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Hezbollah rockets damage Galilee homes as IDF artillery moved into Lebanese territory

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IDF hits Beirut as response stalls till Tuesday, seeking clarification on US role

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Hostage fate sealed if deal not made; Hamas demand withdraw of all troops

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Confirmed; 5 arrested in late October leaked classified documents to foreign media

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Iran and Qatar behind South Africa's World Court case against Israel

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Ynet-News, November 212, 2024 – Friday Q-3 Moon 8th Month

11.22.24 – Fr
Knesset concerned Minister Katz setting stage for settler assault on PA

11.22.24 – Fr
Minister Katz setting stage for settler assault on Palestinians, PA says
Following Israel Katz's decision to cease using administrative detention orders against Jews in the West Bank, Palestinian Authority officials are saying this will lead to increased assaults by wayward settlers on Palestinian civilians; 'Then they will complain about The Hague,' says MK Tibi
Einav Halabi|12:52

The Palestinian Authority is worried that Defense Minister Israel Katz's decision to cease using administrative detention orders against Jews in the West Bank might legitimize Jewish terror activities in the region, potentially leading to further escalation. Hours after Katz's announcement, the Palestinian Foreign Ministry stated that this decision "will encourage settlers to commit additional crimes."

"We view Defense Minister Katz's decision to cancel administrative detention against settlers committing crimes and violations against Palestinian civilians with great concern," the statement read. The Palestinians also pointed out that "the number of detainees is very small."

The Palestinian Authority warned that this decision by Katz, who recently assumed office replacing Yoav Gallant, "encourages extreme settlers to engage in terrorism against Palestinians, their land, and property, giving them a sense of immunity and additional protection." The Palestinian Foreign Ministry also called for "effective international action" to curb what they described as "settler militia terror." According to the ministry,

"an end must be put to the fact that they receive 'immunity from punishment' and to protect our people from the occupation."

Qadura Fares, head of the Prisoners' Affairs Authority and former prisoner, also commented on Katz's decision, stating that "at a time when Israeli authorities are waging the most despicable war against the Palestinian people, with random arrests daily, and perpetuating collective punishment through an unprecedented expansion of administrative detention policy, about 3,500 Palestinians are detained today while the administrative detentions of the Jewish rioters are canceled."

He claimed this move reflects a "racist and fascist state," which he argues "is based on hatred and organized crime, and in its extreme policy, threatens human and social values."

Legal officials issued a warning

At noon, senior legal officials addressed the Defense Minister's decision, stating that "the decision grants a 'license to kill' to 'Na'arei Gva'ot' (hilltop youth) and ties the hands of the Shin Bet in dealing with subversive Jewish elements in the territories." They added that "the decision could spur underground activities targeting Arabs and could ignite the area."

Senior officials clarified that "the decision will also significantly harm the Shin Bet's ability to thwart and deter both extreme Jews and Arabs." The legal system believes that if petitions are filed to the High Court of Justice, it will overturn Katz's decision due to its discriminatory enforcement of law on racial grounds. Shin Bet declined to comment on the decision.

This week, Defense Minister Katz informed Shin Bet Chief Ronen Bar of the dramatic move and requested alternative tools be put in place. However, Katz did not cancel dozens of existing administrative detention orders, but he will not renew them when they expire in a few weeks. "In a reality where settlements in the West Bank face severe Palestinian terror threats and unjustified international sanctions against settlers, it is not appropriate for the State of Israel to take such severe measures against the settlers," stated the Defense Minister.

Earlier, Knesset member Ahmad Tibi responded to the decision, saying, "This is essentially the Defense Minister's certification for Jewish terrorism. Then they will complain about The Hague. A government of terror supporters."

The "Tag Meir" organization, which fights hate crimes, stated: "Administrative detention orders are aimed against Jewish terrorism and acts of revenge against innocent Palestinians. Ceasing the use of administrative detention orders will permit the bloodshed and property damage of these Palestinians, with the approval of the Defense Minister. Minister Katz ignores the diplomatic and security damage that will be caused to Israel due to this decision."

The "Yesh Din" organization said: "Administrative detentions are a draconian and anti-democratic measure that should cease to be used against both Palestinians and Israelis. Instead, law enforcement authorities should conduct effective investigations and prosecute when there is sufficient evidence. Let us remember that thousands of

Palestinians are held in administrative detention under orders that Minister Katz did not cancel."

11.22.24 – Fr

Israel ponders giving aid management in Gaza to American security firm Orbis

11.22.24 – Fr

Israel ponders giving aid distribution management in Gaza to US private firm Netanyahu wishes to have a private US security firm manage the issue of distributing humanitarian aid within Gaza, but runs into legal challenges regarding the scope of the operation, and the issue of footing the bill has not yet been solved, given it could implicate Israel in case it turns violent on the ground

Itamar Eichner|08:45

Amid the Israeli government's plan to delegate the responsibility of distributing humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip to an external company, two main issues are delaying the activation of the American security firm "Orbis," which is slated for this role. Legal challenges arise from the company's operational scope in Gaza and the financial source for covering its services.

The anticipated cost for securing aid convoys is projected to be around \$60 million, independent of the aid distribution itself, which is estimated at approximately \$200 million. Additionally, establishing the company's distribution operations in Gaza is expected to take about three months—a problematic duration as most convoys currently entering the Strip are being plundered.

Orbis is backed by former U.S. Army generals and is affiliated with an American parent company, essentially a conglomerate of six firms. It remains uncertain whether the U.S. will agree to finance the operation, given the financier assumes responsibility for aid distribution. Concerns were voiced in discussions about a scenario where Israel might be accused of a massacre if security personnel were compelled to open fire.

Concurrently, it has been revealed that Israel has paid an advance to the American company to develop plans for a pilot project concerning aid distribution in Jabaliya, located in the northern Gaza Strip. The cabinet is expected to receive an update on the plan on Saturday, but it will not seek approval since a resolution has yet to be found for the challenges of assigning aid distribution to the external company

Earlier, former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant sharply criticized the government's intention to discuss "food distribution to Gaza residents by private companies under IDF security," labeling it a "euphemism for the inception of military governance in Gaza." Gallant argued that "the price will be paid by the soldiers' blood and the State of Israel due to a flawed prioritization that will lead to the neglect of more critical security tasks. Everything hinges on the prior preparation of an alternative entity to replace the IDF in holding the territory—without this, we are on the path to martial law," he stated. "The aid

will be distributed by private companies, the companies will be guarded by the IDF, and we will all bear the cost."

Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich responded to Gallant's remarks. "for an entire year, he imagined a 'non-existent alternative' to do the work for us, effectively preventing us from taking responsibility for the distribution of humanitarian aid." Smotrich claimed that "since this non-existent entity did not materialize, Gallant allowed Hamas to seize control of humanitarian aid and maintain its rule in the Strip, thereby prolonging the conflict, increasing its cost, and exacerbating the suffering of hostages and their families. It is not the management of humanitarian aid that will lead to casualties, nor a military administration if required, but rather the fear of achieving total victory and territorial control that is essential for security."

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir fiercely criticized Gallant as well. "Tonight it was proven again how wise it was for the Prime Minister to dismiss the failed Defense Minister Gallant—as is well known, my position is clear that humanitarian aid should be exchanged only for humanitarian aid, but in any case—as long as aid continues—IDF control over the humanitarian aid to Gaza residents is crucial to dismantle Hamas and strip it of its remaining control of Gaza, which is the goal of the war. Gallant, who is deeply entrenched in the old paradigm and supported by the opposition, would be better off remaining there."

Adversely, former War Cabinet member Benny Gantz backed Gallant's statements, asserting that "Israeli security control in Gaza is essential. Israeli governance when our soldiers are dealing with sewage and garbage is disastrous."

11.22.24 – Fr

Katz halts administrative detention on West Bank settlers for vigilante justice

11.22.24 – Fr

Katz halts use of administrative detention orders against West Bank settlers

Defense minister asks Shin Bet chief to plan an implement alternative measures to deal with settler violence in region; Smotrich and Ben-Gvir laud decision

Yoav Zitun, Elisha Ben Kimon|03:25

Defense Minister Israel Katz announced on Friday he decided to suspend the use of administrative detention orders against Jewish settlers in the West Bank. Katz informed Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar of the move earlier this week and requested the planning and implementation of alternative measures.

"In a reality where Jewish settlements in the West Bank face severe Palestinian terror threats and unjust international sanctions against settlers, it's inappropriate for the State of Israel to employ such severe measures against members of the settlement community," Katz said, explaining his shift in policy.

"If suspicion of criminal acts arises, the perpetrators can be prosecuted. If not, there are other preventive measures that can be taken without resorting to administrative detention. I condemn any violence against Palestinians or acts of vigilante justice and call on settlement leadership to take a similar public stance and unequivocally denounce such actions," he added.

"It's essential to allow the IDF, other security agencies and law enforcement authorities to address Palestinian terror and violence without individuals taking the law into their own hands."

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir praised the decision, saying, "I commend my colleague, Minister Israel Katz, for this significant and important announcement. His decision to stop issuing administrative orders against settlers in the West Bank corrects years of injustice and honors those who love this land."

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich also lauded the decision: "With this decision, Minister Katz has ended years of discrimination against West Bank settlers and rectified a long-standing injustice."

"Settlers were treated as second-class citizens, subjected to draconian and undemocratic measures that trampled their rights — measures not applied to any other population in Israel except dangerous enemies and terrorists," he added.

The use of administrative orders against settlers by security forces saw a rise in recent years over suspicions of settler involvement in terror-related activities. During the ongoing war, dismissed defense minister Yoav Gallant also signed administrative orders against settlers suspected of terrorism against Palestinians. According to security officials, administrative detention orders are an aggressive tool that is used only as a last resort. This isn't a punitive measure but a means to prevent terror activities that threaten security and stability in the West Bank.

11.22.24 – Fr

IAF struck five Hamas terrorists who participated in October 7 attack

11.22.24 – Fr

IDF eliminates five Hamas terrorists who participated in October 7 attack

Air Force fighter jets target Hamas military complex in the northern Gaza Strip based on precise intelligence; Nukhba commanders also among dead
Ynet|02:42

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit reported on Friday that Air Force fighter jets targeted and eliminated five Hamas terrorists in Gaza, including Nukhba commanders who participated in the October 7 attack and abducted Israelis.

“During the night between Wednesday and Thursday, with the intelligence direction of the ISA, the IAF struck terrorist infrastructure in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip. Hamas terrorists, including a number of Nukhba terrorists who participated in the October 7 Massacre, were operating within,” the military said in a statement.

The IDF provided additional detail on the terrorists, saying, “Jihad Mahmoud Yehia Kahlout, a Nukhba Company Commander in the Hamas terrorist organization and Muhammad Riyad Ali Okel, a Company Commander in the Hamas terrorist organization, were two terrorists who commanded the invasion of Israeli territory on October 7 and led the massacres and kidnappings on the Mefalsim road.”

“Numerous other terrorists from Hamas’ Western Jabaliya Battalion who were involved in combat against IDF troops were eliminated during the strike, including Anas Jalal Muhammad Abu Shakian, a commander in the battalion that attacked the area of Kibbutz Mefalim on October 7, Nor Al-Din Abu Al-Jadyan, a Nukhba terrorist from the battalion and Sahib Hasan Ali Maser A-Daeem, a terrorist from the battalion,” the military said.

The IDF added that prior to the strikes, “numerous steps were taken to mitigate the risk to civilians, including the use of aerial surveillance, warning the population in the area to evacuate the active combat zone and additional intelligence information.”

11.22.24 – Fr

Biden criticized ICC warrant on PM; there is no equivalence between Israel & Hamas

11.22.24 – Fr

Biden slams ICC warrants as 'outrageous'

U.S. president criticizes UN court and asserts that there should be no equivalence between Israel and Hamas; Pentagon echoes condemnation

Daniel Edelson, New York|02:09

U.S. President Joe Biden sharply criticized the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague following its decision to issue arrest warrants against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defense minister Yoav Gallant.

In a statement delivered late Thursday night, Biden said, "The ICC issuance of arrest warrants against Israeli leaders is outrageous. Let me be clear once again: whatever the ICC might imply, there is no equivalence — none — between Israel and Hamas. We will always stand with Israel against threats to its security."

Biden's statement followed a response from the U.S. Pentagon on the warrants. Deputy Pentagon Spokesperson Sabrina Singh said on Thursday that the Pentagon rejected the ICC's decision and is concerned about the expedited manner in which the warrants were issued.

According to her, senior Pentagon officials are currently consulting with their Israeli counterparts about the next steps.

"We're continuing to support Israel with the assistance it needs in its fight against Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah, we don't see eye-to-eye on where the ICC is and we reject the court's decision to issue these arrest warrants," Singh noted.

The ICC on Thursday announced that it had rejected appeals against the move submitted by Israel and issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant, who was recently dismissed. The court also issued an arrest warrant for Mohammed Deif, despite reports of his elimination, as Hamas has not confirmed his death.

The first countries to announce compliance with the arrest warrants were Jordan, France and the Netherlands, which houses the ICC. EU Foreign Minister Josep Borrell asserted that the decision wasn't political and must be respected.

