



Ari Cicurel
Assistant Director of Foreign Policy

Yoni Tobin
Policy Analyst

Zachary Schildcrout
Policy Analyst

Anna Schafel
Senior Programs and Outreach Associate

Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update May 13, 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 conflict between Israel, the Iranian regime, and the regime's proxies. 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

- On May 11, Secretary of State Antony Blinken [submitted](#) a report to Congress claiming it is "reasonable" to assess that Israel has used U.S.-supplied weapons in a manner that is "inconsistent" with U.S. and international law, but also that the State Department did not find any specific incidents that would justify withholding U.S. military aid. The report will likely fuel calls to cut off U.S. military aid to Israel, which would embolden Hamas to take a more hardline position in ceasefire and hostage negotiations as well as encourage more aggression from Iran and Hezbollah.

Last 72 Hours

Attacks Against Israel

- At least 15,000 rockets, mortars, drones, and other projectiles have been fired at Israel from all fronts combined during the war, according to JINSA data.

Gaza

- Sirens [sounded](#) in Sderot, Ivim, Nir Am, [Ashkelon](#), [Beersheba](#), [Nahal Oz](#), [Mefalsim](#), [Netiv Ha'asara](#), and [Kissufim](#).
- On May 13, the IDF [said](#) two rockets were launched from the Gaza Strip, one targeting Mefalsim and the other Netiv Ha'asara, both of which struck open areas. No injuries or damage were reported.
- On May 12, *The New York Times* [reported](#), citing U.S. and Israeli officials, that Hamas's leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, is hiding near hostages in Hamas's tunnel system to protect himself. According to the report, U.S. officials believe Sinwar is in a tunnel beneath the southern Gazan city of Khan Younis.
- On May 12, the IDF [said](#) that two rockets launched from Rafah targeting the Kerem Shalom area were intercepted by the Iron Dome.

- On May 12, the IDF [said](#) one rocket launched from central Gaza targeting Sderot was intercepted by the Iron Dome.
 - » Earlier in the day, two rockets were [fired](#) toward the city. No injuries were reported.
- On May 12, the IDF [said](#) one rocket launched from the Gaza Strip struck a building in Ashkelon.
 - » According to Israel's *Maariv* outlet, three people suffered [minor injuries](#) in the attack and were taken to the hospital.
- On May 11, the IDF [said](#) four rockets were launched from Rafah targeting Kerem Shalom, one of which was intercepted by the Iron Dome while the other three struck open areas. There were no injuries reported.
- On May 11, Israel's *Walla* outlet reported that the IDF has [uncovered](#) a tunnel network in eastern Rafah that extended towards the Israel-Gaza border, including a tunnel Hamas reportedly used to infiltrate into Israel on October 7.
 - » If accurate, the report marks the first indication to date that Hamas terror operatives used tunnels to enter Israel during the October 7 attack.
- On May 10, the IDF [said](#) Hamas fired nine rockets from Rafah targeting Beersheba, all of which struck an open area.
 - » The IDF said an earlier barrage of five rockets targeting Beersheba was launched from the central Gaza Strip. One of the rockets struck a park in the city, lightly [wounding](#) a 37-year-old woman and causing damage.
 - » The attack [triggered](#) sirens in Beersheba for the first time since the Iranian missile and drone attack on April 13-14.

