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## Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update April 8, 2024

JINSA's [Israel at War](#) webpage is a dedicated resource for analysis, commentary, webinars, and media coverage about the 10/7 attacks and the ensuing 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

- Multiple Israel's withdrawal of all of its ground forces from southern Gaza could indicate that the IDF plans to shift toward emphasizing targeted strikes to continue eliminating Hamas infrastructure and individuals rather than major combat operations throughout most of Gaza. However, the decision to withdraw forces may also be due to the need to rest and refit them after six months of combat.
  - » Hamas has maintained its last stronghold in Rafah, and U.S. pressure on Israel to avoid conducting full-scale ground operations there could prevent Israel from dismantling Hamas's capabilities in Gaza and recovering the hostages.
  - » An Israeli brigade continues to control the east-west Netzarim Corridor in order to control movement between northern and southern Gaza.

### Last 48 Hours

#### *Attacks Against Israel*

- At least 15,000 rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired at Israel from all fronts combined during the war, according to JINSA data.
- On April 6, Israel Police [said](#) that they arrested a 17-year-old from the West Bank city of Birzeit near the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem and subsequently found a knife in his possession. According to police, the suspect had posted a threatening statement on Facebook that day and was in Israel illegally.
- Israel Police [said](#) on April 6 that they arrested one individual for shooting fireworks toward officers and arrested others for shouting pro-Hamas chants at the Al-Aqsa Mosque during prayers, detaining 16 people in total.
- On April 5, addressing a hack of its website claimed by the Anonymous for Justice group, Israel's Justice Ministry [said](#) on X, "since the morning hours, experts at the ministry and

elsewhere have been looking into the incident and its implications,” and “the scope of the materials is still under review and it will take time to examine the content and scope of the documents that were leaked and their sources.” The attackers said that they stole almost 300 gigabytes of data.

- The IDF [said](#) on April 5 that an assailant fired at a military vehicle near Beit Shean in northern Israel, near the border with Jordan, after he entered Israel from Jordan. No injuries were reported, and the assailant reportedly fled back into Jordan after the attack.

## Gaza

- Rockets struck [Re'im](#).
- According to data the IDF [released](#) on April 7, terrorists in Gaza have launched approximately 9,100 projectiles into Israel since the war began, not including rockets that fell short and struck Gazan territory.
- The rocket that [struck](#) Re'im on April 8, which terrorists fired from Khan Younis, impacted an unpopulated area and inflicted no injuries or damage, the IDF said.
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 7 that according to Israeli government personnel, 70% of southern Israeli residents, or at least 40,150 people out of 57,000 who live within 7 kilometers of Gaza, impacted by Hamas's October 7 attack have returned to their homes.
- On April 7, terrorists near Khan Younis [launched](#) five rockets toward southern Israeli towns, some of which the Iron Dome shot down, the IDF said, inflicting no reported injuries or damage.

## Lebanon

- Sirens [sounded](#) in Safed, Kadita, Safsufa, Dalton, [Merom Golan](#), Otal, Ein Zivan, [Sdeh Nechemia](#), Amir, Beit Hillel, Shear Yeshuv, Kfar Szold, HaGoshrim, Dafna, [Eilon](#), Idmit, Arab al-Aramshe, Goren, [Even Menachem](#), Netua, Shtula, Zarit, Shomera, and [Shlomi](#).
- According to data the IDF [released](#) on April 7, terrorists in Lebanon have launched approximately 3,100 projectiles toward Israel since the war began.
- On April 8, Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally, [claimed](#) that Lebanon will “continue to exercise self-restraint” and will not allow the fighting with Israel to escalate to a full-scale war.
- On April 8, a one-way attack drone [launched](#) from Lebanon struck an area near Rosh Hanikra, causing a small fire but no reported injuries.
- On April 7, the IDF said that Hezbollah [fired](#) rockets towards the Golan Heights area and the town of Manara, causing no reported injuries.
- On April 7, the IDF [said](#) the Iron Dome intercepted a projectile fired from Lebanon, which set off sirens in Safed and several other nearby towns.
- Israel's *Maariv* outlet reported on April 7 that Hezbollah [shot down](#) an IDF-operated Hermes 900 drone over Lebanon on April 6. According to the report, the Hermes 900 is worth approximately \$10 million dollars.
- On April 6, hostile aircraft sirens [sounded](#) in multiple locations across the Golan Heights, including in the Druze localities of Majdal Shams, Mas'ade, and Ein Qiniyye, among others.
- Overnight on April 6, five rockets were [fired](#) from Lebanon at the Shtula area, and several more projectiles were launched at other areas in northern Israel into the morning.
- On April 5, during a funeral for several high-ranking Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) operatives killed in a recent airstrike in Syria, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah

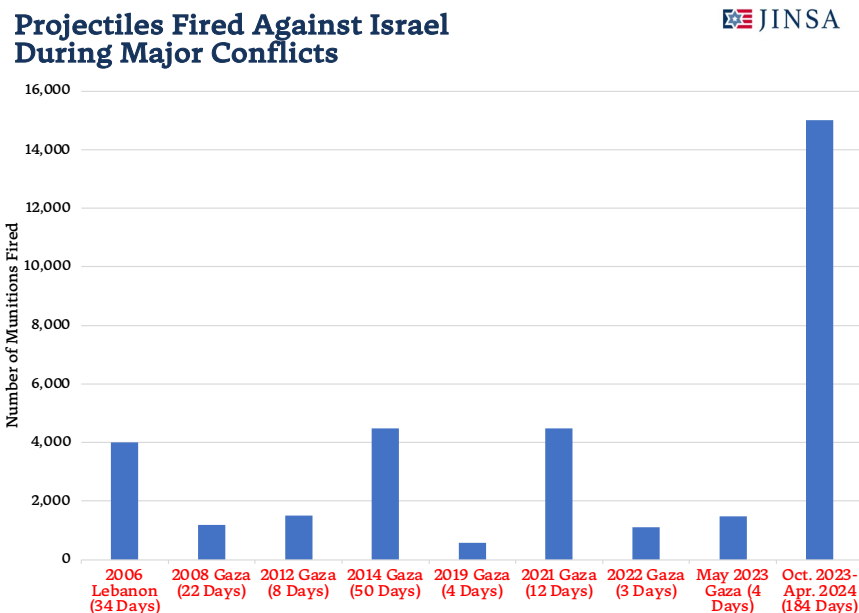
[said](#) in a video message, “be certain that the Iranian response to the targeting in Damascus is inevitably coming.”

## Syria

- According to data the IDF [released](#) on April 7, approximately 35 projectiles have been launched toward Israel from Syria since the war began.

## West Bank

- The IDF [said](#) on April 8 that after a Palestinian woman at the Tayasir Checkpoint in the Jordan Valley refused to identify herself, “she tried to stab the IDF soldiers who were at the post,” failing to injure troops.
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 8, citing unverified local reports, that a large column of smoke in Balata near Nablus in the West Bank was caused by an explosion targeting an Israeli bulldozer in the area. Additional video allegedly shows an IDF vehicle ablaze.
- On April 7, the IDF [said](#) that a terrorist fired toward several vehicles at a junction on Route 55 in the West Bank, seriously injuring a 19-year-old soldier and moderately injuring another man in the same vehicle. That day, the IDF said that it subsequently [found](#) the attacker’s car and detonated a bomb found inside it.



## IDF Operations

### Gaza

- According to data the IDF [released](#) on April 7, the IDF has killed over 13,000 terrorists in Gaza since the war began, including five Hamas brigade commanders or equivalently-ranked operatives, over 20 battalion commanders, and over 100 Hamas company commanders and similarly-ranked members. The data also say that the IDF has struck approximately 32,000 targets in Gaza since the start of the war, which include 3,600 that the IDF uncovered during combat.
  - » In addition, the IDF said that its “Military Intelligence Directorate’s Unit 504 has interrogated some 4,600 Palestinian suspects in the Gaza Strip, many of whom were arrested and brought to Israel for further questioning,” *The Times of Israel* reported.