11.22.24 – Fr

Arab negotiation obstacles; Lebanon estimates cease-fire not even next week

11.22.24 – Fr

Lebanon cease-fire could come 'within days', Israeli officials estimate
Despite report claiming Lebanon has yet to agree to certain terms of the U.S.-led agreement, lawmakers say deal could be finalized by the weekend
Itamar Eichner, Lior Ben Ari, Reuters|16:43

Lebanon seeks to modify the terms of the U.S.-proposed cease-fire agreement to ensure a "speedier withdrawal of Israeli troops from south Lebanon and to give both parties the right to self-defense," Reuters reported on Thursday amid U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein's visit to Israel directly from Beirut.

According to a senior Lebanese official, the country's negotiators requested these changes during meetings with Hochstein in Beirut. These amendments – previously unrequested by Lebanon – indicate that Hochstein still has significant hurdles to overcome to finalize the deal, despite his earlier statement in Beirut that an agreement was "within reach."

The Lebanese official added that Lebanon wishes for Israeli forces to withdraw immediately after the cease-fire is declared, allowing the Lebanese Army to deploy across all areas and displaced persons to return to their homes. This position contradicts Israel's stance, which envisioned a withdrawal within 60 days of the cease-fire taking effect.

Lebanon also seeks a revision in the proposal to stress both sides' right to "self-defense," not just Israel's. The source noted that while the American draft refers to a withdrawal from "Lebanese borders," Beirut preferred specific wording referring to the "Lebanese border" to ensure a complete Israeli withdrawal.

Lebanon's Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib said on Wednesday that Lebanon wants to enforce Hezbollah's evacuation from southern Lebanon on its own terms, rather than via Israeli actions. Israel, for its part, demanded to prevent the terror organization from smuggling weapons into Lebanon by land, sea or air and insisted on guarantees that it can enforce this as a fundamental condition of any agreement.

Strikes in Beirut

The Lebanese official noted that the U.S. draft makes no mention of Israel's ability to continue striking Hezbollah and stressed that Lebanon insists on maintaining its sovereignty. Israel has also agreed to an addendum providing U.S. assurances that it can target Hezbollah in the future should the agreement be violated.

Hochstein arrived in Israel on Wednesday after visiting Lebanon and met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He also held talks with Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, a close confidant of the prime minister and then met with Defense Minister Israel Katz and IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi.

Following these meetings, senior Israeli officials estimated that, despite the new conditions reported by Reuters, the agreement with Lebanon is likely to be finalized "within days."

Meanwhile, official Lebanese sources told Sky News Arabia that "the negotiations could lead to an agreement by the weekend, barring any obstacles." However, estimates say the cease-fire announcement is unlikely to take this week and possibly not even next week.

11.21.24 – Th

ICC issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant over alleged Gaza war crimes

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ICC issues arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant over alleged Gaza war crimes
Court says has 'reasonable grounds to believe' both leaders involved in actions constituting war crimes under its jurisdiction

Itamar Eichner|06:01

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defense minister Yoav Gallant for alleged war crimes committed during the ongoing Gaza war, the court said in a statement Thursday.

The warrants were issued after the ICC's pre-trial chamber unanimously rejected Israel's challenges to the court's jurisdiction and its request to halt proceedings with the prosecution's applications for arrest warrants submitted earlier this year

The tribunal claimed there are "reasonable grounds to believe" that Netanyahu and Gallant bear criminal responsibility for crimes including "the war crime of starvation as a method of warfare" and "crimes against humanity, including murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts" targeting Gaza's civilian population.

The ICC accused the two leaders of deliberately depriving Gaza's civilian population of essential goods, including food, water, electricity and medical supplies, resulting in significant suffering. According to the court, these actions were part of a "widespread and systematic attack" against civilians in Gaza and were carried out in violation of international humanitarian law.

"The Chamber considers that the alleged conduct of Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Gallant falls within the jurisdiction of the Court," the statement read, citing its previous determination that the ICC has territorial jurisdiction over Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The court alleges that from October 2023, Israeli authorities imposed severe restrictions on humanitarian aid, with only minimal assistance allowed in response to international pressure. "Decisions allowing or increasing humanitarian assistance were not made to fulfill Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law but rather to respond to external pressure," the court stated.

Among the alleged abuses, the ICC highlighted instances where hospitals in Gaza lacked anesthetics due to blockades, forcing doctors to operate on patients, including children, without proper sedation. These actions, the court said, amount to "other inhumane acts" under the Rome Statute.

The Chamber also found "reasonable grounds to believe" that the deprivation of essential goods resulted in deaths from malnutrition and dehydration among civilians, including children. While it could not confirm all elements of the crime against humanity of extermination, the court concluded that the crime of murder was committed.

Israel, which is not a member of the ICC, has dismissed the court's authority, calling its actions politically motivated. Both Netanyahu and Gallant have yet to respond publicly to the warrants. The arrest orders are classified as "secret" to protect witnesses and investigations, though details were released due to ongoing similar conduct, the court said. The decision drew swift and unequivocal condemnation across Israel's political spectrum. Avigdor Liberman, leader of the Yisrael Beiteinu party, accused the court of showcasing "the international community's double standards and hypocrisy," adding that "Israel will not apologize for defending its citizens and remains committed to fighting terror without compromise."

Opposition leader Yair Lapid denounced the warrants as "a reward for terror," asserting that "Israel is defending its citizens against terrorist organizations that attacked, murdered and raped our people."

Benny Gantz, leader of the National Unity Party, described the ICC decision as "moral blindness and a shameful stain of historic proportion that will never be forgotten."

Former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett labeled the warrants "a mark of shame" for the ICC, declaring, "On October 7th, Hamas brutally attacked Israel, murdering, burning alive and raping over 1,200 Israelis. Israel is fighting back the most just of wars against pure evil."

Strike hits Syria & Iran high-profile meeting, killing at least 68 in Palmyra

11.21.24 – Th

Report: Israeli strike hits Syrian army, pro-Iran militias, killing at least 68

Opposition watchdog claims pro-Iranian militia sites and Syrian military positions targeted, leaving dozens of Syrian militia operatives, foreign fighters and Hezbollah members, including high-profile figures, dead and wounded

Lior Ben Ari|02:45

Dozens were killed and injured in an Israeli airstrike targeting the city of Palmyra in Syria's eastern desert on Wednesday, Syrian state media and opposition monitors reported. Israel has not claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Among the dead were 10 Syrian soldiers, with significant damage to buildings and surrounding areas, according to the Syrian Defense Ministry.

The ministry alleged the strike was launched from the vicinity of the U.S. military base at Al-Tanf, near the Syria-Jordan-Iraq tri-border area, and claimed the attack targeted multiple sites in Palmyra.

The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, reported Thursday that at least 68 people were killed and 50 injured. Among the dead were 42 Syrians linked to pro-Iranian militias, 22 foreign nationals—primarily members of the Iraqi pro-Iranian Nujaba militia—and four Hezbollah operatives.

According to the watchdog, the strikes hit three separate locations in Palmyra, including two in the Al-Jam'iyah neighborhood, one of which was a weapons depot near an industrial zone. The third site allegedly hosted a meeting of pro-Iranian militia leaders, including senior figures from the Iraqi Nujaba militia and Hezbollah. Families of pro-Iranian operatives, many with Iraqi or foreign citizenship, reportedly reside in the affected area.

The Observatory also noted that some of the buildings targeted were located near Palmyra's famed archaeological sites, although the extent of any impact on the historical landmarks remains unclear.

The strikes reportedly began around 1 p.m. local time, with Syrian media outlets reporting explosions in Palmyra, located in the eastern countryside of Homs province. Subsequent reports, including from the Syrian state news agency SANA, indicated strikes on residential buildings and industrial zones in and around the city. Pro-Iranian militia headquarters were also reportedly among the targets.

11.20.24 – We

Hezbollah rocket strikes West Galilee kindergarten 35 minutes after children left

11.20.24 – We

Hezbollah rocket strikes northern Israel kindergarten minutes after children left
Shortly after Hezbollah chief concludes speech, terror group launches rocket barrage,
striking empty kindergarten in Acre, causing significant damage to building; blast also
damaged dozens of nearby homes, sparking renewed fears among residents
Yair Kraus|15:47

A barrage of 25 rockets launched by Hezbollah struck the Western Galilee on Wednesday,
with one rocket directly hitting the fence of a kindergarten in the coastal city of Acre.

No children were present at the time of the strike, but the kindergarten sustained
significant damage, and dozens of nearby buildings were also impacted by the blast. The
IDF reported that only some of the rockets were intercepted by air defenses.

Assi Abutbul, a 25-year-old local, described the aftermath. “I heard a loud noise and went
outside to see a hole in the kindergarten,” he said. “There were children here this morning.
This is not a good situation—not at all.”

When asked about the prospects for a cease-fire, Abutbul was dismissive. “There is no
settlement, no security, nothing. It’s all lies. Missiles are hitting kindergartens and
schools. There’s no security or agreements—just nonsense.”

In response to the attack, the Acre municipality announced the suspension of classes
citywide on Thursday and Friday. Mayor Amichai Ben-Shlush conducted a situation
assessment at the site and determined that educational institutions would remain closed
until at least Sunday. Further decisions will be made following a reassessment on
Saturday night.

In a conversation with Ynet, Mayor Amichai Ben-Shlush clarified that he does not intend
to continue adhering to Home Front Command guidelines, which permit the reopening of
classes and transportation. Instead, he ordered the closure of schools, kindergartens and
daycares, many of which had only recently reopened for a limited number of students.
For the past nine weeks, educational activities in the city have been almost entirely
suspended due to the ongoing security situation.

Ben-Shlush revealed that about 120 children had been enrolled in the kindergarten that
was struck and noted that they had left the premises only about 35 minutes before the
rocket hit, at 3:45 p.m. “It’s a miracle. You can see the hole in the fence,” he said,
pointing to the damage caused by the rocket.

Ben-Shlush argued that the incident reinforced his belief that fully resuming the
education system should be avoided and done “patiently” and gradually, even if the
Home Front Command does not impose restrictions. “I will act according to my instincts
for the safety and security of Acre’s children,” he vowed.

The mayor also criticized the government’s handling of the situation. “The education
minister visited the city today and toured with me. I told him again that many educational
institutions still lack safe zones,” Ben-Shlush said.

“I described the reality of dozens of schools without protected areas that I cannot safely
reopen. Even if the children return, they will fear coming to schools because of the lack

of shelter. The older schools are like cardboard. We've had a few miracles already, and this was another one. I'm calling on the Israeli government to help us—don't forsake us.”

The barrage was fired immediately after Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem delivered a speech in which he declared that the terrorist organization would continue attacking Israel until a cease-fire agreement is reached. He threatened to target Tel Aviv and central Israel in retaliation for Israeli strikes in Beirut, which have significantly escalated in recent days amid ongoing negotiations.

"We will not leave the capital under fire from the Israeli enemy. When Beirut is under attack by the enemy, the response must target the center of Tel Aviv," he said, seemingly referring to Tel Aviv as Israel's capital. "The enemy must understand that things will not remain as they are when it attacks Beirut."

In his remarks, Qassem addressed the negotiation efforts with Israel, stating that Hezbollah has submitted its comments on the American-brokered proposal and is now awaiting Israel's response. "The success of the negotiations depends on the Israeli response and Netanyahu's seriousness," he asserted.

He outlined two conditions, which he referred to as "limits" for the negotiations: a complete halt to what he called "Israeli aggression" and the preservation of Lebanon's sovereignty. The latter is likely a reference to a contentious clause permitting Israeli freedom of action in response to violations of the agreement.

U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein arrived in Israel on Wednesday evening after visiting Beirut, where he received Hezbollah's response to an American-brokered cease-fire proposal. Hochstein described the negotiations as having made "positive progress" and is set to meet shortly with Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, a close confidant of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Talks will continue Thursday, with Israel's Security Cabinet convening in the evening for a briefing on the developments.

Senior diplomats said an agreement is "closer than ever," with 90-95% of the details finalized, but warned that "the devil is in the details." They noted that sensitive issues, including the establishment of a monitoring mechanism, remain unresolved.

"There appears to be shared interest in reaching a deal, but key decisions must still be made," one diplomat said. The proposed monitoring framework would involve significant roles for the U.S., France and Britain, aimed at bolstering the Lebanese Armed Forces through arms and advisory support. Military cooperation from Jordan, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates is also expected to play a role in strengthening Lebanon's military capabilities.

Meanwhile, the IDF continues its operations in Lebanon, with the military reporting significant strikes against Hezbollah operatives and infrastructure. On Wednesday, the IDF announced that Israeli Air Force fighter jets had killed Hezbollah's operations commander and the commander of its anti-tank missile array in a strike on Sunday. According to the military, the two were responsible for multiple attacks against Israeli civilians and soldiers, including anti-tank missile strikes on the Western Galilee and central Israel. The IDF said that their elimination deals a significant blow to Hezbollah's operational capabilities.

In southern Lebanon, IDF forces uncovered ammunition depots and seized caches of weapons and equipment during ongoing ground operations. Over the past 24 hours, the Air Force struck more than 100 Hezbollah targets, including rocket launchers, weapons warehouses, command centers and operational buildings, the IDF said.

