

**Things have been very busy this weekend and will continue to be busy on Monday and Tuesday (Passover) rdb
Happy Passover to all**



Report: US set to sanction IDF unit in historical first; Netanyahu: 'Absurd'

Axios reports U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken says sanctions against Netzah Yehuda Battalion expected 'very soon'; Israeli officials criticize Biden administration

Itamar Eichner, Daniel Edelson, New York | 15:51

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is expected to announce for the first time sanctions against the IDF ultra-Orthodox combat unit Netzah Yehuda Battalion for alleged human rights violations against Palestinians in the West Bank, U.S.-based news outlet Axios first reported Saturday.



Netzah Yehuda Battalion soldier (Photo: IDF Spokesperson's Unit)

The sanctions will include, among other things, a prohibition on delivering American weapons to the battalion, and its soldiers and commanders will be barred from joint drills between the IDF and the American military.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu criticized the Biden administration's intentions and said, "The IDF shouldn't be placed

sanction on." He added, "While our soldiers are fighting the horror of terrorism, the intentions to place sanctions on an IDF unit is most absurd and a moral decry. My government will act against these moves with all means available to us."

"I think you're referring to the so-called Leahy Law and our work under that," Blinken told a reporter who asked about the upcoming sanctions. So, this is a very important law, and it's one that we apply across the board. I think it's fair to say that you'll see results very soon."

Finance Minister Bezalet Smotrich said, "The decision to enact sanctions against the IDF while Israel is fighting for its existence is crazy. We warned that the Biden administration's sanctions against settlers will carry on to the IDF and the rest of the State of Israel. It's part of a planned move to force Israel to agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state and to harm Israel's security."

The U.S. has moved in recent months against Israeli settlers in particular and placed economic sanctions against them as well.

The Netzah Yehuda Battalion was linked with previous violent incidents in the West Bank in the past, including an investigation against some of its soldiers following the death of a Palestinian elderly man who was detained for questioning.

Israeli officials reacted to the news and said it is unclear if the report is accurate, added the Americans have demanded clarifications regarding the Netzah Yehuda Battalion's activities in the past after claims they were harming Palestinians.

One estimate says that the issue may be related to the implementation of an American law that includes a series of regulations prohibiting the U.S. State Department and Defense Departments from providing military aid to countries that violate human rights.

In any case, even if sanctions are indeed imposed on the brigade, it's unclear how they will affect the unit at this point. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/b1csdobba> [The US government is remarkably stupid. – rdb]

House okays \$17 billion in military aid for Israel under major spending package

Some billions expected to go Gaza for humanitarian aid; total package of \$95 billion in assistance to US allies, including Ukraine and Taiwan, passes after months of wrangling

By [Reuters](#), [AP](#) and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 9:15 pm

WASHINGTON — **The US House of Representatives on Saturday passed a \$95 billion legislative package with broad bipartisan support providing security assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, over bitter objections from Republican hardliners.**

This included **\$17 billion in defense aid to Israel, and some \$9 billion providing humanitarian relief to people in Gaza as well as other war-torn regions (the final decision on allocation was up to the White House, with analysts expecting roughly \$2 billion would go to Gaza).**

The **legislation now proceeds to the Democratic-majority Senate**, which passed a similar measure more than two months ago. US leaders from Democratic President Joe Biden to top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell have been urging embattled Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson to bring it up for a vote.

The Senate **is expected to pass the measure next week, sending it to Biden to sign into law.**

Of the **aid to Israel, some \$5.2 billion will go toward replenishing and expanding Israel's missile and rocket defense system; another \$3.5 billion will go to purchasing advanced weapons systems; \$1 billion to enhance weapons production; \$4.4 billion for other defense supplies and services provided to Israel; and some \$2.4 billion to US operations in the region amid the Gaza war.**

The **bill will also prohibit funds going to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which provides support to Palestinian refugees.**

Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz said the House's approval of aid "sends a strong message to our enemies."

Prime **Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the bill "demonstrates strong bipartisan support for Israel and defends Western civilization. Thank you friends, thank you America!"**

The US Congress just overwhelmingly passed a much appreciated aid bill that demonstrates strong bipartisan support for Israel and defends Western civilization. Thank you friends, thank you America!

— Benjamin Netanyahu – בנימין נתניהו (@netanyahu) [April 20, 2024](#)

Defense Minister **Yoav Gallant also thanked America for its "unwavering support" as Israel "faces threats from 7 different fronts including Iran."**

Biden praised the lawmakers of both parties, saying that "at this critical inflection point, they came together to answer history's call."

"This package will deliver critical support to Israel and Ukraine; provide desperately needed humanitarian aid to Gaza, Sudan, Haiti and other locations... and bolster security and stability in the Indo-Pacific," Biden said in a statement.

While **aid for Ukraine failed to win a majority of Republicans, several dozen progressive Democrats voted against the bill aiding Israel as they demanded an end** to the offensive on Gaza, sparked by Hamas's October 7 attacks on Israel, that has killed thousands of civilians.

In a statement released after the vote, several of the representatives, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Joaquin Castro, Pramila Jayapal and 16 others, said: "We believe strongly in Israel's right to self-defense and have joined colleagues previously in affirming our shared commitment... All of us support strengthening the Iron Dome and other defense systems and we are committed to a sovereign, safe, and secure future for Israel.

But amid the "extraordinary suffering [inflicted] on the people of Gaza... we believe there is a moral imperative to find another path."

They added: "Most Americans do not want our government to write a blank check to further Prime Minister Netanyahu's war in Gaza. The United States needs to help Israel find a path to win the peace."

[mrehttps://www.timesofisrael.com/house-approves-26-billion-in-aid-for-israel-and-gaza-under-major-spending-package/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/house-approves-26-billion-in-aid-for-israel-and-gaza-under-major-spending-package/)

Netanyahu hints at Rafah op., vows to free hostages

"In the coming days, we will increase the military and political pressure on Hamas because this is the only way to free our hostages and achieve our victory," Netanyahu said.