- On April 8, the IDF [announced](#) that it eliminated three Hamas rocket launchers in Khan Younis that were placed next to humanitarian shelters. The IDF said that it also eliminated a fourth rocket launcher in Khan Younis used to fire rockets at Israel that day and other terror infrastructure nearby.
  - » The IDF noted that before conducting the strikes, it made sure that civilians were evacuated from the area.
- On April 7, the IDF [announced](#) that it had withdrawn all its ground troops from the southern Gaza Strip.
  - » According to a report from Israel's *Israel Hayom* outlet, following the withdrawal, "the last [IDF] brigade remaining in the Strip is the Nahal infantry unit, which is there to secure the Netzarim Corridor that splits the Gazan north and south, enabling the IDF to control movements in the area."
    - The Netzarim Corridor, which crosses the Strip from the Be'eri area in southern Israel to the Mediterranean coast, is reportedly aimed at [enabling](#) aid to enter northern Gaza directly, permitting the IDF to conduct raids in northern and central Gaza, and preventing Gazans from returning to northern Gaza.
  - » Israel's *Maariv* outlet [reported](#) on April 7 that the withdrawal formally begins "phase three" of the war, which reportedly will consist of raids and targeted operations based on intelligence.
    - According to the report, the IDF will maintain freedom of action in Khan Younis and will return there based on "operational need," but the defeat of Hamas's Khan Younis Brigade ended the need for an IDF presence in the city.
    - The report also quoted IDF officials as saying that military plans for a way forward in the war, including operations in Rafah and unspecified other plans, have been presented to Israel's political leadership.
- On April 7, *ABC News* [reported](#), citing a report from Israel's *Channel 13* outlet, that Israel is "preparing to begin evacuating Rafah within one week" in preparation for IDF operations there. The report noted that the evacuation process may take several months to complete.
- On April 7, Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [said](#), "the achievements of the 98th Division and its units are extremely impressive, targeting terrorists, destroying enemy targets, warehouses, weapons, underground [sites], headquarters, communication rooms," and, "all these things were carried out in a very impressive manner and thus, Hamas stopped functioning as a military organization throughout the Gaza Strip."
  - » However, a spokesperson for the defense minister subsequently said that Gallant was referring only to Hamas's functionality in the Khan Younis area and other Gazan areas in which the IDF operated, but not all of Gaza.
  - » Gallant also said, "the forces came out [of Gaza] and are preparing for their future missions. We saw examples of such missions in action at Shifa [Hospital], and also for their future mission in the Rafah area," and "we will reach a situation where Hamas does not control the Gaza Strip and where it does not function as a military framework that poses a risk to the citizens of the State of Israel."
- During a press briefing on April 7, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi [said](#), "we are fighting this war differently, it is different from its predecessors," and "the war in Gaza continues, and we are far from stopping. Senior Hamas officials are still in hiding. We will get to them sooner or later. We are making progress, continuing to kill more terrorists and commanders and destroy more terror infrastructures, including last night."

- » He added, “we will not leave Hamas brigades active in any part of the Strip. We have plans and we will act when we decide.”
- » Halevi said further, “when we went to war at the beginning, we knew and said that it would last a long time, to achieve the goals. We have made very significant achievements in fighting in Gaza, but the goals have not yet been fully achieved, the return of all hostages home, the return of all residents of the north and south to their homes in safety, and the dismantling of Hamas in the entire Gaza Strip, in a way that will allow for a government that is not Hamas in the Gaza Strip.”
- » He also said, “this reality is extremely complex and there are no simple solutions. We conduct the war with responsibility and determination. We must not be delusional,” and “as we said, some goals will take a long time, and we will not let up until we achieve them. The return of the hostages is important and urgent, and its timer is different from the timer of the other goals.”
- » Halevi [noted](#) that “October 7 is a watershed in Israeli security. We began to investigate the complex events of this day, we will learn and make decisions,” and “the working hypotheses under which we operated, scenarios to which we prepared for, the perception of the enemy which we held, it is clear to us that these must change.”
  - Elaborating, Halevi argued that “the IDF needs to be stronger, bigger, so that what happened on October 7 will not happen again. And of course, these are not the only changes,” and “the decisions we make today have a decisive and critical effect on building the strength of the IDF in the near and distant future.”
  - He warned, “we do not have the privilege to postpone them. Delaying decisions on building the strength of the IDF endangers the security of the country.”
- Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) during a cabinet meeting on April 7, “this is the time for unity. But precisely at this time, an extreme and violent minority is trying to drag the country into division,” and “there is nothing our enemies want more.”
  - » He said, “let our enemies make no mistake – the absolute majority of the people are united in the need to continue fighting until victory,” and “the majority of the people, and I am among them, condemns any manifestation of violence within us – riots and violations of the law, trampling on demonstrators or attacking policemen, wild incitement and murderous violence on social media.”
- The IDF [said](#) on April 7 that the Commando Brigade found a 900-meter-long tunnel in Khan Younis’s al-Amal neighborhood, in which the military discovered rooms where terrorists hid and a large weapons stash. According to the IDF, combat engineers subsequently destroyed the tunnels.
- *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on April 7 that “the IDF believes that raids based on new intelligence, like the operation at Shifa Hospital and others in northern Gaza, are a more effective way to operate against Hamas,” and “troops will ultimately return for raids based on new intelligence, similar to how operations are taking place in northern Gaza, according to the IDF.”
- On April 6, the IDF and Israel’s Shin Bet internal security service confirmed that an [Israeli airstrike](#) in Gaza on April 3 killed Akram Abd al-Rahman Husein Salama, who held several senior positions in Hamas, including as the deputy head of internal security in Khan Younis.
- On April 6, the IDF [indicated](#) that in recent weeks it had blown up three major attack tunnels in Khan Younis that had been under Israeli surveillance for several years, including one that extended several hundred meters into Israel.

