



War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

May 22, 2025 - October 7 War, Day 594, 58 hostages remain in captivity

LATEST UPDATES

In a devastating terror attack last night, two employees of the Israeli Embassy in Washington DC were murdered at an event hosted by the American Jewish Committee in the nation's capital. The two young embassy employees, Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Lynn Milgrim. Yaron was planning to propose next week to Sara, when they were set to be in Jerusalem together.

See the statement by Jewish Federations of North America [here](#).

Earlier today, US Attorney General Pam Bondi spoke with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and detailed what is known at this time about the identity of the murderer and the two embassy employees. The Attorney General told the Prime Minister that she is "sorry to the depths of her heart" and that US President Donald Trump is involved in managing the event. She added that the US will bring the murderer to justice.

The assailant, Elias Rodriguez, wore a red kaffiyeh scarf and chanted "Free, free Palestine," during the attack. He is known as a far-left activist and is reportedly a member of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, which posted an "anti-genocide pledge" on its social media this week. Rodriguez was apprehended at the scene by law enforcement.

Israel's President Isaac Herzog:

"I am devastated by the scenes in Washington DC. This is a despicable act of hatred, of antisemitism, which has claimed the lives of two young employees of the Israeli Embassy. Our hearts are with the loved ones of those murdered, and our immediate prayers are with the injured. I send my full support to the Ambassador and all the Embassy staff. We stand with the Jewish community in DC and across the US. America and Israel will stand united in defense of our people and our shared values. Terror and hate will not break us."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu:

"We are witness to the terrible cost of the antisemitism and wild incitement against the State of Israel. Blood libels against Israel have a cost in blood and must be fought to the utmost. My heart grieves for the families of the young beloveds, whose lives were cut short in a moment by an abhorrent antisemitic murderer."

Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar told Yaron's father that "his son was a warrior on the diplomatic front who fell just like a soldier on the battlefield."

In honor of Yaron and Sarah, flags at Israel's Foreign Ministry and Israeli diplomatic missions around the world were **lowered to half-staff**.

IDF Activity

- **Two IDF soldiers fell** in the last week: Yosef Chirak, aged 22 (who had been married just seven months), and Danilo Mocanu. Mocanu was the 858th fatality among Israeli service members since October 7, 2023.
- In recent days, the **Israeli military** has begun **conducting extensive attacks** in the northern part of the Gaza Strip, after mobilizing thousands of reservists as part of a renewed campaign. There are now five IDF divisions operating in Gaza. The military says that the goal of the operation, which has been named "Gideon's Chariots," is to achieve "operational control" in areas it is capturing.
- The IDF has confirmed that it killed and recovered **the body of Hamas leader Muhammad Sinwar**, who had taken over the terror group's Gaza operations after his brother, Yahya Sinwar, was killed last year. Muhammad was found hiding beneath a hospital when he was killed.
- Beginning earlier this week, Israel began allowing **humanitarian aid** into Gaza, largely as a result of US pressure. Some 100 supply trucks have entered the Strip, with the IDF trying to ensure that **Hamas is unable to commandeer the goods**. Nonetheless, it is understood that ten percent of the aid has found its way to the terror group. Read more about Israel's aid strategy [here](#).
- The military has confirmed that in a covert and complex Mossad operation (in cooperation with "an allied foreign intelligence service"), it has **recovered the official Syrian archive on Eli Cohen**, Israel's most famous spy, who was executed in Damascus in 1965.
 - The files were presented to **Eli Cohen's widow, Nadia**, who is still alive.
 - Among the documents were the **original will** written by Eli Cohen himself, hours before his execution.
 - The archive includes approximately **2,500 original documents**, photographs, and personal items.
 - Also found among the many documents was the **original sentence and the decision to execute Cohen**. In this document, the court determined that the head of the Jewish community in Damascus, Rabbi Nissim Indibo, was to be allowed to minister to Eli Cohen according to Jewish tradition.

Rockets

- As has occurred multiple times per week in the last few months, the Houthis in Yemen **fired a ballistic missile at Israel overnight, and another this morning**. Millions of Israelis were woken by sirens at 3 am that sounded across the center of the country, including in Tel Aviv. A second missile was fired at the Jerusalem area around 12 noon today. The missiles were intercepted by the Israeli Arrow 3 system, and no injuries or major damage were reported.