By [TOVAH LAZAROFF](#) APRIL 21, 2024 18:16 **Updated:** APRIL 21, 2024 22:40

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hinted that the IDF would soon launch a military operation in Rafah as he vowed to free the remaining 133 hostages held in Gaza, in a special address to the

nation in advance of Passover, which begins on Monday night.

“In the coming days we will increase the military and political pressure on Hamas because this is the only way to free our hostages and achieve our victory,” Netanyahu said on Sunday.

“Until now, all [proposals for the release of our hostages](#) have been rejected by Hamas outright,” Netanyahu explained as he blamed the terror group for the failed talks for a hostage deal.

Increasing pressure on Hamas to return hostages

“Instead of withdrawing from its extreme positions, Hamas is counting on a rift among us. It draws encouragement from the [international] pressure being directed at the Government of Israel,” Netanyahu stated.

“As a result of this, it has only hardened its conditions for the release of our hostages,” Netanyahu said.

In **light of the international pressure on Israel for a unilateral Gaza ceasefire that is divorced from a hostage release, Israel has very few pressure levers to free the hostages,** short of a Rafah operation.

In language reminiscent of the Passover story in which Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to allow the Jewish slaves to leave Egypt, Netanyahu said that Hamas was **“hardening its heart and refusing to let our people go.”**

“Therefore, we will strike it with additional painful blows – and this will happen soon,” Netanyahu vowed.

He spoke as **Jews around the world prepared to celebrate Passover, also known as the festival of freedom, while all efforts for a hostage deal appeared to have failed as Israel marked 198 days since the captives were seized during the Hamas-led invasion of Israel on October 7.**

Israel’s war to destroy Hamas in Gaza, which began on that day, has not led to a decisive victory, and there did not appear to be any way to end the IDF’s cross-border violence with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

It remains unsafe, therefore, for over 100,000 evacuees to celebrate the family holiday in their homes along the country’s southern and northern borders. In the worst case scenarios, the homes have been destroyed by Hamas or Hezbollah.

Hostage families send letter to government

On **Sunday night the war cabinet convened, as Netanyahu is hearing increasing criticism for failing to end the war and secure a deal to free the hostages.** Just one day earlier the Hostage and Missing Families Forum sent a letter to the cabinet asking to meet before the holiday to receive a **“shred of hope”** regarding the fate of their relatives in Gaza.

“It’s been [close to] 200 days in which nothing is the same, and for us, the families of the hostages and the kidnapped, the situation is getting worse from day to day,” the forum wrote.

“The Festival of Freedom will not be celebrated this year in the State of Israel. Freedom is not possible when 133 members of our people and our country are still captive,” it stressed.

“We demand to hear from you directly .. what the Israeli government’s priorities are – half a year after the start of the war.

“Are the negotiations still ongoing? When are our loved ones expected to return from hell and what are you doing every day, and every hour, to bring them back?” the forum asked.

From the protest site at Hostage Square in Tel Aviv to the President and Prime Minister’s Office, activists and officials focused on the symbol of the empty chair at the Seder table, to symbolize those who were missing.

Herzog over the weekend asked the public to place an extra seat at their table. The PMO on Sunday night unveiled an “empty chair campaign” with a video designed for an American audience that ended with the words, “Let our people go.”

In addressing a disheartened nation on Sunday, Netanyahu referred to one of the central opening questions of the Passover Haggadah, as he acknowledged that what was different this year was that 133 hostages were missing from their family’s Seder tables.

“On this Seder night, our hostages being held by Hamas are before our eyes. Their suffering and the suffering of their families rend our hearts and only strengthen our resolve to bring them back,” he said.

What is not different, is that this Passover, as in my past generation, Israel’s enemies “rise up to destroy us.”

He pledged that “we will overcome those who seek our lives – thanks to the faith of our people, the daring of our fighters, and the unity among us.

“We are not relenting, not even for a moment, from our sacred mission to return them home,” Netanyahu stated.

Minister Benny Gantz, who is a member of the war cabinet, said in a brief address to the public, that it was true that the government had not completed its goal of freeing the hostages and returning the evacuees home.

“We haven’t succeeded yet – but we really haven’t given up. And we will never give up,” Gantz stated.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-798152>

Netanyahu accuses hostage negotiators of lying to public - report

The war cabinet met on Sunday evening for the first time in 12 days to discuss the issue of the hostages.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) APRIL 21, 2024 20:24 **Updated:** APRIL 21, 2024 22:45

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attacked members of the negotiating team responsible for ceasefire and hostage release talks, accusing them of conducting "false briefings" and "seeding desperations among the families of the hostages," during a war cabinet meeting on Sunday, according to Israeli media.

"The false briefings from the negotiation team only harm the effort to return the abductees," said Netanyahu, according to N12. "If there is someone on the negotiating team who is not ready to accept the decisions of the political echelon just to get anonymous and false headlines in the media for political purposes - let him be decent and not be here."

The war cabinet met on Sunday evening for the first time in 12 days to discuss the issue of the hostages.

Negotiating team says they feel opportunities for a deal were missed

Earlier this month, members of the negotiating team told N12's Uvda investigative show that they feel that opportunities for a deal were repeatedly missed and that they feel that they were ignored by the prime minister's office.



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convenes the War Cabinet in Tel Aviv to discuss Israel's response to the Iranian attack. (credit: GPO)

"I can't say that [without Netanyahu](#) there would have been a deal, I can say that the likelihood of a deal would have been higher," said one member of the negotiating team to Uvda. "What's more, from December, certainly from January, it's clear to everyone that we don't negotiate. It happens over and over again: we get a mandate during the day, and then the prime minister makes phone calls at night, instructing 'don't say that', 'don't approve of that', bypassing both the team leaders and the war cabinet in this way."