11.20.24 – We

Lebanon cease-fire agreement near, but hurdles persist in the details

11.20.24 – We

'Devil's in the details': Lebanon cease-fire agreement near, diplomats say, but hurdles persist

Sources say '90-95%' of agreement finalized but key details, including monitoring mechanism, unresolved; Hezbollah chief confirms terror group submitted response to US proposal, warning deal hinges on Israel halting 'aggression' and respecting Lebanon's sovereignty

Itamar Eichner, Lior Ben Ari, Yair Kraus|12:09

U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein arrived in Israel on Wednesday evening after visiting Beirut, where he received Hezbollah's response to an American-brokered cease-fire proposal.

Hochstein described the negotiations as having made "positive progress" and is set to meet shortly with Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, a close confidant of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Talks will continue Thursday, with Israel's Security Cabinet convening in the evening for a briefing on the developments.

Senior diplomats said an agreement is "closer than ever," with 90-95% of the details finalized, but warned that "the devil is in the details." They noted that sensitive issues, including the establishment of a monitoring mechanism, remain unresolved.

"There appears to be shared interest in reaching a deal, but key decisions must still be made," one diplomat said. The proposed monitoring framework would involve significant roles for the U.S., France and Britain, aimed at bolstering the Lebanese Armed Forces through arms and advisory support. Military cooperation from Jordan, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates is also expected to play a role in strengthening Lebanon's military capabilities.

Hezbollah's newly appointed leader, Naim Qassem, who assumed the role last month following the assassinations of Hassan Nasrallah and his original successor-designate Hashem Safieddine, delivered a speech Wednesday afternoon addressing ongoing negotiations with Israel.

Amid threats issued during his remarks, Qassem confirmed that Hezbollah had submitted its comments on the U.S.-brokered proposal and is now awaiting Israel's response.

"The success of the negotiations depends on Israel's response and Netanyahu's seriousness," Qassem said. He emphasized two key conditions, which he referred to as

the “red lines” for the talks: a complete halt to what he called “Israeli aggression” and the preservation of Lebanon’s sovereignty—likely referencing disputes over Israel’s demand for freedom of action in the event of violations of the agreement.

11.20.24 – We

Border cities still under daily rocket threats, yet residents can renovate damaged homes

11.20.24 – We

IDF establishes new defensive positions on Lebanon border as cease-fire remains uncertain

Official cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah remains unfinalized, so the IDF is proactively setting up new outposts near the border with Lebanon, refurbishing old military positions and forming combat units to provide visible security and support for returning residents

Yair Kraus|02:09

An official cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah remains elusive, yet the IDF is proactively establishing new outposts near border communities along the Lebanese border. The military is refurbishing former outposts and preparing to station combat units within communities, ensuring returning residents feel secure with a visible military presence.

In recent weeks, the IDF has dismantled concrete walls and firing positions along confrontation line roads, which had become a gray fixture of the landscape. It has also withdrawn military forces from public buildings and evacuated areas, while working with local authorities to shape a new security framework.

In Shlomi, situated right on the border, where over 7,000 residents were evacuated in October 2023, the local council has recently installed permanent firing and defense positions around the community facing Lebanon, ready for any alert. Additionally, a military outpost with at least a company-sized force will secure the community.

This week, the Shlomi local council plans to approve three security tenders developed in anticipation of future needs. These include establishing an extensive camera network operated by a 24/7 active center, budgeting \$6.6 million for a tactical combat unit patrolling around the clock with off-road vehicles, and forming a rapid response force of 60 volunteer fighters from the community.

These measures have been approved by the IDF Northern Command and the Chief of Staff, according to Gabi Naaman, head of the Shlomi Council. In recent days, senior military commanders, including brigade leaders from Golani, Kfir and the 228th Brigade, have consistently urged displaced northern residents to “return home now” through every available media platform.

These military pressures, lacking clear and coordinated statements from political leaders, are viewed by many as unauthorized interference and a detriment to the war objectives expected in the north. Naaman also sought to temper the enthusiastic calls for residents to return home, emphasizing essential conditions: "For us to return home, several critical things must happen," he told Ynet and Yedioth Ahronoth.

"One is for IDF to position itself north of Shlomi, on the mountain and into the Lebanese side, to prevent any certain infiltration. We also expect soldiers to be visibly present in front of us and within Shlomi itself, not behind us. The third requirement is completing the installation of defensive technological means to create a sense of security and visibility."

Amid frantic U.S.-pressured talks to reach a settlement to end the war in Lebanon, Naaman expressed hope that the government will prioritize national interests over global ones.

"We do not trust fabricated agreements, so the IDF must maintain a security zone for at least the coming years to ensure Hezbollah does not plan another attack on northern communities. These are the minimum conditions. It's important that the IDF remains assertive and does everything to empower politicians to negotiate the best possible agreement. I trust the prime minister more than anyone else," he said.

Naaman said the IDF should drive the required strategic change, not politicians. "The IDF is our strength and, unfortunately, also our weakness. If we end the war like a month ago, Hezbollah will only grow stronger. We don't want to beg for an agreement; we want them to be the ones begging for it," he said.

On Tuesday, Naaman, along with other local authority heads from the confrontation line, met with the new minister Ze'ev Elkin, responsible for the northern and southern administrations. Authorities have high hopes that he will succeed in rallying all government ministries to the challenge of developing the area. Naaman announced before the meeting his intention to urge Elkin to create certainty for over 60,000 northern evacuees.

"I will ask him to promote a government decision to extend the stay outside the community, as well as the benefits for residents, not just until the end of December but beyond, to provide calm for residents and ensure their return is gradual, not rushed or under distress as the evacuation was. All this, of course, on the condition the IDF provides absolute security, achieving the main objective of the war in the north and not a moment before."

Keeping a visible contact line whether an agreement is reached this week or postponed, IDF troops continue daily operations beyond the border to expose more areas and "clean" the buffer zone, previously tangled and concealed from the army's view. In the western sector, engineering forces and the 146th Division fighters lead the "plowing" efforts on the ground.

The military warns that without daily maintenance of this line – from the sea at Rosh Hanikra to Mount Dov – to ensure it remains clear, or without physically remaining there, it will be challenging to guarantee security for residents along the border line. Already now, after heavy rains, vegetation is growing again, and must be cleared.

This will likely be a sticking point with Hezbollah, which will insist on withdrawing all Israeli forces beyond the border fence, potentially creating a significant obstacle in any

emerging arrangement. There is concern that the Iranian-funded terrorist organization will quickly seek to cover the area again with dense, concealing foliage.

Residents can no longer agree to a demand that would return the obscured view the army suffered from before October 6, 2023. Alongside targeted raids in southern Lebanon, with relatively fewer forces than those in Lebanon in recent weeks, the IDF reports that the maneuver to thwart the northern attack plan has been completed, and forces await further instructions from the political echelon.

A senior military source noted that, under current conditions, residents can begin renovating damaged homes and preparing them for their return. This is based on the assumption that, following the rocket fire pushed away from the contact line with Israel, it is safer to move around evacuated communities than it was in the past year.

The IDF assesses that the current rocket threat from Hezbollah is not significantly different between many evacuated communities and cities like Nahariya, Acre, or communities adjacent to Haifa such as Kiryat Motzkin, all of which are targeted daily.

11.20.24 – We

Israel will apply martial law in Gaza with military outposts and coalition approval

11.20.24 – We

With military outposts and tacit approval from the coalition: This is how Israel will apply martial law in Gaza

Analysis: After Gallant's dismissal and in view of the new US administration, Israel is working to establish facts on the ground in order to have de facto control of the strip, but without a political decision which could involve many and weighty legal consequences; This corresponds with the settlers' plans to settle in northern Gaza; 'A historic opportunity returns'

Elisha Ben Kimon 01:34

Israel appears to be on its way to realizing the idea of a military administration in the Gaza Strip. In view of actions on the ground, it seems that Israel has increased its activity toward implementation of the move. Netanyahu's senior coalition members, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, have already expressed their opinion on the matter countless times, but now things seem to be getting a push on the ground. Ynet has learned that, in the last few days, the security establishment is beginning to actively work with external companies that will handle all humanitarian aid issues in the Gaza Strip, under Israeli supervision.

This is the realization on the ground of plans that previously were only on paper. In addition, the IDF has deepened its seizure of territory in the Gaza Strip, expanding the axes it holds and establishing military outposts seemingly in order to seize a wide area and apply military administration in practice in the Gaza Strip. In recent days, lively discussions have been held on the issue between the various parties, including new

Defense Minister Israel Katz, senior members of the defense establishment and other senior ministers, in order to promote the policy.

According to sources familiar with the details, some officials in the Southern Command are pushing from within the system for the implementation of military administration of the strip, and are creating a dialogue with the political echelon on the matter. The move comes against the backdrop of two significant changes that delayed the cabinet members to the right of Netanyahu, and have now been removed: In Israel, the replacement of Defense Minister Yoav Gallant; and in the U.S., the victory of Donald Trump in presidential elections. Sources familiar with the details say that Gallant opposed Smotrich's ideas the West Bank and Gaza, and supported the position of the security system on a variety of issues.

Among other things, Gallant opposed Smotrich's position on the demolition of outposts, issuing administrative arrest warrants for extreme right-wing activists, and on the day after in the Gaza Strip. At the same time, the plans for seizing the territory as part of extracting a price from Hamas in Gaza correspond with settlers' plans to settle northern Gaza. Officials in the settlement movement claim that this is a historic period of time to change reality on the ground vis-a-vis the Palestinians, and an opportunity that will not return.

The same sources claim that a decision was made to not wait for the new Trump administration to enter the White House, but to already carry out operations on the ground and build plans that will form the basis for the activities of the new administration. In this context, a senior official in the settlement movement explains that the main thing is to "maintain the integrity of the coalition at all costs."

Although no political decision has been made regarding the day after in the Gaza Strip, the main point of which is the establishment of a military administration, the government is dealing with it and working toward its realization. Besides the economic, logistical, infrastructural and security consequences of establishing a military administration, there are also far-reaching legal consequences regarding control over millions of Palestinians and the need to treat them humanitarily.

Legal sources point to a serious lack of clarity on the question of what Israel will do with Gaza after 13 months of war.

Civilian control in Gaza means that Israel will be required to provide for the needs of the population—such as humanitarian aid, electricity, communications and sanitation - and not just allow international organizations to deliver food and vaccines. In the absence of a decision by the political echelon, Israel has in recent months been forced to deal with petitions to the High Court regarding the "occupation" of the Gaza Strip - which involves many and weighty legal consequences about the treatment of the population, and also with international proceedings such as those conducted at the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Another solution that is also on the table and which is not being promoted at all is giving control of Gaza Strip to another entity in the territory, such as the Palestinian Authority.

This is a solution to which Netanyahu and members of his government are strongly opposed.

Alternatively, it is possible that another country will take responsibility for the strip, but most are opposed to the idea as long as Israel's fighting in Gaza continues.

11.19.24 – Tu

2 Israelis extracted from northern West Bank town after PA attacked & wounded

11.19.24 – Tu

2 Israelis extracted from Palestinian town after being attacked, wounded Ramla residents violently attacked after entering Dayr Balut in northern West Bank; pair rescued by Palestinian police officers and then extracted by IDF, suffering mild-to-moderate injuries

Yoav Zitun|15:06

Two Israeli citizens from Ramla were attacked Tuesday evening after entering the Palestinian town of Dayr Balut in the northern West Bank.

The pair, reportedly there for business, were assaulted by Palestinians who recognized them as Israeli.

According to the Civil Administration, the Israeli governing body that operates in the West Bank, both sustained mild-to-moderate injuries and are under medical care.

Initial reports suggested one was unconscious, but it was later confirmed that both were conscious.

The IDF has launched an investigation to confirm the identities of the two Israelis and determine why they entered the town. Palestinian officials allege the incident stemmed from a financial dispute. The military has since locked down Dayr Balut to search for the attackers.

In August 2023, a similar incident occurred when an Israeli man accidentally entered a Palestinian village near Ramallah. He was attacked and his car was set on fire, but other Palestinians helped rescue him and ensured his safe transfer to Israeli authorities. Dayr Balut lies within Area A of the West Bank, which is under full Palestinian Authority control and makes up 18% of the territory. The IDF has reiterated warnings against Israelis entering Area A, calling it both prohibited and dangerous.

11.19.24 – Tu

Netanyahu visits Gaza troops: Hamas no longer controls Gaza, we will defeat them

11.19.24 – Tu

Netanyahu in Gaza: ' Hamas will no longer control Gaza, we will pursue and defeat them' PM says Israeli forces 'relentless in efforts' to bring hostages home; 'Anyone who dares harm our hostages will pay with their life,' he warns and offers \$5 million award to anyone who returns a captive
Ynetnews|12:10

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed Tuesday that Hamas' rule in Gaza is over, as Israeli forces continue their campaign against the terrorist group across the Palestinian enclave.

" Hamas will no longer rule Gaza. We are now targeting their governing capabilities, and our mission is far from over," Netanyahu said during a visit to the Netzarim Corridor in central Gaza alongside Defense Minister Israel Katz, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi and Shin Bet head Ronen Bar.

