



ISRAEL UPDATE



Israel at War Thursday, April 10, 2025

Day 552, 59 Hostages Remain in Captivity

LATEST UPDATES

Netanyahu's visit to DC

Prime Minister Netanyahu cut short a trip to Hungary to visit the White House on Monday. He is the first foreign leader to meet with Trump since the president announced wide-ranging tariffs on imports, including 17% on some Israeli goods.

The meetings were expected to focus on the tariff policy, the war in Gaza and the hostages, of whom 59 are still in captivity, and Turkey's rising influence in Syria.

Trump gave no assurances to Netanyahu about tariff relief, but later in the week did an about face and dropped the tariff levels across the board to 10% (excluding China). The Manufacturers Association of Israel projected that 17% tariffs would result in a \$2.3 billion economic loss for Israel's economy.

At their White House meeting, Trump made a surprise announcement that the US was entering into direct negotiations with Iran regarding its nuclear program, beginning this Saturday (on the eve of Passover).

Netanyahu has said that only a deal that leads to the destruction of the nuclear facilities would be acceptable. Trump has threatened that if no deal is reached, Israel would strike the nuclear sites.

Iran has confirmed the talks but insists they will not be direct; they announced that they will be held in Oman and will be mediated by Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi and led by Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff.

Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, who has visited Israel more than 100 times, was confirmed as the US Ambassador to Israel by a 53-46 Senate vote, with John Fetterman (D-PA) casting the lone Democratic vote.

Hostages

Hamas officials said that they will not evacuate hostages in areas the IDF is targeting and will blame Israel for any deaths of hostages.

On Friday, one terrorist who aided in the abduction of Shiri Bibas and her two sons, Ariel and Kfir, was eliminated by the IDF. This terrorist likely took part in the Bibas' murders as well.

The Hostages and Missing Families Forum published a report regarding the conditions of the 24 remaining living hostages. The findings highlight severe malnutrition, extreme mental and physical abuse, and emergent medical conditions and injuries of the hostages. The information was collected by released hostages' testimonies, Israeli intelligence, and Hamas propaganda videos.

As public pressure mounts in Israel to finalize a deal, Egypt proposed a compromise between Israel and Hamas's demands, proposing the release of eight hostages freed in increments.

IDF Activities

Heavy fighting in Gaza continued this week, predominantly in Shejaiya (northern Gaza) and in Rafah (southern Gaza). Since the fighting resumed in Gaza last month, both areas were put under evacuation notices ahead of these strikes, in an effort to protect civilians.

A significant expansion of the IDF's buffer zone in Gaza is underway, which represents about 20% of the Palestinian enclave and encompasses the entirety of Rafah.

An Israeli official on Monday reported that the IDF is planning to begin facilitating the entry of aid into the Gaza Strip in the coming weeks, despite earlier denials from the Prime Minister's Office and military. However, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres rejected the Israelis' proposal to manage aid deliveries in Gaza, complaining that it risks "further controlling and callously limiting aid down to the last calorie and grain of flour."

Unnamed Israeli sources said, "There is no starvation or no beginning of diseases in Gaza, but we are about 40 to 50 days away from a situation where the food warehouses will be emptied. Last week, there were incidents when Gazans broke into warehouses with flour we brought in and transferred them to Hamas control."

Rockets

On Sunday, sirens blared across Israel as Hamas launched the largest rocket barrage in recent months. Of the ten rockets fired, five were intercepted by the Iron Dome defense system, while one struck Ashkelon, injuring a man in his thirties. These alerts force millions of Israelis to seek shelter, with many requiring medical attention for both physical and emotional needs.

Ballistic missiles fired by the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen continue to sound alarms as well.

Domestic Strife

After originally denying any involvement in the Qatargate scandal, Prime Minister Netanyahu admitted this week that he orchestrated an information leak from the security cabinet meeting.

The investigation centers on allegations that senior aides to Prime Minister Netanyahu received payments from a U.S.-based PR firm working for Qatar that sought to enhance the country's image as a mediator in hostage talks between Israel and Hamas. President Isaac Herzog has stated that the Qatargate scandal raises questions that must be fully investigated by authorities.

In another scandal regarding Netanyahu's ability to fire and replace head of the Shin Bet, the High Court of Justice issued an interim injunction on Tuesday, ruling that Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar must remain in office until further notice. The court gave the government and attorney general until April 20 to reach a compromise over the controversial attempt to dismiss him. The ruling bars the government from taking any steps to remove Bar, naming a successor, limiting his authority, or altering Shin Bet's relationship with the government while the injunction stands. However, interviews for a potential replacement may proceed.

The decision followed a contentious 11-hour hearing on petitions challenging Bar's dismissal, which began in chaos when protesters, including Likud MK Tally Gotliv, disrupted proceedings, forcing judges to suspend the session and remove the demonstrators. The hearing was broadcast live in Israel.

The case extends far beyond Bar; it is widely viewed as part of the ongoing struggle between the government and the judiciary, reflecting the prime minister's efforts to weaken institutional checks on executive power.

For Further Reading

- [In Southern Syria, Israel is the Power That Matters](#)
- [Israel's Shadow War with Iran is Ensnaring Swedish Teens](#)
- [Lebanon's Precarious Future](#)

Am Yisrael Chai!

Pamela Garron
Director, Strategic Initiatives
pamela.garron@jewishtampa.com

813.739.1688