Netanyahu also accused Defense Minister Yoav Gallant of leaking information from sensitive meetings during a recent security cabinet meeting, KAN news reported on Sunday.

Several ministers and leaders of the defense establishment were present at the meeting.

"Every time I sit in small meetings with the defense minister, the head of the Mossad, and the head of the Shin Bet - everything is leaked. I know that it's not the head of the Mossad and not the head of the Shin Bet, so who could it be?" Netanyahu asked during the meeting, according to KAN.

Gallant was not physically present at the meeting and had called in. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-798167>

Soldier dies due to wounds sustained in Hezbollah drone attack

Zimel was set to be married to his fiance, Shir Sagiv, in just over a month.

By [TZVI JOFFRE](#) APRIL 21, 2024 18:56 **Updated:** APRIL 21, 2024 19:57



IDF Maj. (res.) Dor Zimel, who fell in the Hezbollah drone attack in Arab al-Aramshe on April 17, 2024. (photo credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT)

IDF Maj. (res.) Dor Zimel, 27, who was wounded in a Hezbollah drone attack in Arab al-Aramshe on Thursday, succumbed to his wounds on Sunday, the IDF announced. Zimel was set to be married to his fiancée, Shir Sagiv, in just over a month. Zimel and Sagiv lived in Even Yehuda.

Zimel served as a deputy company commander in the 8103rd Battalion of the IDF's Etzioni Brigade.

Fourteen IDF soldiers and four civilians were wounded in the drone and anti-tank missile attack

launched by Hezbollah on Thursday.

Debris covers the floor of a damaged community center, the day after Hezbollah launched missiles and drones at the Bedouin village of Arab al-Aramshe, amid ongoing cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel, in northern Israel April 18, 2024. (credit: Hannah McKay/Reuters)

Alon Zimel, the soldier's father, eulogized his son, saying, "Rest in peace, our lion."

'Salt of the earth'

Even Yehuda Mayor Matan Katzman eulogized Zimel, saying Zimel was "the salt of the earth, an outstanding officer, a friend, loved all who knew him."

"His death is an unimaginable loss," added Katzman. "In the last year, Dor was the head of my election headquarters, my personal assistant in the Even Yehuda Council and became like a little brother."

Katzman noted that Zimel had donated his organs to save others.

Zimel's funeral will take place at noon on Monday at the military section of the Even Yehuda cemetery.

'The world lost a superhero today'

Dor Weissman, a friend of Zimel, eulogized him as well, saying "Those who don't know who Dor Zimel was - for me he was more than a brother."

"Dor Zimel was the person who would push you to the edge, who would not give up on you for a second. For him, giving up was not an option. He would go all the way for the people he cares about, and would pick them up when they were having a hard time," said Weissman. "A part of my heart is missing - and will never be the same again. The world lost a superhero today, a true angel that it was not his time to go."

Weissman referenced Zimel's planned wedding to Shir, saying, "I thought we would celebrate - we would all shake the wedding hall. Today I will shake the world for you, I swear."

Two other soldiers still hospitalized

Dr. Uriel Trahtemberg, head of the ICU at the Galilee Medical Center said on Sunday that Zimel had been intubated since he was brought to the hospital and had suffered a severe head injury which caused brain damage. The doctors were eventually forced to determine that Zimel was brain dead.

"We share in the family's grief and embrace it in its difficult hour," said Trahtemberg.

Two of the soldiers wounded in the attack are still hospitalized at the Galilee Medical Center, including a 51-year-old man who is in moderate-to-serious condition and 29-year-old man who is in moderate condition.

All of the other people wounded in the attack have been released or transferred to other hospitals.

Another reservist soldier who was brought to the hospital on April 13th after being hit by shrapnel from a [Kamikaze drone](#) is still hospitalized as well, but his condition has significantly improved and he is now in moderate and stable condition. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-798159>



by

Entire IRGC command wing in Syria was eliminated in strike, Bloomberg reveals

Bloomberg reported Israel's attack on Iran's consulate in Syria, killing Revolutionary Guards' command, prompting Iran to suspect Syria's involvement in previous assassinations.

By [MAARIV ONLINE](#) APRIL 20, 2024 20:38 Updated: APRIL 21, 2024 06:57



Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei looks at the coffins of members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps who were killed in the Israeli airstrike on the Iranian embassy complex in the Syrian capital Damascus, during a funeral ceremony in Tehran, Iran April 4, 2024 (photo credit: Office of the Iranian Supreme Leader/WANA/Handout via Reuters)

The Bloomberg television network revealed overnight into Saturday that in the attack attributed to Israel at the Iranian consulate in Syria, the entire command hierarchy responsible for the activities of the Revolutionary Guards in Syria and Lebanon was killed. According to the report, "the senior officers were pivotal for Hezbollah's activities in the region."

According to the reports, General Mohammad Reza Zahedi and his deputy, Mohammad Hadi Rahimi, along with

other officers who were killed, were certain that the consulate building next to the embassy was "the safest" in Damascus and that Israel would not dare to attack the site.

Before the airstrike on the consulate building in Damascus, the residences of the ambassador and the consul were supposed to be transferred to a new apartment complex further down the same street, where the two brothers of [Syrian President Bashar al-Assad](#) also live. Shortly before the attack, the senior ranking officials of the IRGC in Syria met on the second floor of the consulate building and decided to stay there.

Iran investigates the Syria attack

The strike at the Iranian consulate in Syria led Iran, for the first time, to respond directly and attack Israel. Immediately after the assassination, Iran began suspecting that groups in Syria were involved in several assassination cases of IRGC personnel in the country over the past few years.

Iran's suspicion focuses on 18 commanders who were assassinated over a short time in attacks that were attributed to Israel. This is according to a Syrian defector who opposed the Assad regime, who claims to have spoken with an Iranian official.

