

Ynet-News, May 10, 2024 – Friday
Possible Abomination Day **May 31** or June 20, 2024
Pesach Apr 21-28 First-Fruits April 29

5.10. 24 – Fr- - News – Friday Omer 12
14 Gaza rockets strike Be'er Sheva; 35 rockets fired from Lebanon

5.10. 24 – Fr- - News – Friday Omer 12
UN backs PA bid membership; US bill cuts funds to any entity for the PA

5.10. 24 – Fr- - News – Friday Omer 12
War Cabinet votes to expand Rafah operations as IDF encircles city's east

5.10. 24 – Fr- - News Placed in May 10 spot – Friday Omer 12
Spain, Ireland, Slovenia and Malta, & EU countries want 2-State by May 21

5.10. 24 – Fr- - News – Friday Omer 12
South Africa asks for ICJ court measures against Israel over Rafah operation

5.09. 24 – Th- - - News – Thursday Omer 11
'Bad, bad, bad, decision,' Saban warns Biden he is mistaken to withhold munitions

5.09. 24 – Th- - - News Placed in May 09 spot – Thursday Omer 11
Israel population 9.9 million, 7,247,000 Jewish (73.2%), 2,089,000 Arab (21.1%)

5.09. 24 – Th- - - News – Thursday Omer 11
Blinken speaks to Congress Friday on Biden halting military aid to Israel

5.09. 24 – Th- - - News – Thursday Omer 11
US Jewish groups criticize Biden halting military aid to rescue hostages

5.08. 24 – We- - - News Placed in May 08 spot – Wednesday Omer 10
Israel needs media to teach all languages the motives within culture conflicts

5.08. 24 – We- - - News – Wednesday Omer 10
Rafah reopens aid; US & UN demand scale down & delay weapons shipments

5.07. 24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Omer 9
Israel sends Mossad, IDF & Shin Bet to Cairo to join Qatar, US & Hamas in talks

5.07. 24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Omer 9
Biden never notified Congress, delays arms shipments to Israel amid internal pressure

5.07. 24 – Tu- - - News Placed in May 07 spot – Tuesday Omer 9
Radical hostage proposal Israel cabinet unanimously cannot accept; talks continue

5.06. 24 – Mo- - - News – Monday Omer 8

UN proposal to recognize Palestine as a territory would grant all rights of a state

5.06. 24 – Mo- - - News Placed in May 06 spot – Monday Omer 8

IDF enter East Rafah after intense shelling; PA posed pause did not offer Hostages

5.06. 24 – Mo- - - News – Monday Omer 8

Hamas accept Egyptian six-week cease-fire designed for refusal by Israel

5.06. 24 – Mo- - - News – Monday Omer 8

Israel's War Cabinet state their position & approve first phase of Rafah operation

5.06. 24 – Mo- - - News – Monday Omer 8

IDF strikes Hezbollah base 100 km north after 30 rockets hit Galilee and Golan

5.06. 24 – Mo- - - News – Monday Omer 8

IDF begins evacuation of eastern Rafah Monday, for gradual ground operation

5.05. 24 – Su- - - News – Sunday Omer 7

Hamas playing elaborate stall game, dangling 33 hostages for prisoners

5.05. 24 – Su- - - News – Sunday Omer 7

Biden delayed specific weapons shipments to Israel amid imminent Rafah offensive

5.05. 24 – Su- - - News – Sunday Omer 7

At least 16 Katyusha rockets from Lebanon cause major damage in Kiryat Shmona

5.05. 24 – Su- - - News Placed in May 05 spot – Sunday Omer 7

Knesset law shut foreign media, confiscate broadcast equipment, revoke press passes

5.04. 24 – Sa- - - News Placed in May 04 spot – Saturday Omer 6

Hamas insists on cease-fire, Israel doubts deal will continue in Egypt Sunday talks

5.04. 24 – Sa- - - News – Saturday Omer 6

Hamas delegation in Cairo Saturday; Mossad & Shin Bet say deal not received yet

5.10. 24 – Fr

14 Gaza rockets strike Be'er Sheva; 35 rockets fired from Lebanon

5.10. 24 – Fr

Sirens sound in Be'er Sheva as Gaza rockets strike after 6 months of silence

Southern Israeli city targeted by 14 rockets in 2 separate volleys, hitting residential building and playground; woman lightly wounded, extensive property damage reported
Ilana Curiel, Yoav Zitun, Yair Kraus, Lior Ben-Ari|12:31

For the first time in six months, sirens sounded on Friday in the southern city of Be'er Sheva and the surrounding area due to rocket barrages fired from the Gaza Strip.

In the first barrage at just after 5:30 pm, one rocket was intercepted, others exploded in unpopulated areas, but another rocket struck a playground and a nearby house directly. A woman sustained minor shrapnel injuries and is in light condition.

Less than two hours later, another alarm was triggered due to a further volley of nine rockets, which caused no damage or casualties.

"Children playing here in the park, but they managed to get to the bomb shelter when the alarm sounded," one park goer reported after the initial rocket fire.

"The building shook. We heard a serious blast and the house felt like it was being torn apart. Everything fell from the cabinets," added Yelena, a witness. "My neighbor's balcony windows shattered. We had gotten used to there being no alarms. We didn't expect this. It took us by surprise."

Sirens in Be'er Sheva following rocket fire from the Palestinian enclave were last activated on December 6. Last month, the city was targeted in a combined missile and drone attack from Iran.

The warnings were issued as the IDF continues its operation in the city of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, which the War Cabinet voted to intensify Thursday night. The decision was made despite U.S. President Joe Biden's halt on arms shipments to Israel due to its military actions in Rafah. Cabinet ministers maintain that only an escalation of military pressure on Hamas would push the terrorist group to agree to a hostage deal on terms more favorable to Israel's terms.

Meanwhile, IDF tanks seized control of the main thoroughfare that bisects Rafah from east to west on Friday, effectively encircling the entire eastern sector of the Gaza Strip's southernmost city.

Since the morning hours, more than 15 rockets and artillery rounds have been launched from Rafah and Khan Younis in southern Gaza, including three rockets aimed at the Eshkol regional council, two mortar shells fired at Kerem Shalom, two additional mortar shells directed at an IDF force in southern Gaza and another four mortar shells in a separate attack. Some of the projectiles were intercepted by air defenses.

Throughout the day, residents of Rafah reported repeated and intensive attacks, particularly in the east and northeast of the city, amid fierce exchanges of fire between IDF forces and Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists. Palestinian media reported heavy firing and relentless shelling in the area east of Rafah, alongside fire exchanges and bombings of homes.

Meanwhile, a series of alarms sounded in the northern city of Kiryat Shmona following a barrage of 35 rockets fired from Lebanon. Fifteen were intercepted, but others fell within the city and surrounding areas, causing property damage. Fires broke out nearby along Highway 90. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for the attack, and the IDF retaliated by striking the sources of the fire.

5.10. 24 – Fr

UN backs PA bid membership; US bill cuts funds to any entity for the PA

5.10. 24 – Fr

UN General Assembly backs Palestinian bid for membership

143-9 vote, with 25 abstentions, recognizes Palestinians as qualified for UN membership, but stops short of granting full status; 'Shame on you,' says UN envoy Erdan Reuters|11:13

The United Nations General Assembly on Friday backed a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member by recognizing it as qualified to join and recommending the UN Security Council "reconsider the matter favorably."

The vote by the 193-member General Assembly was a global survey of support for the Palestinian bid to become a full UN member - a move that would effectively recognize a Palestinian state - after the United States vetoed it in the UN Security Council last month.

The assembly adopted a resolution on Friday with 143 votes in favor and nine against - including the U.S. and Israel - while 25 countries abstained. It does not give the Palestinians full UN membership but recognizes them as qualified to join.

The General Assembly resolution "determines that the State of Palestine ... should therefore be admitted to membership" and it "recommends that the Security Council reconsider the matter favorably."

The Palestinian push for full UN membership comes seven months into a war between Israel and Palestinian militants Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and as Israel is expanding settlements in the occupied West Bank, which the UN considers to be illegal.

"We want peace, we want freedom," Palestinian UN Ambassador Riyad Mansour told the General Assembly before the vote. "A yes vote is a vote for Palestinian existence, it is not against any state. ... It is an investment in peace."

"Voting yes is the right thing to do," he said in remarks that drew applause.

Under the founding UN Charter, membership is open to "peace-loving states" that accept the obligations in that document and are able and willing to carry them out.

"As long as so many of you are 'Jew-hating,' you don't really care that the Palestinians are not 'peace-loving,'" said UN Ambassador Gilad Erdan, who spoke after Mansour. He accused the Assembly of shredding the UN Charter - as he used a small shredder to destroy a copy of the Charter while at the lectern. "Shame on you," Erdan said.

The ambassador said on Monday that, if the measure was approved, he expected the U.S. to cut funding to the United Nations and its institutions, in accordance with American law. An application to become a full UN member first needs to be approved by the 15-member Security Council and then the General Assembly. If the measure is again voted on by the council it is likely to face the same fate: a U.S. veto.

"The council must respond to the will of the international community," United Arab Emirates UN Ambassador Mohamed Abushahab told the assembly before the vote. The General Assembly resolution adopted on Friday does give the Palestinians some additional rights and privileges from September 2024 - like a seat among the UN members in the assembly hall - but they will not be granted a vote in the body. The Palestinians are currently a non-member observer state, a de facto recognition of statehood that was granted by the UN General Assembly in 2012.

US funding

The Palestinian UN mission in New York said on Thursday, in a letter to UN member states, that adoption of the resolution backing full UN membership would be an investment in preserving the long-sought-for two-state solution.

It said it would "constitute a clear reaffirmation of support at this very critical moment for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to their independent State."

The mission is run by the Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited self-rule in the West Bank. Hamas ousted the Palestinian Authority from power in Gaza in 2007. Hamas - which has a charter calling for Israel's destruction - launched the Oct. 7 attack on Israel that triggered Israel's assault on Gaza.

The United Nations has long endorsed a vision of two states living side by side within secure and recognized borders. Palestinians want a state in the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, all territory captured by Israel in the 1967 war with neighboring Arab states.