Lebanon

- Sirens [sounded](#) in Gesher HaZiv, Lehman, Achziv Miluot Industrial Zone, Nahariya, [Fassuta](#), Netua, Matat, Elkosh, [Hagoshrim](#), [Dafna](#), [Snir](#), [She'ar Yashuv](#), [Kibbutz Dan](#), [A'jaar](#), and [Yiftah](#).
- On May 13, four IDF soldiers were [wounded](#) by two anti-tank missiles fired by Hezbollah from southern Lebanon targeting Yiftah. The IDF said three of the soldiers were lightly hurt while the fourth is in moderate condition.
- On May 13, the IDF [said](#) a drone launched from Lebanon struck an area near Zar'it, causing no injuries.
- On May 13, Hezbollah [claimed](#) responsibility for two one-way attack drones that struck an area near Beit Hillel, causing a small fire that was extinguished and no injuries. Hezbollah claims the drones directly hit a military position.
- On May 12, an explosion was [seen](#) on Israel's northern coast near Rosh Hanikra after sirens warned of an incoming drone from Lebanon. No injuries were reported.
- On May 12, Israel's *Ynet News* outlet [reported](#) that Hezbollah fired a rocket that day at the Mount Dov area of northern Israel, which Hezbollah claimed was a new type of heavy rocket named after deceased Hezbollah operative Jihad Mughniyeh.
- Israel's *Channel 12* outlet [reported](#) on May 12, citing Lebanon's *Al-Diyar* outlet, that Hezbollah's leadership has decided to change the group's strategy for attacking Israel.
 - » According to the report, Hezbollah leadership made the decision in recent days following extensive internal discussions.
 - » The impetus for the decision reportedly was the extensive losses Hezbollah has incurred due to Israeli airstrikes, and the change in strategy is aimed at mitigating its losses and increasing the effectiveness of its attacks.

- » The report alleges that Hezbollah has withdrawn most of its forces from areas near the Lebanon-Israel border and now only deploys units "of 3-4 fighters near the [border] for observation and target identification purposes."
- » In addition, according to the report, Hezbollah has pivoted from primarily using anti-tank missiles to prioritizing the use of drones in its attacks against Israel.
 - Hezbollah reportedly uses hideouts near the Lebanon-Israel border to launch the drone attacks against Israel.
 - According to a May 12 [report](#) from Israel's Ynet News, citing the Al-Diyar report, the "speed and maneuverability" of Hezbollah's drones make it difficult for the IDF to intercept the drones.
- » The report further asserts that Hezbollah is no longer attempting to attack IDF fighter jets over Lebanon in order to avoid further escalating the conflict.
- » The *Ynet News* [report](#), citing the *Al-Diyar* report, further claimed that Hezbollah has enhanced its intelligence capabilities, including through "networks of agents operating inside Israel."
- On May 11, Hezbollah [fired](#) two drones rigged with explosives that impacted the Beit Hillel area.
- On May 10, the IDF [said](#) that Israel's air defenses shot down two drones that Hezbollah fired into Israel.
- On May 10, Hezbollah [claimed](#) responsibility for a barrage of 35 rockets fired from Lebanon targeting Kiryat Shmona. Around 15 of the projectiles were intercepted by the Iron Dome, while the others struck the city and caused property damage.
 - » The Israel Fire and Rescue Services [said](#) 10 firefighting teams battled a large blaze sparked by the barrage.

IDF Operations

Gaza

- On May 13, the IDF announced that it [struck](#) approximately 120 terror targets across the Gaza Strip over the prior 24 hours.
- Reports from May 13 [indicated](#) that Israel killed Democratic Front terror group operative Talal Abu Zarifa in an airstrike in Gaza City's Sabra neighborhood.
- During a ceremony in Jerusalem marking Yom Hazikaron [Israel's day of commemoration for fallen soldiers and terror victims] on May 12, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi [said](#), "as the commander of the Israel Defense Forces during the war, I bear responsibility for the fact that the IDF failed in its mission to protect the citizens of the State of Israel on October 7. I feel its weight on my shoulders every day, and in my heart, I fully understand its meaning," and "I am the commander who sent your sons and daughters to the battle from which they did not return, and to the posts from which they were kidnapped."
 - » He added, "I carry with me every day the memory of the fallen, and I am responsible for answering the sharp questions that keep you awake," and "I did not know all the fallen, but I will never forget them. I did not have time to visit their homes, but I will always be committed to you—the parents, daughters and sons, brothers and sisters, spouses, grandfathers and grandmothers."
 - » He said further, "I stand humbly in the face of your bravery to stand up to the pain, to find the strength in everything in the shadow of the heavy loss, and to bring new meaning into the void that opened up," and "in this war, we are determined to complete the mission, even though we understand the cost."