The visit included a briefing from senior military officials and a discussion with reservist brigade commanders about the ongoing military campaign against Hamas. Netanyahu praised the military's efforts in dismantling Hamas' capabilities. "Our forces have achieved remarkable results in eliminating Hamas' military strength across the Gaza Strip," he said.

The prime minister reiterated Israel's commitment to securing the release of hostages held by Hamas since the October 7 attack. "We are relentless in our efforts to bring them home—both the living and the deceased," he said, warning those responsible for holding the hostages: "Anyone who dares harm our hostages will pay with their life. We will pursue you, and we will reach you." Netanyahu also offered an incentive for cooperation, promising a \$5 million reward per hostage and safe passage for anyone who aids in their release. "The choice is yours, but the outcome will be the same: We will bring everyone back," he said.

Acknowledging the sacrifices of Israel's soldiers and their families, Netanyahu commended the resilience and dedication of reservists. "Our soldiers and commanders are performing exceptional work. I salute our reservists and their families for their unwavering support," he said. "The people of Israel stand united behind you." Katz said the government was "committed to providing all necessary resources and making decisions that will enable our troops to complete their missions," and praised the bravery and professionalism of Israeli forces. "I don't think there's an army in the world that can point to achievements of this kind," he added. Katz underscored that "the most important mission is to bring the hostages home," and echoed Netanyahu's statement about defeating Hamas and ensuring the terrorist group "will not rule here in the future."

11.19.24 – Tu

New GOP Congress ready for Judea & Samaria, part of Israel with Trump

11.19.24 – Tu

Republicans for settlements: New GOP lawmakers ready to make West Bank official part of Israel

As Donald Trump prepares for return to White House, Shomron Regional Council head holds round of meetings in Congress and hears support from lawmakers advocating for Israel to apply sovereignty to West Bank

Elisha Ben Kimon|11:36

West Bank settlers are preparing for President-elect Donald Trump's entry into the White House. While the heads of the settlements gathered to formulate an action plan for the president-elect's new term in office, the head of the Shomron Regional Council, Yossi Dagan, left for a visit to the United States that included meetings with senior Republicans and members of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington. The meetings were, of course, mainly concerned with the hope of applying Israeli sovereignty in the West Bank, also known as Judea and Samaria.

Republican House of Representatives lawmaker Claudia Tenney of New York is an ally of Dagan. "I am a partner in the legal initiative that will guarantee the rights of Samaria and Judea and make sure that they will be recognized and not called 'the West Bank' when talking about products and other things produced in this area. I am a strong supporter of Israel. We are very excited to cooperate with you, and we will be happy to return to Samaria in the future," she said.

Republican Sen. Pete Ricketts of Nebraska did not address the issue directly, but expressed his support for Israel.

"After the terrible attack on October 7 and what Israel had to do to defend itself, I look forward to defending your sovereignty and your security in this new administration you will find an administration that's got friendship for Israel as opposed to what happened in the past administration."

According to Maryland Rep. Andy Harris: "When all is said and done, the two-state solution just doesn't work. It's got to be a one-state solution, with obviously Judea and Samaria in part of the State of Israel. That's the way it has to be. This is the only solution that will ensure sustainable peace."

Dagan also met with the chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy, U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann, and Rep. Nick LaLota of New York, who said that it is important to maintain the "excellent relations" between the two countries. "The relationship between the U.S. and Israel, with an emphasis on stopping the harassment and obsessive persecution against the Jewish settlement in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria," said Dagan.

"We presented to the members of Congress with our request and demand that the U.S. government either support or not oppose and thwart sovereignty over the Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria. We have partners here who have promised to be

involved in this matter," Dagan said. "Even if the U.S. administration cannot say that it is in favor of it, and even has to say that it is opposed, it will not fight the way the Biden administration would have fought."

He also called on the prime minister and government ministers to act. "The ball is in your court. You can apply sovereignty immediately upon the entry of the Trump administration," he said.

11.19.24 – Tu

Gaza clerics say jihad not achieved; timing a mistake with relentless bombing of Gaza

11.19.24 – Tu

Hamas attack on Israel stirs controversy among Gaza clerics

Well-known Palestinian cleric questions harm caused by Oct. 7 attack, including high civilian death toll, while local group of religious leaders asserts Hamas assault legitimate Reuters|11:04

The Hamas attack on Israel that triggered the Gaza war has stirred debate among the enclave's Palestinian clerics, with some saying it was not worth the heavy civilian death toll and others declaring the October 7, 2023 assault was a Muslim duty.

Some 1,200 Israelis were killed on that day, and some 251 people were taken hostage into Gaza, of which 101 hostages, both dead and alive, are still held captive. It was the country's bloodiest day in its history. Israel responded with a destructive offensive in Gaza.

Responding to questions sent by Gazans on an online messaging platform, prominent preacher Suleiman Al-Dayya said Muslim leaders should avoid going into battles if the harm inflicted upon civilians is greater than the gains.

He said warriors should question the wisdom of fighting if it increases the harm to religion, life, honor, children or wealth or the seizure of land, let alone the destruction of the "foundations of life."

A former senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood, the oldest Islamist movement in the Arab world, he was also close to Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, co-founder and leader of the Palestinian terror group Hamas, before pursuing a more moderate form of Islam. "When it becomes highly likely that the objectives and aims of jihad will not be achieved due to the absence or deficiency of its pillars, causes or conditions, it must be avoided," said Dayya.

Late on Monday, a statement issued in the name of "a group of clerics" in Gaza defended the assault as a "legitimate act and a fulfillment of the duty of jihad, with no doubt about its legitimacy."

"However, was the timing of the decision a mistake in judgment, as it led to this destructive war afterward, or was it appropriate due to specific circumstances known to the fighters, for example? This is a matter open to consideration," the statement said. "But such consideration and placing of blame are not appropriate during the war; they should come afterward, as it serves no purpose now and rather harms," it added. In their statement, the clerics' group said they appreciated Dayya's opinion and religious status but they cautioned his verdict could be misunderstood and could affect the spirit of ordinary Palestinians as well as fighters. Some Gazans are also questioning the wisdom of Hamas staging an attack that led to Israel's relentless bombardment of Gaza, which was already struggling with widespread poverty and high unemployment before the war erupted.

For Israelis and their Western allies, Hamas is a terrorist group that has fired missiles at them and staged suicide bombings.

Hamas' supporters regard its fighters as heroes leading the fight for Palestinian statehood, which had drifted off the international agenda.

Israel, which has assassinated several top Hamas leaders, has vowed to destroy the group.

11.19.24 – Tu

Israel proposes US sanction relief for Assad, to stop arms from Russia to Hezbollah

11.19.24 – Tu

Israel proposes sanction relief for Assad, to stop flow of arms to Hezbollah, report
Lebanese paper says Strategic Affairs Minister raises possible lifting of sanctions from
Russian and Syrian companies after meetings in Moscow

Lior Ben Ari, Itamar Eichner|04:44

Israel proposed that some U.S. sanctions should be lifted from Syrian President Bashar Assad in exchange for his involvement in preventing the flow of arms to Hezbollah across the Syrian border with Lebanon, the Lebanese daily Al Jounhouria reported on Tuesday.

According to the paper, Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer raised the possibility of sanction relief to ensure Russian involvement in the effort to block the smuggling of arms from Syrian territory into neighboring Lebanon and block what has been termed the "Iranian highway," connecting the Dahieh in Beirut to Iran via Syria and Iraq.

Dermer committed to request the Biden administration to freeze sanctions on Assad as well as Russian and Syrian companies. The idea was discussed during the first Trump term and may have come up now after his reelection.

Crushing protests, lacking experience: Meet Khamenei's secretly appointed successor
Dermer was in Moscow earlier in the month on a secret visit to try and promote the matter. Israeli officials said there was an understanding that Russia can influence

Hezbollah, Syria and Iran and that Moscow was hoping for a cease-fire in the war in Lebanon.

The Wall Street Journal reported in an article on Tuesday that Russian-made weapons were found in by troops in Hezbollah's weapons stores in South Lebanon and that new, even recently produced weapons made in Russia were transferred through Syria recently and replace old Soviet-era armaments.

11.19.24 – Tu

70% of seized arms in Lebanon are Russian-made, imported through Syria

11.19.24 – Tu

Russian-made weapons found in Hezbollah arsenal, report

Anti-tank missiles produced as recently as 2020, among stocks found by troops in South Lebanon delivered via Syria, raising concerns of deepening Moscow-Tehran cooperation; 70% of seized Hezbollah weapons are Russian made

Ynet|02:58

The IDF found Russian-made weapons in Hezbollah stores in South Lebanon, the Wall Street Journal said on Tuesday. Among the weapons made in Russia were anti-tank missiles sent in recent years to Lebanon via Syria which had been receiving Russian weapons for years.

Israel had not been able to confirm the flow of Russian-made weapons to the Iran-backed terror group until its forces were on the ground in South Lebanon, the journal said.

According to the outlet, citing a Syrian security official, some of the munitions, including anti-tank missiles manufactured as recently as 2020, were sent to the country from Russian stocks located in Syria. The news contradicts earlier Israeli assessment that the terror group only used Soviet era weapons from the 2006 Second Lebanon War in 2006. The discoveries also increased fears in Israel, according to the Wall Street Journal, that Moscow was deepening relations with the Iran-backed group despite its insistence on neutrality in the conflict.

“We must explain and convey to the Russians that we will no longer stand any assistance to Hezbollah and Iran that could hurt Israelis,” Mil-Man, a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) in Tel Aviv, said.

Both the Russian government and the Syrian foreign ministry refused to comment on the inquiry made by the Wall Street Journal.

According to the article, Russia's stance in the Middle East has shifted since the start of the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, despite Israel's efforts to maintain friendly relations with Moscow, so as to avoid conflicts in Syria, where Russia has a strong military presence.

Analysts told the outlet that Russia was now actively seeking to harass the U.S. and its allies wherever possible.

The report also detailed how the Russians provided aid in the form of munitions and military intelligence to Yemen's Houthis, who have taken an active part in attacking Israel since the outset of the Gaza war on October 7. Moscow has also allegedly delivered anti-air defense systems to Hezbollah, though there was no confirmation of the transaction, according to the Wall Street Journal.

The WSJ detailed Russia's warming relations with Hamas since the start of the war, hosting its political leaders several times in Moscow while seeking to reconcile the terror group and Fatah.

Russia's growing support comes against the backdrop of its deepening relations with Iran, who delivered the same drones and ballistic missiles to Moscow as it did to its proxy Hezbollah.

According to a report, Russia's involvement in Syria has had a ripple effect on the region's military dynamics, particularly concerning Hezbollah's access to advanced weaponry. Russia deepened its ties with Syria following the outbreak of Syria's civil war in 2011, intervening militarily to support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

The outlet reported that Russia not only provided weapons to Syria but also maintained its own stockpiles in the country. Around 2015, Russian forces began collaborating with Hezbollah fighters on the ground, strengthening ties between the two groups.

Russian weapons make 70% of seized arms in Lebanon ground operation

According to Syrian security officials and an Arab official cited in the report, this relationship facilitated Hezbollah's access to Russian arms in Syria, including advanced weapon systems like antitank, anti-aircraft and anti-ship missiles.

The frequency with which Hezbollah obtained Russian weapons remains unclear, according to the Wall Street Journal. Traditionally, much of Hezbollah's arsenal has come from its patron Iran. However, Israeli officials have reportedly found a significant number of Russian-made weapons in southern Lebanon during recent operations.

The outlet detailed a visit to Israel's National Mmunition Disassembly Lab, where seized materials from southern Lebanon are analyzed. The lab revealed an array of Russian weaponry, including Kornet and other guided antitank missile systems like Metis, Konkurs, Fagots and Sagers. These weapons were discovered in Hezbollah bunkers both above and below ground, less than a kilometer inside southern Lebanon an Israeli major told the Wall Street Journal.

According to the Israeli officer, Russian-made arms comprised 60-70% of the weapons seized in the early days of Israel's recent invasion of southern Lebanon. IDF Reservists reportedly continue to encounter Russian weapons in the area.

While the exact methods by which Hezbollah acquired these arms remain uncertain, some of the captured weapons bore markings linking them to Russia's shipments to Syria's defense ministry.

The outlet reported that markings on some weapons, such as the Kornet, confirmed their Russian origin rather than being Iranian copies. One set of rockets even had labels in Russian indicating shipment to Syria.

However, **not all seized weapons carried such identifiers**. The timeline for these deliveries is unclear, but the report noted that some **weapons** were **manufactured as recently as 2020**, while **others**, like the Saggers, date back to the **1980s**.

Fabian Hinz, a military research fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, **highlighted the importance of reliable, short-range missiles** like the Kornet to Hezbollah's operations.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Hinz said these weapons have **enabled Hezbollah to carry out a more efficient campaign against Israel** compared to **Hamas**, which primarily **relies on less reliable Iranian-made versions**.

Adam Roussele, a researcher at Militant Wire, noted that the Kornet and two other **Russian-made antitank missiles** seized by IDF forces have featured prominently in Hezbollah attack videos since October 7, 2023 and have **played a significant role in Hezbollah's military tactics**.

