



Update from Israel

April 30, 2026

Prepared by and sent from Jewish Federations of North America's Israel Office

- **Two Israelis were killed in Lebanon last week; twelve soldiers were injured today**
- **An antisemitic terror attack wounds two Jewish residents of London**
- **On Iran, there is little expectation of an imminent breakthrough, despite continued indirect contacts**
- **IDF says that a "provocative" flotilla was intercepted before reaching Israel**

Lebanon

- **Twelve Israeli soldiers were wounded** after a Hezbollah drone struck an IDF artillery position near the northern border community of Shomera on Thursday morning. The IDF said two soldiers were moderately injured, while the others sustained light injuries and were listed in good condition. The drone, launched from Lebanon, hit an M548 armored cargo carrier used to transport artillery shells, triggering a fire and causing several shells in the area to explode. The military is examining whether the drone was guided by a fiber-optic cable, a method Hezbollah has used in recent weeks that is not vulnerable to electronic jamming. The IDF has been hitting Hezbollah targets in response.
- IDF **Sgt. Idan Fooks, 19, from Petah Tikva, was killed** on Sunday during fighting in southern Lebanon when a Hezbollah explosive drone struck IDF forces operating near the village of Taybeh. The attack wounded six additional soldiers, several seriously. In response, the IDF carried out a wave of airstrikes against Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon and the Beqaa Valley — Israel's first strike in the Beqaa in about three weeks.
- On Tuesday, **an Arab-Israeli civilian contractor working on behalf of the Defense Ministry was killed** in southern Lebanon when a Hezbollah drone struck heavy engineering equipment he was operating near Bint Jbeil. The civilian, identified as Amer Hujirat, 44, from the town of Shefa-Amr, was carrying out demolition work against Hezbollah infrastructure when the attack occurred. His 19-year-old son, who was working alongside him, was wounded and evacuated for treatment.
- The IDF **destroyed the largest Hezbollah tunnel system** discovered to date in southern Lebanon, describing it as a [major underground network](#) built with Iranian support and intended for large-scale operations by Hezbollah's Radwan Force. According to the

military, [the tunnel complex](#) ran for roughly one and a quarter miles and was located near the village of Qantara, about six miles from Israel's northern communities. The demolition required extensive preparation and a controlled explosion that was felt across wide areas of northern Israel, with residents warned in advance. The IDF said the site included living quarters, storage areas, and weapons caches, and described the operation as a significant blow to Hezbollah's military infrastructure.

- Earlier in the week, the **Israel–Lebanon negotiating track** formally moved into a renewed diplomatic phase even as fighting continued. On April 24, President Donald Trump announced a three-week extension of the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon after hosting a second round of ambassador-level talks at the White House, saying the US would work with Lebanon “to help it protect itself from Hezbollah” and that he expected to host Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Lebanese President Joseph Aoun at the White House “in the near future.” Trump also stated that the truce did not bar Israel from striking in self-defense. Israeli officials described the talks as an attempt to create a channel for direct Israel–Lebanon engagement where Hezbollah was not part of the discussions.
- Israeli political and military leaders observed that Hezbollah was actively testing — and attempting to undermine — the ceasefire. Netanyahu complained that **Hezbollah was trying to “sabotage” the truce** and that Israel was maintaining “full freedom of action” against threats, describing Israeli strikes during the ceasefire as part of that posture.
- Yesterday, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir told troops there was “no real ceasefire” on the **Lebanon combat front** and said Israel would not leave its security buffer zone in southern Lebanon until the threat to northern communities was removed.

Iran

- US.–Iran **negotiations are mainly frozen** at present. Trump blames the stalemate on divisions with Iran's leadership. He reiterated that the US naval blockade of Iranian ports will remain in place until Tehran presents a unified position that meets American demands.
- Over the past several days, while stopping short of announcing a firm new deadline, **Trump has repeated that Iran must agree to strict limits on its nuclear program** and must also address US concerns over regional security. Washington officials do not expect a breakthrough anytime soon, despite continued indirect contacts via intermediaries.
- Iranian officials have **publicly rejected U.S.** pressure and deadlines, with statements dismissing threats as coercive and insisting that negotiations “cannot be conducted under siege.” Tehran has said the U.S. blockade is illegal and warned that continued pressure will not force concessions, while maintaining that Iran remains prepared to defend itself and its allies. At the same time, Iranian messaging has left the door open to diplomacy in principle, without signaling any concrete new proposal.
- President Trump is also slated to receive a briefing on **new plans for potential military action** in Iran today from the leader of the US Central Command, Adm. Brad Cooper.
- Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stressed that **Israel will coordinate closely with the US but will not accept** any agreement that allows Iran to retain significant nuclear capabilities or rebuild military strength.
- Israeli analysts have outlined **several possible scenarios**: a prolonged standoff under a fragile pause; a limited renewal of hostilities driven by miscalculation; or a narrow interim deal that postpones, rather than resolves, the core disputes.
- The **United Arab Emirates announced it will withdraw from OPEC** effective May 1, ending nearly six decades of membership. Commentators described the move as a significant blow to OPEC's cohesion, removing one of the group's largest producers with substantial spare capacity and limiting the group's ability to manage global supply and prices. Israeli media have said that the decision reflects long-standing Emirati frustration with production quotas as well as possible strains in the UAE–Saudi relationship.