- » Halevi said, “as long as our enemies rise up against us, we will be on guard, we will be ready and alert, we will respond strongly to any attempt to harm us, and we will strike back at those who seek to kill us.”
- » At the ceremony, Israel’s President Isaac Herzog [said](#), “I stand here, next to the remnants of our Temple, in torn garments. This tearing—a symbol of Jewish mourning, it is a symbol of the mourning and sorrow of an entire people in this year—a year of national mourning. A symbol of a blood-drenched rend in the heart of the people. A tear in the heart of the State of Israel—shattered, bereaved, crying bitter tears, refusing to be comforted for its sons and daughters—soldiers and civilians, civilians and soldiers ... A great tragedy has befallen us.”
 - He added, “I turn from here, in this holy moment, to our brothers and sisters held hostage, and to their families: throughout these national days, we never forget that there is no greater commandment than redeeming captives. The entire nation is with you. We must summon courage and choose life. Not to rest and not to be quiet until they all return home.”
 - He also said, “believe me, my sisters and brothers, I would—with all my heart—like to tell about each and every one of our fallen loved ones, from all of Israel’s wars, from all the security forces, from all over the country. About their goodness, their beauty, their bravery. But the fracture is so great, and our losses are too many, too many indeed.”
 - He recalled, “hundreds fell on October 7 and throughout the entire campaign ... some by fire and some by suffocation, some by sword and some by beast. Some at the doorstep of their home, and some in armored personnel carriers, some in the warmth of their bed and some in the streets, some at a guard-post and some in the battlefield, some at a bus stop and some at a police station. Some in a car and some in an armored vehicle, some on the kibbutz pathways, some in the pasture and some at a party, some in the shopping mall and some in missiles and rockets, some in tunnels, and some in hiding. Forever, forever we remember them.”
 - Herzog said further, “citizens of Israel, at this sacred moment, I remind us and the entire world: we never wanted nor chose this terrible war. Not this one nor its predecessors.”
 - He said, “all we wanted was to return to Zion from which we were forcibly expelled, and to renew our freedom there—in a Jewish and democratic state. To build a life here. A future. A hope. We always dreamed of peace and good neighborliness with all the peoples and countries in the region, and no less than that forever. But as long as our enemies seek to destroy us, we will not lay down our swords.”
- On May 12, the IDF [began](#) combat operations in Jabaliya in northern Gaza.
 - » According to the IDF, prior to the ground maneuver of the 98th Division in the area, the IDF conducted airstrikes across Jabaliya, striking roughly 30 Hamas targets and killing several terror operatives.
 - » On May 11, the IDF [said](#) that it is launching strikes against Hamas in Jabaliya in northern Gaza after warning civilians in the area to evacuate. According to the IDF, the terror group was attempting to reconstitute there. On May 12, Palestinian media [reported](#) combat in the area.
 - » On May 11, Israel’s *Channel 12* outlet [reported](#) that IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Halevi told Prime Minister Netanyahu that “we are now operating again in Jabaliya. As long as there isn’t a diplomatic move to develop a governing body in the Strip that isn’t Hamas, we’ll have to act again and again in other places to dismantle Hamas’s infrastructure.” He reportedly added, “it will be a Sisyphean task.”