- » Israel discovered the cross-border tunnel in 2019 before the underground border barrier was constructed. The IDF stated that “sensors and explosives were placed in [the tunnel] in order to be used by the IDF if needed, as part of a special operation against the underground network of the Hamas terror organization.”
  - The IDF stated that it struck the tunnel several times during the war alongside other operations to render the tunnel inoperable and that the rest of the tunnel was destroyed in recent weeks.
  - The IDF said that Hamas did not use the tunnel during the October 7 attack.
  - The IDF has said for years that no tunnels crossed into Israeli territory since the creation of the underground barrier in 2021.
- On April 6, IDF forces operating in the al-Amal neighborhood of Khan Younis [located and destroyed](#) a weapons depot containing 40 explosive devices and a ton of explosive material.

## Lebanon

- According to data the IDF [released](#) on April 7, the military has killed over 330 terrorists in Lebanon, largely Hezbollah operatives, since the war began, including 30 commanders of the terror group. The data also say that the IDF has struck approximately 4,700 Hezbollah targets.
- On April 8, the IDF [carried out](#) an airstrike that killed three Hezbollah operatives in the southern Lebanese town of as-Sultaniyah. The IDF announced that Ali Ahmed Hassin, who held a rank equivalent to brigade commander, was killed in the strike.
  - » Hassin was responsible for “the planning and execution” of Hezbollah projectile attacks against the Ramim Ridge area in northern Israel, which has come under attack numerous times since the war began, according to the IDF.
- Reuters [reported](#) on April 7 that “two Lebanese security sources [said] that an Israeli attack in eastern Lebanon targeted a training camp belonging to Hezbollah in the Janta village, near the border with Syria.” The outlet also noted, “one of the strikes was aimed at the town of Safri, near the eastern city of Baalbek.”
  - » Israel reportedly [launched the](#) airstrikes in response to the downing of an IDF drone by Hezbollah that day.
- On April 7, the IDF announced that it [conducted airstrikes](#) on Hezbollah targets across southern Lebanon, including a terror compound operated by Hezbollah’s elite Radwan forces in the town of Khiam.
  - » The compound consisted of seven buildings used by Hezbollah, according to the IDF.
  - » The IDF also struck a Hezbollah command center in Toura and rocket launching sites in the towns of Kawkaba and Mays al-Jabal in response to earlier rocket fire from those locations.
- On April 7, the IDF [carried out](#) airstrikes against Hezbollah targets in the southern Lebanese town of Kafr Kila and a rocket launching position in the town of Yaroun.
- On April 5, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to strike a building affiliated with the Hezbollah-allied Amal Movement in Marjayoun in southern Lebanon. Amal said that three of its operatives were killed.
  - » The IDF added that it launched airstrikes against a terrorist in Lebanon directing missile fire via a drone and that it conducted airstrikes against additional Hezbollah infrastructure in Kafr Kila, Tayr Harfa, Mays al-Jabal, and Blida.

## Iraq

- On April 7, the Iran-backed Islamic Resistance in Iraq [claimed](#) that it fired drones at an IDF base in the Golan Heights region of Israel and another IDF base at an unspecified location in Israel that morning.
  - » According to a report from *The Times of Israel*, “there were no reports of drone strikes Sunday morning, though rocket sirens did sound in the Golan Heights” on the morning of April 7.

## West Bank

- According to data the IDF [released](#) on April 7, the IDF has arrested over 3,700 wanted individuals in the West Bank, including over 1,600 Hamas operatives. The data also say that the IDF has killed an additional 420 gunmen. In addition, the IDF said that it has conducted 70 brigade-level raids in the West Bank.