An Israeli staff sergeant involved in medical evacuations in Lebanon described **anti-tank missiles**, including Kornets, as the **most effective tools for targeting IDF soldiers** and noted that these missiles can **strike from a range of 7–8 kilometers (4.3–5 miles)**.

While **Hezbollah has suffered setbacks from IDF** military actions, the sergeant stressed its strength relative to Hamas, largely due to its advanced arsenal. The Wall Street Journal reported that the **IDF has displayed weapons seized from Hezbollah** during ongoing combat operations in Lebanon.

Israeli officials have **pointed to two key objectives** of their operations: neutralizing the threat posed by anti-tank missiles near Israeli communities and **forcing Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force back north of the Litani River**.

The report also noted **growing concerns among analysts** and officials regarding Israel's diplomatic approach toward Russia. While many **Western nations** have **provided military aid to Ukraine** in its **war against Moscow**, Israel has limited its support to non-military aid, a stance believed to be influenced by its **desire to avoid provoking Moscow**.

Carmit Valensi, a senior researcher at the INSS, criticized this approach. "We need to **sober up from this approach**. It's **no longer just Russian support for the axis of resistance that is unconnected to Israel**. **We are meeting this in the battlefield and it is extracting casualties**," she said.

11.19.24 – Tu

Hamas punishing aid theft in Gaza, at least 20 thieves eliminated of about 500

11.19.24 – Tu

Hamas enforces rule by punishing aid theft in Gaza

The **terror group** claims to have **executed at least 20 thieves who looted aid trucks**, leading **Gazans** to **hope prices** of basic goods **will drop** as a result

Einav Halabi | 01:49

Gaza-based terror group Hamas announced on Monday it had carried out a “successful elimination operation” against 20 looters who have allegedly taken over humanitarian aid in the enclave and claimed they were the ones who oversaw prices of stock being sold to remaining markets in the Strip.

The report comes against the backdrop of efforts to prevent the group from taking over aid being delivered to Gaza and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s directive asking the IDF to “make plans to diminish Hamas’ political and governing capabilities.”

"A 25-kilogram (55-pound) sack of flour, which feeds one family for a day, costs 400 shekels (\$100). The situation has become unbearably dire," A Gazan staying in one of Khan Younis’ camps said. "Thieves began stealing massive amounts of goods and aid, driving up prices."

“This group of criminals had been sentenced to death but escaped Hamas prisons after the war. However, Hamas managed to regain control and eliminate them in one swift operation. We're relieved that we'll finally receive food and water,” he added.

Sources within Gaza's Hamas-controlled Interior Ministry claimed that over 20 gang members involved in thefts of aid trucks were killed during a "high-quality security operation" carried out by the terror organization's security services in collaboration with tribal committees east of Rafah.

As part of Hamas' efforts to solidify its rule in the Strip after over 13 months of fighting and heavy losses, sources told Hamas' Al-Aqsa channel that "the operation marks the beginning of an extensive and carefully planned security campaign that will continue to target all involved in the theft of aid trucks, which significantly impacted civilians' lives and led to hunger in southern Gaza."

Hamas’ Interior Ministry said that the operation wasn’t aimed at specific tribes but asked to eliminate the phenomenon of truck looting. On Sunday, the "popular committees," a body established by Hamas to "protect" aid, announced the execution of four thieves.

"The field executions are part of an integrated plan to address the crimes of aid truck robberies," the ministry said. "We will continue to pursue lawbreakers and thieves who steal the food of the Palestinian people."

Meanwhile, the German government announced on Monday of €6 million (\$6.5 million) in financial aid to enhance the UN mechanism for expediting humanitarian aid delivery to Gaza. The funds will be delivered under an agreement with the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), tasked with overseeing secure aid distribution.

The financial aid is part of Germany's humanitarian commitment to support international efforts to address Gaza's worsening crisis, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2720 (2023), aimed at improving aid distribution through UN-monitored humanitarian corridors.

Despite reports of Hamas stealing and reselling aid at inflated prices, displaced Gazans are now anticipating price reductions that will enable them to purchase basic goods.

Estimates suggest that about 500 thieves, operating in gangs, have been stealing aid since the war began.

Senior Israeli officials have instructed the security bodies to intensify actions against aid looters in Gaza, asking to ensure that aid doesn't fall into the hands of hostile elements like criminal syndicates and Hamas terrorists.

Ynet learned that approximately 15 aid trucks were looted on Monday in the area by armed individuals. The IDF responded by opening fire at others attempting to loot additional trucks, foiling their efforts.

While no official government directive has been made regarding the aid distribution, the IDF and the security officials have recently taken measures to tighten control over its delivery.

According to security officials, certain points and junctions have become hotspots where looters attack and rob the trucks. Some Hamas terrorists have also managed to seize portions of the aid.

11.18.24 – Mo

Criminals steal 3 machine guns from IDF troops taking a break in northern Israel

11.18.24 – Mo

Criminals steal machine guns from IDF troops in northern Israel

3 MAG machine guns stolen from IDF troops near Lebanon border, as criminals increasingly target military weapons; Military Police probe underway

Yair Kraus|14:51

Three MAG machine guns were stolen from IDF infantry forces stationed near a village in northern Israel, the military confirmed Monday.

The theft occurred last week while the soldiers were taking a break in a designated assembly area near the Lebanon border. The weapons were taken from military vehicles left unattended.

The IDF said that the Military Police has launched an investigation, and its findings will be reviewed by the Military Advocate General. "Naturally, we cannot share details of an ongoing investigation," the statement added. Local police in Israel's northern district said they were unaware of the incident.

The theft highlights an ongoing issue of military-grade weapons being targeted by criminal organizations. MAG machine guns, which are highly sought after in the criminal underworld, were reportedly valued at up to half a million shekels (\$135,000) on the black market before the war. Experts believe prices have since risen.

This is not the first instance of weapon theft from military assembly areas. In November last year, grenades, explosives, ammunition and M16 rifles were stolen from IDF positions in the Galilee. The thieves had distributed food and clothing to soldiers as part of a diversion tactic before stealing the weapons. Three suspects, Arab-Israeli residents of nearby villages, were later arrested and charged.

In October, shortly after Hamas' attacks in southern Israel, a MAG machine gun was stolen from soldiers who had left it behind while seeking shelter during a rocket alert in the town of Avdon. In another incident, criminals stole a LAW anti-tank missile from a reservist battalion stationed along the northern border.

Police have warned that since the start of the war, criminal groups have increasingly targeted military personnel, exploiting moments of inattention to steal weapons and equipment. Investigations into these incidents are ongoing.

11.18.24 – Mo

Hezbollah demands changes; Lebanon will lose authority over air, sea and borders

11.18.24 – Mo

Hezbollah demands changes to proposed cease-fire deal

Terror group rejects terms including German, UK participation in commission overseeing implementation of agreement; Lebanese outlet opposing Hezbollah says commission to have vast authority over Lebanon's airport, sea ports and borders

Lior Ben Ari|05:56

Hezbollah is demanding modifications to the cease-fire agreement being negotiated by U.S. special envoy Amos Hochstein, local media reported on Monday.

According to the Hezbollah-affiliated al Akhbar newspaper, the Iran-backed terror group submitted its response to the proposal to Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri and care-taker Prime Minister Najib Mikati. The newspaper claimed Israel was hoping that Hezbollah would reject the deal so that the war could continue.

Sources told al Akhbar that the wording of the Lebanese response to Hochstein is nearing completion and will be delivered to the American embassy in Beirut ahead of the envoy's expected arrival on Tuesday.

"The positive ambiguity is Lebanon's way to deal with the American proposal," sources reportedly said. The questions that were expected to upend the negotiations were resolved and there is a wide birth left. "The negotiations became serious and Netanyahu was under doubled pressure to stop the fighting," according to the report.

Political sources told the publication that Hezbollah's response was in line with the 2006 UN resolution 1701 and that Hochstein will not announce an agreement during his visit and will only relay the Lebanese response to the Israelis.

But officials in Lebanon believe that even if a deal can be agreed, there would be difficulties in implementing it. Hezbollah rejected the participation of Germany and the UK in the committee overseeing the implementation of the cease-fire deal but agreed to American and French involvement. "This is a critical week, there will either be a cease-fire agreement within days or the fighting would continue until mid-January," the officials said, referring to the inauguration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump.

Western officials said they believe the "positive openness in Lebanon will help pressure Israel to implement the deal."

According to the Lebanese daily Nidaa al-Watan (Call of the Nation), which does not support Hezbollah, the pending deal delivered to Lebanon includes:

- The establishment of an international commission to oversee the implementation of UN resolution 1701, headed by an American general and with the participation of a French general.
- The demolition of Hezbollah military structures north and south of the Litani River.
- Preserving Israel's right to intervene in case of violations of the agreement that cannot be resolved in negotiations.
- Implementation of the deal either through dialogue or through force.

The newspaper also reported Berr's response may not be a resounding yes or no, which would not be enough for the Americans or the Israelis, who insist on a positive Lebanese response, and that even if a cease-fire is agreed upon, there would be complications as a result of the agreement and the difficulties would continue.

The Al Joumhouria newspaper, which opposes Hezbollah, revealed more information about the proposed deal than previously reported, including a Hezbollah withdrawal north of the Litani while the IDF would withdraw its troops from south Lebanese villages, the return of displaced civilians on both sides of the border and the strengthening of peacekeeping forces and the Lebanese army.

The newspaper also reported the establishment of an international commission but said that, in addition to the U.S., France and the UK, an unnamed Arab country also would participate.

The commission's authorities will be vast and will include oversight of strategic installations in Lebanon, including the international airport, the ports and border crossings.

The newspaper raises the question of whether the agreement could be reached before U.S. President-elect Donald Trump assumes office, or if there is a risk of a dangerous escalation in the war. It also reports that the initial Lebanese response was already delivered but more comments would be added.

11.18.24 – Mo

Hezbollah rockets damage Galilee homes as IDF artillery moved into Lebanese territory

11.18.24 – Mo

Rockets score direct hit on Kiryat Shmona buildings; Barrage of 30 rockets targets Western Galilee

Hezbollah rockets damage local hesder yeshiva, area homes; Increased rocket fire comes as cease-fire deal seems within reach

Yoav Zitun, Yair Kraus, Lior Ben Ari|04:14

Hezbollah rockets made a direct hit on the city of Kiryat Shmona on Monday causing damage to homes and to a local hesder yeshiva that was thankfully not populated after its students were evacuated to the center of the country. Rockets targeted the Upper Galilee area since the early morning hours.

At barrage of at least 30 rockets targeted the coastal city of Nahariya and its surrounding areas in Western Galilee. According to the IDF some of the rockets were intercepted and others fell in open areas.

The extensive fire came as expectations for a cease-fire agreement grew ahead of the arrival to Beirut of U.S. special envoy Amos Hochstein who is to receive Lebanon's official response to the proposed agreement, including the answer from Hezbollah.

According to Lebanese media reports, the Iran-backed terror group demands changes to the proposal and is adding demands but add that progress was being made.

The IDF at the same time renewed its fire on Hezbollah targets in South Lebanon. According to Lebanese media the military was attacking villages near Nabatieh after reports on Monday that artillery batteries were moved into Lebanese territory.

11.18.24 – Mo

US families of Hamas massacre victims sue Iran in US Court, citing Iran funded actions

11.18.24 – Mo

Families of U.S. victims of Hamas massacre sue Iran

Forty-six American citizens, including children, were killed on October 7, 2023 and 12 others, both living and dead, are still held in Gaza; Lawsuit filed in US District Court cites Hamas documents discovered in Gaza

Ynetnews|02:18

Families of victims of the Hamas massacre on October 7 who hold American citizenship are suing Iran for its part in supporting the deadly attack on Israel. The victims include those who were killed, injured or suffered mental anguish due to the massacre.

The lawsuit, filed on Sunday in U.S. District Court in Washington, seeks compensatory damages under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act and Anti-Terrorism Act, the New York Times reported. It names Hamas, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which all appear on the U.S. list of designated foreign terrorist organizations.

Forty-six American citizens, including children, were killed on October 7, 2023. Some 12 Americans were also among the 250 people taken hostage by Hamas. Seven of them still remain in captivity, at least three who are believed to be dead. More than 30 American

Israeli citizens serving in the IDF have been killed in Gaza, and some of their families also are parties to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit cites Hamas documents discovered in Gaza, as well as documents obtained by the Americans' lawyers regarding a secret meeting of Hamas leaders in December 2022, in which Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar requests an additional \$7 million a month from the Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps for the "big project," referring to the October 7 attack, according to the New York Times, which reviewed the documents.

The lawsuit was filed by several lawyers, including Lee Wolosky, and Gary M. Osen, who once represented Nazi victims. Lawsuits are frequently filed against Iran in U.S. courts, and the cases are often won via default judgments.