- » On May 11, Israel's *Walla* outlet [reported](#) that the IDF was initiating an evacuation of civilians from Jabaliya in northern Gaza in advance of combat operations there.
 - According to *Walla*, Hamas has begun re-establishing its command-and-control centers in Jabaliya and elsewhere in Gaza. Israeli intelligence reportedly has detected “extensive Hamas activity” in Jabaliya in recent weeks.
- Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) during a ceremony on May 12, “the strong commitment to our country encompasses all of our fighters in this difficult war,” including “Jews, Druze, Christians, Muslims, Bedouins, Circassians.”
 - » He added that “we have completed about half of [the war against Hamas], but we are committed to completing this sacred task.” He also said, “we all fight together. Because this is the only way to defeat the monsters of Hamas, who want to destroy us.”
- On May 12, the IDF [said](#) that troops from the 98th Division were engaged in close-quarters combat with Hamas operatives in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City. Troops called in multiple airstrikes to eliminate Hamas operatives and infrastructure during the ground operation.
- On May 12, the IDF [conducted](#) an airstrike in Rafah that killed 10 Hamas operatives.
- On May 12, Israel's *Walla* outlet [reported](#), citing IDF sources, that the IDF is refraining from beginning major ground operations in most of Rafah due to U.S. pressure.
 - » The report alleged that though the IDF is conducting artillery shelling and airstrikes against Hamas targets in Rafah, it is not engaging in ground maneuvers west of Salah al-Din Road, constituting virtually the entirety of Rafah.
 - » According to sources cited in the report, Israel currently has no plans for control of Rafah Crossing on the Egypt-Gaza border, through which Hamas has smuggled weapons into Gaza for over a decade.
- On May 12, the IDF and Israel's internal security agency Shin Bet [announced](#) in a joint statement that the IDF killed Naim Ghoul, a senior operative in Hamas's Shati Battalion, in a May 10 airstrike.
 - » Ghoul was responsible for a number of rocket attacks against Israel and also involved in guarding now-deceased hostage Cpl. Noa Marciano for a period of time during the war.
- On May 11, the IDF [said](#) that it killed a Palestinian Islamic Jihad member who took part in the October 7 massacre in an airstrike in Zeitoun.
- On May 10, the IDF [said](#) it struck two rocket launch positions in Rafah, which had been used to strike Beersheba earlier in the day. The IDF said it identified secondary explosions after the strike, indicating munitions were present.
- Reports from May 10 [indicated](#) that Israel's security cabinet voted to expand the military's operations in Rafah.

Lebanon

- On May 12, the IDF [said](#) that it launched airstrikes against two Hezbollah rocket launchers in Halta and Kafarhamam in southern Lebanon, as well as two additional targets near Kherbe.
- On May 11, the IDF [said](#) that it used fighter jets to target a Hezbollah building in al-Amra.
- On May 10, the IDF [said](#) that it launched airstrikes against Hezbollah targets in Odaisseh, Khiam, Rab al-Thalathine, Deir Siriane, Ayta ash-Shab, and Mhaibib.

West Bank

- Reports from May 12 [indicated](#) that the IDF killed Samer Rummaneh, an operative of the Lion's Den terrorist organization, during an operation near Nablus.

Humanitarian Efforts

- According to Israel's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories ([COGAT](#)), from the beginning of the war to May 10, there have been 531,160 tons of humanitarian aid that entered Gaza on 27,775 trucks.
- On May 12, the IDF [said](#) that Israel opened the Western Erez Crossing with Gaza, which the Defense Ministry's engineering department constructed, "as part of the effort to increase aid routes to the Gaza Strip, and to the northern Gaza Strip in particular."
- AFP [reported](#) on May 12 that during a conference, the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) pledged more than \$2 billion in humanitarian aid to Gaza to be distributed over the course of two years.
- On May 11, the IDF [said](#) that it and COGAT have facilitated the construction of an International Medical Corps-run hospital in Deir al-Balah as "a further part of the IDF and COGAT's humanitarian efforts to ensure aid, including medical aid, reaches the Gazan civilian population."
- On May 11, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that "*Walla* news site reporter Barak Ravid [quoted] an Israeli official as saying that Egypt is refusing to send trucks ferrying aid through the Kerem Shalom Crossing between Gaza and southern Israel until the IDF withdraws from the Rafah Crossing, leading to a significant drop in the amount of humanitarian assistance entering the enclave."
 - » The original [report](#) from *Walla* further alleged, citing a U.S. official, that Egypt withdrawing its assistance with administering the crossing has already led to a significant decrease in humanitarian aid entering Gaza.
- On May 11, the IDF [said](#) that approximately 300,000 Palestinians have gone from Rafah to a humanitarian area in al-Mawasi and Khan Younis, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) said on May 13 that approximately 360,000 people have fled the city.