## Humanitarian Efforts

- According to Israel’s Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories ([COGAT](#)), from the beginning of the war to March 28, there have been 363,775 tons of humanitarian aid that entered Gaza on 19,448 trucks.
- On April 7, COGAT [announced](#) that 322 humanitarian aid trucks were inspected and entered Gaza that day, a single-day record for aid trucks since the war began.
  - » COGAT stated that 70 percent of the aid trucks—228 trucks—sent into Gaza carried food, and noted that “there is no limit to the amount of aid that can be facilitated for the civilians in Gaza.”
- During a press briefing on April 7, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi [said](#), “at the same time as the offensive effort, we allow the introduction of humanitarian aid into the Strip. The interest of Hamas is to present a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, to press for an end to the war.”
  - » He added, “Hamas is trying to take control of the humanitarian aid and prevents its distribution, to return and control the Gaza Strip. This should not happen.”
- On April 7, Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and U.S. Ambassador to Israel Jack Lew [toured](#) the IDF’s new Humanitarian Coordination and Deconfliction Cell, where both were briefed on “measures being taken to increase the effective inspection, transfer and distribution of humanitarian aid,” according to a statement from Israel’s Defense Ministry.
  - » Gallant stated during the tour, “as we work to achieve the goals of this war, namely the destruction of Hamas and the return of the hostages, we recognize the importance of facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza.”
- On April 7, Iraq’s Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani [stated](#) that Iraq agreed to send 10 million liters of fuel to Gaza and to receive wounded Palestinians in Gaza for treatment in Iraq.

## Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations

- On April 8, both [Israeli](#) and [Hamas](#) officials reportedly indicated that they did not have confidence that negotiations would lead to a deal soon.
- Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) during a cabinet meeting on April 7, “I made it clear to the international community: There will be no ceasefire without the return of the hostages. It just won’t happen,” and “this is the Israeli government’s policy, and I

welcome the fact that the Biden administration made it clear the other day that this is still its position as well.”

- » He added, “Israel is not the one preventing a deal. Hamas is preventing a deal,” and “its extreme demands were intended to bring about an end to the war and leave it intact. To ensure its survival, its rehabilitation, its ability to endanger our citizens and our soldiers.”
- » Netanyahu insisted, “surrendering to Hamas’s demands will allow it to try to repeat the crimes of October 7 again and again, as it promised to do.”
- During a press briefing on April 7, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi [said](#), “we all would have liked to have [hostage Elad Katzir] back alive. We didn’t succeed in that,” and “we will continue to act in any way. We will continue our efforts, intelligence and operational, to return all the hostages as quickly as possible.”
  - » He also said, “as chief of staff, I personally feel a responsibility to return them, and so do the other commanders of the IDF and its soldiers” and argued that hostage negotiations should be conducted “responsibly and carefully and its details should be left in the right rooms.”
  - » Halevi insisted, “the IDF is strong enough for the State of Israel to know how to pay prices for the return of its sons and daughters. We have a moral duty to them and the IDF will know how to withstand even a difficult price and will also know how to come back and fight with strength.”
- On April 6, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#), citing a senior Israeli official, that a report the previous day from *CNN* indicating that Hamas rejected an Israeli proposal was false and that Israel did not in fact receive any response from Hamas.
  - » The official claimed that Hamas’s leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, is “dragging his feet and does not want a deal, despite Israel’s tremendous flexibility.”
  - » The official further alleged that Qatar’s mediators at the negotiations have not utilized their leverage over Hamas, stating, “Qatar has refrained from deporting the Hamas leaders it hosts, nor has it closed their bank accounts, which hold hundreds of millions of dollars used for terrorism.”
- Reports from April 5 [indicated](#) that Hamas rejected Israel’s most recent counter-proposal to reach a deal for the release of hostages. An unnamed diplomat told *CNN* that “[Hamas] refused and asserted it doesn’t include any reply to their asks,” and the terror group’s position is “that [the] Israeli proposal includes nothing new, so they see no need to change their proposal.”
  - » *The Times of Israel* reported, citing the diplomatic source’s correspondence with *CNN*, that “the latest Israeli proposal did not meet Hamas’s demands for the unrestricted return of Palestinians to northern Gaza and a complete withdrawal of IDF troops from the Strip.”
  - » The outlet also reported that “Israel insisted on inspections of those returning to the north and refused to pull-out from central Gaza” and noted that talks among CIA Director William Burns, Mossad Director David Barnea, Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar, Qatar’s Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, and Egypt’s intelligence head Abbas Kamel to reach a ceasefire will continue this weekend in Cairo.
- On April 5, President Biden wrote [letters](#) to the leaders of Egypt and Qatar pushing them to pressure Hamas to reach a ceasefire and hostage deal.