According to the Syrian defector, after the assassination of Raza Musawi in Syria in December 2023, a joint investigation between the two countries began, attempting to trace a possible security breach. However, at a certain point, Iran chose to conduct an independent investigation with Hezbollah, following concerns that the Syrian intelligence was interfering with the investigation.

The independent investigation concluded that the security breaches that led to the assassination were under high-level political and security cover, and it was unlikely that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was unaware of them.

The defector further added that what heightened suspicions in Tehran was that the [Hezbollah operatives](#) who were assassinated in the country were linked to Syrian security services. Their assassination was possible through espionage, using advanced technology. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/bloomberg-reveals-that-the-entire-irgc-command-wing-in-syria-was-assassinated-798031>



Five rockets fired from Iraq towards US military base in Syria, security sources say

The attacks came one day after a huge blast at a military base in Iraq early on Saturday killed a member of an Iraqi security force that includes Iran-backed groups.

By [REUTERS](#) APRIL 21, 2024 23:04 Updated: APRIL 21, 2024 23:46

A PATRIOT missile interceptor in Tel Aviv ready to shoot down Scud missiles fired from Iraq. (photo credit: Nathan Alpert/GPO)

At least five rockets were launched from Iraq's town of Zummar towards a US military base in northeastern Syria on Sunday, two Iraqi security sources told Reuters.

The attack against US forces is the first since early February when Iranian-backed groups in Iraq stopped their attacks against US troops.

The attack comes on the same day Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani returned from a visit to the United States and met with President Joe Biden at the White House.

Rocket launchers fire at US forces



Two security sources and a senior army officer said a rocket launcher fixed on the back of a small truck had been parked in Zummar border town with Syria.

A general view shows the Kalso military base after it was hit by a huge explosion on late Friday, in Babil Province, Iraq April 20, 2024. (credit: ALAA AL-MARJANI/REUTERS)

The military official said the truck caught fire with an explosion from unfired rockets at the same time as warplanes were in the sky.

"We can't confirm that the truck was bombed by US warplanes unless we investigate it," said a military official on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the incident.

The attacks came one day after a huge blast at a military base in Iraq early on Saturday killed a member of an Iraqi security force that includes Iran-backed groups. The force commander said it was an attack while the army said it was investigating and there were no warplanes in the sky at the time.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-798177>

Satellite image appears to show damaged Iranian radar allegedly struck by Israel

Surrounding Russian-made S-300 air defense missile launchers largely unscathed in attack that reportedly targeted embattlements guarding secret Natanz nuclear site

By Tol Staff Today, 12:54 pm



An undated satellite image showing empty air defense embattlements at a site reportedly struck in an alleged Israeli attack on April 19, 2024, near Isfahan, Iran. (Screen capture: Google Maps)

An image aired by an Iranian opposition news outlet Sunday appeared to show significant damage to a radar system near a secretive Iranian nuclear site, after an alleged Israeli strike last week.

The destroyed remains of what was reported to be an anti-aircraft mobile radar station could be seen in the satellite image published by Iran International, with the ground around it charred black.

Satellite images of the site captured before the alleged attack early Friday showed the same "flap-lid" radar intact and surrounded by an array of four Russian-made S-300 mobile anti-aircraft missile launchers and other vehicles related to the air defense system.

Imagery taken Friday, hours after the attack, showed the missile launchers removed from the air defense system at the Eighth Shekari Air Base in Isfahan.

In the photo released Sunday, at least three of the missile launchers had apparently been returned.

Aside from the radar, all the other vehicles at the air defense site appeared to be largely unscathed, showing the pinpoint nature of the strike, which officials had indicated was intended as a limited retaliation to Iran's barrage of missiles and drones on Israel days earlier.

Analysis of satellite imagery obtained by Iran International confirms media reports that a central part of the S-300 air defense system at an Iranian air base in Isfahan was hit by a presumed Israeli attack early Friday.

???? @FardadFarahzad via @SkyWatchApps pic.twitter.com/s8ViDTqcFh

— Iran International English (@IranIntl_En) [April 21, 2024](#)

The New York Times reported on Saturday that Israel used a high-tech missile that was able to evade Iran's radar systems to attack the site, in a move meant to send a message of deterrence by displaying Israel's offensive abilities.

It cited two Iranian officials as saying that the S-300 system was hit in the attack. The air defense post was reported to be part of an array defending the nearby top-secret Natanz nuclear site, some 100 kilometers away.

The Iranian officials told the newspaper that Iran had not detected intrusions into its airspace from drones, missiles or aircraft.

Umbra synthetic aperture radar imagery acquired 0648Z 19APR2024 showed evidence of damage to the Iranian S-300PMU2 strategic surface-to-air missile battery in Isfahan since 15APR2024. A probable damaged 30N6E target engagement radar was visible in imagery still on the radar...

pic.twitter.com/eqMFTanPOH

— Chris Biggers (@CSBiggers) [April 19, 2024](#)

Two unnamed Western officials cited by the newspaper said the missile aimed to show Tehran that Israel is able to dodge and neutralize its defenses, in a move meant to force Iran to rethink launching another direct attack on Israel.

Despite the reports, Iran continued to insist that only several small drones were launched and that they had not caused any damage.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, in New York to attend a United Nations Security Council meeting on the Middle East, likened the strike on Friday to child's play.

Speaking to NBC News through a translator, Amir-Abdollahian said the drones had taken off from inside Iran and flew for a few hundred meters before being downed.



A Russian-made S-300 air defense system is carried on a truck during Army Day parade at a military base in northern Tehran, Iran, April 17, 2024. (AP/Vahid Salemi)

“What happened last night was no attack,” said Amir-Abdollahian. **“It was the flight of two or three quad-copters, which are at the level of toys** that our children use in Iran.”

