



# War in Israel: Update on Current Situation

May 6, 2024

Past updates can be found [here](#).

## The Latest

- Major rocket attack in the south kills four Israelis—additional attacks in the north.
- IDF orders the evacuation of parts of Rafah in apparent preparation for an assault on the city
- The hostage deal is still undecided

## Rockets

- While the number of **Hamas** rocket attacks on Israel remains negligible on most days, **a barrage of fourteen rockets and mortars** was launched yesterday from Rafah towards the Kerem Shalom border station. [Four Israeli soldiers were killed](#) in the attack, and at least seven others were injured. The crossing, used for humanitarian aid trucks, was shut down due to the attack and truck traffic was halted.
- In the **north**, Hezbollah continues to fire at Israeli targets, triggering significant Israeli retaliations. Yesterday, over 65 rockets and mortars were launched into the Kiryat Shmona and Upper Galilee areas, causing property damage. Today, two people were seriously wounded after a drone launched by Hezbollah hit the Metula area. Shortly after the attack, the IDF struck 15 targets belonging to Hezbollah's Radwan Force at a military camp in Al-

Lwazia in southern Lebanon. Watch an Israeli retaliatory strike on a terror target in Markaba, southern Lebanon, [here](#).

- In the **Red Sea**, the US, the UK, and Israel continue to defend against attacks by the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. Similarly, the US military continues to strike at pro-Iranian targets in Syria and Iraq.

## Hostages

- According to many media reports, the United States, Egypt, and Qatar are awaiting a **final answer from Hamas** on whether the terror group will accept the currently proposed deal that will see the release of some hostages. US Secretary of State Blinken has called the latest Israeli concessions “very generous,” and [said](#) that agreeing to the deal should be a “no-brainer” for Hamas. To date, the group has delayed issuing a response to the deal numerous times and appears to be trying to buy more time. The *Wall Street Journal* has reported that Israel has issued an ultimatum to Hamas that the IDF will begin its proposed **attack on Rafah** (see below) if the deal is not accepted by the end of this week.
- Numerous sources suggest that the **proposal now on the table** involves the release of 33 out of the 132 hostages being held. In return, Israel would free 40 terrorists (including many who are serving sentences for murder) in exchange for each of the female soldiers to be released, as well as 10 terrorists in exchange for each Israeli civilian. The deal is also purported to involve a halt to all fighting for an extended period, opening Gaza’s north for evacuees to return, and other conditions.
- **Protestors in Israel** have [increased the scope and frequency](#) of their demonstrations, blocking highways and assembling in major public places. The mother of one hostage has said she will begin a hunger strike to urge the government to show even greater flexibility and a willingness to compromise to reach a deal.
- The IDF, the National Institute of Forensic Medicine, and the Ministry of Health have notified the family of Elyakim Libman, who until now had been classified as a hostage, that **he was murdered on October 7**. DNA evidence showed that his badly-burned body was in fact inside the grave of another fallen soldier.

## Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Activities

- The IDF continues to **operate at a lower level** inside Gaza as it awaits instructions from the government as to whether or not to enter Rafah. [Daily skirmishes](#) between troops and terrorists continue as the IDF [maintains its presence](#) in the rest of the Strip.
- Earlier today, the IDF began **evacuating civilians from eastern Rafah** to a new expanded humanitarian zone which includes al-Mawasi and parts of Khan Yunis and central Gaza, reportedly ahead of planned IDF operations in the Rafah area. The new humanitarian zone includes field hospitals, tents, and increased provisions of food, water, medicine, and other supplies. The call to evacuate is being made through leaflets, text messages, phone calls, and statements in Arabic; approximately 100,000 people are sheltering in that area.
- Yesterday, an **Israel Air Force aircraft killed** Hamas leader Saleh Jamil Muhammad Amad, who was responsible for combat support within the group's Bureij Battalion. He was eliminated along with several other terrorist operatives. A similar attack eliminated three Hamas "Nukhba" terrorists, some of whom took part in the October 7th massacres.
- Other targets hit yesterday included **military installations**, terrorist infrastructure, and [weapons storage facilities](#).
- As **Yom Hashoah**, Holocaust Memorial Day is commemorated in Israel today, the IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi issued [this statement](#): "We fight in memory of the six million who could not fight the enemy that rose to destroy them; for our people who looked in horror and helplessness through the barbed wire fences.... While we fight our just war, let this memory be the source of our strength and a reminder of the importance of maintaining a protective force for our people. We shoulder the responsibility to continue fighting for the freedom of the people of Israel and to ensure: Never Again." General Halevi also [visited troops](#) operating inside the Gaza Strip.
- The Israeli government unanimously authorized the **closing of Al Jazeera's news network operations in Israel**, in line with a law passed by the Knesset in April. According to Communications Minister Shlomo

Karhi, who strongly advocated for the law, "Our orders will go into effect immediately.... to finally stop the well-oiled incitement machine of Al Jazeera, which harms the security of the state." Karhi is now empowered to order Israel's television providers to cease broadcasting Al Jazeera, to order the channel's Israeli offices to be closed, to confiscate the channel's equipment, and to block access to Al Jazeera's website.