Ceasefire and Hostage Negotiations

- On May 13, Prime Minister Netanyahu claimed during a [conversation](#) with Dan Senor on the *Call Me Back* podcast that the perception of tension in the U.S.-Israel relations has hurt the ceasefire and hostage deal and "gives succor to Iran and its henchmen. But it means that we have to apply the pressure even more."
 - » Netanyahu asked, "where does America go? ... Does it succumb to this madness, to this mobocracy in those campuses, to this flagrant antisemitism that is sweeping the globe?"
 - » Netanyahu added, "the fate of the world depends on where America goes ... I think for the sake of humanity, for the sake of our common future, our common values, our civilization, it is very important that America retains its dominant position as the supreme global power."
- In response to U.S. President Joe Biden's assertion on May 11 that "Israel said it's up to Hamas; if they wanted to do it, we could end it tomorrow. And the ceasefire would begin tomorrow," Hamas [said](#) in a statement on May 12, "we condemn this position by the US president. We consider it a setback from the outcomes of the latest round of negotiations, which led to the movement's agreement to the proposal put forward by mediators."
- During a press briefing on May 10, U.S. National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [said](#), "we are working hard to try to keep both sides engaged in continuing the discussion—if only virtually—and to continue to work on the actual text itself. We still believe that a deal was possible ... The gaps remaining can be surmounted, but it's going to require

leadership, some moral courage and it's going to require continued ability to compromise and to negotiate in good faith. We're not giving up on that."

- » He added, "there are no in-person meetings now in place ... That doesn't mean the process has to end ... We're still all in, and we're still going to keep working on it."
- On May 10, Hamas official Khalil Al-Hayya [said](#), "Hamas did not suspend nor withdraw from the negotiations. The occupation turned against the mediators' proposal" and that Hamas seeks a deal, while Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seeks continued fighting.
- On May 10, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that "Hamas says it is holding consultations to reconsider its negotiating strategy in light of Israel's rejection of its counter-proposal in the hostage talks earlier this week and the expanding IDF operations at the Rafah Border Crossing." Hamas reportedly said that negotiations are at "square one."

Post-War Planning

- On May 13, Prime Minister Netanyahu [told](#) Dan Senor on the *Call Me Back* podcast that "you don't have to reoccupy it [Gaza]. You just have to demilitarize it actively. And you know, the distances are so small. So you go in, you go out. Or you remain where you have to be."
 - » Netanyahu argued, "no one's going to come in [to provide civil administration in Gaza], until they know that you either destroyed Hamas, or you're about to destroy Hamas. And that's a certainty. Because, if they think Hamas is going to emerge from the rubble and retake Gaza, they're not going to commit suicide."
- On May 13, Israel's *i24 News* outlet [reported](#) that the Palestinian Authority said it would not assume control of the Rafah Crossing despite Israel's request that it do so.
- During an interview with CBS's "Face the Nation" on May 12, Secretary of State Antony Blinken [argued](#) that Israel needs to have a plan for post-war governance in Gaza because "if they leave and get out of Gaza, as we believe they need to do, then you're going to have a vacuum that's likely to be filled by chaos, anarchy, and ultimately by Hamas again."
- On May 12, Israel's *Channel 12* outlet [reported](#), citing reporting from Saudi Arabia-based *Al Arabiya*, that Egypt, Qatar, and other unspecified Arab countries rejected a proposal from Israel in which the countries would be involved in helping to administer post-war Gaza.