The U.S. mission to the United Nations said earlier this week: "It remains the U.S. view that the path toward statehood for the Palestinian people is through direct negotiations."

Under U.S. law, Washington cannot fund any UN organization that grants full membership to any group that does not have the "internationally recognized attributes" of statehood. The United States cut funding in 2011 for the UN cultural agency, UNESCO, after the Palestinians joined as a full member.

On Thursday, 25 U.S. Republican senators - more than half of the party's members in the chamber - introduced a bill to tighten those restrictions and cut off funding to any entity giving rights and privileges to the Palestinians. The bill is unlikely to pass the Senate, which is controlled by President Joe Biden's Democrats.

5.10.24 – Fr

War Cabinet votes to expand Rafah operations as IDF encircles city's east

5.10. 24 – Fr

War Cabinet votes to expand Rafah operations as IDF encircles city's east

Locals report near-constant explosions and gunfire east and northeast of city, western parts also unsafe due to tank fire; troops uncover large weapons cache in central Gaza City school

Yoav Zitun, Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi, Reuters|Updated:09:26

Despite U.S. President Joe Biden's halt on arms shipments to Israel due to its military actions in Rafah, the War Cabinet voted unanimously Thursday night to expand operations in the southern Gazan city.

Cabinet ministers maintain that only an escalation of military pressure on Hamas would push the terrorist group to agree to a hostage deal on terms more favorable to Israel's terms.

Hamas has so far refused to release 33 live hostages in the initial phase of a deal, citing uncertainty about having enough women, female soldiers and elderly captives to fulfill that quota. Moreover, Hamas demands an Israeli commitment to end the war in the subsequent phase of the agreement, a stipulation that Israel has rejected.

Meanwhile, IDF tanks seized control of the main thoroughfare that bisects Rafah from east to west on Friday, effectively encircling the entire eastern sector of the Gaza Strip's southernmost city.

The military said that Givati Brigade soldiers were operating in eastern Rafah to dismantle terrorist sites and secure the area, eliminating dozens of terrorists and discovering weapons and tunnel shafts.

Forces also raided a sector of Rafah from which rockets were launched at the Kerem Shalom border crossing earlier in the week, killing four soldiers. Hamas rockets targeted the border crossing again on Friday.

Residents in Rafah described near-constant explosions and gunfire east and northeast of the city on Friday, with intense fighting between Israeli forces and Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists.

"It is not safe, all of Rafah isn't safe as tank shells landed everywhere since yesterday,"

Abu Hassan, 50, a resident of Tel al-Sultan west of Rafah told Reuters via a chat app.

"There is an increased movement of people out of Rafah even from the western areas, though they were not designated as red zones by the occupation. The army is targeting all of Rafah not only the east with tank shells and air strikes."

According to UNICEF, at least 100,000 people have already left Rafah while food supplies were running low and would last only for two more days. The UN organization said that the closure of the Rafah border crossing to Egypt affects fuel supplies humanitarian aid and the movement of people. UNICEF also claimed hospitals would not be able to operate due to lack of fuel.

Meanwhile, the IDF reported on Friday that Israeli forces uncovered a large weapons cache stashed within a school in the Zeitoun district of Gaza City.

Nahal Brigade troops found AK-47 rifles and magazines, as well as additional combat gear, stored in the classrooms. The discovery was part of a broader counterterrorism

operation in the Zeitoun district, with Nahal forces raiding and demolishing sites used for terrorist activities, eliminating terrorists and **seizing weapons and intelligence equipment.**

5.10. 24 – Fr

Spain, Ireland, Slovenia and Malta, & EU countries want 2-State by May 21

5.10. 24 – Fr

Spain, Ireland to recognize Palestinian state on May 21, EU's Borrell says
Spanish PM says agreed with Ireland, Slovenia, Malta counterparts on May 21 step on
path to a Palestinian state alongside Israel; says 2-state solution essential for lasting peace
Reuters|Updated:05:25

Spain, Ireland and other European Union member countries plan to recognize a
Palestinian state on May 21, the EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, said late on Thursday ahead of an expected UN vote on Friday on a Palestinian bid to become a full member.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said in March that **Spain and Ireland,** along with **Slovenia and Malta,** had **agreed** to take the first steps towards **recognition of a Palestinian state alongside Israel,** seeing a two-state solution as **essential** for lasting peace.

Asked on local Spanish radio station RNE if May 21 was when Spain, Ireland and other EU countries would recognize a Palestinian state, Borrell said yes, mentioning Slovenia as well. "This is a **symbolic act of a political nature.** More than a state, it recognizes the will for that state to exist," he said, adding that **Belgium and other countries would probably follow.**

Previously, Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares had said the decision on recognition had been made, although he did not give a date.

International calls for a cease-fire and permanent end to the Palestinian-Israeli **conflict** have grown along with the death toll from Israel's **offensive in Gaza to root out Hamas after the deadly cross-border attack on Oct. 7.**

Israel has said plans for **Palestinian recognition constitute a "prize for terrorism"** that would reduce the chances of a negotiated resolution to the Gaza conflict.

On **Friday** the **United Nations** General **Assembly** is set to **back** a **Palestinian bid** to become a **full UN member** by recognizing it as **qualified to join** and sending the application back to the UN Security Council to **"reconsider the matter favorably."** Ireland's national broadcaster RTE said on Thursday that Spain, Ireland, Slovenia and Malta had been waiting for the UN vote and were **considering a joint recognition on May 21.**

A spokesperson for the **Spanish** Foreign Ministry **did not immediately respond** to a request for comment. There was **no immediate comment** on the date **from the other countries.**

Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob said earlier this week his country would recognize Palestine's statehood by mid-June. Since 1988, 139 out of 193 UN member states have recognized Palestinian statehood.

Terror group source tells Arab news outlet at least 30 IDF soldiers remain kept in far away locations and adds Sinwar has left underground tunnels

5.10. 24 – Fr

South Africa asks for ICJ court measures against Israel over Rafah operation

5.10. 24 – Fr

South Africa asks ICJ to take additional measures against Israel over Rafah operation

South Africa submits urgent request to International Court of Justice, says previous measures are not fully addressing the changed circumstances.

Elad Benari, Canada May 10, 2024, 8:49 PM (GMT+3)

South Africa on Friday submitted an urgent request to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), asking it to impose additional provisional measures against Israel following the operation in the Gazan city of Rafah.

In its new request, South Africa stated that the provisional measures previously indicated by the Court “are not capable of ‘fully address[ing]’ the changed circumstances and new facts on which [its] request is founded.”

It further stated the situation brought about by the Israeli assault on Rafah, and the extreme risk it poses to humanitarian supplies and basic services into Gaza, to the survival of the Palestinian medical system, and to the very survival of Palestinians in Gaza as a group, is not only an escalation of the prevailing situation, but gives rise to new facts that are causing irreparable harm to the rights of the Palestinian people in Gaza.”

In January, South Africa filed a case against Israel at the ICJ, accusing the Jewish state of carrying out genocide in Gaza.

On January 26, the ICJ handed down a ruling in South Africa’s case, saying that Israel must do everything to prevent genocidal acts in Gaza and take “immediate” measures for aid provisions. It did not, however, order Israel to stop the war in Gaza.

In early March, the court rejected South Africa’s request that it take urgent measures to prevent Israel from operating in the Gazan city of Rafah.

South Africa’s case against Israel at the ICJ came amid already strained relations, as the country continues to accuse Israel of a policy of apartheid against Palestinian Arabs.

The South African government announced in November it was recalling its ambassador and entire diplomatic mission from Israel in protest against Israel's attempts to defend itself from the Hamas terrorist organization following the October 7 massacre.

Later, South Africa called in Israeli Ambassador Eliav Belotsercovsky for a formal reprimand, citing "public comments" he had made.

In late November, a majority of South African lawmakers voted in favor of a motion calling for the closure of the Israeli embassy and the cutting of diplomatic ties until Israel agrees to a cease fire in Gaza.

5.09. 24 – Th

'Bad, bad, bad, decision,' Saban warns Biden he is mistaken to withhold munitions

5.09. 24 – Th

'Bad, bad, bad, decision,' Haim Saban warns Biden
Israeli-American media mogul and staunch supporter of Democratic Party tells president he is mistaken to withhold munitions shipment to Israel; 'there are more American Jews support Israel than American Muslims who support Hamas'
Itamar Eichner|13:38

Haim Saban, an Israeli-American media mogul and a staunch supporter of the Democrat Party on Thursday warned U.S. President Joe Biden, that he was making a mistake by withholding arms from Israel.

In an interview with CNN, Biden said that heavy bombs, he was delaying the delivery of a large shipment of heavy bombs, and artillery shells, which had caused the widespread killing of civilians in the Strip. He said that he told the war cabinet and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that if Israel begins the more extensive operation in areas of Rafah where most civilians have sought shelter, he will not be willing to supply these weapons.

Saban then wrote that Biden's decision sends a terrible message to allies of the U.S. in the region, when America a flip from doing the right thing to bending to political pressure.

"Let's not forget that there are more Jewish voters who care about Israel than there are Muslim voters who care about Hamas," Saban wrote in a message he asked be brought to the president. "Bad, bad, bad decision on all levels. Please reconsider," he wrote. Saban made his fortune as a television producer in the U.S. and was estimated to be worth 3.7 billion dollars. He had been a close friend to former president Bill Clinton and was revealed to have been among the mediators involved in the successful negotiations of the Abraham Accords, which normalized Israeli relations with the UAE in 2020. He has contributed extensively and has raised funds supporting democratic political campaigns and heads the Saban Family philanthropical foundation involved in children's health research and social welfare in Los Angeles, CA, and in Israel.

5.09. 24 – Th

Israel population 9.9 million, 7,247,000 Jewish (73.2%), 2,089,000 Arab (21.1%)

5.09. 24 – Th

Israel's population up 12 fold since state established

Central Bureau of Statistics says of 9.9 million, 7,247,000 citizens are Jewish (73.2%), 2,089,000 are Arab (21.1%), and the remaining 5.7% are classified as others

Since Israel's establishment in May 1948, its population has grown from 806,000 to over 9.9 million, marking a more than twelvefold increase.

