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Israel's Operation Swords of Iron Update May 15, 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 15, JINSA's [open letter](#) from 94 retired U.S. generals and admirals in support of Israel ran in the print edition of *The New York Times*. The letter declares that "given our experience as retired American military leaders, we are very concerned about the security impacts of increasingly strained U.S.-Israel ties as Israel becomes a growing source of domestic division. We therefore feel compelled to declare that a strong Israel is vital to the United States national security, and it is imperative that America unequivocally stand by this indispensable ally."
- After choosing to withhold an arms shipment to Israel of 2,000-lb. and 500-lb. munitions unless Israel forgoes a full-scale ground operation in Rafah, the Biden administration [informed](#) Congress on May 15 that it would transfer to Israel \$1 billion in arms, including up to \$700 million in tank rounds, \$500 million in tactical vehicles, and \$60 million in mortar shells.
 - While the continuation of U.S. arms transfers to Israel is critical as it continues to use a high volume of its munitions stocks, [freezing](#) the sale of 2,000-lb. bombs to Israel unless it avoids conducting operations in Rafah will embolden Hamas to avoid



reaching a ceasefire and hostage deal and undermine deterrence against Hezbollah and Iran.

- During a JINSA [webinar](#) on May 13, President of NGO Monitor Gerald Steinberg argued that “we know that [on October 8], National Students for Justice in Palestine ... put out this ‘toolkit’ ... the messaging [of different SJP chapters] is all the same ... so there is clearly coordination there ... you can identify individuals whose names keep popping up ... there is an organization, there is close coordination ... and there needs to be a serious effort to make that visible through whatever documentation is available.”
 - » Ira Stoll, Editor of *TheEditors.com*, commented, “you’d think there’d be some U.S. attorney ... somewhere who would get curious about this ... There’s existing laws about what tax-exempt purpose is ... and maybe we should look at whether advocating for a boycott of Israel is a tax-exempt purpose.”
 - » JINSA’s Director of Research Jacob Olidort noted, “this is not simply students exercising free speech, but [it] is ... incorporating the involvement of organizations and individuals with destructive agendas.”

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 May 14, the IDF [said](#) that a fighter pilot intercepted a drone that was fired from the east, which did not cross into Israel’s airspace.
- On May 14, Israel’s *i24 News* [reported](#), citing a report from *The Times of London*, that the IDF has uncovered a document in Gaza that reveals a secret Hamas plan to establish an operations hub in Turkey.
 - » According to the report, the document was located by IDF soldiers in the hideout of the chief of staff to Hamas’s leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar.
 - » The document reportedly details a three-year plan to establish an outpost in Turkey and “[set up] many military cells and safe houses in many countries” in order to plan sabotage and assassination plots.

Gaza

- Sirens [sounded](#) in Ashkelon and other nearby regions and [Sderot](#).
- On May 15, the IDF [said](#) that the Iron Dome shot down a rocket that terrorists near Jabaliya in Gaza fired toward Sderot, triggering sirens in the area.
 - » Shortly afterward, the IDF [said](#) that the Iron Dome intercepted two more rockets that terrorists in Gaza fired toward Sderot, but subsequent [reports](#) indicated that a rocket impacted an unoccupied building.
- On May 14, representatives of the Sderot municipality [said](#) that terrorists in Gaza fired three rockets toward the city, which air defenses shot down.
- On May 14, terrorists in Gaza [launched](#) rockets toward Ashkelon.
- On May 13, *The New York Times* [reported](#) that “the Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar has for years overseen a secret police force in Gaza that conducted surveillance on everyday

Palestinians and built files on young people, journalists and those who questioned the government, according to intelligence officials and a trove of internal documents reviewed by” the outlet.

- » The piece elaborated that “the unit, known as the General Security Service, relied on a network of Gaza informants, some of whom reported their own neighbors to the police. People landed in security files for attending protests or publicly criticizing Hamas. In some cases, the records suggest that the authorities followed people to determine if they were carrying on romantic relationships outside marriage.”