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 620 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).
 - 272 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
 - The IDF announced the deaths of Staff Sgt. [Ariel Tsym](#), 20, from Modin; Sgt. [Itay Livny](#), 19, from Ramat Hasharon; Sgt. [Yosef Dassa](#), 19, from Kiryat Bialik; Sgt. [Ermiyas Mekuriyaw](#), 19, from Beersheba; Sgt. [Daniel Levy](#), 19, from Kiryat Motzkin.
 - As of May 6, 1,609 IDF soldiers have been [injured](#) during ground combat in Gaza, including at least 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 35,034 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and 78,755 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 May 13, Prime Minister Netanyahu [claimed](#) that “fourteen thousand have been killed, combatants, and, probably around sixteen thousand civilians have been killed” in Gaza.
 - » On May 10, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that an “infographic issued [by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs] on Wednesday places the total broader Gaza war toll at 34,844 with 7,797 (32%) of the casualties being children and 4,959 (20%) of them being women. In the previous infographic released by OCHA two days earlier, the broader death toll was 34,735 with over 9,500 (27%) of them being women and over 14,500 (42%) being children.”
 - The outlet noted that this “would suggest that the number of women and children killed dropped from 69% to 52% in just two days.”
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, nearly 500 people have been [killed](#), and an additional approximately 4,900 have been wounded in the West Bank.
- The IDF [claims](#) that it has killed at least 1,500 infiltrators from Gaza since the start of the war.
- So far, [105](#) hostages in Gaza have been released, [three](#) have been rescued by the IDF, [eight](#) have been [found dead](#), three have been [mistakenly](#) killed by the IDF, and one was [killed](#) during an IDF attempt to rescue him.
 - » 81 Israeli hostages have been released.
 - » 46 hostages with foreign nationalities—some also holding Israeli citizenship—have been released.
 - Thus far, 23 [Thai](#) nationals, 6 [Argentinian](#) nationals, 5 [German nationals](#), 3 [French](#) nationals, 4 [Russian nationals](#), 1 [Dutch](#) national, 1 [Filipino national](#), 1 [Mexican](#) national, 1 [Uruguayan](#) national, and 1 [American](#) national have been released.
 - Hamas has released [36 children](#) and still holds two as hostages.
- Israel has said that terrorists in Gaza currently [hold](#) 133 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 May 12, at approximately 3:30 a.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) one drone from Yemen over the Gulf of Aden. U.S. forces later shot down the drone.
- On May 11, between approximately 4:30 a.m. and 4:45 a.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) three drones from Yemen over the Red Sea. U.S. forces shot down the drones.

- On May 10, at approximately 8:45 p.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) one drone from Yemen over the Gulf of Aden. A coalition aircraft shot down the drone.