As Israel approaches its 76th Independence Day, at the current growth rate, the population is projected to surpass 10 million by next Independence Day.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), as of midday Thursday, 7,247,000 Israelis are Jewish (73.2%), 2,089,000 are Arab (21.1%), and the remaining 5.7% are classified as others.

The population grew by 189,000, a growth of 1.9% in the past year. During this period, approximately 196,000 babies were born, about 37,000 new immigrants arrived, and 60,000 people passed away. Israel's population is notably young, with around 28% aged 0-14, compared to about 12% aged 65 and above.

Looking ahead, the CBS predicts that by 2030, Israel's population will reach 11.1 million, by 2040 it will be 13.2 million, and by Israel's 100th Independence Day in 2048, the population is expected to reach 15.2 million.

As of the end of 2022, approximately 45% of the world's Jewish population resided in Israel. Additionally, around 80% of Jews in Israel were born in the country.

5.09. 24 – Th

Blinken speaks to Congress Friday on Biden halting military aid to Israel

5.09. 24 – Th

Israel remains optimistic for possible workaround on US military aid halt

Officials estimate US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will tell Congress Israel upheld its pledge to adhere to international humanitarian law, allowing the Americans to deliver weapons but prohibit their use specifically in Rafah

Nadav Eyal|06:27

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is expected to appear before Congress on Friday, against the backdrop of the Israel-U.S. crisis, which reached a new peak on Wednesday

with U.S. President Joe Biden's dramatic threat not to supply Israel with bombs and missiles should it decide to launch a broad military operation in Gaza's Rafah.

At the time, Washington asked Defense Minister Yoav Gallant to sign a memorandum confirming that Israel complies with the principles of international humanitarian law. Israeli officials believe that Blinken will say that Israel is still doing so today, in light of the facilitation of humanitarian aid entrance to the Strip, but how is this related to the military aid crisis?

Israel's security officials want to believe that it's possible to contain the American arms embargo only to the IDF's campaign in Rafah – an optimistic scenario Jerusalem wishes for. "After all, weapons and ammunition have no color or smell," an Israeli security official said. "If they stop the arms shipments – they're also withholding them from use in Beit Hanoun, the Zeitoun neighborhood and Lebanon. This is a severe blow to Israel's security."

He estimated that while the weapons would be delivered to Israel, the Americans would prohibit their use only in Rafah itself which, according to the acquisition agreement, Washington can do. That is, weapons and arms shipments to Israel will resume, but the U.S. will enforce a clause that prohibits their use in the southernmost city in the Strip.

Israel is also concerned that harsh statements against the Biden administration, including Thursday's tweet by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir against Biden (" Hamas Biden"), will undermine this partial solution to the crisis.

5.09. 24 – Th

US Jewish groups criticize Biden halting military aid to rescue hostages

5.09. 24 – Th

'Israel must be able to prevent October 7': US Jewish organizations blast Biden administration

Important Jewish bodies supporting Democratic party show anger at Biden's decision to halt military aid to Israel amid impending Rafah operation; Trump sounds own criticisms
Itamar Eichner, Daniel Edelson, New York|02:25

Large U.S. Jewish organizations published unprecedented statements on Thursday criticizing U.S. President Joe Biden after he announced his administration would halt military aid to Israel should the IDF launch a military operation in Rafah. Those join condemnations by former president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump against Biden and his administration.

Former American Jewish Committee (AJC) CEO and Democratic House of Representatives member Ted Deutch, wrote, "It is Hamas that started this conflict. It is Hamas that month after month refuses to accept proposals to release hostages and pause fighting. It is Hamas that continues to endanger Israeli and Palestinian lives. President

Biden should not take steps that could impair Israel's ability to prevent Hamas from attacking it again and again."

"The U.S. knows that defeating Hamas is critical to Israel's long-term security and to defeating the global threat posed by the Iranian regime and its proxies. Over the past week, Hamas has stolen humanitarian aid from Palestinians and fired rockets from Rafah at a humanitarian zone, killing four Israelis and preventing humanitarian aid from entering Gaza," he added.

"With thousands of Hamas terrorists still in Rafah, Israel must be able to prevent 10/7 from happening again. The protection of civilians during conflict is vital, and we encourage the U.S. to continue working with Israel to ensure the safety of civilians." Jewish organization Democratic Majority for Israel (DMFI), which supported and funded Biden's election campaign, wrote, "We are deeply grateful for President Biden's unprecedented support for Israel and its security. The President has demonstrated that support in word and deed, including approving over 100 weapons transfers to Israel during a war Hamas started."

"At the same time, we are deeply concerned about the Administration's decision to withhold weapons now and potentially impose further restrictions. A strong U.S.-Israel alliance like the one President Biden has created, plays a central role in preventing more war and making the path to eventual peace possible. Calling the strength of that alliance into question is dangerous," the statement read.

These unusual statements were published on behalf of bodies that have supported Biden thus far. AJC is one of the largest and most influential Jewish organizations in the United States, and Deutch is considered an influential figure in the Democratic Party, which is close to Biden.

Jewish organization American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) joined the criticism, writing, "It is dangerous and counter to American interests to deny our ally the weapons necessary to remove Hamas from power and prevent it from ever attacking Israel again."

"Congress recently overwhelmingly approved aid to Israel. It should now send a clear message to the Biden Administration that America must continue to stand by Israel and supply what she needs to defeat this terrorist army," it added.

Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America also issued a statement on the matter, with the organization's Director for Public Policy and Nathan Diament writing, "Yesterday, I commended President Biden for his speech; he stressed that 'it was Hamas that unleashed this terror' & started the war. But today's threat to withhold arms from Israel betrays this truth. It undermines Israel's ability to defeat Hamas & gives Hamas leverage & hope to survive."

Former U.S. President Donald Trump harshly attacked U.S. Biden as well, writing, "Hamas has murdered thousands of innocent civilians, including babies, and is holding American hostages, if they are alive at all, but the corrupt one stands precisely on the side of these terrorists, just as he stands on the side of the radical mob that is taking over our campuses."

Trump added that Biden acts this way "because his donors appoint these radicals," and said that the president is "weak, corrupt and leading the world straight to World War III." The former president once again claimed that "just like the war in Ukraine, the war in Israel would not have happened if I was still in the White House, but soon I will return and demand one more time - peace through force."

5.08. 24 – We

Israel needs media to teach all languages the motives within culture conflicts

5.08. 24 – We

Ex-spokesperson Eylon Levy blasts Israeli government's 'absolute failure' at advocacy efforts

Israel's official spokesperson during first six months of war tells Ynet's People of the State conference Israel in 'free fall' to the bottom of the abyss in terms of our legitimacy; Israel advocacy activist Yoseph Haddad says it's a 'war that we simply neglected' Ran Boker|07:24

Eylon Levy, who served as the government spokesperson during the initial six months of the war in Gaza, delivered a sharp critique of the state's handling of its public relations efforts on Wednesday morning at the People of the State conference held by Ynet and Yedioth Ahronoth. "We are in free fall to the bottom of the abyss in terms of our legitimacy - which is why I can no longer hold my tongue," he said.

He pointed out flaws in the operations at the Prime Minister's Office. "The State of Israel has declared 'an absolute failure' in the public relations war," he said. "I'm not saying this as criticism of the wonderful people who are on the front lines doing the work; I'm speaking at the state level. Public relations is a war, and the state simply did not define this war strategically with the necessary ammunition, protective gear and manpower, and we are seeing the results."

Levy believes it's not too late for improvements. "Now I don't want to continue pointing out mistakes, what wasn't done right. The sad part is we could have done things differently. The good news is, it's still possible to salvage the situation," he said. Levy proposed three solutions to address the crisis and noted that when the Prime Minister and his team want to, they know how to respond immediately, especially concerning personal matters.

"The first thing, the State of Israel must recruit an army of professional, committed spokespersons who are salaried, with proper contracts, in all languages. Language isn't just about speaking Norwegian and Swedish. It's also about understanding the culture of the place. These spokespersons need proper briefings, social media support, someone to edit for them and help push them out, so that in every language there's someone identified as a spokesperson for Israel. The second thing, we need to establish a public relations system that is essentially a crisis management center.

"Not an advertising agency. You know who knows how to do this well? The Prime Minister's Office. Because there's no report against the prime minister that they don't immediately respond to by the end of the report. We need the same thing. And the third thing, perhaps the most important: to activate the Diaspora. Israelis sometimes underestimate the Jews of the Diaspora, but there's an amazing awakening there of people who want to help us, who understand that it's vital not only for us but also for them." Levy revealed that during his tenure as the government spokesperson in English, he was not briefed by any official body before he himself briefed foreign journalists. "I was put up as 'the spokesperson for the Israeli government to foreign media.' I issue statements and hold press conferences on behalf of the government, that's how it's perceived when it's broadcast live. Many volunteers helped me."

Are you alone? Isn't there a team behind you, training you, explaining to you?

"Yes, from volunteers who joined. From the state? No. No. And that needs to change. We rely on press releases from the IDF spokesperson, the prime minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defense, the president, but all the real ammunition to fight beyond the general messages, that's something we had to initiate.

So there was no strategy.

"I wasn't really exposed to behind-the-scenes information. If I needed to consult on specific issues there were advisors I knew to turn to and check what exactly we wanted to say on that matter, but when I got up and held a half-hour press briefing on UNRWA, I stayed up all night in the living room to actually write a government statement on UNRWA and that needs to change. It has to change."

Israeli public relations activist Yosef Haddad also addressed the conference. "The whole issue of public relations in Israel was perceived as something incidental. Israeli public relations were seen as something not essential. We said 'we have the strongest army in the world,' 'we have the strongest country in the Middle East,' we don't need public relations. While we were sleeping and dozing off, our enemies entered politics, academia, culture and sports and planted this virus of terror everywhere."

Haddad, who noted that since the October 7 massacre he has spent hundreds of thousands of shekels of his own money on public relations, added: "For the first time there is some recognition that public relations are important, and therefore even at the torch-lighting ceremony, they light torches that are Israeli public relations-oriented and this indicates the biggest change that has occurred in Israeli society regarding public relations. They used to say 'dismantle it,' 'close budgets.' Now they say 'no, we need to invest in public relations, it's an additional war that we simply neglected.'"