Lebanon

- Sirens [sounded](#) in Fassuta, Alkosh, Abirim, Netua, [Adamit](#), Hanita, Ya’ara, Eilon, Goren, Arab al-Aramshe, and [Majdal Shams](#).
- On May 15, Hezbollah [launched](#) at least 10 rockets at the Western Galilee, which caused no injuries.
- On May 15, the IDF [said](#) a barrage of around 60 rockets was launched from Lebanon at northern Israel, largely targeting Mount Meron. At least one heavy rocket was fired at the Biranit army base.
 - » Hezbollah claimed responsibility for the attack, which the IDF said caused no injuries but some “minor damage.”
- On May 14, anti-tank guided missiles were [launched](#) from Lebanon at the Upper Galilee.
- On May 14, the IDF [said](#) 10 rockets were launched from Lebanon at the Mount Hermon area, striking open areas and causing no damage or casualties.
- On May 14, the IDF [said](#) that Hezbollah shot down an observation balloon that the military operated. The terror group said that it used missiles to fire at the balloon near Adamit.
- On May 13, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah [said](#), “the link between the supportive Lebanese front and Gaza is definitive, final, and conclusive,” and “no one will be able to de-link them.” Regarding residents of northern Israel who have fled their homes, he said, “if you want to solve the issue, go to your government and tell them to stop the war on Gaza.”

Iraq

- On May 15, the IDF [said](#) fighter jets shot down two drones headed towards Israeli territory.
 - » The Iran-backed Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed to have launched two drones targeting Eilat.

IDF Operations

- In a recorded announcement addressing Jews in the Diaspora marking Yom Ha’atzma’ut, Israel’s independence day, Israel’s President Isaac Herzog [said](#) that in light of Hamas’s “murder, torture, rape, and abduction of hundreds of our people,” the ensuing grief, and the “shocking scale of the reemergence of antisemitism in so many forms throughout the world,” “there is no question that this year, our Yom Ha’atzma’ut celebrations are different.”
 - » He said that the months since October 7, despite the suffering, have “also been a time of important achievements.” He elaborated, “they have reminded us why we rose up from tragedy and found the strength and determination to establish a beautiful and beloved national home — the miracle that is the State of Israel.”

- » He went on, “they have reminded us, also, of our core qualities, of our power as a people to stand up, again and again, against hatred. To survive and speak our truth. Of our deep and sustaining caring for one another. Of our connection to the call that we have carried across the ages: To do good, to pursue peace, tikkun olam, and to repair our fractured world.”
- » Herzog said, “my friends, we have seen our people step forward this year for one another. To offer one another protection, support, empathy, and care and love. We have shown that we truly belong to one another. And that, no matter what happens, we can tap into deep resources of caring, connection, love and belonging.”
- » He urged, “may we continue to raise our voices and fight for what matters — for the immediate release of our hostages. For our safety and our future in a thriving and secure Jewish and democratic State of Israel, and for a world of peace, harmony, and goodwill.”
- Marking Yom Ha’atzma’ut, Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) in a recorded message, “seventy-six years ago, in the War of Independence, we stood alone. Few against many. Five Arab armies invaded our territory to eliminate the country that had just been born. We were poor in weapons, almost without means. But we had one secret weapon: the spirit of the ages, the life force of an ancient people that refuses to die.”
 - » He went on, “thanks to this spirit, we defeated our enemies and secured our existence. Today we are infinitely stronger. But the desire to destroy us has not gone away; it is still here. We saw it this year on October 7. This is no ordinary Independence Day. The war is still going on. It was imposed on us on a black day of a terrible massacre.”
 - » He said that families of IDF soldiers killed in Gaza urged him to “continue to the end, continue until the Hamas monsters are eliminated,” and he said, “although this is not a normal Independence Day, it is a special opportunity to understand the meaning of our independence. The independence to be a free people in our country. The independence to protect ourselves on our own. The independence to realize the decree of the generations: never again.”

Gaza

- The United Nations (UN) [said](#) on May 15 that Israeli tank fire on May 13 struck a marked UN vehicle and killed Waibhav Anil Kale, a UN staffer from India. Jordan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the incident also injured UN staffer Yara Dababneh. The IDF said, “an initial inquiry conducted indicates that the vehicle was hit in an area declared an active combat zone” and that it had “not been made aware of the route of the vehicle.”
 - » This was the [first time](#) an international UN staff member has been killed in Gaza since the war began.
- The IDF [said](#) that overnight on May 15, troops pushed into the Jabaliya camp and fought “dozens of armed squads and eliminated a large number of terrorists.” The IDF said a drone strike also killed members of a cell responsible for rocket fire targeting Sderot the previous day.
- On May 15, in a post on its Arabic-language social media account, the IDF [called for](#) civilians to evacuate from a number of neighborhoods in northern Gaza, including the al-Atatra, al-Mansheya, Sheikh Za’id, and Salatin neighborhoods. Civilians were told to travel to shelters west of Gaza City.
 - » On May 14, the IDF’s Arabic-language spokesperson, Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee, [announced](#) new zones in northern Gaza that civilians should evacuate amid intensified

IDF operations in the Jabaliya area. The IDF told civilians to head to shelters located west of Gaza City.

