety and safeguarding their lives,” and “the IDF once again emphasizes its commitment to uncompromising fighting against the Hamas organization, alongside upholding the values of the IDF, the laws of war and avoiding harming innocents.”
- The IDF pledged that it “will learn the lessons of the incident, and will implement the lessons.”



Source: [IDF](#)

- On April 5, the IDF [shelled](#) rocket launch sites in the northern Gaza Strip which it said were used in attacks against Sderot, Ashkelon, and Kibbutz Kfar Aza yesterday.
- On April 4, the IDF [publicized](#) video of an airstrike targeting terrorists in central Gaza spotted by the Nahal Brigade. The IDF also said that operations against Hamas in Khan Younis in southern Gaza are ongoing and that the military conducted airstrikes against terror targets throughout Gaza during the prior day.
- On April 4, the IDF [published](#) footage of an airstrike carried out against a Hamas cell in central Gaza.

- The IDF [said](#) on April 4 that during the past week, the Gaza Division's Northern Brigade and the Kfir Brigade's Netzah Yehuda Battalion destroyed Hamas assets in Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza, and the ultra-orthodox Netzah Yehuda battalion eliminated a Hamas cell.
- In an April 3 report in Israeli outlet *+972 Magazine* [claiming](#) that Israel has employed artificial intelligence (AI) to compile 37,000 names of potential targets in Gaza, the IDF Spokesperson's Unit was quoted as saying that AI systems are "auxiliary tools that assist officers in the process of incrimination."
  - » The IDF also said, "an independent examination by an [intelligence] analyst is required, which verifies that the identified targets are legitimate targets for attack, in accordance with the conditions set forth in IDF directives and international law."
- On April 3, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi [said](#) to officers in Khan Younis, "we are pressing to deepen the achievement, and we are also pressing to try to bring about a shift in the negotiations, to bring about an agreement on the release of hostages. This is a task of utmost [importance]."
  - » He added, "it will only come from stronger pressure and we will press harder, however [much is] necessary. Another battalion being dismantled, another commander killed, another infrastructure destroyed, this is the way to exert pressure to eventually release the hostages."
- On April 3, the IDF said that during its recently-concluded second operation in Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, it [arrested](#) Hamas members:
  - » Ashraf Ibrahim Samur, the Hamas intelligence division's deputy head of the information department;
  - » Hashem Sarsour, head of the emergency committees in East Gaza City;
  - » Mehdi Abu Hassanin, head of internal security in the Gaza City;
  - » Ibrahim Tamraz, head of police operations in Gaza City;
  - » Mahmoud Ajour, head of "policy decisions committee";
  - » Asama al-Tata; head of the Shejaiya Brigade's rocket unit; and
  - » Diab al-Tahar, a senior member of the emergency committees in south Gaza.
  - » In addition, the IDF also said it captured PIJ operatives:
    - Hassan Aki, deputy commander of a special rocket unit;
    - Bakr Jaabari, assistant to the former head of PIJ's northern Gaza region;
    - Muhammad Mali, responsible for PIJ finances; and
    - Musa al-Imawi, the deputy commander of PIJ's Sabrah district in Gaza.
  - » That day, the IDF also released video of Samur's interrogation, during which he said Hamas units use Shifa Hospital for operations and that the terror group regrouped in the building just two days after the IDF evacuated the facility in 2023.

## Lebanon

- The IDF [said](#) on April 5 that it used fighter jets to target Hezbollah positions in Zibqin in southern Lebanon and buildings the group used in Yarine and Ayta ash-Shab. The IDF also said that it struck a Hezbollah observation post in Chebaa earlier.
- On April 4, the IDF [said](#) that it fired artillery toward the source of a Hezbollah projectile attack against the Western Galilee that damaged a home in Shlomi.