Former beauty queen Noa Cochva, who was recruited to the public relations front a few weeks after she was discharged from reserves as a combat medic in the south, shared at the conference: "I was burning to do something, and then I just flew to the U.S.," Cochva recounted. "Suddenly I realized how much the Jews of the Diaspora need us, they need to feel that connection to Israel. We have the State of Israel as an anchor and they don't have that. They encounter antisemitism on the street and they hide their Jewish symbols and here we can cling to each other."

She added: "Everyone stopped their lives from October 7 because you can't really go back to routine and the moment I was discharged I felt I had to continue to be active and just do everything I can, use every platform I know to keep speaking to the country, to

continue promoting the country, and it's just sad that people are really all doing it on their private time, private initiative, everything we're really doing with 10 fingers."

Emily Schrader, an advocacy activist and journalist at Ynetnews, said at the conference: "I think it's no secret that we have issues with international media, and a significant part of this is undoubtedly antisemitism. We're currently seeing this with the global narrative about what's happening, which doesn't reflect reality. It's crucial now, more than ever, to address this, just as we handle Al Jazeera, which I consider the most dangerous entity in international media.

"For a long time, we did nothing, and the problem with the current narrative is that the world doesn't understand that this war isn't just happening within our borders. It's not merely Israel against Arabs, Palestinians, or the State of Palestine. It's Israel and the entire West against the Islamic Republic. That's the real issue. We need to educate the world about this problem that we must confront."

5.08.24 – We

Rafah reopens aid; US & UN demand scale down & delay weapons shipments

5.08.24 – We

Despite Hamas mortar rounds, Kerem Shalom crossing opens to allow humanitarian aid
Due to intense pressure from the Biden Administration, political leadership orders reopening of Kerem Shalom crossing to facilitate the transfer of humanitarian aid, in conjunction with promise to U.S. to conduct a 'limited operation' in Rafah; Many Gazans moving north to escape the fighting
Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi|03:29

Amid intense international pressure to scale down operations in Rafah as much as possible, and following American threats that have begun to materialize with the halting of arms shipments to Israel, the political leadership ordered the reopening of the Kerem Shalom crossing. This decision came three days after the Hamas attack on the Rafah crossing in which four soldiers were killed.

The crossing was reopened on Wednesday morning, partly at the request of the U.S., following a phone call between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Joe Biden, despite ongoing mortar fire targeting Kerem Shalom even on the previous day. The IDF's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) emphasized that "all humanitarian aid is admitted only after a thorough security inspection by the security personnel of the land crossings authority at the Ministry of Defense."

The bombings in Rafah continued Wednesday, prompting many Gazans to flee the city, which has become a focal point of Israel's push to eradicate Hamas. Footage from the Strip shows Palestinians moving in trucks and vehicles. The recent attacks have primarily targeted Rafah, where the evacuation of residents began earlier this week. IDF forces

have entered the eastern part of the city and have also taken control of the Palestinian side of the Rafah crossing.

Meanwhile, in what is referred to as "the last stronghold of Hamas," preparations are being made to expand the operation, and the Abu Youssef al-Najjar Hospital in Rafah is being evacuated of patients and staff. Concurrently, the Al-Qassam Brigades – the military wing of Hamas – reported that they had "exchanges of fire and fierce battles" with IDF forces east of Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.

The Hamas Authority for Crossings and Borders reported that Wednesday morning, despite American assurances that the crossing would soon open as Israel had promised, the Kerem Shalom crossing remains closed to aid entry for the third consecutive day. UNRWA has called for "the immediate reopening of the Gaza crossings," noting that only through them can essential supplies reach the inhabitants of the Strip. "We reiterate the call to the UN Secretary-General to work toward achieving a desired cease-fire agreement in Gaza," the group said in a statement.

The attacks are indeed concentrated on Rafah, particularly in the Al-Jeneina neighborhood in the eastern part of the city, but not exclusively. In the last day, terror targets were also struck in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City – where IDF forces maneuvered in the early months of the war, as well as in Beit Lahiya and the central camps, including Nuseirat.

On Tuesday night, a senior official in the Biden administration confirmed that the U.S. delayed a weapons shipment to Israel last week. He stated that "a shipment of bombs was stopped to signal to Israel the American opposition to the action in Rafah." His comments come a day after the Wall Street Journal reported the U.S. is delaying a \$260 million shipment to Israel, which includes, among other items, about 6,500 JDAM kits ("Joint Direct Attack Munition") that transform ordinary air bombs into "smart bombs" and are target-guided, according to sources familiar with the delay of the deal.

It was also reported that, since March, the Biden administration has not advanced the process of transferring additional weapons worth about a \$1 billion to Israel, in deals including tank ammunition, military vehicles, and mortar missiles. According to American sources, these potential deals included the transfer of \$700 million in 120mm tank ammunition, \$500 million in tactical vehicles, and less than \$100 million in 120mm mortar ammunition.

5.07. 24 – Tu

Israel sends Mossad, IDF & Shin Bet to Cairo to join Qatar, US & Hamas in talks

5.07. 24 – Tu

Israel sends delegation to Cairo to join Qatar, US and Hamas in truce talks

Delegation made up of members of the Mossad, IDF and Shin Bet will be allowed to hear the mediators and ask questions, but not be able to really negotiate any terms

Ynetnews|11:05

Delegations from Qatar, the United States – lead by CIA chief William Burns, and Hamas were in Cairo on Tuesday, according to high-ranking Egyptian officials speaking to local media outlets. A med-level Israeli delegation also arrived for the resumption of talks on a possible agreement on a hostage release in exchange for a cease-fire.

The delegation made up of members of the Mossad, IDF and Shin Bet will be allowed to hear the mediators and ask questions, but not be able to really negotiate any terms after they were not authorized to do so by the cabinet.

Israeli officials said that if there is no progress in the talks, Israel will move to the next stage of the offensive on Rafah, which began on Monday. "We understand that (Hamas leader Yahya) Sinwar is playing for time. We mustn't slow down in Rafah. It is our only chance to bring about a deal," the officials said.

Earlier, after Hamas announced Monday that it was accepting a proposal from mediators, it added new demands which Israel rejected.

Hamas says it will only free 18 hostages unless Israel agrees to end the war, according to a report on CNN reported on Tuesday, quoting unnamed sources.

The network also said that Hamas refused to release only live hostages in the first phase of the deal and insisted that if 33 hostages were to be freed in the agreed upon categories, they would include some who were killed. The terror group also demands that Israel not be able to oppose the freeing of any prisoner from its jails, clearing the way for the release of Marwan Barghouti, who has been imprisoned for over 20 years after being convicted of multiple murders. He is considered a leading candidate to replace Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

American officials said there is room for optimism although Hamas did not actually accept the proposed deal. Still, the officials said their Monday response could be a sign of progress.

Israel and Hamas should be able to close the remaining gaps in their positions in order to reach a cease fire-for-hostages deal in Gaza, the White House said on Tuesday. "We believe that these gaps can be closed," John Kirby, the White House national security spokesperson, told reporters as negotiators began gathering in Cairo for a fresh round of discussions. Kirby said Hamas had offered amendments on Monday to an original Israeli proposal aimed at ending the impasse. The deal text, as amended, suggests the remaining gaps can "absolutely be closed," he said.

The Hamas announcement came as Israeli forces began their offensive on eastern Rafah. On Tuesday, the Israeli flag was raised on the Rafah border crossing with Egypt while troops continued their advance on the city.

In a statement on Tuesday Hamas said the offensive aimed to compound the already grave humanitarian situation in the Strip. "This crime comes after we announced that we accepted the proposed deal," the statement claimed.

Biden never notified Congress, delays arms shipments to Israel amid internal pressure

5.07.24 – Tu

US delays arms shipments to Israel amid internal pressure

Biden administration holds back tank ammunition, armored vehicles, and about a billion dollars worth of artillery, mortal shells although already approved by Congress

Daniel Edelson, New York|05:13

Following reports that the United States was delaying a shipment of ammunition that was supposed to leave for Israel last week, the Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday that the Biden administration was delaying a shipment of thousands of weapons amid increasing internal pressure in the United States towards the administration following the war in Gaza.

According to the report, the United States was delaying a shipment of about 6,500 JDAM kits (Joint Direct Attack Munition) that turn simple air bombs into "smart" and targetable bombs to Israel worth 260 million dollars. According to sources familiar with the deal, Congress became aware of the proposed deal in January, but the Biden administration has not advanced it.

It was also reported that the Biden administration has not advanced the transfer process to Israel of additional combat assets worth billions of dollars, in deals including tank ammunition, military vehicles, and artillery rockets since March. According to American sources, these potential deals included the transfer of 700 million dollars worth of 120mm tank ammunition, 500 million dollars worth of tactical vehicle components, and about 100 million dollars worth of 120mm artillery ammunition.

The American State Department is required to notify Congress when the United States plans to sell weapons to other countries if the transaction amount exceeds a certain threshold. The State Department usually provides information to the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee before potential arms sales, and then the official notification goes to Congress.

However, the WSJ reported that the State Department never notified Congress about the JDAM kits which caused its delay. A congressional source familiar with the arms sales process said that this is unusual, especially for Israel, especially during wartime. According to him, Congress does not know the reason for the delay.

On Monday, White House National Security Council Press Secretary John Kirby assured reporters that their security commitments to Israel are solid. So far, the White House has publicly opposed calls to restrict arms sales to Israel, despite criticism of the number of casualties and destruction in Gaza by American weapons.

Nadav Eyal reported last week that the U.S. informed Israel that if Israel carries out an extensive operation in Rafah without coordinating it beforehand, it will lead to a delay in arms shipments, and possibly to a ban on using American weapons and ammunition. Under the terms of American procurement, some weapons can be prohibited from being

used. In recent months, it has been reported that the U.S. is considering delaying arms shipments and prohibiting their use in Rafah.

Britain was also considering suspending arms exports to Israel if it operated in Rafah as early as February. Washington has delivered more than 100 arms shipments to Israel since the beginning of the war, and recently President Biden approved an unprecedented amount of aid to the IDF. Overall, the U.S. sent hundreds of millions of dollars worth of arms, vehicles, weapon components, and more.