- On May 14, the IDF [said](#) that amid battles in Rafah, Zeitoun, and Jabaliya, the Air Force struck over 100 targets during the past day.
- On May 14, IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari [said](#) during a press briefing that the IDF killed over 100 combatants in Gaza over the past day, as well as over 100 gunmen in Rafah. He also said that the IDF discovered 10 tunnels.
 - » He also said, “there are also hostages in the Rafah area. We are determined to do whatever it takes to create the conditions for them to return to us soon.”
 - » In response to a question about IDF operations in areas in which the IDF previously fought Hamas, Hagari said, “there is no doubt that a governmental alternative to Hamas will create pressure on Hamas, but that is a question for the political echelon.”
- On May 14, the IDF [said](#) a Hamas command room located inside of a United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) school in Nuseirat was struck by fighter jets, killing at least 15 terror operatives including 10 Hamas members. According to the IDF, members of Hamas’s elite Nukhba force who participated in the October 7 massacre were among those killed in the strike.
- On May 14, residents of the neighborhoods of Al-Jneina, Al-Salam, and Al-Brazil in Rafah [told](#) Reuters that Israeli tanks were pushing deeper into eastern Rafah.
- On May 14, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that “Palestinian gunmen are seen at a UNRWA logistics center in southern Gaza’s Rafah and near United Nations vehicles, in IDF drone footage from the weekend.” The IDF said that Israel’s Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) “conveyed the findings to senior officials in the international community and called on the UN to investigate the matter urgently.”
 - » COGAT further “warned the UN against the presence of terrorists in the area, and the seriousness of the danger that exists in the presence of the terrorists in the logistics center compound with regard to the continued protection of the organization’s facilities.”
 - » Following publication of the footage, Israel’s Foreign Minister Israel Katz [argued](#) that UNRWA “is an arm of the terrorist organization Hamas” and urged Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the agency, to resign.
- On May 13, *CNN* [reported](#) that “the Biden administration has assessed that Israel has amassed enough troops on the edge of the city of Rafah in Gaza to move forward with a full-scale incursion in the coming days, but senior US officials are currently unsure if it has made a final decision to carry out such a move in direct defiance of President Joe Biden, two senior administration officials told” the outlet.
 - » The outlet said that “one of the officials also warned that Israel has not come anywhere close to making adequate preparations – including building infrastructure related to food, hygiene and shelter – ahead of potentially evacuating more than one million Gazans ... who currently reside in Rafah.”
 - » Meanwhile, Reuters [reported](#) on May 14 that the IDF used tanks to expand operations deeper into Rafah that day while intensifying strikes against targets in northern Gaza.
- On May 11, IDF drones [captured footage](#) of Palestinian gunmen at an UNRWA logistics center in Rafah and near United Nations vehicles.

- » The video shows gunmen in the logistics compound itself, which the IDF says is used by UNRWA to deliver humanitarian aid. Another clip shows a Palestinian gunman opening fire inside the complex.

Lebanon

- On May 14, the IDF [said](#) a member of Hezbollah was killed in an airstrike in Mays al-Jabal. The IDF said it also used fighter jets to target Hezbollah sites in Kharayeb, Halta, and Yaroun.
- On May 14, Lebanese media [reported](#) that at least one person was killed in an alleged Israeli airstrike on a vehicle in Tyre in southern Lebanon. Reuters [reported](#) that day, citing two Lebanese security officials, that the strike killed a Hezbollah field commander.
 - » Hezbollah later [confirmed](#) that one of its operatives, Hussein Ibrahim Makki, was killed in the strike.
 - » According to the IDF, Makki was a senior commander in the terror group's so-called Southern Front unit and previously served as the commander of Hezbollah's coastal division.
- The IDF said it [struck](#) multiple Hezbollah sites overnight on May 14, using fighter jets to strike Hezbollah military buildings in Khiam and Kafr Kila and a site in Odaisseh where Hezbollah terrorists were spotted.
- On May 13, the IDF [released footage](#) of a rocket flying from a launcher in Ayta ash-Shab before it was targeted by Israeli fighter jets. The IDF said it also struck another rocket launcher in the same area.
 - » The IDF identified secondary blasts and rockets flying from both sites, indicating that the launchers were prepared to launch attacks on Israel.