- On April 4, the IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes against Hezbollah targets in Yaroun, Aynata, and Maroun al-Ras.
- Overnight on April 4, the IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes against a Hezbollah observation post in Khiam and another Hezbollah site in Kafr Kila.
- On April 3, Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [said](#) in Haifa during a homefront exercise that Israel is "increasing preparedness, and at the same time we are also expanding our operations against Hezbollah, against other bodies that threaten us, we strike our enemies all over the Middle East."
  - » He also said, "we prefer ... an agreement that will result in the removal of the threat, but we have to prepare for the possibility of [using] force in Lebanon which can also take into account the scenario we are describing here, which is a scenario of war, and we need to be prepared for this issue and understand that it can happen. We need to be prepared and ready for every scenario and every threat, against close enemies and against distant enemies."
  - » Israel's Defense Ministry said that "in light of the increasing need to return the residents of the north to their homes," the drill assessed coordination among local leaders, state ministries, and rescue personnel in a war simulation.
- On April 3, the IDF [said](#) it conducted airstrikes targeting Hezbollah sites and infrastructure in Kfarhamam in southern Lebanon, one of which terrorists used just minutes prior to fire projectiles toward Mount Dov in northern Israel. The IDF also said that it struck Hezbollah buildings in Blida and Aynata the night of April 2 to neutralize threats.

### **West Bank**

- Overnight on April 4, Border Police officers [killed](#) a Palestinian terror suspect, Asaad Issam al-Qaniri, during an arrest raid in Jenin. The IDF said an additional 20 Palestinian terror suspects were detained in the overnight raids.
- On April 3, Israel's Defense Ministry [publicized a video](#) showing 26-year-old Waheb Sabita from Tira in Israel wielding a knife and charging guards manning the Eliyahu Crossing. The guards subsequently shot and killed him. That day, Sabita's family said in a statement that he was mentally ill and therefore his actions should not be viewed as nationalistic terrorism.

### *Humanitarian Efforts*

- According to Israel's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories ([COGAT](#)), from the beginning of the war to April 4, 388,350 tons of humanitarian aid have entered Gaza on 20,742 trucks.
  - » This aid includes:
    - 12,677 aid trucks with 268,050 tons of food;
    - 429 cooking gas tanks;
    - 29,140 tons of water delivered in trucks; and
    - 20,280 tons of medical supplies.
- On April 4, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) [announced](#) that it airdropped over 50,680 meal equivalents into northern Gaza that day. However, CENTCOM also noted that "approximately 20 bundles" of aid "landed in the sea." It was unclear how many meal equivalents were in each bundle.

- On April 4, Spanish nongovernmental organization (NGO) Open Arms [announced](#) it would suspend its attempts to provide humanitarian aid into Gaza via the sea after the Israeli strike that killed WCK aid workers.
- Israel's *Israel Hayom* outlet [reported](#) on April 4 that Israel's war cabinet recently enlisted Fatah affiliates to protect humanitarian aid shipments to Gaza and keep the aid out of Hamas's hands.
- On April 3, WCK founder Jose Andres [told](#) Israel's *Channel 12*, "the airstrikes on our convoy, I don't think, were an unfortunate mistake. It was really a direct attack on clearly marked vehicles whose movements were known by everybody at the IDF."
- Reports from April 3 [indicated](#) that a ship containing 240 tons of food headed toward Gaza turned back toward Cyprus following Israel's recent airstrike that it said mistakenly killed seven WCK employees.
- UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric [said](#) during an April 3 briefing that in the wake of the deadly strike that killed WCK employees, the UN is pausing nighttime maneuvers in Gaza for a minimum of 48 hours to examine security questions. He noted that the UN's World Food Program is still conducting daytime operations in Gaza and said, "as famine closes in we need humanitarian staff and supplies to be able to move freely and safely across the Gaza Strip."