11.18.24 – Mo

IDF hits Beirut as response stalls till Tuesday, seeking clarification on US role

11.18.24 – Mo

Lebanon agrees to US cease-fire proposal, says Hezbollah submits response
Lebanese media says Beirut's response, to be delivered to U. S. envoy Amos Hochstein, will include demands for changes and clarification on American assurances to Israel that it can operate against Hezbollah violations of the deal
Itamar Eichner, Lior Ben Ari|00:59

Hezbollah submitted its response to the cease-fire proposal presented by U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein Lebanon's LBCI channel reported late on Sunday. Hochstein is due to arrive in Beirut as early as Tuesday and receive the official Lebanese position.

According to the report, Beirut accepts the outline of the deal but will introduce changes and demand clarifications regarding U.S. assurance to Israel that the IDF would be able to operate in Lebanon should the terms of the cease-fire agreement be violated. Beirut rejects any Israeli operations on its territory.

Israel requested a letter from the U.S. ensuring freedom of action against Hezbollah if the Lebanese army or the peacekeeping force that would be deployed to the south fail to respond.

If there is progress on an agreement, Hochstein is expected to travel to Israel after his visit to Beirut. According to senior officials who were privy to details of the negotiations, Iran was not expected to prevent Lebanon from agreeing to the cease-fire. "Iran wants to calm things down. They are playing the long game. To them, there is no problem reaching a deal," the officials said.

Saudi Arabia's Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper cited sources in Lebanon who said that the speaker of parliament, Nabih Berri, kept in touch with Hochstein and his team. "There is serious concern that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will ultimately reject the deal."

Israel has increased its attacks on Beirut, and on Sunday conducted attacks strikes outside the Dahieh neighborhood, Hezbollah's stronghold in the city. An Israeli official said the attacks are "a symptom of attempts to finalize the deal."

The IDF confirmed on Monday that it targeted Hezbollah's spokesperson Mohammad Afif.

Lebanese media said the target of a later attack was a senior Hezbollah commander of South Lebanon.

11.17.24 – Su

Hostage fate sealed if deal not made; Hamas demand withdraw of all troops

11.17.24 – Su

Israeli security chiefs warn hostages fate sealed if deal not made

Shin, Bet, Mossad, IDF heads say without Israeli concessions talks of a deal cannot restart; Netanyahu summons ministers including far-right opponents of any deal that would end the war, for consultations

Itamar Eichner|15:42

Israel's top security officials believe there is a need for flexibility in Israel's positions on a possible withdrawal of troops from Gaza and an end to the war, if a hostage deal is to be achieved.

Israel has been attempting to re-start negotiations after they have been stalled and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is summoning a consultation on the matter with members of his cabinet including Defense Minister Israel Katz, Foreign Minister Gideon Saar, Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. The last two have been vocal opponents of any deal that would end the war and have threatened to bring down the government if one was made.

The security officials estimate that of the 101 hostages held in Gaza for over 400 days, only 51 are still alive. They advised the prime minister that if there would be no Israeli concessions, there would be no deal to release them, leaving them to their fate.

The renewed efforts come most likely, as winter approached and amid fears that more hostages will die in the tunnels. The efforts are also as the result of regional developments and the election of Donald Trump for a second term as president of the United States.

Israel must first decide its position understanding that Hamas will not agree to a deal that would not end the war and include a full withdrawal of troops.

Although Qatar announced it was backing away from mediating between Israel and Hamas, it is still involved behind the scene. Egypt is also actively involved and Israel would have to decide whether to allow Turkey to also be involved in the talks.

11.17.24 – Su

Confirmed; 5 arrested in late October leaked classified documents to foreign media

11.17.24 – Su

How Netanyahu aid leaked misinformation in security breach

Court lifts ban on suspicions of prime minister's aid and spokesperson's use of classified documents obtained illegally, leaked to German Bild to sway public opinion, while endangering security

Netael Bandel, Meir Turgeman|14:41

The magistrate court in Rison Letzion on Sunday lifted some of the gag order on the case involving a possible security breach by a close aid to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Eli Feldstein, who was Netanyahu's liaison to military security reporters was in custody for the past three weeks, suspected of leaking classified documents to foreign media outlets, in a misleading way and endangering national security.

Although he was not given security clearance, Feldstein accompanied Netanyahu on visits to sensitive security facilities during the war, including the Air Force command bunker at the IDF's Tel Aviv military headquarters and was even exposed to classified transcripts from meetings held by the Security Cabinet.

According to court filings, in April a reserve soldier serving in a secret intelligence unit gave Feldstein a copy of a classified document via social media, "so that it would reach the prime minister and assist him in making the right decisions for the hostages."

On August 31, six hostages were executed by Hamas in a tunnel in Rafah. They were Hirsh Goldberg-Polin, Eden Yerushalmi, Ori Danino, Almog Sarusi, Carmel Gat and Alex Lubanov. The brutal murder caused outrage in Israel and prompted a wave of protest against the government and Netanyahu for failing to secure the release of hostages in a deal with Hamas and saving at least some who were to be released in the first phase of the deal that was being negotiated at the time.

Therefore, early in September, Feldstein decided to release the document to the Israeli media in order to sway public opinion and portray the protests of the families of hostages, against the government, that had been taking place for the past year, as bolstering Hamas and its leader Yahya Sinwar.

Feldstein approached a number of Israeli media outlets. One reporter submitted the document to the military censor who banned its publication.

Feldstein then decided to bypass the censor and gave the document to the foreign media. He was assisted by another person to bring the document to publication in the German Bild newspaper. At the same time, he informed Israeli journalists that the story will be published as asked them to do a follow-up report.

On September 6 the Bild published a report dealing with the Hamas positions in negotiations to free the hostages, and used documents obtained illegally from IDF intelligence. A few days later, the military launched an investigation into the leak of documents, at the request of Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi.

The military found that a document that was sensitive and classified as "top secret," was leaked and its publication, the investigators said could harm efforts to achieve the release of hostages which is one of the objectives of the war and could damage IDF and Shin Bet operations in Gaza.

Feldstein who saw that the validity of the report in the Bild was under question, met the reserve soldier in the intelligence unit and received a hardcopy of the document and two other documents classified as "top secret." One of the documents dealt with "unusual actions by players in the region at time of war, that could be suspected as targeting Israel."

A joint IDF and Shin Bet investigation led to the leaks being stopped and prevented damage to Israel's security. After the source of the leak was found, further intelligence gathered by investigators, strengthened suspicions against others who were involved.

The reserve soldier, two officers and a non-commissioned officer along with Feldstein were arrested late in October and the investigation became public knowledge. Netanyahu who at first denied Feldstein was part of the Prime Minister's office later criticized the Shin Bet and the police for mistreating Feldstein and the other suspects who were prevented from seeing council in the first weeks of their detention. His son Yair, who is active on social media even accused the Shin Bet of staging a coup against his father.

11.17.24 – Su

US envoy Hochstein to advance Lebanon's response Tuesday; expectations are low

11.17.24 – Su

Hochstein to return to region to advance cease-fire deal, report

The U.S. envoy is expected in Beirut on Tuesday to receive Lebanon's response and deliver it to Israel, according to reports in Saudi press; Sources tell outlet expectations are not high and Iran has yet to weigh in

Lior Ben Ari|12:30

U.S. special envoy Amos Hochstein is expected to return to the region on Tuesday for meetings in Beirut, after Hezbollah responded to the proposed cease-fire agreement presented to the Lebanese government last week.

According to the Saudi Al Hadath channel, Hochstein will deliver the response to Israeli officials. The outlet said that expectations that a deal to end the fighting and return residents of Israel's north to their homes, are low because the official Lebanese response does not have the blessing of Iran.

"The wording of the cease-fire agreement is good but indicates that Israel emerges victorious and that will not be accepted. According to Hezbollah, the American proposal requires serious and prolonged discussions and could be a basis for an agreement," sources told Al Hadath.

According to the outline agreed by Israel and the U.S. the main terms of the emerging arrangement include Hezbollah's withdrawal north of the Litani River, deployment of the Lebanese army in the country's south and prevention of weapons smuggling and deliveries from Syria.

Israel also insisted on assurances in a side document to be attached to the deal, that would ensure the IDF would be able to operate inside Lebanon if the terms of the agreement are violated by Hezbollah and the Lebanese army or the international peace keepers do not take measures to stop them.

Lebanon has said they would not agree to any Israeli military action in its territory and insisted that there would be no additions to the 2006 UN resolution 1701 which Hezbollah ignored.

11.17.24 – Su

Netanyahu & Mossad meet about 101 hostages; efforts for direct negotiations

11.17.24 – Su

Netanyahu, Mossad chief to meeting about 101 remaining hostages

Amid Mossad Chief David Barnea's efforts to spearhead Israeli initiatives to reignite negotiations for a deal with Hamas, a critical discussion will be held on the fate of the 101 hostages who have been in Hamas captivity for 408 days

Itamar Eichner|09:51

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Mossad Chief David Barnea will meet on Sunday for consultations on the 101 hostages held by Hamas for 408 days. Barnea will lead the meeting against the backdrop of his efforts to jumpstart negotiations, bypassing intermediary states.

So far, Hamas has rejected all proposals for a hostage deal and remains adamant about its demands for a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and a total cease-fire.

Ahead of International Children's Day this week, the Hostages and Missing Families Forum dedicated a rally held Saturday in Tel Aviv to the children affected by the ongoing crisis. The event honored those who have returned from captivity, those still awaiting the

return of their parents, and especially the two young Bibas siblings, Ariel and Kfir, who remain in Hamas captivity.

Ofri Bibas Levy, the aunt of Ariel and Kfir, spoke at the rally: "I want to cry on your behalf the way children shout, 'It's not fair.' It's not fair that all the other children have returned, but you are still there. It's not fair that you 'celebrated' holidays and birthdays in captivity. It's not fair that you haven't jumped in puddles, gone to the pool, or played at the beach. It's not fair that you didn't start preschool.

"It's not fair that you haven't hugged your father, Yarden, for 407 days. It's not fair that you've had to be strong for your mom, Shiri. It's not fair that you lost your grandparents, Yossi and Margit. It's not fair that you said goodbye to your dad in a shelter, witnessing and enduring things no child in the world should ever experience."

Avital Dekel Chen, the wife of hostage Sagiv Dekel Chen, also shared her emotional story: "Last week, I took my daughters on a three-day vacation. Amid all this pain, I must create moments of joy for them. In one store, my 7-year-old daughter, Bar, came to me and said, 'Mom, look, I found a little chair. Maybe you can buy it for me so I'll have something to sit on at the rallies?'

"A 7-year-old who wants a chair for rallies calling for her father's release, as he waits in Hamas tunnels. And if that's not heartbreaking enough, my 3-year-old daughter, Gali, hums every day with a half-smile, 'Everyone, now.' A 3-year-old singing about redeeming hostages for her father.

"So, for anyone who still doesn't understand my reality: I am at war. One war is for the return of Sagiv, the love of my life since I was 14 and the father of my children. The second war is for the souls of my daughters."

11.17.24 – Su

Herzog not attending climate conference: Turkey refused Zion plane in its airspace

11.17.24 – Su

The real reason Herzog isn't going to the climate conference: Turkey refused to let plane carrying Herzog in its airspace

President's office said in official statement that trip to COP29 was canceled for 'security reasons,' but host Azerbaijan says the real reason is that Turkey refused to allow the Wing of Zion plane to pass through its airspace

Itamar Eichner|02:57

A news website from Azerbaijan that is considered the mouthpiece of the government claims that the real reason President Isaac Herzog canceled his visit to the climate conference in Baku is Turkey's refusal to allow Herzog's plane to fly in its airspace on the way to the meeting. Azeri officials confirmed the veracity of the local media report to Ynet.

Herzog was supposed to arrive in Baku on Tuesday for a visit of only a few hours, and Ynet learned that the flight to Azerbaijan was planned to be made on the country's official Wing of Zion plane. On Saturday night, the president's office announced that "in light of the situation assessment and for security reasons, the president of the country decided to cancel his trip to the climate conference in Azerbaijan." Israeli officials stated that it was due to security alerts.

The Azeris did not like the way Israel framed the decision, and a senior official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan told the Caliber News website that the reason for Herzog's cancellation was not at all related to security, but to the ban imposed by Turkey on allowing the plane carrying Herzog to use its airspace.

"Unfortunately, intensive negotiations through diplomatic channels that lasted for several days did not yield results. Azerbaijan provides has created appropriate conditions for the participation of all parties in the climate conference, but the situation surrounding the Israeli president's visit arose for reasons beyond our country's control," the source added.

According to him, in Azerbaijan - which has repeatedly hosted major regional and global events such as the Eurovision song contest - a high level of security is guaranteed. "It is not an exaggeration to say that Baku is one of the safest cities in the world," the source claimed. "This is confirmed by the fact that a large number of Israeli officials have come to Azerbaijan, including President Herzog himself, who visited Baku on May 30 of this year. Prime Minister Netanyahu also came to Azerbaijan for a one-day visit in 2016."

He noted that "unprecedented security measures are also being taken in preparation for the conference in connection with the arrival of tens of thousands of guests and about 100 world leaders and heads of high-ranking delegations to the country."

The Azeris were apparently offended by the Israeli report on the reason for the cancellation, and tried through diplomatic contacts to change its framing. Israeli ministers who arrived in Baku did so on commercial flights through Georgia. It is not clear why Herzog did not choose a similar route, but decided to fly on the Wing of Zion.