West Bank

- On May 15, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) that “after Israel blocked Qatari broadcaster *Al Jazeera* in the country and shuttered its local offices, *Army Radio* reports that Defense Minister Yoav Gallant has ordered IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi to block the network in the West Bank as well.”
 - » The outlet specified that “the report says it isn't yet known whether the order applies only to areas of the West Bank where Israeli settlers live, or if it extends as well to the Palestinian areas, where *Al Jazeera* is much more widely watched.”

Humanitarian Efforts

- According to Israel's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories ([COGAT](#)), from the beginning of the war to May 13, there have been 531,160 tons of humanitarian aid that entered Gaza on 27,775 trucks.
- Amid Egypt's recent refusal to send humanitarian aid through the Rafah Crossing, Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz [said](#) on May 14, “the world is placing the responsibility of Israel for the humanitarian issue, but the key to preventing a humanitarian crisis is now in the hands of our Egyptian friends,” and “ Hamas will not control the Rafah Crossing. This is a security need we won't compromise on.”
- On May 14, UNRWA stated that approximately 450,000 Palestinians [evacuated](#) from the southern Gazan city of Rafah in the previous week.

- On May 14, Israeli extremists reportedly looted and then hours later [torched](#) two trucks carrying aid from Jordan to Gaza.
 - » On May 14, British Foreign Secretary David Cameron [wrote](#) on X, “attacks by extremists on aid convoys en route to Gaza are appalling. Gazans are at risk of famine and in desperate need of supplies,” and “Israel must hold attackers to account and do more to allow aid in – I will be raising my concerns with the Israeli government.”
 - » On May 13, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan [responded](#) to repeated attacks on aid convoys by stating, “it is a total outrage that there are people who are attacking and looting these convoys. It is completely and utterly unacceptable behavior.”
- “The International Red Cross says it is opening a field hospital in southern Gaza today to try to meet what it describes as ‘overwhelming’ demand for health services in the city,” Reuters [reported](#) on May 14.
 - » The organization said, “medical staff are faced with people arriving with severe injuries, increasing communicable diseases which could lead to potential outbreaks, and complication[s] related to chronic diseases untreated that should have been treated days earlier.”
- On May 14, Pentagon Press Secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder [told](#) reporters regarding the U.S. efforts to construct a pier off Gaza’s coast to increase aid flows into Gaza, “in the coming days, you can expect to see this effort underway. And we are confident ... that we will be able to, working with our NGO partners, ensure that aid can be delivered.”
- On May 14, Deputy U.S. State Department Spokesman Vedant Patel [claimed](#), “we’ve seen 50 trucks enter Gaza on May 12. This is not nearly enough.”

Post-War Planning

- On May 15, Prime Minister Netanyahu [claimed](#) in a video statement that “until it becomes clear that Hamas doesn’t rule Gaza militarily, no actor will be ready to accept upon himself the civil rule of Gaza out of fear for his own safety.” Netanyahu added that talks about “the day after” in Gaza are meaningless until Hamas is defeated.
 - » Netanyahu stated, “there is no alternative to a military victory ... The attempt to bypass it with all sorts of claims is simply detached from reality. There is only one alternative to victory—defeat. A military and diplomatic defeat, a national defeat. My government will never agree to this.”
 - » He also noted that Israel is evacuating civilians from Rafah and that “the humanitarian disaster they spoke about did not take place, nor will it,” a reference to opposition from the Biden administration and much of the international community to Israel conducting ground operations in Rafah.
- On May 13, *Axios* [reported](#) that “Israel proposed the Palestinian Authority send representatives to the Rafah crossing last week to take part in operating it,” according to “four senior American, Israeli and Palestinian officials.”

Casualties and Hostages

- Over 1,200 people were [killed](#) in Israel, and 13,000 Israelis have been [injured](#) in the war.
 - » 621 Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#).