- On Friday, the **IDF attacked three sea ports operated by the Houthis** from the air. Earlier, Israel had issued a warning to Yemen's citizens to stay away from the ports of Hodeida, Ras Issa, and Saliff.
- Yesterday, there were two separate incidents of **rocket fire from Gaza**, one towards Ashkelon and one at the communities surrounding the Strip. All rockets were either intercepted or fell in open areas. In response, the IDF ordered the areas from where the rockets were fired to be evacuated in anticipation of a retaliatory response.

Hostages, Ceasfire, and Diplomacy

- **Intense negotiations have continued over a possible hostage and ceasefire deal.** At times, reports suggested that a deal was very close, while others said that there were still significant gaps in the positions of each side. US Special Envoy for Hostages Adam Bohler said that "we are closer than ever to a hostage deal," adding that this is in part due to IDF operations on the ground in Gaza. However, for now, Israel has recalled the senior members of the negotiating team from Qatar, leaving a smaller number of "professional representatives."
- Earlier in the week, the leaders of **Britain, France, and Canada** issued a harsh condemnation of Israel's conduct of the war, slamming its "egregious actions" in Gaza, particularly the expanded offensive and the "wholly inadequate" resumption of aid. They warned of "concrete actions" if Israel did not ease its stepped-up offensive. Netanyahu called their joint statement a "huge prize" for Hamas.
- Leader of The Democrats (the merged Labor and Meretz parties), **Yair Golan**, sparked controversy in Israel this week after implying in a radio interview that the IDF is killing babies in Gaza "as a hobby." Golan, whose comments were widely criticized in the Jewish state, is a former IDF Deputy Chief of Staff.
- There was also widespread criticism of **former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert**, who told the BBC this week that "what Israel is doing now in Gaza is very close to a war crime."
- In an incident in the Palestinian **city of Jenin**, an authorized delegation of foreign diplomats in a motorcade was instructed to travel on a designated route in order to ensure their safety, as the IDF continues to operate in the area. For an as-yet unknown reason, the foreign diplomats deviated from the authorized route, entering a closed military area. Warning shots were fired by IDF soldiers who did not know about the diplomatic convoy. The incident ended without harm to the diplomats or others, and the IDF is investigating the event.
- On Wednesday, Prime Minister **Netanyahu gave his first press conference** since December 2024, where he said that Israel is ready to agree to a partial hostage deal that would include a temporary, though not a final, ceasefire. He also said that Israel will escalate the military pressure on Hamas and that at the end of the operation, the entire Gaza Strip will come under Israeli security control, although specifically, not "occupation."
- During the press conference, Netanyahu reiterated that **Hamas will be eradicated**, but added that humanitarian aid will be allowed into Gaza immediately.
- In addition, Netanyahu listed his **three conditions for ending the war**:

- The return of the hostages;
- The demilitarization of Hamas;
- The exile of Hamas's leadership.

Eurovision

- On Saturday night, **Yuval Raphael**, representing Israel in the hugely popular Eurovision Song Contest in Basel, Switzerland, won second place out of 37 countries competing.
- Raphael is a **survivor of the massacre at the Nova music festival** on October 7, and the lyrics of her song *New Day Will Rise* reflect her hope for the future.
- Similar to the situation last year, the judges, who come from each competing country's public broadcasting network, awarded few points to Israel. Nonetheless, **Raphael won the popular vote** based on scores from the general population in each country, placing her second overall.
- The competition was **marred by numerous calls for Israel to be thrown out** of the event for so-called war crimes, including by Spain's prime minister and numerous contestants.
- Nonetheless, Israeli supporters have pointed out that the **vote suggests that the general population in Europe** may be more supportive of Israel than some of the countries' elites and leaders.
- Watch the **full performance** [here](#).

For Further Reading

- [The Latest Haredi Enlistment Targets: Insufficient and Ineffectual](#)
- [Saying the Right Things: The New Syria Takes a First Step Towards the Abraham Accords](#)
- [What Kind of Deal Did the U.S. Make with Hamas?](#)