However, the reports that Israel had fired at least one missile appear to correlate with debris found in Iraq in the morning after residents of Baghdad reported hearing sounds of explosions.

Images showed what appeared to be parts of a two-stage standoff air-to-surface missile near Latifiya, southwest of Baghdad, which would have fallen away after the missile launch, although this remained unconfirmed.

???? ???????? ⚡: UN-EXPLODED ISRAELI MISSILE IN IRAQ

The Popular Mobilization Forces found the remains of an Israeli missile in the Latifiya area on the outskirts of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. [#Iran #Israel #IranAttackIsrael](#)

#Isfahanpic.twitter.com/wqfuUO9pbD

— UnCover (@uncoovr) [April 19, 2024](#)

Israel has several types of these munitions available for its air force, raising the possibility it was fired as part of the attack.

Also, around the time of the incident in Iran, Syria's state-run SANA news agency quoted a military statement saying Israel carried out a missile strike targeting a southern air defense unit and

causing damage. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor of unclear funding, said the strike hit a military radar for government forces.

That area of Syria is directly west of Isfahan, some 1,500 kilometers (932 miles) away and east of Israel, and could provide an indication of the route taken by Israeli jets.

The deeply fortified underground Natanz enrichment site has been repeatedly targeted by suspected Israeli sabotage attacks, but the reported strike on the S-300 radar would appear to be the first direct Israeli military attack in an area thought to contain much of Iran's nuclear production capability.

The alleged Israeli strike came after Jerusalem indicated it would retaliate for Iran's decision to launch over 300 missiles and armed drones at Israel overnight April 13-14, an unprecedented volley which itself came in reaction to an alleged Israeli strike on Iran's consulate compound in Damascus on April 1 that killed several members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp, including a top officer.

After an international coalition helped Israel down nearly all of the projectiles launched by Iran last week, Jerusalem was heavily pressured to show restraint and avoid retaliatory measures that could further escalate tensions and send the region hurtling toward all-out war.

Iran's insistence that the strike was carried out by drones and caused no damage appeared to be part of an effort to play down its severity, with a senior Iranian official casting doubt on whether Israel had been behind the attack and saying there were no plans to hit the country back.

Israel has not officially commented on the strike, in line with its strategy of ambiguity regarding actions abroad, meant to give those it attacks maneuverability to avoid pressure to retaliate.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/satellite-image-appears-to-show-damaged-iranian-radar-allegedly-struck-by-israel/>

3 Palestinians shot dead while attacking IDF troops in West Bank

Woman killed trying to stab guards at Jordan Valley checkpoint, two men killed assaulting soldiers near Hebron, as army ends 50-hour refugee camp operation amid heightened tensions



By [Reuters](#) and [Tel Staff](#) Today, 11:27 pm

Israeli troops stand guard near the scene of a shooting, near Hebron in the West Bank, April 21, 2024. (Wisam Hashlamoun/FLASH90)

The army said soldiers opened fire at three Palestinians who attacked them on Sunday in the West Bank, where violence has flared in recent days, with the Palestinian Authority health ministry confirming that all three had died.

In the first incident, at the Beit Einun junction near Hebron in the southern West Bank, the Israel Defense Forces said a man had shot at troops, while another attempted to stab them, before

the soldiers opened fire on both attackers, whom medics later declared dead.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa, citing local sources, said that ambulance crews were prevented from reaching the two, whom the agency identified as Mohammad Majid Jabareen, 19, and Musa Mahmoud Jabareen, 18.

In the second incident, the military said soldiers shot a woman who tried to stab them at the Beka'ot checkpoint — also known as Hamra, after the adjacent settlement — in the north West Bank's Jordan Valley. She was later confirmed dead by Palestinian Authority health authorities.

Wafa identified her as Manal Sawafta, 40, from Tubas in the Jordan Valley.

Violence in the West Bank, already on the rise before October 7 — when thousands of Hamas-led terrorists stormed southern Israel to kill nearly 1,200 people and abduct over 250 — has escalated throughout the war sparked by the onslaught, with [frequent army raids](#) on terror groups, [rampages by Jewish settlers](#) in Palestinian villages, and deadly [Palestinian street attacks](#).

The IDF began an extended raid in the early hours of Friday in the Nur Shams refugee camp, near the flashpoint Palestinian city of Tulkarm, and exchanged fire with gunmen well into Saturday.

Fourteen Palestinian operatives were killed in the fire exchanges and 10 soldiers were wounded, according to an IDF statement issued on Sunday, after it had completed the 50-hour operation.



Nur Shams residents have so far identified only five of the fatalities as operatives. One of those killed was a 16-year-old boy, authorities said.

IDF troops operate in the West Bank's Nur Shams refugee camp, in an image published April 21, 2024. (Israel Defense Forces)

Since October 7, IDF troops have arrested some 3,850 wanted Palestinians across the West Bank, including more than 1,650 affiliated with Hamas. According to the Palestinian Authority health

ministry, more than 480 West Bank Palestinians have been killed in that time. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/3-palestinians-shot-dead-while-attacking-idf-troops-in-west-bank/>

UNRWA critics deeply skeptical as review panel set to present final recommendations

Though evidence shows enduring glorification of terrorism and intolerance at UN's agency for Palestinians, an interim report failed to recommend substantive measures for change

By [Jeremy Sharon](#) Today, 10:04 pm

An independent review into severe allegations against the United Nations agency for Palestinians is set to release its findings on Monday, and is widely expected to call for merely cosmetic changes to the organization's functioning.

The review process was set up in February, after at least 15 countries froze their funding for UNRWA over Israeli allegations that at least 12 of the agency's employees were directly involved in the October 7 atrocities perpetrated by Hamas, another 30 assisted or facilitated those crimes, and as much as 12 percent of the organization's staff were affiliated with terror organizations.