- 273 IDF soldiers have been [killed](#) during ground combat in Gaza so far.
- On May 14, the IDF [announced](#) the death of Sgt. Ira Yair Gispan, 19, from Petah Tikva. His death was the first IDF fatality during its push into Rafah.
- 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.
- On May 14, three troops of the Paratroopers Brigade's 202nd Battalion were [seriously wounded](#) in a gun battle in the northern Gaza Strip, and another five troops were moderately injured. A soldier in the Givati Brigade's Tzabar Battalion was seriously hurt by an explosive device in Rafah.
- On May 13, two soldiers of the elite Yahalom combat engineering unit were [seriously wounded](#) by mortars launched by Hamas in Rafah, and another six soldiers were moderately hurt. In a separate May 13 incident in Gaza, a Defense Ministry contractor was seriously hurt and another two lightly hurt.
- » 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 35,180 people have been [killed](#) in Gaza, and over 79,000 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."
 - » Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) as of March 10 that Israel has killed approximately 13,000 Hamas operatives over the course of the war.
- On May 13, Farhan Aziz Haq, a spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, [defended](#) a change to the death toll in Gaza that the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) had cited. Haq stated that UN figures were based on data provided by the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry and "can vary based on their own verification process that they undertake."
 - » He added, "the United Nations teams on the ground in Gaza are unable to independently verify those figures, given the prevailing situation on the ground and the sheer volume of fatalities."
 - » On May 8, OCHA released an [infographic](#) that claimed the total Gaza death toll was 34,844, with 7,797 (32%) of the casualties being children and 4,959 (20%) of them being women. On May 6, OCHA had released an [infographic](#) claiming the total death toll was 34,735 with over 14,500 (42%) of them being children and over 9,500 (27%) women.
- According to the Palestinian Authority-run Palestinian Ministry of Health, nearly 500 people have been [killed](#), and an additional over 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 13, between approximately 5:51 p.m. and 6:02 p.m. local time, the Houthis [launched](#) one anti-ship ballistic missile from Yemen at the USS *Mason* as it sailed in the Red Sea and launched one drone over the Red Sea. The USS *Mason* and other U.S. forces destroyed both projectiles.

U.S. and International Response

- On May 15, the Biden administration informed Congress that it is [proceeding](#) with the transfer of \$1 billion in arms, including up to \$700 million in tank rounds, \$500 million in tactical vehicles, and \$60 million in mortar shells.
- On May 15, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan spoke over the phone with Israel’s Minister without portfolio Benny Gantz.
 - » Gantz [posted](#) on X that he “emphasised in our call the imperative of increasing the international pressure on Hamas in addition to continuing the military pressure to secure an arrangement to return the hostages and remove the threat of Hamas. We discussed further the efforts to reach an agreement to normalise relations with Saudi Arabia, expand the regional alliance of moderates and the subject of Gaza ‘the day-after.’”
- On May 14, a senior U.S. official [told](#) *The Times of Israel* that U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan will depart for Saudi Arabia and Israel later this week. In Saudi Arabia, Sullivan will reportedly discuss a potential normalization agreement with Israel. In Israel, he will reportedly discuss Israel’s plans for a large operation in Rafah.
- On May 14, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell [stated](#), “in some respects, we are struggling over what the theory of victory is ... Sometimes when we listen closely to Israeli leaders, they talk about mostly the idea of ... a sweeping victory on the battlefield, total victory.”