5.07. 24 – Tu

Radical hostage proposal Israel cabinet unanimously cannot accept; talks continue

5.07. 24 – Tu

Hamas agrees to free just 18 hostages unless Israel ends the war, report
Among demands reported terror group refuses to commit to freeing only live hostages initially; increases demand for number of Palestinians freed and rejects notion they would be expelled to Strip

Einav Halabi, Lior Ben Ari, Itamar Eichner|04:19

Hamas says it will only free 18 hostages unless Israel agrees to end the war, according to a report on CNN reported on Tuesday quoting sources.

The network also said that Hamas refused to release only live hostages in the first phase of the deal and insisted that if 33 hostages were to be freed, they would include some who were killed. The terror group also demands that Israel would not be able to oppose the freeing of any prisoner from its jails, clearing the way for the release of Marwan Barghout, who has been imprisoned for over 20 years after being convicted of multiple murders. He is considered a leading candidate to replace Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Among the reported demands made by the Islamist terror faction was allowing Palestinians that would be released by Israel, to remain in the West Bank and not be exiled to Gaza as Israel has demanded. Hamas wants 30 Palestinians freed – up from 20 - for every Israeli hostage released and 50 – up from 40 - for every female soldier. Hamas's reported approval of a cease-fire, which was announced on Monday, failed to prevent the start of Israeli action in Rafah. Israel rejected the demand to end the war. and claimed that Hamas has put forth a radical proposal, which it was turning down. Nevertheless, an Israeli delegation will attend Cairo talks, amid accusations that the U.S. had "set a trap" for Israel

Earlier reports claimed that the Hamas's proposal, the first stage of the deal would last for 42 days, during which Hamas would release 33 Israeli captives, including women (civilians and soldiers), children (under the age of 19 who are not soldiers), adults (over 50), as well as sick and injured civilians.

Hamas would release 3 hostages on the third day of the agreement, then three more every 7 days, and finally all the rest. If the number of living Israeli hostages does not reach 33, Hamas will make up the difference with returned bodies from the same category. In the second stage, all remaining living Israeli males, civilians, and soldiers, will be released. In the third and final stage, there will be exchanges of bodies and remains.

On Monday, the War Cabinet met again to determine whether the delegation going to Cairo would receive a mandate to conduct negotiations. The cabinet decided unanimously "that Hamas's response is poor, and Israel cannot accept it."

Hamas's proposal, as published in the Arabic media

Hamas will release living or dead hostages according to categories in their respective stages. In exchange for the gradual release of all Israeli hostages, Israel will release 50 prisoners for each female hostage from the first stage (including 30 inmates serving life sentences), based on Hamas's lists.

During the first stage, Hamas will release 3 hostages on the third day of the agreement, and then release 3 more every 7 days, starting with women (civilians and soldiers). After the sixth week, Hamas will release all civilian hostages included in this stage.

In return, Israel will release Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons, according to lists submitted by Hamas. Hamas claims it will try to provide information about the number of Israeli captives to be released at this stage. On day 22, Israel will release all prisoners from the Shalit deal who were re-arrested.

According to Hamas' proposal, during the first stage where Hamas will release 33 dead or living hostages, Israel will have to release all women and children under 19 who were arrested in Gaza after October 7. This exchange must be done by the fifth week of the first stage by Hamas' demands.

The exchange process is complex and linked to compliance with the agreement's terms. The agreement includes a mutual cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of Israeli forces, the return of displaced persons, and the entry of humanitarian aid. At the same time, the deal entails legal procedures required to ensure that released Palestinian prisoners will not be arrested on the same charges.

The first stage does not constitute a basis for negotiation for the second stage. During the first stage, the punishments imposed on prisoners in Israeli prisons and detention camps after October 7 will also be lifted, and their imprisonment conditions will be improved, including those arrested later.

At this stage, there will be a temporary cessation of military operations between the two sides and the withdrawal of Israeli forces along the Gaza border. Flights will also be suspended above the Gaza Strip for 10 hours a day and 12 hours on hostage-release days. Also, displaced Gazans will return to their homes unarmed while the IDF withdraws populated areas, dismantling all facilities and military installations in this area. Hamas also demands that Gazans will be allowed to move freely in Gaza and humanitarian aid will enter Gaza unhindered.

In addition to the significant increase in humanitarian aid, Hamas demands the entry of fuel which, according to the terror organization, will be used to operate hospitals, businesses, powerplants, and equipment for removing debris from the first day of implementing the deal.

By **day 16** of the deal, both sides will begin discussions regarding the second stage's hostages and prisoners. At this stage, Hamas will **release male soldiers** and men and both sides will agree on the main details by the fifth week of the first stage.

Since the beginning of the deal's implementation, the Gaza-based international agencies, including **UNRWA**, will **provide humanitarian services** in the **Gaza Strip**, throughout the agreement. In addition, infrastructure will be **rebuilt** including **water, electricity, sewage, roads, and communication** in all areas of the Gaza Strip and the necessary equipment will be brought in. Also, residents who lost their homes will be housed in temporary homes, caravans and tents while Gaza is rebuilt.

From the **first day of the first stage**, **no less than 50 injured** military personnel will be **allowed to pass through the Rafah crossing** for medical treatment. Countries and the **UN** will supervise the comprehensive **reconstruction** of homes, civilian facilities, and infrastructure that were destroyed due to the war. All steps in this stage will continue in the second stage until a permanent cease-fire is declared.

The **second stage** will be characterized by a **cease-fire** and the **release of all** remaining **Israeli men** in exchange for a **"mutually agreed number of prisoners"** from Israeli prisons, and a complete **withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza Strip**. In the **third stage**, there will be exchanges of **bodies and remnants** from both sides. After the exchange is complete, Gaza will be rebuilt for the next 3 to 5 years, including homes, civilian infrastructure, compensation for all affected individuals, and the siege on Gaza will be lifted. **Qatar, Egypt, the U.S., and the UN will back the deal.**

The **first stage will begin without a permanent cease-fire**

Yahya Sinwar's deputy, Khalil al-Hayya, said on Monday that Hamas agreed to begin the first stage of the deal even without a permanent cease-fire. According to him, the first stage will include the **withdrawal of the IDF to the border area**, and only in the **second stage** will Israel commit to a permanent **cease-fire**.

"In this agreement, we achieved the goals of a cease-fire, the return of the displaced, humanitarian aid, and a serious exchange deal. On the **first day** of the first stage of the agreement, there is a clear commitment to **temporarily halt military** operations. There are no restrictions on the return of the displaced, and this is a clear provision in the agreement. According to the proposal we approved, **Israel will withdraw on the third day from Rashid Street**, and the displaced will be able to return, and on day 22, Israel will withdraw from Salah al-Din Street," he added.

5.06. 24 – Mo

UN proposal to recognize Palestine as a territory would grant all rights of a state

5.06. 24 – Mo

UN Security Council sets vote on turning Palestine into de facto state

After the **US vetoed turning Palestine into official state** in latest vote, Palestinians have found a **workaround**; They now **ask to be recognized as a territory with all the same rights**

and qualifications of a state, including a vote in all UN matters, a move that cannot be blocked by any country's veto

Itamar Eichner|17:06

Following the U.S. veto of a Security Council proposal to recognize Palestine as a member state of the United Nations, Palestinians are now pushing forward with a groundbreaking initiative. This Friday, they plan to present a resolution at the UN General Assembly that would grant them rights akin to those of a full member state, including voting privileges. Currently, a draft of this resolution is being shared among nations for feedback, which could lead to further amendments.

This Palestinian request is without precedent and presents a significant challenge for Israel. The Israeli Foreign Ministry has been actively dealing with this matter for several days, prompting urgent diplomatic efforts from Israeli embassies worldwide. Israeli officials have noted that this initiative strays from standard UN procedures, which typically require a Security Council endorsement for state membership. Israeli embassies have been directed to solicit opposition to this proposal from various foreign ministries. The General Assembly's resolution seeks to endow Palestinians with all the rights of a full member state, barring the official title.

The draft resolution asserts: "The State of Palestine is a peace-loving state as defined by the UN, capable and willing to uphold the commitments of the UN Charter and should thus be accepted as a member of the UN. The Assembly recommends that the Security Council revisit this issue positively, to grant the State of Palestine rights that ensure its full and effective participation in the General Assembly, various international meetings under the UN, and other UN bodies on an equal footing."

Israel has voiced strong opposition to this proposal, citing among other concerns, the ongoing hostage situation in Gaza. "The release of the hostages must be at the top of the priorities. We expect all our friends to emphasize at this time the demand for immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages and to condemn the Hamas terrorist organization. The current focus on the Palestinian state does not reflect the actual situation on the ground, it strengthens Hamas, hardens its stance in negotiations for the release of the captives, and could jeopardize the crucial humanitarian process of their release," Israel said in a statement.

Furthermore, the statement addresses attempts to impose a political settlement on Israel following the terrorist attacks of October 7 and the Iranian attack on April 13, viewing them as rewards for Hamas and Iran. "It must not be forgotten that on October 7, Hamas launched a brutal and unprecedented attack against the State of Israel, the worst atrocity against Jews since World War II. Additionally, Iran attacked Israel on April 13 with unprecedented firing of hundreds of UAVs, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles. This resolution proposal lends support to Palestinian terrorism and Iranian aggression, while 133 captives are still held in the Gaza Strip. Even countries that have previously recognized the Palestinians bilaterally should now oppose this resolution, given the circumstances," the statement said.

"The Palestinians do not meet the criteria for full membership in the UN. A Security Council committee unequivocally determined (April 16), as it did in 2011, that there is no consensus among the Security Council members regarding the Palestinians meeting the required criteria to be accepted in the UN as a full member, nor do the Palestinians do not meet the required criteria of a peace-loving state with effective governance and abstention from the use of force. Especially after October 7, the situation regarding these criteria has only deteriorated. It cannot be claimed that the PLO has effective governance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, especially given the split between the West Bank and Gaza, Hamas' control of the Strip, and its military capabilities. Nor can it be claimed that the Palestinians are peace-loving and abstain from the use of force, given Palestinian terrorism led by Hamas and the PFLP and the lack of condemnation of terrorism by the PLO, incitement, and the policy of paying salaries to terrorists."