### *Post-War Planning*

- According to an April 8 [report](#) from *The Wall Street Journal*, Palestinian Authority (PA) officials have been operating in Gaza during the war, including intelligence officials.
  - » According to the report, which cites U.S., Israeli, and PA officials, Israeli officials have not ruled out working with PA or PA-affiliated officials in a post-war Gaza environment.
    - One Israeli official told *The Wall Street Journal* that there is a “general understanding” among Israeli officials that “in one way or another we’re going to have to work with people who are somewhat related to the PA.”
  - » One senior PA official cited in the report “acknowledged the presence of intelligence officials in Gaza” who are involved in “help[ing] coordinate aid distribution and are unarmed.” The source stated that these officials did not come from outside Gaza.
  - » The report notes that on March 30, Hamas arrested six people allegedly involved with the PA intelligence apparatus. Hamas accused the individuals of entering Gaza with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, an aid group, and alleged the six individuals were collaborators with Israel.

### *Casualties and Hostages*

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
  - » 604 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
    - 260 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
    - The IDF [announced](#) the deaths of Cpt. Ido Baruch, 21, from Tel Mond; Sgt. Amitai Even Shoshan, 20, from Azri’el; Sgt. Ilai Zair, 20, from Kedar; and Sgt. Reef Harush, 20, from Kibbutz Ramat David.
    - According to data the IDF released on April 7, 41 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) due to either friendly fire or other military-related accidents since the start of the war.
    - As of April 6, 1,550 IDF soldiers have been [injured](#) during ground combat in Gaza, including 317 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 33,207 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 75,933 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, at least 459 people have been [killed](#), and at least 4,750 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.
    - On April 6, the IDF [announced](#) that hostage Elad Katzir was murdered in Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) captivity and his body buried in Khan Younis, after troops found his body during operations there.
- 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.

#### *Iranian Involvement and Response*

- On April 8, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian [traveled](#) to Damascus, Syria, one week after a strike killed seven Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) members in Damascus.
- On April 7, Israel's *Maariv* outlet [reported](#), citing multiple Syrian officials, that the most likely Iranian response to the killing of second-in-command IRGC-QF commander Mohammad Reza Zahedi on April 1 is an attack on Israel's Golan Heights region.
  - » According to the report, Iran is not interested in a major retaliation for Zahedi's killing, as it wants to avoid a significant escalation. The sources cited in the report asserted that Iran may target IDF installations in the Golan Heights region while still seeking to avoid a major flare-up in the war.
  - » The report also alleges that in light of a number of IRGC commanders being killed in recent months, Iran has become increasingly suspicious of leaks or espionage in its proxy network, which it believes may be stemming from Syrian intelligence services seeking to rid Syria of Iran's influence.
    - According to the report, 18 IRGC commanders have been killed in recent months in airstrikes that Iran believes are attributable to Israel.