U.S. and International Response

- On May 12, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan reiterated to his Israeli counterpart, Tzachi Hanegbi, “the ironclad U.S. commitment to Israel’s security and the defeat of Hamas in Gaza,” according to a U.S. [readout](#) of the call.
- On May 12, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Jack Lew [argued](#) that “fundamentally, nothing has changed in the basic relationship” and that the Biden administration has only held back delivery to Israel of “one set of munitions,” specifically “large diameter bombs, heavy bombs, particularly when there’s the possibility of them being used in densely populated urban areas.” He indicated that “everything else keeps flowing.”
- On May 11, Secretary of State Antony Blinken [submitted](#) a report to Congress stating that it is “reasonable” to assess that Israel has used U.S.-supplied weapons in a manner that is “inconsistent” with U.S. and international law but did not find any specific incidents that would justify withholding U.S. military aid. The Biden administration’s National Security Memorandum-20 (NSM-20) mandated the report.
 - » The report noted that Israel “has the knowledge, experience and tools to implement best practices for mitigating civilian harm in its military operations,” but that “the results on the ground, including high levels of civilian casualties, raise substantial questions” about whether Israel is using those tools.
 - » The report noted that “action and inaction by Israel” had slowed the flow of humanitarian aid into Israel.
 - » The report [noted](#) that “Israel has not shared complete information to verify whether US defense articles covered under NSM-20 were specifically used in actions that have been alleged as violations of IHL or IHRL in Gaza, or in the West Bank and East Jerusalem during the period of the report.” However, it added, “given Israel’s significant reliance on US-made defense articles, it is reasonable to assess that defense articles covered under NSM-20 have been used by Israeli security forces since October 7 in instances inconsistent with its IHL obligations or with established best practices for mitigating civilian harm.”
 - » Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) [argued](#) that “this report contradicts itself,” and “it provides a useful accountability structure, but it will be most useful if judgments can be made based on the facts and the law and not driven by what we wish the facts and the law were.” He added that the Biden administration is “ducking a determination on the hard ... politically inconvenient cases.”
 - Van Hollen further noted that “the report might create an atmosphere where people will push for more limitations on offensive weapons to Israel.”
- On May 11, *The Washington Post* [reported](#) that the United States had offered Israel assistance, including intelligence, to help Israel locate Hamas leaders and tunnels if it refrains from a full-scale operation in Rafah.
- On May 11, Israel’s *Ynet News* outlet [reported](#) that Israeli officials believe the United States will continue to deliver the munitions that the Biden administration has delayed providing to Israel but will also prohibit their use in Rafah.
- After a *CNN* [report](#) released on May 10 alleged abuse of Palestinian detainees at Israeli prisons, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby stated, “we have seen these reports on alleged prisoner abuse at this prison. It’s deeply concerning, very troubling. We are reaching out to our Israeli counterparts to get more information here

about these allegations and our expectation is that we'll get good answers here ... Our expectations are of the highest standard when it comes to the treatment of prisoners.”

- During an interview on *NBC's* “Meet the Press” on May 12, Secretary Blinken [denied](#) that the United States has a double standard when evaluating Israel's compliance with international law and that “we treat Israel, one of our closest allies and partners, just as we would treat any other country.”
- On May 12, Commander of U.S. Central Command GEN Michael “Erik” Kurilla [arrived](#) in Israel to meet with Israeli military officials for a situational assessment.
- On May 10, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby [stated](#), “I wouldn't go so far as to say that what we've seen here in the last 24 hours connotes or indicates a broad, large-scale invasion or major ground operation [in Rafah]. It appears to be localized near the crossing largely with the forces that they had put in there at the beginning.”
- On May 10, 26 Democrat members of the House of Representatives signed a [letter](#) organized by Reps. Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ) and Jared Golden (D-ME) to U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan arguing, “with democracy under assault around the world, we cannot undermine our ally Israel, especially in her greatest hour of need. America's commitments must always be ironclad.”
 - » The letter further claimed, “we have a duty to continue to equip Israel with the resources she needs to defend herself and crush the terrorists who also seek to do America harm, free the hostages including the Americans, continue delivering critical humanitarian aid to innocent civilians in Gaza, and to stand by our democratic allies around the world.”
 - » The representatives explained, “the president's unyielding commitment to passing emergency supplemental funding for Israel showed the world our commitment. When we abandon these duties, we leave a vacuum of American leadership for our anti-democratic adversaries to fill.”
- On May 12, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan [claimed](#) that Prime Minister Netanyahu “has reached a level that would make Hitler jealous with the genocidal methods he has put forward.” Erdogan further argued that Gaza is an “open-air prison, not just after October 7, but for years before, like a concentration camp.”
- On May 12, U.K. Foreign Minister David Cameron [told](#) the U.K.'s *Sky News* that his “view is that the right answer is to try and stop the fighting by having a hostage deal, achieving a pause in the fighting and then using that to build a sustainable ceasefire without going back to further conflict.” He noted, however, “the problem is it goes back to Hamas,” and “Hamas have been offered a deal which would release hundreds of prisoners from Israeli jails, that would provide a pause in the fighting ... and they're not taking that deal.”
 - » Cameron argued, “the real pressure should be on Hamas to agree to that hostage deal. The fighting could stop tomorrow.”
 - » He also opposed an embargo on Israel because it “would strengthen Hamas [and] weaken Israel. I think it probably makes a hostage deal less likely.”
- On May 12, Colombia's President Gustavo Petro [posted](#) on X, “dropping bombs on thousands of innocent children, women and elderly people does not make you a hero. You remain alongside those who killed millions of Jews in Europe.” He added, “a genocide is a genocide no matter regardless of religion. Try to at least stop the massacre.”
- On May 12, Egypt [announced](#) it would join South Africa's lawsuit at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Israel alleging war crimes during the fighting in Gaza.
 - » On May 10, South Africa [asked](#) the ICJ to impose additional emergency measures against Israel.