Israeli Ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, responded to the Palestinian initiative. "The Palestinians are again exploiting the automatic majority and the moral decay of the UN, and the decision will not change anything on the ground but will prove how much the UN is disconnected from reality and rewards terrorism. Since the initiative is contrary to the UN Charter, if it is approved - I hope the United States will cease funding the UN, in accordance with American law."

5.06. 24 – Mo

IDF enter East Rafah after intense shelling; PA posed pause did not offer Hostages

5.06. 24 – Mo

Palestinians report tanks have entered East Rafah after War Cabinet gives operation go-ahead

IDF ground forces enter East Rafah after intense shelling; War Cabinet unanimously decides to continue Gaza operation and also send negotiating team to Gaza; US official: 'War Cabinet did not negotiate with Hamas in good faith'
Einav Halabi, Yoav Zitun|Updated:15:45

About two hours after Hamas' responded positively to an Egyptian-Qatari cease-fire proposal, Palestinian and Arab media reported Monday evening that IDF forces and tanks began to enter Gaza's East Rafah, in following intense heavy shelling in the eastern area of the city.

The IDF spokesman confirmed the report and said that "IDF forces are attacking and operating now against targets of the terrorist organization Hamas in a targeted manner in East Rafah." The Palestinians reported that houses were blown up in the al-Shuqa area and around the Rafah Crossing, and that there was tank fire and artillery shelling from the east.

Shortly after the reports, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement that "the War Cabinet unanimously decided that Israel will continue its operation in Rafah in order to

exert military pressure on Hamas in order to promote the release of our hostages and the other goals of the war."

The cabinet was convened at the request of the Chief of Staff Major General Herzi Halevi and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant

It was also reported that "even though the Hamas proposal is far from meeting Israel's necessary requirements, Israel will send a delegation of working-class mediators to exhaust the possibility of reaching an agreement under conditions acceptable to Israel."

Israel claims that there is still a great distance from agreeing to a deal, but it is impossible to say no to Hamas' answer, and that is why a delegation is being sent to Cairo, while on the other hand preparations for the operation in Rafah are continuing.

A U.S. official familiar with truce negotiations between Hamas and Israel told Reuters on Monday that Israel still plans to proceed with a 90-day plan to invade Rafah, which Washington is committed to stopping.

"Netanyahu and the War Cabinet have not appeared to approach the latest phase of negotiations (with Hamas) in good faith," the official told Reuters, asking not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the matter.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres commented on the start of the operation in Rafah.

"I reiterate my call urging both the government of Israel and the leadership of Hamas to go the extra mile necessary to fulfill an agreement and stop the current suffering. I am very concerned about the indications that a large-scale military operation in Rafah may be coming. We are already seeing movement of people, many of them are in a desperate humanitarian situation. They are looking for a safe space that has been rejected so many times."

Hamas announced earlier on Monday evening it has accepted an Egyptian-Qatari proposal for a cease-fire to halt the seven-month-long war with Israel in Gaza, hours after Israel ordered about 100,000 Palestinians to begin evacuating from the southern city of Rafah, signaling that a long-promised ground invasion there could be imminent. A Hamas official said that "we agreed to a six-week cease-fire."

a senior Israeli official called the so-called deal "a unilateral proposal without Israeli involvement. This is not the proposal we discussed with the Egyptians. This is an exercise by Hamas designed to present Israel as a refusenik."

Israeli officials added that "the Egyptians unilaterally flexed all the parameters so that Hamas would agree. This was done unilaterally and this proposal is not acceptable to Israel." According to an Israeli official, "it sounds like a drill."

At the same time, an official briefed on the cease-fire talks said Hamas agreed to the latest proposal that Israel had made on April 27 and there were no major changes since then, adding the Qatari mediators had spoken to Hamas about this on Sunday and Monday. "What happens next depends on Israel to accept or reject Hamas' response. The ball is in Israel's court," the source told Reuters, asking not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the matter.

First published: 22:48, 05.06.24

5.06. 24 – Mo

Hamas accept Egyptian six-week cease-fire designed for refusal by Israel

5.06. 24 – Mo

In Rafah, throughout Gaza citizens celebrate Hamas acceptance of cease-fire proposal Celebrations breakout across Gaza after terror group announces it accepts cease-fire proposal; 'We have been reborn; we are crying with happiness'
Einav Halabi, News Agencies|14:13

Palestinians went took to the streets of Rafah, Gaza City and Deir al-Bala, and throughout the Strip on Monday evening to celebrate after Hamas announced that the terrorist organization accepts the terms of the cease-fire presented by Qatar and Egypt, which are mediating contacts with Israel.

"We thank the Egyptian side, we are happy and feel as if we were reborn today. We are very tired," said a Gazan who took part in the celebrations. The correspondent for the AFP news agency in Rafah reported on Palestinians rejoicing in the streets of the city in the southern Gaza Strip, and on shots being fired in the air as a sign of joy. "People are crying with happiness," the correspondent reported.

Hamas announced Monday it has accepted an Egyptian-Qatari proposal for a cease-fire to halt the seven-month-long war with Israel in Gaza, hours after Israel ordered about 100,000 Palestinians to begin evacuating from the southern city of Rafah, signaling that a long-promised ground invasion there could be imminent. A Hamas official said that "we agreed to a six-week cease-fire."

Israel has not yet officially responded to the proposal, but a senior Israeli official called the so-called deal "a unilateral proposal without Israeli involvement. This is not the proposal we discussed with the Egyptians. This is an exercise by Hamas designed to present Israel as a refusenik."

Israeli officials added that "the Egyptians unilaterally flexed all the parameters so that Hamas would agree. This was done unilaterally and this proposal is not acceptable to Israel." According to an Israeli official, "it sounds like a drill."

Meanwhile, an announcement came from the Defense Minister's Office that Yoav Gallant and the IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevy had "approved operational plans" for the continuation of the fighting in Gaza and in particular for Rafah.

5.06. 24 – Mo

Israel's War Cabinet state their position & approve first phase of Rafah operation

5.06. 24 – Mo

Israel's War Cabinet approves first phase of Rafah operation

After residents of southern most city in Strip told to evacuate to safe zones, ministers vote unanimously in favor of operation following Hamas deadly strike on Kerem Shalom crossing and failure of hostage release negotiations

Israel's War Cabinet approved on Sunday the launch of a military operation in Rafah, which began with the evacuation of Gazans from the eastern part of the city near the border with Israel earlier on Monday. Two incidents preceded the decision – Hamas' insistence on ending the war and the deadly rocket attack on the Kerem Shalom crossing in which four soldiers were killed.

Despite the ongoing public threats, mainly from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Sunday marked the first time in the last four months — since an operation in Rafah was put on the agenda — that Netanyahu presented the first phase of the Rafah operation and demanded that War Cabinet ministers state their position on the matter. Ministers raised questions during the discussion, and eventually, one by one, decided to approve the operation's first stage.

From the moment the population evacuation began on Sunday, as part of the limited operation an offensive against what's been called "Hamas' final stronghold" could begin within days. However, Israel has not shut the door on mediation efforts - especially those led by the U.S.

It should be noted the operation is a limited one, designed to allow Israel to return to the negotiating table at any moment. A senior Israeli official told Ynet that despite the beginning of evacuations, "everything is reversible." He explained, "If Hamas agrees to a deal - the operation can be stopped."

Hours after the start of evacuations, Hamas called the move a "dangerous escalation." The terror group also threatened "consequences." Meanwhile, footage from Rafah showed that some residents in the designated evacuation zones were already heading north. According to reports in Gaza, 28 people have been killed in IDF strikes on Rafah since Monday morning.

Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron spoke on the phone with Netanyahu on Sunday. French media reports said after the call that Macron reiterated to Netanyahu that the release of all hostages was at the top of France's priorities.

In addition, Macron encouraged Netanyahu to complete the current round of negotiations and clarified that "France fully supports the mediation efforts." He reiterated his strong opposition to military action in Rafah and the need to ensure a substantial flow of humanitarian aid to the Strip.

5.06. 24 – Mo

IDF strikes Hezbollah base 100 km north after 30 rockets hit Galilee and Golan

5.06. 24 – Mo

IDF strikes Hezbollah-Radwan base after drone strike on Metula

Heavy exchanges of fire reported in wake of the drone attack and the firing of some 30 rockets at the Galilee and Golan Heights; overnight military conducts strike on Hezbollah facility 100 km north of border

Yoav Zitun|05:22

The IDF on Monday, struck 15 buildings in a base used by Hezbollah's Radwan force in Lebanon after a drone attack on Metula and heavy rocket fire to the Galilee and Golan Heights. Heavy exchanges of fire were reported across the border.

Lebanese media reported extensive IDF strikes in South Lebanon including in areas close to the Israeli border after an airstrike was reported overnight, 100 kilometers(62 miles) north of the frontier.

The Iran-backed terror group fired a barrage of at least 30 rockets at the Golan Heights, in response to the overnight strike on a Hezbollah base deep inside Lebanon, where at least three people were injured, claiming to aim for a military position there. On Sunday, some 100 rockets were fired at the Golan and the Galilee causing injuries and extensive damage.

Earlier on Monday, the IDF said it had thwarted a drone attack from the east. Pro-Iran militia claimed responsibility for what they said was an attack on a military base in the southern city of Eilat.

5.06. 24 – Mo

IDF begins evacuation of eastern Rafah Monday, for gradual ground operation

5.06. 24 – Mo

IDF begins evacuation of Rafah residents amid negotiation deadlock

Military calls on Gazans living in the city's eastern neighborhoods to promptly evacuate to humanitarian zone near Al-Mawasi; U.S., Qatar to exert pressure on parties to continue talks

Yoav Zitun, Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi|00:54

The IDF on Monday began evacuating the population in Rafah neighborhoods, following the collapse of the hostage deal negotiations and Hamas's demand to end the war in Gaza. Sources familiar with the details told Ynet the terror group's official response to the proposed Egyptian deal has yet to be received.

"The IDF is expanding the humanitarian zone in Al-Mawasi and is calling on the population to temporarily evacuate from the eastern neighborhoods of Rafah to the expanded humanitarian space," the IDF Spokesperson's Unit said in a statement, that was also conveyed to the Gazan population by an IDF spokesperson in Arabic.

