



Update from Israel

May 28, 2026

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

- **Netanyahu orders Lebanon escalation; IDF strikes Beirut for first time since May 6; Israel orders Tyre evacuation; 12th soldier killed since ceasefire began**
- **Iran deal described as "largely negotiated" by Trump; second US strike in Iran Wednesday as Trump warns he may "finish the job"; Israel deeply concerned over emerging framework**
- **Knesset dissolution bill advances; Netanyahu privately urges Haredi parties to delay elections**

France and Poland ban Ben Gvir; Italy requests EU sanctions over flotilla conduct

Lebanon

- In the past week, two IDF soldiers have been tragically killed. Sergeant Nehorai Leizer, 19, from Eilat, a combat engineer in the 601st Battalion, was killed Sunday when a Hezbollah drone struck his armored personnel carrier near the village of Dibel in southern Lebanon. He was the 11th IDF soldier killed since the ceasefire began on April 17. Sergeant Rotem Yanai, 20, from Giv'at Ada, a noncommissioned officer in the Givati Brigade's Rotem Battalion, was killed Wednesday when Hezbollah launched explosive drones into a military zone along Israel's northern border. She was running toward a shelter when struck. Two other soldiers were wounded in the incident. Yanai is the 12th IDF soldier killed since the ceasefire began.
- Israel's military campaign in Lebanon escalated sharply this week. Prime Minister Netanyahu announced Monday that Israel is "intensifying operations" against Hezbollah, seizing strategic positions and reinforcing the security buffer zone. The announcement followed a surge in Hezbollah drone attacks on IDF troops and northern Israeli communities. It came as the IDF confirmed it has expanded ground operations beyond the designated security zone

in parts of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah operatives have been pushed farther north. Israel also called up additional reserve troops to deploy to Lebanon.

- Overnight Monday into Tuesday, the Israeli Air Force carried out more than 120 strikes across southern Lebanon and the Beqaa Valley, targeting what the IDF described as storage facilities, command centers, and observation points used to attack Israeli troops and northern communities. In one strike on the village of Mashghara in the Beqaa Valley, a series of hits carried out within seconds of one another killed 12 people, including several members of a single family, according to Lebanon's state-run National News Agency. Lebanon's health ministry reported 31 people killed across all attacks on Tuesday, including at least four children and three women. One strike hit near a public hospital in the Tyre area, causing what the National News Agency described as significant damage to the hospital's departments.
- On Wednesday, the IDF issued a formal evacuation order for most of the city of Tyre and it declared all areas south of Lebanon's Zahrani River, roughly 40 kilometers north of the Israeli border, to be combat zones. Residents were ordered to head north. Israel also struck Beirut on Wednesday for the first time since May 6, ending a pause that Hebrew media had attributed to a White House request to avoid strikes on the Lebanese capital during the ongoing Iran negotiations.
- New reporting this week from KAN News indicates that Hezbollah has equipped its FPV drones with night-vision technology, allowing the group to strike IDF troops after dark. Read more in the [Jerusalem Post](#).
- The scale of Hezbollah's violations since the ceasefire took effect on April 17 has been documented by Israeli military officials. As of May 25, Hezbollah has launched 908 rockets, 1,337 drones and one-way attack aircraft, 342 of them equipped with explosives, along with 24 anti-tank guided missiles and 17 roadside bombs against Israeli forces and communities. Twelve IDF soldiers and one civilian have been killed; 225 people have been injured.
- Despite the escalating fighting, diplomatic negotiations continue. The US-mediated security track is scheduled to convene at the Pentagon on May 29, with political talks following on June 2 and 3. Lebanon's government has pursued the diplomatic track while Hezbollah has rejected it. Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam has called for international support in Beirut's negotiations with Israel.

Iran

- This week saw a roller coaster of activity and expectations regarding a US deal with Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and deal with Iran's nuclear program. Despite President Trump's Saturday announcement that a deal was imminent, a final deal has yet to emerge. By Wednesday, Trump said that the US was "not satisfied" with the offer on the table, emphasized that "Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon." Read more on [NPR](#).
- The framework under discussion calls for an initial memorandum of understanding to end the war, followed by 30 to 60 days of broader negotiations covering the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's nuclear program. A senior US administration official told CNN that the unfreezing of approximately \$24 billion in Iranian assets will occur only once the Strait of Hormuz has reopened.
- Israel is deeply concerned about the emerging deal. According to the Times of Israel, Israel has informed the United States that the framework gives Iran time and money, falls short of key security needs, does not include a commitment to export Iran's uranium stockpile, and leaves Iran's terror proxy networks intact, with nuclear details deferred entirely to later negotiations. Trump told Netanyahu he would ensure Iran's nuclear program is thwarted, but Israeli officials remained concerned. Read more in the [Times of Israel](#).

- Trump separately demanded, as part of the broader deal framework, that Arab leaders normalize relations with Israel in exchange for ending the war and signing a final agreement with Iran.
- Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid called the emerging agreement a "disaster" at a press conference Monday. "The regime did not fall — it grew stronger," he said, arguing that the deal does nothing to address Iran's ballistic missile threat and that it is "absurd" it was drafted without Israel at the table. He accused the Netanyahu government of setting goals it repeatedly fails to meet.
- The US military carried out self-defense strikes in southern Iran on Monday night, targeting Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps missile launch sites and naval vessels attempting to lay mines near the Strait of Hormuz. A second round of strikes followed Wednesday, targeting a military site the Pentagon said posed a threat to American forces and commercial maritime traffic. Iran accused the United States of ceasefire violations and said it retains the right to respond. Talks in Doha continued through both rounds of strikes. According to CBS News, difficult in contacting Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, who has been in hiding following the assassination of his predecessor and father, has further delayed negotiations. Read more in the [Times of Israel](#).

Elections in Israel

- The Knesset dissolution bill that passed its preliminary reading 110-0 last week is now before the House Committee, with the next full Knesset vote scheduled for June 1.
- Election timing remains fluid. September 1 and 15 are no longer viable options; September 8 remains a possibility. Three October dates are also under discussion: October 13, October 20 and October 27, the legally mandated deadline.
- Netanyahu has privately urged the ultra-Orthodox parties not to force elections in September, warning that an early timeline would endanger the right-wing bloc's chances of winning. But the Haredi parties have shown little patience: Rabbi Dov Landau, a leading figure in Israel's Lithuanian Haredi community, ordered Netanyahu's ultra-Orthodox coalition partners this month to "work toward dissolving the Knesset as soon as possible." The Haredi parties have also threatened to push for dissolution close to October 7, a step widely seen as deliberately damaging to the prime minister.

Ben Gvir and the Flotilla Aftermath

- The international response to National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir's conduct toward detained flotilla activists at Ashdod port, reported in last week's update, has continued to grow. France banned Ben Gvir from entering the country, with Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot citing his "reprehensible actions" toward detained activists, including French and European citizens. Poland imposed a five-year entry ban, with Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski writing: "In the democratic world we do not abuse and gloat over people in custody." Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani formally asked EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas to place Ben Gvir sanctions on the agenda of the next meeting of EU foreign ministers. Read more in the [Times of Israel](#).
- EU-wide sanctions against Ben Gvir would require unanimous backing from all 27 member states, and adoption is considered unlikely. The Czech Republic has already vowed to block any such action. Meanwhile, flotilla activists from Australia, the United States and other countries have been returning home in recent days; American activists returning to JFK Airport on May 24 showed journalists bruises they said were sustained during Israeli detention.

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