- On April 7, Yahya Rahim Safavi, senior adviser to Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, [told](#) Iran’s *ISNA* state news agency that “the embassies of the Zionist regime are no longer safe.”
- On April 7, Iran’s *Jadeh Iran* news outlet cited an anonymous Arab source who [indicated](#) that the Iranian regime offered not to attack Israel if a ceasefire is reached in Gaza. The source also claimed that Tehran signaled, “if America succeeds in containing the situation, it will be a great success for the Biden administration and we can build on that.”
- On April 7, Israel’s Shin Bet internal security agency indicated that the Iranian regime was likely responsible for [sending flowers](#) to the home of current hostage Liri Albag with a message that read, “may her memory be a blessing, we all know that the country is more important.”
- On April 6, at approximately 6:00 p.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) an anti-ship missile from Yemen towards the Red Sea. A U.S. coalition partner neutralized the missile.
- On April 6, between approximately 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) one drone from Yemen over the Red Sea. The United States later shot down the drone.
- On April 6, during the funeral of IRGC General Mohammad Reza Zahedi, who was killed in an airstrike in Damascus, Syria, Iranian Army Chief of Staff General Mohammad Bagheri [claimed](#) that “the decline period of the Zionists started with the Islamic Revolution . . . Non-Islamic and weak currents gradually went to the sidelines, and authentic Islamic currents such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine came into the field with full power, and since 30 years ago, this power has increased day by day.”
  - » IRGC Commander General Hossein Salami [told](#) the crowd at the funeral of the Iranian officers killed in Damascus that “our brave men will punish the Zionist regime.” He added, “we warn that no act by any enemy against our holy system will go unanswered and the art of the Iranian nation is to break the power of empires.”
- On April 5, Iranian presidential aide Mohammad Jamshidi [wrote](#) on X, “in a written message, the Islamic Republic of Iran warns U.S. leadership not to get dragged in Netanyahu’s trap for [the] U.S.: Stay away so you won’t get hurt. In response [the] U.S. asked Iran not to target American facilities.” The United States did not immediately address these remarks.
- During a speech on April 5, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah [said](#), “be certain that Iran’s response to the targeting of its Damascus consulate is inevitable,” a reference to the recent airstrike in Syria that killed several high-ranking IRGC operatives.

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

- On April 6, between approximately 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. local time, the United States [struck](#) one Houthi surface-to-air missile system in Yemen that was prepared to target ships in nearby waters.
- During an [exchange](#) with a reporter on April 5 who asked President Biden, “did you threaten to stop military aid to Israel?” Biden responded that he “asked them to do what they’re doing.”
  - » When the reporter asked, “are you abandoning Israel?” Biden answered, “where you from, man?” and when the reporter repeated the question, Biden retorted, “is that a serious question?”

- On April 5, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [stated](#) that the Biden administration has no plans to conduct an independent investigation into the Israeli strike that killed seven World Central Kitchen aid workers in Gaza.
- On April 5, Israel's *Channel 12* outlet reported that Israel's Opposition Leader Yair Lapid will [meet](#) with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) during his visit to Washington this week.
- On April 5, nearly forty Democrats in the House of Representatives, including former Speaker Nancy Pelosi, signed a [letter](#) to President Biden and Secretary Blinken that stated, "in light of [the Israeli strike that killed seven World Central Kitchen aid workers], we strongly urge you to reconsider your recent decision to authorize the transfer of a new arms package to Israel, and to withhold this and any future offensive arms transfers until a full investigation into the airstrike is completed."
  - » The letter also stated, "we also urge you to withhold these transfers if Israel fails to sufficiently mitigate harm to innocent civilians in Gaza, including aid workers, and if it fails to facilitate—or arbitrarily denies or restricts the transport and delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza."
- On April 5, US Ambassador to Israel Jack Lew stated during an [interview](#) with Israel's *Yedioth Ahronoth*, "I'm not going to talk about the alternative if there is no hostage deal because, honestly, I don't think we can accept an alternative where there is no deal."
  - » Lew added, "we have to keep pressing. And I understand that time is not on the hostages' side," using the Hebrew word for hostages during the English interview. Lew noted, "the hostage deal is critical, not only as a humanitarian issue, but also as a regional strategic matter."
    - He argued, "if you look at the geopolitical components, whether it's Hezbollah and Lebanon or Saudi Arabia. All of the pieces come together more easily if there is a deal to return the hostages along with a ceasefire."
  - » Lew dismissed claims that the U.S. abstention from voting on a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire and the release of the hostages amounted to a change in U.S. position. He further rejected the premise that U.S. pressure on Israel has caused Hamas to harden its negotiating position, stating, "no one cares more about Hamas believing that there must be a release of the hostages than the U.S."
- On April 5, *Axios* [reported](#) that during a phone call with Prime Minister Netanyahu on April 4, President Biden told the Israeli leader that if Israel did not change its operations in Gaza, "we won't be able to support you."
  - » White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby later told reporters that Biden's message to Netanyahu was, "let's get this [hostage deal] done so that we can get a ceasefire for a matter of weeks in place." Kirby added that Biden encouraged Netanyahu "to get to yes" on a deal.
- On April 8, European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Josep Borell [indicated](#) that the EU's mission to protect Red Sea shipping, which consists of four frigates, had neutralized eleven attacks since it began in late February.
  - » Greek commander Vasileios Gryparis stated that those eleven attacks involved nine drones, one maritime drone, and four anti-ship ballistic missiles.
- On April 8, the International Court of Justice began [preliminary hearings](#) for a case that Nicaragua brought accusing Germany of facilitating genocide by providing military and other forms of aid to Israel.