In the morning hours, the IDF dropped missives with instructions for the evacuation via designated routes for residents in eastern Rafah to reach defined safe areas prepared by the military to the north of the city near Al-Mawasi. The IDF estimates that about 100,000 Palestinians reside in the evacuated area, out of 1.3 million residents in the entire Rafah region.

The move isn't a wide-scale evacuation of the entirety of Rafah, but rather the city's eastern neighborhoods, while works are done to expand the humanitarian zone that was predefined and delimited in advance with a large living space including field hospitals and facilities to enable an operation in the city.

The Kerem Shalom border crossing will remain closed and will be opened later according to situation assessments. Additional crossings, including Erez and "96" near the Netzarim Corridor, will remain open to allow for extensive humanitarian aid delivery to the Strip. The evacuation is part of the IDF's preparation for a ground operation in Rafah, which will be carried out gradually.

According to the IDF Spokesperson's Unit, "the expanded humanitarian zone includes field hospitals, tents, and increased quantities of food, water, medications, and additional supplies. In addition, in cooperation with international organizations and other countries, the IDF enables the expansion of the scope of humanitarian aid entering the Strip.

"In accordance with the government's approval, the IDF calls on the Gazan population under Hamas's control to temporarily evacuate from Rafah's eastern neighborhoods to the expanded humanitarian zone. This matter will be advanced in stages according to ongoing situation assessments. The IDF calls on residents in Rafah's eastern neighborhoods to temporarily evacuate to the expanded humanitarian area via missives, SMS messages, phone calls, and Arabic media broadcasts."

The IDF Spokesperson in Arabic also issued a statement to Rafah's residents. "The IDF will act forcefully against terrorist organizations in your residential areas, as it has done so far," the statement read.

"Anyone affiliated with terrorist organizations is endangering his life and the lives of his family. For your security, the IDF is addressing you – evacuate immediately to the expanded humanitarian zone in Al-Mawasi. Be warned that Gaza City is still a dangerous combat zone, refrain from traveling north from Wadi Gaza. We caution against approaching the eastern and southern security barrier."

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant spoke with U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin Monday overnight. Austin stressed to Gallant the need for any potential Israeli military action in Rafah to "include a credible plan for the evacuation of Palestinian civilians and ensuring the flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza." Austin also reiterated the U.S.'s commitment to defend Israel.

Following the collapse of the hostage negotiations, as described by the U.S., CIA Director William Burns decided to fly to Qatar immediately after Hamas's delegation left Cairo on Sunday. After his visit to Qatar, he is expected to arrive in Israel on Monday

and meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Mossad Chief David Barnea, and other senior officials.

The Reuters news agency reported, citing sources informed with the details, that talks are on the verge of collapse - and that Washington and Doha will aim to exert "maximum pressure" on the parties to continue them.

According to Israeli sources, the reason for the deadlock in negotiations is Hamas's insistence on stopping the war - even if only in the second phase of the deal. Israel insists on avoiding any such commitment, claiming the terrorist organization wants to ensure the war will end should a deal be agreed on.

5.05. 24 – Su

Hamas playing elaborate stall game, dangling 33 hostages for prisoners

5.05. 24 – Su

Cairo talks end with no hostage deal, CIA chief en route to Qatar

Hamas delegation leaves Cairo for 'consultations with group's leaders' in Qatar, as reports suggest the terror group agreed to release 33 prisoners in the first stage, without committing to ending the hostilities

Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi, Roni Green Shaulov|12:52

Hamas announced on Sunday that the talks for a prisoner swap, held in Cairo with Egyptian intelligence chief Abbas Kamel ended. The Hamas delegation, led by Yahya Sinwar's deputy, Khalil al-Hayya, will return to Doha for "consultations with group's leaders."

At the same time, the security cabinet is convening at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem, with Egypt expecting a response from Israel by Monday to Hamas's statement.

Various reports suggest that the terror group agreed to release 33 prisoners in the first stage, without committing to ending the hostilities, with further details to be discussed later.

According to Arab reports, Hamas is not willing to agree to a comprehensive cease fire until the second stage. Nonetheless, Reuters reported, citing a source close to the matter, that CIA Director William Burns is flying to Qatar for an "emergency meeting" with the local prime minister, while the talks are "close to collapse." The source added that the U.S. and Qatar are expected to exert "maximum pressure" on Israel and Hamas to continue negotiations.

In an official statement, Hamas said, "The organization has conveyed its response to the Egyptian and Qatari mediators, and profound and serious discussions have taken place. We affirm the desire to reach an agreement that meets the national demands of our people, ending the aggression completely, leading to a complete withdrawal of IDF from the Gaza Strip, increasing aid, rehabilitating the displaced, starting reconstruction, and completing the prisoner exchange deal."

Security officials responded, saying, "This is not a surprising step; they don't want a deal. It won't bode well for the situation vis-à-vis Lebanon." While the security cabinet meets in Jerusalem, families of the hostages gathered outside, demanding a deal.

Meanwhile, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Sunday told IDF troops in Gaza that the offensive on Rafah would begin soon.

"We have clear goals for this war; we are committed to the eradication of Hamas and freeing the hostages," Gallant said during his visit to the Israeli-held Netzarim Corridor which bisects the coastal enclave.

"We are seeing worrying signs that Hamas does not intend to enter any agreement with us, implying that actions in Rafah and throughout the Gaza Strip are imminent."

5.05. 24 – Su

Biden delayed specific weapons shipments to Israel amid imminent Rafah offensive

5.05. 24 – Su

Axios: Biden admin delaying weapons shipments to Israel amid Rafah considerations

In a first since October 7, President Biden is showing clear signs he is losing faith in the Israeli premier by delaying agreed upon munitions shipment bound to Israel; This comes as Israel insists the offensive must go forward, despite international efforts to advance a deal with the understanding Rafah remains undisturbed

Itamar Eichner|12:18

Journalist Barak Ravid has revealed on Axios today that the Biden administration has postponed a scheduled ammunition shipment to Israel that was due last week.

According to two Israeli sources, there has been no official response from either the White House or the Prime Minister's office regarding this delay. This marks the first instance of such a delay by the U.S. since October 7, amid objections to a proposed ground operation in Rafah, a move Netanyahu has repeatedly said he's committed to.

An Israeli official commented, "The stream of security shipments from the U.S. to Israel is ongoing. While individual shipments might be delayed, the overall flow remains uninterrupted, and we are not aware of any policy suspending it."

On the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the global criticism of Israel since the war began, especially concerning potential actions in Rafah.

"The first lesson of the Holocaust is this: if we do not protect ourselves - no one will protect us," he said. "And if we need to stand alone - we will stand alone. We will defend ourselves in every way, overcome our enemies, and ensure our security - in the Gaza Strip, on the northern border, everywhere."

As Israeli officials continue to indicate a ground operation in Rafah is imminent, Netanyahu underscored, "These heroic survivors are right. During the terrible Holocaust, there were great leaders in the world who stood by."

During a recent visit to Israel, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken reiterated America's opposition to any action in Rafah. Following their discussion, Netanyahu's office relayed that he had informed Blinken that the Rafah operation "is not conditional on anything," and he would not agree to a hostage deal that included ending the war. A day later, White House spokesperson John Kirby told journalists that Israeli officials are aware of the fact that President Biden "is sincere" when it comes to potential adjustments to U.S. policy on the Gaza conflict. He emphasized this policy shift would likely materialize "should they (Israel) move ahead with some sort of ground operation in Rafah that doesn't take into account the refugees."

Ynet analyst, Nadav Eil, reported the U.S. has warned Israel that an uncoordinated extensive operation in Rafah could lead to further delays in weapon shipments and potentially a prohibition on the use of American weapons and ammunition. This refers to arms that can be restricted under U.S. procurement procedures.

In February, it was also reported the UK might suspend weapon exports to Israel if it proceeds with actions in Rafah. Subsequent reports indicated the U.S. was considering a similar step, which would represent a significant setback, considering Washington has transferred more than 100 weapon shipments to Israel since the onset of the war, and President Biden recently approved unprecedented aid to the IDF, including the transfer of shells and components worth hundreds of millions of dollars, as well as mine-clearing equipment and precision weapons.

The Wall Street Journal noted that Israel has given Hamas an ultimatum to agree to a deal within a week or face military action, following prolonged stalling by Yahya Sinwar. Signaling how important it is for the Biden administration that the deal moves through, a weekend call with both Egyptian and Qatari mediators, additionally involved CIA chief Bill Burns. The progress culminated with even Hamas saying they were going to Cairo with "positive spirits".

That said, not everyone shares said optimism. During a visit to Israeli military forces in Gaza on Saturday, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant noted "worrying signals" indicating Hamas may not be progressing toward an agreement. "This suggests that an operation in Rafah and other areas of Gaza is likely to occur very soon," he said.

5.05. 24 – Su

At least 16 Katyusha rockets from Lebanon cause major damage in Kiryat Shmona

5.05. 24 – Su

At least 16 Katyusha rockets from Lebanon cause major damage in Kiryat Shmona. It's one of the heaviest barrages fired on Kiryat Shmona since the beginning of the war; Heavy damage was caused to houses, vehicles, infrastructure and property of residents; Electricity out in much of city

Yair Kraus|Updated:08:03

Several rockets fell inside Kiryat Shmona following the rocket warning sirens that were activated when a barrage of 16 Katyusha rockets was fired from Lebanon early Sunday afternoon. Three people were injured in the attack, and there was direct damage in the city, including a building. Power outages also are reported throughout the city.

Heavy damage was caused to houses, vehicles, infrastructure and property of residents. "Those who have been talking about a cease-fire and an agreement between Israel and Hezbollah in recent days received a crushing answer today about the value of talks and agreements with terrorist organizations," Kiryat Shmona Mayor Avichai Stern said after the attack.

"The latest barrage launched in the afternoon toward Kiryat Shmona caused great damage and direct hits on destroyed houses. Imagine what would happen if there were families with children in those houses. So that we stop seeing these sights, I call on the Israeli government to start doing what is good for the Jews and not what the gentiles want.

Anyone who thinks that the residents of Kiryat Shmona will return to the city to be ducks on a shooting range is seriously mistaken. If there is no clear decision, Kaplan's demonstrations will be child's play compared to what we are planning soon."