11.17.24 – Su

3 arrested firing flares at Netanyahu's home; this is not a protest - this is terrorism

11.17.24 – Su

3 arrested for firing flares at Netanyahu's home

Suspects, including a reserve officer active in the protest effort, transferred to joint investigation by the Shim Bet and Israel Police for firing at least two flares at prime minister's Caesarea home, which landed on the property; The prime minister and members of his family were not home at the time

Eitan Glickman , Yoav Zitun|01:13

Three suspects have been arrested in connection with firing two flares at the Caesarea home of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday night, the Israel Police and Shin Bet announced Sunday morning. The three suspects were transferred to a joint investigation by the Shin Bet and Lahav Unit 433 of the Israel Police, which said in a statement that "more details will be provided later, depending on the progress of the investigation."

The three are known activists in the protest against the prime minister, including a lieutenant colonel in the reserves who is considered one of the leaders of the protest in Caesarea. A gag order was placed on the identities of the suspects. An attorney working with the protest movement claims that the suspects have been denied a meeting with a lawyer.

On Saturday night, police officers carried out searches in Caesarea, after the flares were fired around 7:30 p.m., allegedly from the direction of the sea. The prime minister and his family members were not home at the time of the incident.

The flares that were fired are used as a distress signal when sailing at sea, and were apparently fired at Netanyahu's house in Caesarea from the dunes near the beach in the city. In the footage from a security camera from the scene, one of the flares appears to hit the area of a security post in the courtyard of the prime minister's house.

Saturday night's incident is not the first in which flares have been fired at demonstrations. A week ago, the Jerusalem Police arrested a suspect for involvement in launching flares at the Prime Minister's residence on Gaza Street during a protest in the area. "It was just like on a soccer field, orange smoke that landed in the yard of the Netanyahu family. The family members were not here, but it was definitely something we did not expect to see, certainly not after the drone shot from Lebanon that hit the front of the house. It's stressful," a neighbor said.

Another nearby Netanyahu neighbor said that "the prime minister and his family members were not at home at the time of the incident. "Long before the drone struck the house, they stopped coming here, but this is still a worrying escalation. It's scary, and I hope they capture the culprits who fired the flares."

Last month, a drone launched from Lebanon struck the Netanyahus' home, breaking a window.

The incident took place precisely after this week the group Moked Caesarea, which led the demonstrations in front of the Prime Minister's private home for five years, announced the end of the demonstrations there and the transfer of the protest to Jerusalem. The decision was made, according to the group, because "the time has come to step up," after they demonstrated in front of the house in Caesarea three times a week - protests that were often accompanied by arguments and even confrontations with the police, which led to arrests and severe violence.

The incident was condemned from all sides in the political system, and President Isaac Herzog said afterwards that he had spoken with the head of the Shin Bet. He called the incident "a highly dangerous event, which I strongly condemn. I have just spoken with

the Shin Bet chief and emphasized the urgent need to investigate and address those responsible as quickly as possible."

Herzog stressed that this represents "a dangerous escalation and noted that the investigation is being carried out with the utmost seriousness. We must not let these flames escalate. I continue to warn against the rise of violence among the public — this is a matter of our very survival."

In a post on X, Israel's new Defense Minister Israel Katz said that the incident has crossed all the "red lines."

"It is not possible for the Prime Minister of Israel, who is threatened by Iran and its proxies who are trying to assassinate him, to be subject to the same threats from home," Katz said in the X post.

The chairman of the national unity party, Benny Gantz, who first condemned the firing of the flares on Saturday night, commented on Sunday morning that the three arrested are anti-government protest activists and posted on the X platform: "If indeed the suspicions are true and the protest activists are behind the firing of the flares at the Prime Minister's house, we should say unequivocally: this is not a protest - this is terrorism."

According to Gantz, "Although I deeply disagree with Netanyahu and often criticize him, and although I have no doubt that the people need to re-elect their leaders, in recent months I repeated and said even when there were those who attacked me for it - Netanyahu is not a murderer and is not an enemy, one should demonstrate against him and the government only according to the law. This is the position of the absolute majority of those who oppose this government. In view of the recent events, every public leader, including the leaders of the protests, should say it outright."

In his response to the case, Justice Minister Yariv Levin called for renewed promotion of the judicial overhaul. "The time has come for full backing to be given to the restoration of the justice system and the law enforcement systems," said Levin, who also serves as Deputy Prime Minister. "There was no need for flares to be fired at the Prime Minister's house, to understand the seriousness of the rampant violence and the refusal on the part of those who are trying to dismantle the country from within."

11.16.24 – Sa

Hezbollah-Israel conflict disrupts Syria's lucrative Captagon drug smuggling trade

11.16.24 – Sa

Hezbollah-Israel conflict disrupts Syria's lucrative Captagon trade

Syria's reliance on Captagon smuggling faces new challenges as the ongoing conflict with Hezbollah threatens to undermine critical revenues for the Assad regime

The Media Line|15:21

Syria's illegal drug trade, a critical economic pillar for President Bashar Assad's regime, is under threat as the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hezbollah disrupts the production and smuggling of Captagon, an illicit stimulant wildly popular across the

Middle East. The weakening of Hezbollah, a key ally and facilitator in the drug industry, could lead to significant economic repercussions for the Syrian government.

The role of Captagon in Syria's economy

Captagon, a brand name for the synthetic stimulant fenethylamine, has become a major source of revenue for Syria. The country is currently the world's largest producer of Captagon, with Syrian drug trafficking reaching nearly three times the value of the combined drug trade of Mexican cartels, according to Syrian economic journalist Samir Tawil.

“The war in Syria has drained many economic resources, leading the regime to seek alternative funding,” Tawil told The Media Line. “Drugs of all kinds have become the most important economic resource for the Syrian regime and Hezbollah over the past 10 years.”

Sanctions and key figures in the drug trade

In March of last year, the UK, the US, and the European Union imposed sanctions on individuals suspected of involvement in the Captagon trade, including two of Assad's cousins. The Syrian regime, along with Hezbollah—the Lebanese group closely intertwined with the regime—is believed to rely on drug sales to fund military actions.

According to the UK, Assad earns around \$60 billion annually from drug revenue. During the announcement of its sanctions, the UK asserted that the Syrian regime “plays a central role in the drug trade, with shipments worth billions of dollars leaving regime-controlled strongholds like the port of Latakia.”

The 4th Armored Division and Hezbollah's involvement

The drug trade in Syria is overseen by high-ranking officials and military units, notably the 4th Armored Division led by Maher Assad, the president's brother, and his deputy Ghassan Bilal. Both have been implicated in facilitating drug production and smuggling.

In 2021, during the trial of Hassan Muhammad Daqou, a Syrian-Lebanese drug trafficker known as the “King of Captagon,” evidence emerged of conversations between Daqou and Bilal discussing smuggling drugs across the Syria-Lebanon border.

A source within the 4th Armored Division, speaking on condition of anonymity, revealed that most soldiers are involved in the drug trade. “The highest authorities provide security cover for those involved, in exchange for absolute loyalty to the Syrian regime,” the source said.

Hezbollah's global drug operations

Hezbollah's involvement in drug trafficking extends beyond the Middle East. In 2002, the arrest of Lebanese citizen Asaad Barakat in Brazil on tax evasion charges unveiled his role in raising funds for Hezbollah through drug trafficking in Latin America. Subsequent arrests included Nemer Zaiter in 2008 for attempting to smuggle cocaine into the US and Hamza Barakat in 2013 for founding a fraud and smuggling network.

Dozens more have been arrested on similar charges, highlighting Hezbollah's global network for funding through illicit means.

Iran's financial support to Hezbollah

Hezbollah has long relied on financial and military support from Iran. In the 1980s, Iran provided \$100 million annually, increasing to \$200 million by 2005 and \$300 million from 2006 to 2009. Despite fluctuations due to sanctions and oil prices, recent years have seen Iran's support stabilize around \$700 million annually, especially after sanctions were lifted during the presidencies of Barack Obama and Joe Biden.

The Israeli assassination of Syrian businessman Baraa Qatirji on July 15 revealed his involvement in transporting funds from Iran to Hezbollah. Funds were moved by the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) through oil and cash shipments to Syria, sold to a company called "BS" owned by Qatirji, with proceeds transferred to Hezbollah.

Mustafa Al-Naimi, an expert on Iranian affairs, told The Media Line that Hezbollah receives not only financial but also military support from Iran, with members undergoing training in Iran and Syria. He noted that Hezbollah is currently facing significant setbacks due to the loss of fighters in the war with Israel and the disruption of financial routes from Iran via Syria.

The Al-Qard Al-Hassan Association

Another key financial arm of Hezbollah is the Al-Qard Al-Hassan Association, founded in 1982 with over 30 branches in Lebanon. Operating outside the supervision of Lebanon's central bank, it is on Israel's terrorist list, according to The New York Times. Adam Smith, former Senior Advisor to the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), described the association as a "state within a state" in Lebanon and a primary source of Hezbollah's funding. The US Treasury imposed sanctions on Al-Qard Al-Hassan in 2007 and expanded them in 2021 to include six employees who funneled over \$500 million through Lebanese banks.

US Legislative Actions Against the Captagon Trade

In December 2022, US President Joe Biden signed the "Captagon Act," declaring Syria's involvement in the drug trade a national security threat. The law targets networks involved in Captagon production and trafficking linked to the Assad regime. Subsequent legislation specifically targeted members of Assad's family, including Maher Assad and figures from the 4th Armored Division.

Impact of the Israel-Hezbollah war on drug trafficking

The recent conflict between Israel and Hezbollah has significantly disrupted drug smuggling operations. Jordan and Saudi Arabia have reported a notable decline in drug seizures at their borders over the past month compared to previous years.

Political analyst Wael Khalidi noted that drug smuggling is a primary topic in meetings between Jordanian and Syrian officials. "The last month has seen economic stagnation in the Syrian regime due to the decline in Captagon smuggling, caused by the war between Israel and Hezbollah," Khalidi told The Media Line.

Residents in Damascus have observed a shortage of Captagon supplies, with dealers attributing the disruption to Hezbollah's involvement in the conflict. Ahmad M., a local resident, said that drug users are having trouble getting their fix due to decreased supply.

Calls for international action

Khalidi urges stronger international efforts to combat the drug trade originating from Syria. "Drugs are not difficult to smuggle from Syria to Washington," he warned. "The smuggling networks are highly trained and operate in the interests of Hezbollah and Assad."

He emphasizes that leniency shown to Syria, including its reintegration into the Arab League and trade deals under the guise of humanitarian aid, has facilitated the drug trade, especially through the port of Latakia. Entire generations are being lost due to drugs, whether through addiction or trafficking, Khalidi said.

The story is written by Rizik Alabi and reprinted with permission from The Media Line.

11.16.24 – Sa

Hezbollah rocket hits Haifa synagogue, as IDF hit Beirut in eight waves

11.16.24 – Sa

Rocket hits Haifa synagogue after Hezbollah salvo

IDF says only some of the munitions were intercepted with at least 10 being launched; fall causes damages, injury as a result of running for shelter

Lior El-Hai, Yoav Zitun|12:40

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit reported on Saturday that Hezbollah fired at least 10 rockets toward Haifa with only some of them being intercepted by the Iron Dome. The hit damaged the local "Avot U'Banim" synagogue in the city

According to the Magen David Adom emergency service, one woman was injured while running for shelter before a rocket hit the Merkaz HaCarmel neighborhood in the city, where vehicles were set on fire as a result.

Reports suggested another hit was seen in another part of the city, with no reports of injuries or damages. Israel's National Rescue and Fire Authority said a vehicle caught fire in one scene, causing damage to several buildings found nearby.

"At this time, there are no reports of trapped individuals or wounded, but firefighters on the scene alongside medical teams and the Israel Police continue searching in order to rule out victims," the authority said in a statement.

The barrage comes following an intense day of fighting against the Iran-backed terror group, with the IDF bombarding Hezbollah's stronghold in Lebanon's capital in eight strike waves throughout the day.

Lebanese reports indicated that Israeli airstrikes have intensified in Dahieh, with multiple hits reported within minutes of each other. Local media has claimed that the scope of the destruction in the southern Beirut suburb is reminiscent of the 2006 Lebanon War.

11.16.24 – Sa

Israel pounds Hezbollah stronghold in Beirut with relentless bombardment

11.16.24 – Sa

Israel pounds Hezbollah stronghold in Beirut with relentless bombardment

Lebanese media reports eight waves of attack on Dahieh district, with multiple hits reported within minutes of each other; further strikes reported in southern Lebanon as IDF advances deeper into Lebanese territory; Islamic Jihad confirms commanders killed in Syria strikes

Yoav Zitun, Lior Ben Ari, Einav Halabi, AFP|09:17

The IDF has carried out eight waves of airstrikes in Beirut's Dahieh district throughout Saturday, according to Hezbollah-affiliated media, as Israel ramps up its attacks on the Hezbollah stronghold. This comes in the backdrop of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terror group confirming two of their commanders were eliminated in a strike near Damascus that took place on Thursday.