- On April 7, U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak released a [statement](#) that said that “we continue to stand by Israel’s right to defeat the threat from Hamas terrorists and defend their security. But the whole of the UK is shocked by the bloodshed.” The statement further noted that “this terrible conflict must end. The hostages must be released. The aid—which we have been straining every sinew to deliver by land, air and sea—must be flooded in.”
- On April 7, U.K. Foreign Minister David Cameron [indicated](#) that the United Kingdom would send a Royal Navy ship to assist with the new maritime corridor to provide humanitarian aid from Cyprus to Gaza. Cameron also pledged 9.7 million pounds (\$12.26 million) for equipment and logistical support to the maritime corridor.
- On April 7, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres [released](#) a video statement calling October 7 “a day of pain for Israel and the world.” He stated, “nothing can justify the horror unleashed by Hamas on October 7.”
  - » Guterres condemned “the use of sexual violence, torture, injuring and kidnapping of civilians, the firing of rockets toward civilian targets, and the use of human shields.”
  - » He also “call[ed] for the unconditional release of all the hostages still held by Hamas and other armed groups.”
- On April 7, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Martin Griffiths released a [statement](#) that “for the people of Gaza, the past six months of war have brought death, devastation and now the immediate prospect of a shameful man-made famine.” Griffiths also stated, “for the people affected by the lasting horror of the October 7 attacks, it has been six months of grief and torment.”

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

- On April 7, rallies and demonstrations [calling](#) for the release of the hostages took place across the world on the six-month anniversary of Hamas’s October 7 massacre.
  - » In New York City, thousands [gathered](#) near the UN building, and rallies were also held in Brussels, London, and Amsterdam.
  - » Several hundred people [attended](#) a rally at the Trocadero esplanade in Paris, waving Israeli flags and holding posters of the hostages.
  - » A rally was also [held](#) in Toronto, but it was disrupted by pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel counter-protesters. According to *The Toronto Sun*, two of the counter-protesters were [arrested](#).
    - In videos shared online, the pro-Palestinian counter-protesters can be seen [heckling](#) the demonstrators, with one man saying, “Your happy days are over. Every time you come out to celebrate we’ll be here ... you guys are known as the prophet killers. Ask your parents what you guys did to Jesus. Ask them what you did to Moses. Look at this filth right here.”
- In Israel, [demonstrations](#) to mark the six-month anniversary of Hamas’s October 7 massacre took place in at least 50 locations across the country, as protesters called for a deal to release the hostages and new elections.
  - » On April 7, at least 50,000 people [attended](#) a rally outside of the Knesset building in Jerusalem, [including](#) family members of the hostages.
  - » On April 6, organizers at the protest in Tel Aviv [said](#) that more than 100,000 people were in attendance.

- A driver [hit](#) three protesters with their car and kept driving until police stopped and arrested the suspect. The three protesters were treated for mild to moderate injuries.
- » On April 6, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that protests also took place in Haifa, Caesarea, Kfar Saba, Ra'anana, and Karkur.
- » On April 6, a nonpartisan rally was [held](#) in Sha'ar Hanegev Junction near Sderot, with around 300 people in attendance.
- On April 7, *The Jerusalem Post* [reported](#) that the University of Michigan Hillel had been vandalized twice in the past week with antisemitic graffiti. Both incidents, which were reported to local police, had graffiti that likened the Star of David to a swastika.
- On April 6, protesters [gathered](#) in front of the Histadrut workers union headquarters in Tel Aviv and called for a large-scale strike to pressure the government into a deal that would secure the release of the hostages.
- On April 6, *Fox News* [reported](#) that Vanderbilt University had expelled several students, suspended one, and placed an additional 20 on probation for staging an anti-Israel sit-in at Vanderbilt's Chancellor's Office on March 26. During the more than 20-hour sit-in, the university said the students physically assaulted a Community Service Officer and pushed staff members as they attempted to gain access to the building.
- On April 5, Columbia University [said](#) that four students were suspended for organizing the "Resistance 101," event on March 24. The event reportedly featured speakers who praised Hamas and explicitly [endorsed](#) terrorism as a means to win back "every inch of Palestine."

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