Police said that they are "currently dealing with several fallout scenes of rocket parts in the vicinity of the city of Kiryat Shmona; there is property damage, but no casualties are known at this time. North District police and police sappers are now isolating the fallout scenes and scanning for additional remains, in order to remove another risk to the public."

Magen David Adom reported that "at this stage no calls about casualties have been received. MDA teams went out to search places where reports of rocket falls were received."

Fire crews worked on several destruction and fire incidents in Kiryat Shmona as a result of the rocket barrage. A spokeswoman for fire and rescue said that "in several other scenes around the city, firefighters worked to extinguish vehicles on fire, gas leaks and search for victims at the crash sites."

Later on Sunday, rockets fired toward towns in the Golan sparked several fires.

Overnight between Saturday and Sunday, Israeli Air Force fighter jets struck Hezbollah terror targets in southern Lebanon, including a military structure in the area of Khiam, and an observation post in the area of Matmoura, according to the IDF.

First published: 13:47, 05.05.24

5.05.24 – Su

Knesset law shut foreign media, confiscate broadcast equipment, revoke press passes

5.05.24 – Su

Cabinet votes to shut down Al Jazeera network in Israel

Ministers approve move in unanimous vote after National Unity party members avoid meeting; Communications Minister signs directive and requests military enforce decision in the West Bank

Itamar Eichner|06:30

The cabinet on Sunday voted to shut down the Qatari-owned Al Jazeera network's bureau in Israel, which employs 70 people. The decision was approved by a unanimous vote after National Unity Party members stayed away from the meeting.

The decision was made possible after the Knesset passed a law stipulating that the Communications Minister could act to shut down foreign media channels in the country should the prime minister find it is harming Israel, after reviewing at least one security assessment on the issue and conditioned by the approval of the government or Security Cabinet.

After the ministers voted to approve the move, Communications Minister Shlomo Kahrhi signed a directive to close the network's bureaus, confiscate its broadcast equipment, revoke press credentials from its journalists, remove the channel from cable and satellite services and block its websites on the internet. He said he also planned to request that the military administration of the West Bank ban the network from operating or being broadcast there.

The cabinet was scheduled to vote on the matter last week but at the request of the Mossad and Shin Bet chiefs, who were concerned that such a move would endanger a possible hostage release deal, it was moved to Sunday.

5.04. 24 – Sa

Hamas insists on cease-fire, Israel doubts deal will continue in Egypt Sunday talks

5.04. 24 – Sa

Hamas agrees to release 33 Israeli hostages in first phase of hostage deal, report Israeli officials remain pessimistic on possible agreement to Egyptian-mediated deal; Hamas delegation insists no agreement would take place without complete cease-fire
Itamar Eichner|15:57

Saudi news outlet Al-Akhbar reported late Saturday Hamas agreed to release 33 Israeli hostages in the first stage of the Egyptian-mediate hostage deal, "contrary to its previous position," during discussions held in Cairo. The report corresponds with other reports published on Saturday according to which the terrorist organization insists on ending the war - but is willing to implement the first stage of the hostage deal even without such an obligation.

On the other hand, Al Jazeera quoted a senior Hamas official as saying, "The occupation hinders reaching an agreement by insisting on continuing the war. The Zionist entity

seeks a framework for a deal for the release of hostages without linking it to the end of hostilities. There won't be an agreement that doesn't explicitly include stopping the war."

Meanwhile, Israeli officials estimate that Hamas' response to the Egyptian proposal for a deal will come soon, but contrary to optimistic Arab reports – the officials didn't show the same optimism. In fact, the current assessment as expressed by senior officials is extremely pessimistic, suggesting that Hamas won't return a response that allows significant progress in the negotiations.

Evidence of this may have been given in the report of Qatari network Al-Araby Al-Jadeed that said the discussions that took place Saturday ended "without a final result" and will continue on Sunday - so the terrorist organization won't publish its official response later tonight.

"The Hamas has questions it wants answers to," the Qatari outlet wrote. "This is done in coordination with all parties. The negative Israeli statements don't affect the current dialogue in Cairo."

In contrast to the pessimism of Israeli officials, a senior American official said that he "estimates there will ultimately be a hostage release deal." According to him, "There's a lot of pressure on the Qataris. Hamas released videos of captives, meaning it's clear they don't want Israel to enter Rafah."

"Hamas thinks they're winning the war, so they're trying to raise the price, Bibi [Benjamin Netanyahu's nickname] has his politics - we're trying to break the cycle. Until now, we've supported Israel's position and we think it's already a fait accompli. Now we're putting pressure on Hamas," he added.

The main controversy surrounding the deal remains Hamas' demand for an Israeli commitment to stop the war. Israel insists on refusing, and while the proposal, according to reports, was intentionally worded delicately and refers to a "stable calm" and not "a permanent cease-fire" - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that as far as he's concerned, and operation in Rafah would take place either way.

Ministers Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot aren't committed to stopping the war themselves, but Gantz was nevertheless angered by the timing of Netanyahu's announcement - which supposedly could provide Hamas with an excuse to refuse the proposed deal.

The current Israeli assessment is that Hamas will refuse the deal, and even if it agrees to it- it will include conditions for Israel to commit to stopping the war and demands regarding the release of terrorists with blood on their hands.

Hamas demands guarantees from the mediators for a cease-fire in Gaza - a demand that Israel refuses to grant, despite reports that the U.S. has given such guarantees. A senior government official said that "it's reasonable to assume that Hamas' response will be negative, but now everyone will think it's because of Netanyahu and not because of [Yahya] Sinwar – in a decision made by his political interests."

Hamas delegation in Cairo Saturday; Mossad & Shin Bet say deal not received yet

5.04.24 – Sa

'IDF will enter Rafah whether pause is achieved or not,' Israeli official says

Official releases statement saying military will continue to eliminate remaining Hamas battalions amid reports of Hamas' positive response to proposed Egyptian hostage deal
ynet correspondents|09:00

An Israeli official said Saturday amid reports in Arab media that Hamas has agreed to the hostage deal outline proposed by Egypt that “the IDF will enter Rafah, whether there’ll be a pause in the fighting or not.” This comes after additional reports according to whom the U.S. “gave guarantees to end the war and the IDF’s withdrawal from Gaza.”

"Israel will in no way agree to the end of the war as part of a deal to release our hostages," the official added in a statement. "As decided by the government, the IDF will enter Rafah and eliminate the remaining Hamas battalions there, whether or not there will be a temporary pause for the release of our hostages."

This statement drew sharp criticism from Minister Benny Gantz: "An official response to the proposed deal hasn't been received yet. When it's received, the War Cabinet will convene and deliberate on it. Until then, I suggest the 'officials' and all decision-makers to wait for official updates, to keep a cool head, and not to succumb to hysteria for the sake of political considerations."

A Hamas delegation arrived in Cairo on Saturday in preparation for the terrorist organization's response to the Egyptian proposal - which, according to various indications, is expected to be positive.

Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan told Al-Jazeera that the talks are still ongoing. "It's clear that we are progressing. There are some good points. But so far, we're still talking about the main issue, which is a complete cease-fire and withdrawal from Gaza. We hope for good responses today."

Hamdan said the "elements" to be discussed would also include the announcement of the planned IDF operation in Rafah: "Unfortunately, there was a clear announcement by Netanyahu saying that he will continue the attack regardless of what happens, whether there's a cease fire or not. This means that there will be no cease-fire, and that the attack will continue, which goes against what we're discussing."

"We want to know what it means, what the implications of his statement are, and to hear the mediators' response on it," Hamdan added. "From our understanding, the meaning of any cease-fire agreement is that there will be no more attacks on Gaza and Rafah."

An official Hamas source told the Reuters news agency that the terrorist group's delegation has arrived in Cairo for further discussion. An Egyptian security source told Reuters: "The results today will be different. We have reached an agreement over many points, and a few points remain,"

A Palestinian source familiar with the mediation efforts also expressed **cautious optimism** to Reuters, saying: "Things look better this time but whether an agreement is on hand would depend on whether Israel has offered what it takes for that to happen." **Israel** remains **pessimistic toward** the proposed **deal**, and it's estimated the **chances** of a deal being agreed on remain low. The intensive **American involvement** in the talks does leave a **small window for a possible deal**, but despite this, the heads of the **Mossad** and the **Shin Bet** are the only top decision-makers who **believe a proper deal could take place**.

====

Ynet-News, May 03, 2024 – Friday

Possible Abomination Day June 20, 2024

Pesach Apr 21-28 First-Fruits April 29

5.03. 24 – Fr- - News Placed in May 03 spot – Friday Omer 5

Israel plan joint Gaza control with Arab states, allows IDF continue in Gaza & WB

5.03. 24 – Fr- - News – Friday Omer 5

France outlines 3-phase proposal to withdraw Hezbollah & redraw border line

5.03. 24 – Fr- - News – Friday Omer 5

Syria accuses Israel of attacking Damascus military site from the Golan Heights

5.03. 24 – Fr- - News – Friday Omer 5

Turkey bans all Israeli imports and exports, ending a major trading partner

5.02. 24 – Th- - - News – Thursday Omer 4

Wary of The Hague ICC arrest warrants, Israel turns to US legislators for help

5.02. 24 – Th- - - News – Thursday Omer 4

Forces stationed for Rafah offensive, hinging on hostage deal or scuttled talks

5.02. 24 – Th- - - News Placed in May 02 spot – Thursday Omer 4

UN blacklists Israel over Gaza harming children; Biased inaccuracies in the draft

5.01. 24 – We- - - News Placed in May 01 spot – Wednesday Omer 3

Violent Clashes of University protesters & Police at Los Angeles & New York

4.30. 24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday Omer 2

PA students attack German ambassador & EU representatives to protest Gaza war

4.30. 24 – Tu- - - News Placed in April 30 spot – Tuesday Omer 2

The Hague ICC Court issued arrest warrants for all Israel officials & military leadership

4.29. 24 – Mo- - - News Placed in April 29 spot – Monday First Fruits Omer 1

Egyptians oppose Israeli military action in Rafah; publish study of Israeli weaknesses

4.29. 24 – Mo- - - News – Monday First Fruits Omer 1

Senator Rubio urges US oppose Hezbollah & revoke campus protest visas