An interim report by the review panel produced back in March, which was not made public but a summary of which has been seen by The Times of Israel, did identify some key problems with UNRWA's operations in general, and in Gaza more specifically.

But it did not call for the termination of some 1,500 to 2,000 UNRWA staff members in Gaza who Israel says are members of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, did not recommend solutions for the repeated abuse of UNRWA facilities by terror organizations in the territory, and did not provide answers to ongoing incitement in its educational institutions.

The final report, which will be published around noon in New York on Monday, is similarly expected to skirt these most problematic issues and recommend bureaucratic and administrative solutions to staffing issues, while calling for increased funding to facilitate such measures.

The review panel is led by former French foreign minister Catherine Colonna, and is being conducted in collaboration with three research organizations: the Raoul Wallenberg Institute in Sweden; the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Norway; and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, all of which have been accused by the UN Watch organization of seeking to exonerate UNRWA in order to preserve its international funding.



The picture of Palestinian terrorist Dalal Mughrabi who carried out the Coastal Road Massacre is featured on a classroom chalkboard in the Al-Zaytun Elementary School in Gaza run by the UNRWA Palestinian humanitarian aid agency. (Courtesy IMPACT-se)

Within the current review process, the IMPACT-se research and policy institute, which analyzes educational curricula around the world for compliance with UNESCO benchmarks, submitted an extensive 245-page dossier detailing the glorification of terrorism and antisemitism that is apparently still rife within UNRWA

educational facilities, and was the only NGO to testify to the panel.

The organization said that the large body of evidence it presented to the panel contradicted statements and promises made by UNRWA to donor nations that it works to prevent hate teaching and the glorification of terrorism in its schools, that its “neutrality officers” prevent such teachings, and that its own textbook reviews have identified and addressed problematic content in its schools curricula.

IMPACT-se also noted that the review panel’s interim report ignored visual evidence from within UNRWA schools and classrooms across all Gaza districts that showed violent and antisemitic teaching materials produced by UNRWA’s education departments themselves. This evidence included highly problematic materials bearing the agency’s logo, the names of problematic schools, and lists of contributing UNRWA administrative staff who signed off on the inflammatory materials.

“This includes school principals, vice principals, educational experts, [and] content supervisors involved in drafting, supervising, approving, printing, and distributing hateful content to students,” IMPACT-se said.

One such example was an Arabic-language study card produced by UNRWA’s Al-Maghazi Middle School for Boys in Gaza that contained a reading comprehension story that celebrated an attack on Israeli passengers traveling on a bus, describing it as a “barbecue party.” It remained present in the school’s educational materials as of 2022.

IMPACT-se’s dossier also included documentation from UNRWA’s Al-Zaytun Elementary School in Gaza showing how infamous Palestinian terrorist Dalal al-Mughrabi was glorified in class, with her picture posted on the classroom chalkboard alongside text celebrating her as “the fighting leader,” and referring to her terrorist accomplices as “heroes.”

Al-Mughrabi and eight accomplices perpetrated the Coastal Road Massacre in 1978, in which they murdered 38 people, including 13 children.

In a further example glorifying violence, UNRWA-produced sixth grade Arabic study material in use at the Asma Middle School for Girls in western Gaza included an exercise titled, “Loving the Homeland,” which promoted sacrificing one’s life — “the most precious thing” a person has in order to “nourish the homeland with his blood.”

Grammar exercises in the same textbook included the sentences “I will commit jihad to liberate the homeland,” “We Palestinians resisted the Occupation,” and “I will not give up a centimeter of my land.”

Furthermore, educational material in use at the Tel Al-Hawa Middle School accuses Israel of infecting Palestinians with cancer and polluting the Palestinian environment by dumping toxic waste in the West Bank and Gaza.

IMPACT-se also submitted its November 2023 report, which found that at least 100 Hamas members who have carried out terror attacks against Israelis in recent years were graduates of the UNRWA education system, and exposed UNRWA school events that celebrated the October 7 atrocities, as well as UNRWA teachers and staff who applauded the massacres on social media.

“The devastating evidence presented by IMPACT-se on institutional hate-teaching in UNRWA textbooks and schools would convince any fair-minded investigative panel of the agency’s unacceptable complicity in terror,” the organization’s CEO Marcus Sheff said in a statement summarizing the evidence submitted to the independent review panel.

“Should the UN’s internal review fail to reach this conclusion, an independent, external investigation must immediately be set up to ensure that UNRWA no longer continues in its role.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/unrwa-critics-deeply-skeptical-as-review-panel-set-to-present-final-recommendations/>

Biden asks Americans to choose between freedom and democracy

The president’s latest blunder comes as a majority of Americans doubt his mental capacity for office



Joe Biden speaks during a campaign event in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 18, 2024 © AFP / Andrew Caballero-Reynolds

US President Joe Biden has implored his supporters to choose “freedom over democracy,” in the latest of a long series of gaffes and verbal blunders. Conservative pundits have viewed the incident as more proof that the 81-year-old is unfit for office.

Speaking at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania on Thursday, Biden rattled off a string of

buzzwords as he asked voters whether they would choose him over former President Donald Trump in November's presidential election.

"Are you ready to choose unity over division? Dignity over demolition? Truth over lies? Are you ready to choose freedom over democracy? Because that's America," he exclaimed.

Biden's "freedom over democracy" line drew a mix of laughs and applause from the crowd, and ridicule from conservative pundits and influencers.

BIDEN: "Are you ready to choose freedom over democracy? Because that's America!" 😏

pic.twitter.com/VaiHZhcwLe

— RNC Research (@RNCResearch) [April 18, 2024](#)

"When people were concerned about Ronald Reagan having cognitive decline near the end of his second term, it was nothing like this," the Conservative Brief wrote on X (formerly Twitter). *"Look in the mirror and ask yourself, truthfully, if this is the man you want in charge of our security, our economy, and our country for another four years?"*

Biden has a long history of similar slip-ups, and was ridiculed for a 2019 campaign speech in which he declared: "We choose unity over division. We choose science over fiction. We choose truth over facts."