#### *Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations*

- On April 5, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that Mossad head David Barnea, Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar, and IDF hostage point person Nitzan Alon will travel to Cairo this weekend for ceasefire and hostage negotiations.
- On April 4, Hamas officials [rejected](#) the latest ceasefire and hostage release proposal that Egyptian mediators submitted to them days after Israeli officials left Cairo after having updated their offer.
- On April 3, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [stated](#) that he does not "anticipate any particular impact on" hostage and ceasefire negotiations stemming from Israel's strike on an aid convoy in Gaza.
- On April 3, Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani [told](#) reporters that the main sticking point in negotiations is Hamas's demand that Palestinians displaced from northern Gaza be allowed to return there.
  - » Israel has repeatedly objected to such a request, arguing that doing so would enable Hamas to reconstitute itself in areas that were already cleared by the IDF.

#### *Post-War Planning*

- According to an April 4 [report](#) from Israel's *Maariv* outlet, the United States, Israel, and Saudi Arabia are making progress towards reaching a "mega-deal" to both conclude the war and normalize ties between Saudi Arabia and Israel.
  - » The deal would reportedly involve Israel maintaining freedom of movement throughout Gaza to conduct security operations, akin to the current arrangement in Area B of the West Bank, but ending major combat operations.
  - » Saudi Arabia reportedly would receive some form of defense treaty with the United States and U.S. assistance with a civilian nuclear program in exchange for normalizing ties with Israel.



- » The report claims that former president Donald Trump and Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) are involved in the discussions.
  - *The New York Times* had [reported](#) on April 3 that Trump recently held a phone call with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, but it was unclear what was discussed in the call.

### *Casualties and Hostages*

- Over 1,200 people were [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.
  - » On April 4, Lidor Levy, 34, a victim of the terror attack in Gan Yavne on March 31, [died](#) of his wounds.
  - » 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 33,091 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 75,750 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, 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, 457 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 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 4, Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei [claimed](#) in a speech that “the defeat of the Zionist regime in Gaza will continue and this regime will be close to decline and dissolution.” He added, “desperate efforts like the one they committed in Syria will not save them from defeat. Of course, they will also be slapped for that action.”
- Reuters cited Iranian officials in a [report](#) on April 4 who claimed that Tehran’s response to a strike in Syria attributed to Israel, which killed IRGC officers, would be “limited and aimed at deterrence.”
  - » The Iranian officials claimed that the Iranian regime would not change its stance of avoiding direct confrontation with Israel or the United States and would continue relying upon its proxies.
- On April 4, Israel’s *Maariv* outlet [reported](#), citing a report in Lebanon’s Hezbollah-linked *Akhbar* outlet, that Iran-backed militias in Iraq recently asserted that they are preparing to “arm 12,000 fighters in Jordan” in order to “[open] a new front” in the war.
  - » According to the report, which cites sources familiar with the plans, the Iranian militias have begun coordinating with terror operatives in Jordan in an effort to provide them weapons and training.
- Early on April 3 local time, the Houthis [launched](#) one anti-ship ballistic missile and two drones from Yemen toward the USS *Gravelly* in the Red Sea. The *Gravelly* and CENTCOM forces destroyed the missile and drones.

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

- On April 5, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [welcomed](#) Israeli efforts to increase humanitarian aid into Gaza, but added “really the proof is in the results, and we will see those unfold in the coming days, in the coming weeks.”
- On April 5, Vice President Kamala Harris [told](#) a reporter that “we will make sure Israel is never left without an ability to defend itself.” She added, “at the same time, if there are not changes to their approach, it’s very likely we’re going to change our approach.”
- On April 5, Israel’s Foreign Minister Israel Katz [commended](#) a clarification from the United States that a ceasefire deal must be conditioned on the release of hostages. However, it was not clear what clarification Katz was referencing.