Gaza

- Israel's navy **intercepted a Gaza-bound activist flotilla** hundreds of miles from Israel's coast, stopping vessels near the Greek island of Crete rather than closer to the Gaza Strip as in past incidents. According to Israeli officials, 21 of the 58 boats in the Global Sumud Flotilla were intercepted overnight; approximately 175 activists were detained and transferred to Israel. The flotilla was attempting to breach Israel's naval blockade of Gaza, with participants claiming they were carrying humanitarian aid. Israeli naval forces warned the vessels to change course and said any aid could be delivered through established channels via the port of Ashdod. Israeli officials accused organizers of staging a provocation rather than a genuine aid mission. The interception was said to have occurred peacefully, and [video](#) showed the "activists" enjoying themselves on the Israeli naval ships.
- While international attention has shifted sharply away from Gaza to the Iran war, the **formal Gaza ceasefire from October 2025 remains in effect**, but has not been total, with occasional terrorist activity continuing.
- Talks on **further implementation of the ceasefire** have largely stalled. Discussions mediated by Egypt, Qatar and the US have continued at a low level, focusing on Hamas disarmament proposals and governance arrangements, but there has been no announced extension, upgrade, or transition to a permanent settlement. US-backed mechanisms established after the ceasefire, including the "Board of Peace," have not met in recent weeks, and Hamas has not formally responded to proposals related to disarmament or international stabilization forces.
- **Hamas remains the dominant security actor** in the roughly 50% of Gaza it controls, but exercises limited effective civil administration, with municipal services, policing and courts largely nonfunctional. Reports from the Strip suggest a growing reliance on ad-hoc arrangements, including family networks, local committees, and clan mediation, to manage disputes and basic needs. There is no indication of movement toward an interim civilian authority or international administrative framework inside Gaza.
- **Humanitarian conditions** remain significant and fragile. Aid entry has fluctuated sharply, but flows increased notably between April 14–20 following the partial reopening of the Zikim crossing.

Other Developments

- Yesterday, two Jewish men — a 76-year-old and a 34-year-old — **were seriously wounded in a terrorist stabbing attack in the Golders Green** neighborhood of London, an area with a large Jewish population. UK counterterrorism police declared the incident a terror attack and arrested a 45-year-old suspect at the scene on suspicion of attempted murder. Both victims were hospitalized in stable condition. Israeli President Isaac Herzog condemned the attack, saying he was "horrified by yet another violent attack on Jews in broad daylight on the streets of London," warned that the situation for Jews in the UK was "unacceptable," and urged British authorities to take urgent action to confront antisemitism and ensure the safety of Jewish communities.
- Former prime ministers **Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid announced they are uniting** their parties under a joint list, "Together – Led by Bennett," ahead of Israel's next elections, which will take place no later than October. Bennett will head the slate and serve as its candidate for prime minister, with Lapid saying the partnership was meant to consolidate the opposition and avoid fragmentation. Both leaders said the alliance would seek to form a government composed only of Zionist parties, and publicly invited former IDF chief Gadi Eisenkot to join the list. Israeli political analysts described the merger as a tactical move aimed at consolidating the anti-Netanyahu vote, while cautioning that unity alone may not be sufficient to form a governing coalition. Israeli media said that early polling shows the combined list competitive with Likud, but still short of a clear bloc majority, leaving the coalition math highly uncertain. Others argued the merger benefits both leaders personally

- strengthening Bennett’s claim to the premiership while preventing a collapse of Lapid’s party — rather than fundamentally reshaping Israel’s polarized political map.
- President Isaac Herzog’s office **invited prosecutors and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s defense team** to hold talks aimed at exploring possible understandings in Netanyahu’s ongoing criminal cases, in what was described as a preliminary step before any consideration of a pardon request. Herzog’s legal adviser said the initiative was intended to examine whether a negotiated plea deal could be reached outside the courtroom, and stressed that participation would not prejudice any party’s legal positions. Senior officials indicated that a pardon is not under consideration at this stage, with mediation viewed as a way to reduce public polarization surrounding the trial. Netanyahu denies all charges and continues to testify in court.
- A diplomatic dispute erupted after **Ukraine accused Israel of allowing wheat shipments** it says were stolen by Russia from occupied Ukrainian territory to enter Israeli ports. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned that Kyiv is preparing sanctions against those involved, stating that such trade “cannot be legitimate business,” while summoning Israel’s ambassador for clarification. Israeli officials pushed back, saying Ukraine has not provided substantiated evidence and that the matter should be handled through formal legal channels rather than public statements. The issue has drawn the attention of the European Union, which said it raised the matter with Israel and warned it could expand sanctions if necessary.