- On May 10, the UN General Assembly [passed](#) a resolution supporting Palestine’s bid to become a full UN member state and recommending that the UN Security Council “reconsider the matter favorably.” 143 nations voted in favor, nine countries voted against, including the United States and Israel, and 25 nations abstained.
 - » The U.S. mission to the United Nations [released](#) a statement arguing that “since the attacks of October 7, President Biden has been clear that sustainable peace in the region can only be achieved through a two-state solution, with Israel’s security guaranteed, where Israelis and Palestinians can one day live side by side with equal measures of freedom and dignity. It remains the US view that unilateral measures at the UN and on the ground will not advance this goal. The General Assembly resolution being debated today is no exception and so the United States will be voting ‘no’ and encourages other Member States to do the same.”
 - The statement added, “the draft resolution does not alter the status of the Palestinians as a ‘non-member state observer mission.’ Even if the resolution were adopted, the text explicitly outlines that the Palestinian non-member-state observer mission would not gain the right to vote in the General Assembly. It also would not gain the right to put forward candidates in UN organs or to be elected as a member of the Security Council.”
 - The statement also explained, “perhaps most importantly, adopting this resolution will not bring about a tangible change for Palestinians. It will not end the fighting in Gaza or provide food, medicine and shelter to civilians in Gaza. That is where US efforts are focused: bringing about a ceasefire and the release of hostages, all while continuing to surge aid to Palestinians in Gaza who desperately need it.”
 - » After the vote, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas [stated](#) that “Palestine will continue its endeavor to obtain full membership in the UN.”
 - » Israel’s Foreign Minister Israel Katz [claimed](#), “the absurd decision taken today at the UN General Assembly highlights the structural bias of the UN and the reasons why, under the leadership of UN Secretary-General Guterres, it has turned itself into an irrelevant institution.”

Rising Antisemitism, Protests, and Attacks

- On May 12, a house in the West Bank town of Duma was [set on fire](#) in an apparent anti-Palestinian attack. The words “Regards from Benjamin” were spray painted on the house, which was likely a reference to 14-year-old Benjamin Achimeir, who was found dead on April 13. A resident from Duma is suspected of Achimeir’s murder.
- On May 12, during a [speech](#) by actor Jerry Seinfeld at Duke University’s commencement ceremony, dozens of students booed, chanted “free Palestine,” and walked out to protest his speech.
- On May 12, New York City police [arrested](#) hundreds of anti-Israel protesters who blocked the Manhattan Bridge.
- On May 12, roughly 4,000 anti-Israel protesters [marched](#) through Madrid, Spain.
- On May 11, Israel’s Eurovision contestant, Eden Golan, was [booed](#) as she performed during the grand final of the competition. She [placed](#) fifth in the competition.
 - » Golan was also [booed](#) during her rehearsal earlier that day.
 - » That day, anti-Israel demonstrators [clashed](#) with police outside of the arena for the Eurovision competition in Malmo, Sweden.

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- VADM Michael Connor, USN (ret.), Lt Gen Eric Fiel, USAF (ret.), and LtGen Richard Mills, USMC (ret.), [“Israel Must Act: Leaving Hamas In Rafah Is Simply Not An Option,”](#) *19FortyFive*, May 1, 2024