Republicans insist that Biden's cognitive faculties are declining, and that this decline has accelerated over his three years in the White House. Video footage of the president shaking hands with [imaginary people](#), getting [lost](#) when out in public, and telling reporters that he had just met with [long-dead](#) world leaders have served to bolster their case.

In February, US Justice Department prosecutor Robert Hur opted not to charge Biden for mishandling classified documents, noting in a report that the president suffered extreme memory lapses and didn't possess the *"mental state of willfulness"* needed to commit a crime.

An Associated Press poll last month found that six out of ten American adults doubt Biden's mental capacity to serve as president. <https://www.rt.com/news/596344-biden-freedom-democracy-gaffe/>

Ukraine secures another benefactor

South Korea has signed a framework agreement on economic cooperation with Kiev, including \$2.1 billion in low-interest loans

21 Apr, 2024 17:46



South Korean Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok poses with his Ukrainian counterpart, Sergey Marchenko, after signing an aid deal on Friday in Washington. © South Korean Finance Ministry

South Korea has followed through on its pledge to provide more aid to Ukraine, signing a framework agreement that clears the way to give Kiev \$2.1 billion in low-interest loans to help shore up its finances.

South Korean Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok and his Ukrainian counterpart, Sergey Marchenko, signed the deal on Friday in Washington, where both men had traveled to attend G7, IMF and World Bank meetings. Seoul previously gave Ukraine \$200 million in humanitarian aid amid its conflict with Russia and promised to provide an additional \$2.1 billion through long-term loans.

"Friday's agreement was meant to lay the legal foundation on credit assistance," the South Korean Finance Ministry said on Sunday in a [statement](#). *"The two sides agreed to explore projects together that help Ukraine's reconstruction and development."*

The **deal comes at a time when Russian forces are making battlefield gains and Ukraine's cash-strapped government is struggling to ramp up weapons production.** Marchenko told G7 finance ministers that although Ukraine's government has made progress in boosting its revenue and borrowing money domestically, *"internal measures have only limited effect."* He added, *"Ukraine's financial needs in the conditions of full-scale war are significant, and international support continues to be vital."*

South Korea has faced pressure from the US and other Western allies to boost its support for Ukraine, but it has sought to avoid raising tensions with Russia. Although Seoul has maintained an official policy of providing only non-lethal aid to Kiev – the country has a law against sending weapons to war zones –

President Yoon Suk-yeol's administration reportedly agreed to transfer over 300,000 [artillery shells](#) to Ukraine last year.

The framework agreement with Ukraine calls for South Korea to start providing low-interest loans in 2025. US lawmakers passed a long-stalled Ukraine aid bill on Saturday. House Speaker Mike Johnson won more support for the legislation by reclassifying some of the nearly \$61 billion that will be given to Kiev as loans that will supposedly be paid back at some point. <https://www.rt.com/news/596356-south-korea-signs-ukraine-aid-agreement/>

A similar program has already been introduced for male students at universities

21 Apr, 2024 16:30

Ukrainian high school and vocational school students could soon be required to undergo basic military training, according to a new bill backed by the Parliamentary Committee on Youth and Sports.

Details of the new proposal were reported by the local Judicial Newspaper on Sunday. According to the report, the Committee supported the measure, arguing that it would “contribute to the improvement of initial military training and military-patriotic education of Ukrainian youth.”

Military training is expected to be added to the curriculum at general secondary schools, vocational and pre-university schools and institutions of higher education. The new subject would be called ‘Defense of Ukraine’ and would be developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture in cooperation with the Defense Ministry.

Earlier this month, Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky signed a new bill tightening mobilization rules under which all Ukrainians – even those living abroad – are required to provide updated data about themselves to the military authorities within 60 days of the legislation taking effect. Also, all men between the ages of 18 to 60 are required to carry their military ID on them at all times.

Women will also be able to attend the new classes, but on a voluntary basis. However, earlier this month, Kiev's chief military adviser for gender issues, Oksana Grigorieva, urged Ukrainian women to be ready for conscription.

Zelensky signed another controversial mobilization law this month that lowers the age of conscription for men from 27 to 25.

The flurry of legislative activity comes as Kiev is struggling to replenish its losses in the conflict with Russia. In late February, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu claimed that Ukrainian forces had suffered more than 444,000 losses since the hostilities broke out in February 2022. Earlier this month, he said Kiev had lost more than 80,000 service members this year alone.

Ukrainian officials have suggested that they would need to call up an additional 500,000 soldiers to fill out the ranks, although it was later claimed that this figure had been reduced. <https://www.rt.com/russia/596347-ukrainian-schools-military-training/> **Turning the Ukrainian youth into Brownshirts? rdb**

Congressman Gaetz Releases Bombshell Report on State Department's American Troop Crisis Cover-up in Niger

April 18, 2024 [Press Release](#)

Washington, D.C. — This week on the House Floor, U.S. Congressman Matt Gaetz (FL-01) announced the release of his bombshell investigative report titled “Unwelcome in Niger: An Interim Report by Congressman Matt Gaetz on the American Troop Crisis in Niger,” detailing how U.S. Forces in Niger are facing imminent risk due to the State Department's coverup of intelligence in the region.

The investigative report, written by the Office of Congressman Matt Gaetz, includes interviews of active-duty U.S. service members stationed in Niger who have revealed a suppression of intelligence reports by the Department of State on the conditions American troops on the ground in Niger face, which has led to a crisis for our service members in that country. The investigative report was initiated, following a letter transmitted to Rep. Gaetz's office by a senior enlisted leader stationed at Air Base 101 in Niger.