Violence in the West Bank

- Violence by a **small number of Jewish residents** of the West Bank against Palestinians continues, with data and reporting pointing to a significant increase since October 7, 2023.
- The **incidents have included** arson, vandalism, beatings, intimidation and attacks on property, particularly in rural and herding communities. The phenomenon has drawn widespread international condemnation and framed the settlement movement – and, by extension, all of Israel – in a very negative light.
- Israeli **condemnations of the violence have come from across the political**, security, religious and settlement spectrum. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed that offenders would be prosecuted and stressed that only the IDF and security forces were authorized to fight terrorism. President Isaac Herzog publicly described settler attacks as crossing a “red line” and said they violated Jewish values. The official settler leadership said the rioters represented a tiny fringe and warned that their actions damaged the broader settlement enterprise. Prominent West Bank rabbis likewise condemned attacks on Palestinian villages as morally unacceptable and contrary to Torah values.
- There is no universally accepted definition of “settler violence,” and **Israel has challenged UN data** as overstating incidents by including criminal acts that are not politically motivated.
- High-profile events, such as the August 2024 **riot in the village of Jit**, in which masked Israelis set vehicles and buildings on fire in response to a terror attack that emanated from the village, helped concentrate attention on the issue and prompted official Israeli investigations that acknowledged both operational failures and subsequent intervention by Israeli security forces.
- Israeli officials and commentators have consistently described the **perpetrators as a very small, radicalized minority**, commonly associated with loosely organized groups known as “hilltop youth.” Senior Israeli politicians, US officials, settler leadership bodies and prominent journalists, including figures identified with the political right, have said the violence was morally unacceptable and strategically damaging, regardless of the limited number of participants.
- **Government responses** have combined enforcement measures, policy shifts and new prevention frameworks, with mixed results. Israel has at times used administrative detention without trial, as well as criminal prosecutions against Jewish extremists, but those tools were later scaled back amid political debate. More recent efforts have focused on prevention and rehabilitation, including new inter-ministerial programs targeting at-risk youth, alongside

restraining orders, firearms restrictions, and increased security buffers. At the same time, Israeli media and official data reported a decline in police investigations and indictments even as the number of recorded nationalist incidents rose.

Jewish Federations and Partners

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)

- Federation-supported JDC's **Ad Habayit program provides** war-time tailored, hands-on support to highly vulnerable displaced individuals and families whose housing, benefits and relocation needs cannot be fully addressed through existing municipal welfare services. The program was expanded to additional locations and is now operating in Beit Shemesh, Be'er Sheva, Dimona and Arad, providing individualized support to displaced and vulnerable households whose needs are not fully met by existing welfare services.
- JDC's **Machar initiative**, focused on strengthening municipal welfare and resilience, has expanded to four additional northern municipalities: Metula, Merom Golan, Ma'alot-Tarshiha and Majdal Shams.
- New **economic support initiatives for small businesses** were launched in the North, including a digital voucher program and targeted assistance for small tourism businesses preparing for recovery.
- JDC also completed a pilot in Rehovot **upgrading a community shelter to be fully accessible for people with disabilities** and began developing guidelines to support similar upgrades in additional municipalities.
- **Mental health interventions** were expanded nationwide, with dozens of services delivered to northern municipalities for residents and municipal professionals.
- Since October 7, 2023, JDC has:
 - delivered approximately 655,000 items of emergency medical equipment to first-response teams in 152 municipalities;
 - provided career guidance and counseling services to more than 370,000 reservists, evacuees and newly injured Israelis;
 - deployed over 180 community caseworkers to support frail older adults and people with disabilities.
 - more than 250,000 Israelis have accessed psychological support through JDC's Nafshi online platform.
- Within hours of missile strikes in March 2026, JDC **connected Wi-Fi** in approximately 500 public shelters across 24 locations along Israel's northern border, delivered roughly 4,800 pounds of clothing, toiletries and basic necessities to more than 3,400 evacuees housed in hotels, and assisted 120 high-risk families from Be'er Sheva and Beit Shemesh with relocation and household setup after they lost their homes.

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