Lebanese reports indicated that Israeli airstrikes have intensified in Dahieh, with multiple hits reported within minutes of each other. Local media has claimed that the scope of the destruction in the southern Beirut suburb is reminiscent of the 2006 Lebanon War. Strikes in Hezbollah stronghold in Beirut

Meanwhile, Lebanese media reported civilian casualties from strikes in various locations. Seven people, including five children, were reportedly killed in an attack on the village of Al-Kharbatha in the Bekaa Valley. In Nabatieh, the death toll from a separate strike rose to five. In Tyre, an airstrike targeting a motorcyclist killed one person and injured another.

In a statement, IDF Arabic-language spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee urged residents of 15 villages in southern Lebanon, many of whom have already fled, to evacuate immediately. Adraee warned that the IDF would target areas used by Hezbollah for military operations.

At noon, the IDF confirmed additional strikes on southern Lebanon, including rocket launch sites used for attacks on Israel. Over the past day, Israel has attacked more than 160 targets in Lebanon and Gaza, including weapons depots, command centers and launchers, the military said.

The Lebanese National News Agency claimed that Israeli forces seized a strategic hill in the village of Shaam, five kilometers from the border, before allegedly destroying a shrine and several homes and later withdrawing. The IDF did not confirm the report. These developments come as Israel pushes deeper into southern Lebanon, with ground forces reportedly advancing to the second line of villages along the border. According to Lebanese media, a fire fight occurred at the farthest point reached by Israeli troops in six weeks of ground operations.

Meanwhile, rocket fire from Lebanon continued, with the IDF reporting over 35 launches toward northern Israel, including Safed and the Haifa Bay area. Most rockets fell in

unpopulated areas or were intercepted. Damage was reported to agricultural structures near Tamra, where livestock were killed and vehicles damaged. Following the intense fighting in Lebanon, two senior Islamic Jihad figures were killed in an Israeli strike on Syria on Thursday, a source from the Palestinian terror group which has fought against Israel in Gaza alongside Hamas told AFP on Saturday.

The source said that Abdel Aziz Minawi, a member of Islamic Jihad's political bureau, and the group's foreign relations chief Rasmi Abu Issa were killed in the strike on Qudsaya, in the Damascus area.

The strike that took place on Thursday targeted military complexes and Islamic Jihad headquarters at several locations in Damascus and the surrounding countryside. Official Syrian news agency SANA reported of a strike in the Mazzeh neighborhood and later in Qudsaya. The Syrian Defense Ministry reported 15 fatalities and 16 injuries following the strikes.

"Air Force fighter jets, under the direction of IDF Northern Command, struck multiple military structures and Islamic Jihad headquarters in Syria," The IDF Spokesperson's Unit reported shortly after the strike.

"The strike dealt a significant blow to the organization's headquarters and its operatives. The Islamic Jihad, led by its heads outside the Gaza Strip, carried out the deadly October 7 attack alongside Hamas and has been orchestrating terror activities against the State of Israel since," it added.

Israeli strikes in Damascus

According to the Syrian Defense Ministry's official statement released on Thursday, "At around 3:20 p.m., Israel targeted residential buildings in the Mazzeh neighborhood and the Qudsaya area in rural Damascus. Fifteen were killed and 16 were injured

According to the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor, the strikes on Thursday in and around Damascus killed 23 people.

SANA noted that the strike targeted two residential buildings, while the opposition-affiliated Syrian news site Voice of the Capital reported an apartment was hit in the area. According to reports, the attack took place while Ali Larijani, an advisor to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, was visiting Damascus on a "special political mission," as reported by the Hezbollah-affiliated Al-Mayadeen outlet.

11.16.24 – Sa

Lebanese media mirrors Hezbollah's reluctance to accept cease-fire with Israel

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Lebanese media mirrors Hezbollah's reluctance to accept cease-fire with Israel

Hezbollah mouthpiece Al-Akhbar squarely rejects Israeli terms, rejecting proposals to involve Lebanese Army in disarming Hezbollah or allow Israel 'operational freedom' under self-defense clause, calling it cover for further aggression

Lior Ben Ari|06:33

Lebanese media aligned with Hezbollah voiced skepticism Saturday over the prospects of a cease-fire agreement with Israel, reflecting the terrorist group's reluctance to accept the terms under discussion.

The Lebanese daily Al-Akhbar, known for its ties to Hezbollah, published multiple articles suggesting pessimism over the likelihood of a deal. Sources told the paper that despite ongoing talks, there is little optimism in Lebanon about reaching an agreement.

One article by editor Ibrahim al-Amine dismissed Israel's conditions for a cease-fire, accusing it of seeking to dictate terms to Lebanon. "Israel wants the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL to achieve what it failed to accomplish militarily—disarming Hezbollah operatives south of the Litani River," he wrote, adding, "Surrendering to the enemy's demands, directly or indirectly, is not an option that aligns with the sacrifices made." Another article by Al-Akhbar columnist Yehia Dbouk alleged that Israel seeks a formal agreement to legitimize further strikes. "There will be no cease-fire dictated by Israel, which is in no position to impose terms," the article read, criticizing key elements of the cease-fire proposal and suggesting that assigning the Lebanese Army the task of dismantling Hezbollah's infrastructure south of the Litani River would effectively turn it into an "Israeli proxy."

Concerns were also raised over provisions allowing Israel to act in "self-defense," which the writer argues would legitimize Israeli cross-border operations, including assassinations, abductions and attacks under the guise of security needs.

The London-based Asharq Al-Awsat highlighted fears in Lebanon that this clause might grant Israel the "operational freedom" it has sought, a point that has already faced opposition in Beirut.

IDF strikes Beirut's Dahieh

The Lebanese daily Al-Joumhouria reported that while Hezbollah has refrained from public statements, its priority remains halting Israeli strikes. "Hezbollah's stance is that Israel should not gain politically what it failed to achieve militarily," the paper said. It added that Hezbollah lacks trust in the United States, which it views as a partner in Israeli attacks, and opposes rushing into cease-fire agreements that could lead to further Israeli demands.

In contrast, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, who negotiates on Hezbollah's behalf, struck a more optimistic tone. "The atmosphere is positive, and the work is progressing well," Berri told Al-Joumhouria.

According to the Wall Street Journal, U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has approved a cease-fire framework aimed at ending the northern conflict. Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer reportedly presented the proposal to Trump during a meeting this week, with Trump expressing hope that the plan could be implemented before his inauguration on January 20.

On Thursday, the U.S. presented Lebanon with the draft cease-fire agreement developed in coordination with Israel. President Joe Biden's special envoy to the region Amos Hochstein reportedly warned Lebanese leaders that he would not return to Beirut unless

they demonstrated **readiness to finalize the agreement**. Hochstein delivered the draft to Prime Minister Najib Mikati and Speaker Berri.

11.16.24 – Sa

Iran and Qatar behind South Africa's World Court case against Israel

11.16.24 – Sa

Iran and Qatar behind South Africa's World Court case against Israel, report claims Report alleges foreign financial and political support in 'genocide' case against Israel; ruling ANC, near bankruptcy, reportedly received major donation from foreign states after filing claim in December

Daniel Edelson, New York|04:23

A new report by the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) alleges **financial and political involvement by Iran and Qatar in South Africa's December 2023 case** at the International Criminal Court (ICC) accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza.

According to the New York-based ISGAP, **South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC), which was nearing bankruptcy, received substantial donations** from the two nations **just days after filing the ICC claim.**

South African Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola attended the swearing-in of Iranian President Masoud Pezkhian **in Tehran last July**, the report states. During the visit, Lamola met with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri, who **praised him for advancing the ICC case**. Bagheri called Lamola "an innovative diplomat" and reiterated **Iran's full support for South Africa's role in the legal effort.**

The report estimates that initiating an **ICC case requires** approximately **\$10.5 million**, with total **legal costs reaching \$79 million**, necessitating a **complex network of international legal experts**. ISGAP concludes that **such costs suggest significant external funding.**

Rumors of **Iranian involvement** have **circulated in South Africa**, particularly among opposition leaders. However, ANC officials, including President Cyril Ramaphosa, have refused to disclose the **origins of a mysterious donation that helped the party recover from nearly \$30 million in debt just before filing the case.**

ISGAP also highlighted a **surge in trade between South Africa and Qatar**, which **grew from \$307 million to nearly \$1 billion over the past decade**, indicating strengthened economic ties. The report suggests Iran views South Africa as a strategic hub to bypass Western sanctions and leverage **access to sensitive technologies like satellite interception, hacking and missile guidance.**

In exchange, **South Africa has supported Iran's inclusion in the BRICS economic bloc, granting Tehran access to international funding despite U.S. sanctions.**

The report further notes that 45 of the 574 citations in South Africa's ICC filing came from organizations openly critical of Israel. This raises questions about the case's credibility, ISGAP argues.

Among the cited sources is Al-Haq, an NGO designated as a terror organization by Israel, though this classification has been rejected by the U.S. and Europe.

Another is the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, led by Raji Sourani, who previously served prison time in Israel for membership in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which is designated as a terror organization by Israel, the U.S., the UK, the EU, Canada, Australia and Japan

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Ynet-News, November 15, 2024 – Friday Full Moon 8th Month

11.15.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday Full Moon 3:29pm
Jared Kushner poised to steer Trump's Middle East agenda behind the scenes

11.15.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday Full Moon 3:29pm
Israel strikes Lebanon children's TV, shaping culture rituals in young audiences

11.15.24 – Fr- - - News Placed in November 15 spot – Friday Full Moon 3:29pm
French leaders appeal court to ban Israel from future Paris Air show

11.15.24 – Fr- - - News – Friday Full Moon 3:29pm
Trump approved outline; yet Lebanon demands IDF removal on land, air & sea

11.14.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday
Decrease in rocket fire as Lebanon's casualties and devastation exceed \$8 billion

11.14.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday
Knesset reject call to sideline Netanyahu during trial testimony in ongoing war

11.14.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday
Israel strikes Damascus during Iran official visit; two building hit in strike

11.14.24 – Th- - - News – Thursday
Hezbollah, Beirut leaders, join in terms; withdrawal north, UN force, weapons import

11.14.24 – Th- - - News Placed in November 14 spot – Thursday
Israel plans Lebanon cease-fire; involves remove Russia blacklists and sanctions

11.13.24 – We- - - News Placed in November 13 spot – Wednesday
Israel strikes key weapons transfer routes between Syria and Lebanon

11.13.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Israeli Navy joined ground forces in several deadly strikes on Hezbollah

11.13.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

Israel Knesset may vote next week on final draft for Lebanon cease-fire

11.13.24 – We- - - News – Wednesday

FBI arrests CIA agent sharing documents detailing Israel preparing attack on Iran

11.12.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Biden may sanction Ben-Gvir before leaving; to urge sanctions around the world

11.12.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Next US ambassador to Israel: Mike Huckabee says Israel should control West Bank

11.12.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Kissufim crossing opens to deliver aid to Gaza, angering kibbutz residents

11.12.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

IDF expect weeks to clear North Gaza, where terrorists & commanders converged

11.12.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

IDF strikes Hezbollah stronghold in Beirut, brings down high-rise building

11.12.24 – Tu- - - News Placed in November 12 spot – Tuesday

Mossad confirms intel of terror plot to attack Israelis in Thailand Full Moon party

11.12.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Israel seizes millions from PA Martyrs Fund to compensate Nova victims

11.12.24 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Drone crashes on pre-school yard in Haifa; kids taken to shelter before UAV hit

11.11.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Families of hostages tell thousands of Jews at DC rally its time for deal to end war

11.11.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Smotrich prepares for West Bank annexation; Gantz rants on budget & draft

11.11.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

100+ rockets to Galilee, Haifa area, day after Katz declared Israel defeated Hezbollah

11.11.24 – Mo- - - News Placed in November 11 spot – Monday

Arab Riyadh summit unanimously condemn Israel; call for PA state by UN

11.11.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

50 rockets into Karmiel, as IDF tell villages to leave; Hezbollah not aware of deals

11.11.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Coup against PM, made to distract investigation of Shin Bet release of prisoners

11.11.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

IDF ban all commercial or private boats along Israel coastline south of Haifa -(weather)

11.11.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

US, Britain strike Yemen Houthis & IDF intercepts 4 Iran missiles

11.11.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Progress in Israel-Lebanon deal requiring Hezbollah move north of the Litani River

11.11.24 – Mo- - - News – Monday

IDF destroys Hezbollah complex under South Lebanon cemetery in 'special operation'

11.11.24 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Israel strike on Damascus hit Hezbollah member in charge of Golan Heights

11.11.24 – Su- - - News – Sunday

D9 bulldozers lead combat teams, clearing paths; shipment stalled by US embargo

11.11.24 – Su- - - News Placed in November 10 spot – Sunday

Lebanon & Gaza in fear with Trump involved; PM shunned by US (JFNA) conference

11.11.24 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Israeli news crew in Amsterdam hostile chanting crowd, escorted out by police

11.09.24 – Sa- - - News – Saturday

Qatar ends mediation, expels Hamas leaders, IDF set to remove Hamas from territory

11.09.24 – Sa- - - News Placed in November 09 spot – Saturday

Hezbollah rocket attack around Sea of Galilee; IDF strike foothills of Mt. Hermon