Since the U.S.-trained Nigerien coup leaders took control of the country in mid-2023, there has been a cessation of diplomatic overflights. This has left the Department of Defense unable to execute planned troop rotations, in addition to being unable to deliver critical medical supplies, equipment,

and other routine materials. Furthermore, American contractors, and allies—Germany and Italy—have been prohibited from entering the country, and contracted support staff are quickly vacating when their visas (ineligible for renewal) lapse, leaving the maintenance of the U.S. bases being called into question.

The “Unwelcome in Niger: An Interim Report by Congressman Matt Gaetz on the American Troop Crisis in Niger” can be found [HERE](#). Additionally, exclusive coverage of the Rep. Gaetz’s Report on the American Troop Crisis in Niger by Breitbart News can be found [HERE](#). <https://gaetz.house.gov/media/press-releases/congressman-gaetz-releases-bombshell-report-state-departments-american-troop>

OP Ed

Who Said “Let My People Go!”... Anybody?

By: David Altschuler April 21, 2024

When, as a young adult, I skeptically attended my first Bible class in 1978, I assumed that the attendees would be... drooling like zombies. That’s the image of religious people often portrayed in secular homes and public schools. **Secular liberals pride themselves on nuanced thinking, genuine curiosity, and open-mindedness; they tend to view religious people quite differently.**

I love a good joke, but **this time the joke was on me.**

The topic that day was Noah, of ark-and-flood fame, one of the “good guys” of the Bible. The verse being discussed was [Genesis 6:9](#) where **Noah** is introduced as **“whole-hearted (or perfect) in his generation.”** Jewish commentators were quoted as disagreeing on whether this is an admiring description of Noah or not. Does this mean that Noah was great, despite being in a decadent society, suggesting he might have been even greater in a more moral environment? Or does it mean he was not so great, only seeming superior relative to the corrupt society around him? The discussion acknowledged both viewpoints, showing that human personality is subtle and complicated. The attendees at this lecture were engaging in deep, thoughtful analysis—not drooling!

So I came back the next week. And the next week...and the next month, year, decade, etc.

Even after 46 years, more subtleties and surprises continue to emerge from my re-readings of the Bible. Here’s another one, particularly relevant as Passover approaches.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְדַבֵּר אֵלָיו כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים שְׁלַח אֶת־עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי:

Hashem said to Moshe, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says Hashem, the God of the Hebrews: Let

My people go to worship Me.

Exodus 9:1

How many other Bible translations, books, songs and even movies feature Moses demanding that Pharaoh stop using Jews as slaves with the ringing words, “Let My people go!”

What a dramatic line! If only that is what the Hebrew words, “*shelach et ami*,” really mean.

It’s not an awful translation, perhaps a bit melodramatic. “Let My people go!” would more accurately have been written *shachreir et ami* (“Free my people!”). But the Hebrew word *shelach* means “send out,” or to add a touch of melodrama, “kick My people out,” which implies that the Jews were not motivated to leave!

Is that possible? Beaten and starved, yet not desperate to get out?

If “send My people out” is what God said, He must have understood that the Jews’ mindset did not match our popular image of Jewish desperation for freedom and independence.

When God first appeared to Moses at the burning bush, instructing him to accept the leadership of the Jews back in Egypt, God said “You will take out the children of Israel” ([Exodus 3:10-12](#)).

Moses announces to his fellow Jews that G-d will “send you out” ([3:20](#)).

Moses then confronted Pharaoh in [Exodus 5:1](#), demanding, “Send out My people,” a phrase he repeated before most of the forthcoming ten plagues described in Exodus 7:11-11:11.

And after the last plague, Pharaoh explicitly told Moses, “Get up and GO!” This was not merely permission to leave, but a demand that they MUST leave NOW.

“Take” and “Send” – are the words used throughout the story of the Exodus, never “Free” or “Release”.

Now we can consider why God might have chosen the terminology that He did.

One classical Jewish commentator suggests that the Jewish people knew from a tradition dating back to

Abraham that his descendants would be enslaved for 400 years ([Genesis 15:13](#)), yet they had been in Egypt for only about half that duration. Thus, Moses was suspected of fabricating his divine mission, and many slaves likely feared leaving Egypt prematurely. Several plausible start dates for the “400 years” make this theory historically interesting, but of less psychological interest.

It is more likely that the slaves needed to be “sent” or even “kicked” out because people often “prefer the devil they know to the devil they don’t know.” Leaving the advanced civilization of Egypt meant not knowing where the next meal would come from, where water might be found, and how one would survive the harsh elements of the desert. Parents had responsibility for their children (recall that the Bible says the Jews had very large families) and would wisely resist counting on ongoing miracles for sustenance.

Moreover, the Jews had been slaves for generations, not soldiers! Even if they crossed the Sinai desert, how would they defend themselves against the inhabitants of the Holy Land to which they were headed?

No, common sense indicated that while God would surely take them out of Egypt one day, that day had not yet arrived. It would take a year’s worth of plagues to devastate Egypt and convince the Jews that God intended for them to leave now — and, by then, there was little left in Egypt to keep them there.

In our times, an increasing number of Jews have been immigrating to Israel since the start of the war with Hamas on October 7th. The confusion and anarchy prevalent in much of Western civilization, along with a rise in overt antisemitism, are compelling many to leave their current homes. Effectively, these conditions are “sending” Jews back to their ancestral homeland—a place that is prepared, organized, and ready to welcome them with open arms. This contemporary migration, much like the Exodus, is shaped by both divine calling and the pressing circumstances in the countries they inhabit.

Israeli soldiers are risking their lives to protect us all from Islamic terrorism. But they need our help. [Sign up for Israel365 Action](#) to receive updates on how YOU can help fight Hamas and its supporters in the United States and around the world. <https://theisraelbible.com/who-said-let-my-people-go-anybody/>