- » He added, “I don’t think we believe that that is likely or possible and that this looks a lot like situations that we found ourselves in after 9/11, where, after civilian populations had been moved and lots of violence that ... the insurrections continue.”
- On May 14, the House Rules Committee met to [consider](#) the Israel Security Assistance Support Act, which would freeze the budgets for the offices of the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and the National Security Council unless President Biden delivers the 2,000-lb. and 500-lb. bombs that his administration announced it was withholding.
 - » On May 14, the Office of Management and Budget released a [statement](#) of administration policy indicating that President Biden will veto the legislation if it passes.
 - » On May 14, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre [told](#) reporters, “we strongly, strongly oppose attempts to constrain the president’s ability to deploy ... U.S. security assistance consistent with US foreign policy and national security objectives.”
- On May 14, President Biden [wrote](#) a letter to Israel’s President Isaac Herzog stating, “the United States is proud of our enduring relationship with Israel. As the first country to recognize Israel as an independent state in 1948, our bonds are underpinned by shared democratic values, common interests, and cultural affinities ... as I—a lifelong supporter of Israel and the only American president to visit Israel in wartime—made clear after Hamas’s attack, the United States’ commitment to Israel’s security is ironclad.”
- On May 13, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan [stated](#), “we do not believe what is happening in Gaza is a genocide. We have been firmly on record rejecting that proposition.”
- On May 13, U.S. officials [denied](#) reports that the Biden administration is withholding intelligence on Hamas from Israel. The [reports](#) alleged that the United States would provide Israel with intelligence on Hamas if it avoided conducting a full-scale operation in Rafah.
 - » During a meeting at the White House with Jewish leaders, Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finer stated that the reports are “not true.”
 - » A U.S. official told the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, “the United States is working with Israel day and night to hunt the senior leaders of Hamas, who were the authors of the brutal terrorist assault of October 7.”
 - The official added, “we are providing unprecedented support—in ways that only the United States can—to help Israel bring them to justice. And we will continue to work relentlessly toward this objective in the period ahead ... Any report to the contrary is false. Helping Israel target the leaders of Hamas, and providing any information we have as to their whereabouts, is a top priority for us, and not a quid pro quo. None of this is dependent on operational decisions Israel makes.”
- On May 13, at approximately 3:41 p.m. local time, the United States [struck](#) one Houthi drone in Yemen that was prepared to target ships in nearby waters.
- The International Court of Justice plans to hold [hearings](#) on May 16 and 17 about South Africa’s request for the court to impose emergency measures against Israel.
- On May 15, Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan [claimed](#), “do not think that Israel will stop in Gaza ... Unless it’s stopped ... this rogue and terrorist state will set its sights on Anatolia sooner or later,” a reference to the Turkish peninsula also called Asia Minor.
 - » Erdogan added, “we will continue to stand by Hamas, which fights for the independence of its own land and which defends Anatolia.”

- On May 15, Ireland’s Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Micheal Martin [stated](#) that his country “will be recognizing the state of Palestine before the end of the month.”
- On May 14, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that Egyptian officials are considering downgrading relations with Israel by withdrawing the country’s ambassador to Israel. An Egyptian official clarified to the *Journal* that “as we stand, there are no plans to suspend ties or throw away Camp David ... but as long as Israeli forces remain at Rafah crossing, Egypt will not send a single truck to Rafah.”
- On May 14, Turkey’s Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan [stated](#) that his country would join South Africa’s case at the ICJ alleging Israeli war crimes in Gaza.
- During a meeting in Ankara on May 13, Greece’s Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis [told](#) Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, “let’s agree to disagree,” after Erdogan expressed sadness that Greece considers Hamas to be a terrorist organization. Erdogan also stated at the press conference that Turkey is currently [treating](#) over 1,000 Hamas members in Turkish hospitals.
- On May 13, [reports](#) indicated that several junior Israeli diplomats have returned to Turkey, but Israel’s Ambassador to Turkey Irit Lillian has reportedly not returned to Ankara.

Rising Antisemitism, Protests, and Attacks

- On May 15, anti-Israel protesters at University of California, Berkeley [took down](#) their tent encampment as activists held meetings with the school’s leadership.
- On May 14, two men were [charged](#) in a Greater Manchester, England, court with planning to attack and kill members of the Jewish community with automatic weapons on behalf of the Islamic State.
 - » Police said Walid Saadaoui, 36, and Amar Hussein, 50, were charged with preparation of a terror attack, while a third man, Saadaoui’s younger brother Bilel, 35, is charged with failing to disclose information about an act of terrorism.
- On May 14, anti-Israel protesters at Harvard University [took down](#) their tent encampment in Harvard Yard after school officials agreed to discuss their divestment demands.
- On May 14, roughly 3,000 Arab citizens in Israel [marched](#) and waved flags in northern Israel to commemorate the “Nakba,” or “catastrophe,” the Arabic term for Israel’s creation and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians during the 1948 War.
- On May 13, a Holocaust memorial in Paris, France, dedicated to French people who risked their lives to save Jews during the Nazi occupation, was [vandalized](#) with painted red hands. The Wall of the Righteous and other sites in Paris’s Marais district were vandalized overnight.
 - » Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo [said](#), “no cause can justify such degradations that dirty the memory of the victims of the Shoah and of the Righteous who saved Jews at risk to their lives.”
- On May 13, Amsterdam University [announced](#) that it would cancel all classes and remain closed for two days after police removed masked anti-Israel protesters who had occupied campus buildings.

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- Michael Makovsky, [“Statement on Biden’s Threat to Withhold Offensive Weapons to Israel,”](#) May 8, 2024
- Matthew Kenney, Zac Schildcrout, and Yoni Tobin, [Biden Threatens to Stop Arms Shipments to Israel, Harming Both Countries,](#) May 8, 2024
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