- During a phone call with Prime Minister Netanyahu on April 4, President Biden “emphasized that the strikes on humanitarian workers and the overall humanitarian situation are unacceptable” and “made clear that US policy with respect to Gaza will be determined by our assessment of Israel’s immediate action on these steps,” according to a White House [readout](#).
  - » Biden argued “that an immediate ceasefire is essential to stabilize and improve the humanitarian situation and protect innocent civilians, and he urged the prime minister to empower his negotiators to conclude a deal without delay to bring the hostages home.”
  - » The readout further stated that Biden “made clear the need for Israel to announce and implement a series of specific, concrete and measurable steps to address civilian harm, humanitarian suffering and the safety of aid workers.”
  - » An [Axios report](#) on April 3 had cited a U.S. official as saying that Biden was “outraged” and another claimed that “Biden is pissed. The temperature regarding Bibi is very high.”
- On April 4, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [argued](#) that “what happened after October 7 could have ended immediately if Hamas had stopped hiding behind civilians, released the hostages and put down its weapons, but Israel is not Hamas. Israel is a democracy; Hamas, a terrorist organization. Democracies place the highest value on human life, every human life. As it has been said, whoever saves a life, saves the entire world.”
- On April 4, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [stated](#) in reference to the Israeli strike that killed WCK aid workers, “we want to see that, even as the Israelis work their investigation, that they are willing and able to take practical, immediate steps to protect workers on the ground and to demonstrate that they have that civilian harm mitigation in place.”
- On April 4, Senator Chris Coons (D-CT) said during an [interview](#) on *CNN* that “I think we’re at the point where President Biden has said and I have said... [that] if Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were to order the IDF into Rafah at scale, [if] they were to drop 1,000-pound bombs and send in a battalion to go after Hamas and make no provision for civilians or for humanitarian aid, that I would vote to condition aid to Israel.”
  - » Coons added, “the tactics by which the current prime minister is making these decisions don’t reflect the best values of Israel or of the United States.”
- During a radio interview with Hugh Hewitt on April 4, former president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump [indicated](#) that he was not “loving the way” Israel conducted the war against Hamas. He added, “what I said very plainly is get it over with, and let’s get back to peace and stop killing people.”
- On April 4, at approximately 2:20 p.m. local time, the United States [struck](#) one Houthi anti-ship missile in Yemen that was prepared to target vessels in nearby waters.
- Reports on April 4 indicated that the U.S. State Department [authorized](#) the [sale](#) of more than 1,000 MK82 500-pound bombs, more than 1,000 small-diameter bombs (SDB), and fuses for MK80 bombs on April 1.
- On April 4, the U.S. Treasury [announced](#) it was sanctioning the United Arab Emirates (UAE)-based Oceanlink Maritime DMCC shipping company and 13 of its vessels for shipping Iranian commodities “including on behalf of Iran’s military.”
  - » According to the Treasury press release, one such vessel transferred “over \$100 million worth of commodities” on Iran’s behalf in a single shipment in late March.