## Humanitarian Aid

- At the end of last week, **Hamas managed to seize** a major shipment of humanitarian aid that was delivered to Gaza from Jordan, according to US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller. The supplies were the first to be shipped to the enclave through a newly-reopened Israeli border crossing. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken viewed the shipment on Tuesday just before it departed from the headquarters of the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization in Amman bound for the renovated crossing into the Gaza Strip at Erez, which was largely destroyed by Hamas on October 7.
- As mentioned above, yesterday, **Hamas fired 14 rockets at Kerem Shalom, destroying one of the major truck crossing points** for humanitarian aid. Four Israeli soldiers were killed in the attack.
- The US military is [nearing completion](#) of a \$320 million **floating pier** off Gaza, a complex project to allow seaborne humanitarian aid into the Strip. Hundreds of US troops have spent weeks building the structure, which is aimed at easing the humanitarian crisis in the area.
- Some additional data (from the IDF's Coordinator of Aid to Gaza):
  - 223 trucks containing aid were delivered to Gaza by UN aid agencies, 134 of them containing food aid, (May 4)
  - 94 pallets containing tens of thousands of packages of food aid were airdropped, in coordination with partner countries over northern Gaza yesterday (May. 4).
  - 63 aid trucks were coordinated to northern Gaza (50 from the private sector, 12 WFP, and 2 containing fuel) (May 4).

- 26 bakeries are currently operational in Gaza, providing close to 5 million loaves of bread, rolls, and pita daily.
- The northern water pipeline from Israel is now fully operational, providing an average of more than 13 gallons per person per day in Gaza.
- See more on humanitarian aid [here](#).

## International Response

The **Eurovision Song Contest**, while not well-known in North America, is a major international event throughout Europe and the world, including in Israel. It is the largest live-music event in the world and attracts some 160 million viewers. This year, Eurovision will be held in the Swedish city of Malmo from **May 7 to 11**. As always, Israel is participating in the contest.

- Despite calls for Israel to be dropped from this year's line-up, Eden Golan will sing her new song [Hurricane](#) in Malmo. The song was originally entitled "October Rain," and dealt squarely with the October 7 attacks, but the lyrics were deemed too political by organizers. The new version vaguely hints at the tragedy.
- Watch [this](#) video of Golan boarding her special El Al flight to Malmo and the surprise organized by the ground crew at Ben Gurion Airport.
- Despite threats of boycotts against Golan and the performance and a perceived strong anti-Israel feeling in Europe, the song continues to rank in the top 10 of the competition across dozens of polls. (Eurovision scoring includes public votes from all competing countries).
- Malmo (which has one of the highest concentrations of Syrian, Lebanese, Iraqi, and Iranian migrants in Europe) is known as a focus for anti-Israel protests, which occur weekly and frequently include incitement, calls to attack Jews and Israelis, and the burning of Israeli flags. It has been reported that on October 7, anti-Israel elements publicly celebrated the massacre that Hamas perpetrated in Israel. On 19 March, ISIS operatives who were planning to attack the Swedish parliament were arrested in Malmo.
- Israel's National Security Council (NSC) has said that these developments raise the tangible concern that terrorists will exploit expected anti-Israel protests at

the competition to attack Israelis attending Eurovision.

- As a result, Golan and her entourage, who are under extremely high security, have been ordered to remain in their secured hotel the entire time they are in Malmo, other than for the performance itself, plus rehearsals at the venue.
- The NSC has also upgraded its travel warning for Malmo from Level 2 (potential threat) to Level 3 (moderate threat) and recommends that Israelis due to arrive in the city reconsider the necessity of the trip. The travel warning applies during the period of the Eurovision contest.

## Stories of Heartbreak, Heroism, and Hope

- Read about Shir Yaron, 21, an [extreme sports lover who had big travel plans](#) before she was killed on October 7.
- Watch [this story](#) of Lia, a lone soldier from Texas. While she was recording a Pesach holiday greeting on her base for her family back home in Texas, she received a very emotional surprise.
- Miriam Haber: [Two packs of tissues and an arm around my shoulders](#) – “I knew nothing could prepare me for saying Yizkor for my son, recently killed in the war, but it was a woman's kind comfort that surprised me.”
- See [this story](#) about Aviel Oren, 29, a triplet who was known by all as a "man of kindness," who was killed at the Nova festival.

## On Campus

- Over the last two weeks, anti-Israel protests have engulfed hundreds of North American university campuses, and more than 2,000 people have been arrested.
- Read Jewish Federations' [statement](#) and see this [Instagram post](#) about what Federations say university administrators must do to ensure the safety of their Jewish students.
- Several Federations have also issued powerful statements. Examples include [Los Angeles](#), [New](#)

[York](#), and [Dallas](#). Federations are also working in close coordination with national partners and will continue to monitor this situation and provide updates as they become available.

- Jewish Federations of North America's president and CEO Eric Fingerhut, along with two other alumni of Northwestern, [sent a letter](#) to the board of the university calling on them to dismiss the president for giving in to the protesters' demands.