- During a call on April 3 with Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin “expressed his outrage” about the Israeli strike that killed WCK humanitarian aid workers, according to a Pentagon [readout](#).
  - » The readout further stated, “Secretary Austin urged Minister Gallant to conduct a swift and transparent investigation, to share their conclusions publicly, and to hold those responsible to account. Secretary Austin stated that this tragedy reinforced the expressed concern over a potential Israeli military operation in Rafah, specifically focusing on the need to ensure the evacuation of Palestinian civilians and the flow of humanitarian aid.”
- On April 3, the United States [struck](#) a Houthi surface-to-air missile system in Yemen.
- On April 3, Lt. Gen. Alexis Grynkewich, CENTCOM’s Combined Forces Air Component Commander, [claimed](#) that U.S. strikes on the Houthis have “certainly affected their behavior. Their pace of operations is not what it was.”
  - » He added, “the challenge for us is understanding what the denominator was at the beginning. In other words, what did they have on hand to start with? We obviously know how much we have struck and we have assessments of how successful those strikes were ... The other complicating factor is Iranian resupply.”
- On April 3, U.S. special envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking [stated](#) that the United States is considering removing the Iran-backed Houthis from the Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) entity list if the terror group ended its attacks on shipping.
  - » Lenderking stated, “we would certainly study that” when asked by a reporter about the possibility of doing so.
- On April 3, U.S. State Department Spokesman Matthew Miller [noted](#) that “while we support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and you’ve seen the Secretary engage in very intensive diplomacy over the past few months to try to establish a Palestinian state with security guarantees for Israel, that is something that should be done through direct negotiations through the parties—something we are pursuing at this time—and not at the United Nations.”
- On April 3, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) expressed support for Israel’s minister without portfolio Benny Gantz’s call for new elections in September. Schumer [posted](#) on X, “when a leading member of Israel’s war cabinet calls for early elections and over 70 percent of the Israeli population agrees according to a major poll, you know it’s the right thing to do.”
- According to a [report](#) in *Axios* on April 3, during a virtual meeting between senior U.S. and Israeli officials on April 1, the Israeli side indicated that evacuating Rafah of civilians before an Israeli ground operation there would take at least four weeks. U.S. officials at the meeting thought it would take up to four months, but Israeli officials rejected that claim.
  - » U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Israel’s Minister for Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer, who is a former JINSA distinguished fellow, and Israel’s National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi attended the meeting.
- On April 5, UN Human Rights Office spokesperson Jeremy Laurence [argued](#) that “attacking people or objects involved in humanitarian assistance may amount to a war crime ... As the High Commissioner has repeatedly stated, impunity must end.” He added, “the Israeli airstrikes that killed World Central Kitchen personnel underline the horrific conditions under which humanitarian workers are operating in Gaza.”
- On April 5, Poland’s Deputy Foreign Minister Andrzej Szejna indicated that a diplomatic spat between Poland and Israel was calming after an Israeli strike killed the WCK workers, one of

whom was Polish. Szejna [stated](#) at a press conference that he “handed over a note of protest to the [Israeli] ambassador. The ambassador apologized for this event, which has no precedent in the history of the civilized world.”

- » Szejna added, “the information we received so far is not satisfactory, but we see this meeting as a change of tone.”
- » On April 4, Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk [stated](#) that “we will expect... an immediate explanation of the circumstances and compensation for the victims’ relatives.”
- On April 4, the UAE [announced](#) it would suspend its coordination with Israel of humanitarian aid in Gaza following the killing of WCK aid workers.
- On April 4, a Danish frigate [arrived](#) back in Denmark after suffering a weapon system failure during a Houthi drone attack last month in the Red Sea. Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen dismissed the country’s top military official, General Flemming Lentfer, for failing to inform the ministry in detail after the incident.
- On April 4, Australia’s Prime Minister Anthony Albanese [stated](#) that Israel’s explanation for the killing of WCK aid workers was “not good enough” and that “we need to have accountability for how it has occurred, and what is not good enough is the statements that have been made, including that this is just a product of war.”
- On April 3, Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez [claimed](#) that Israel’s explanation of the killing of WCK humanitarian aid workers was “unacceptable and insufficient, and we are awaiting a much stronger and more detailed clarification, after which we’ll see what action to take.”

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

- On April 4, German media [reported](#) that police in Bulgaria uncovered a cache of weapons linked to four suspected Hamas members who were arrested in Germany and the Netherlands last December. The four were arrested on suspicion of planning to carry out a terror attack against Jewish targets in Europe.

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- Michael Makovsky and Blaise Misztal, [“After Biden’s Afghanistan fiasco, why should Israel take his advice?”](#) *The Hill*, April 3, 2024
- Yoni Tobin, [Israel Has “Not Received” What It Needs](#), April 1, 2024
- Webinar: [The State of U.S.-Israel Relations](#), with Michael Makovsky, IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, and John Hannah, March 28, 2024
- [Michael Makovsky](#), Rep. Don Davis, Rep. August Pfluger, [“Conditioning U.S. Aid to Israel Would Be a Mistake,”](#) *Washington Examiner*, March 27, 2024