

**From WarNew24/7:** <https://warnews247-gr.translate.goog/i-kina-esteile-opla-stin-rosia-o-oukranikos-stratos-katerripse-kinezikis-kataskevis-drone-sto-ntonetsk/? x tr sl=auto& x tr tl=en& x tr hl=en>

# Has China already given weapons to Russia? – The Ukrainians shot down a Chinese-made drone in Donetsk (images)

Downing of Chinese Mugin-5

16/03/2023 - 16:31 in Main topics , Ukraine

**The Ukrainian military shot down a Chinese Mugin-5 drone in the Donetsk region, CNN reported.**

According to the American television network, soldiers of the Ukrainian Armed Forces led journalists to the place where the wreckage of the unmanned aircraft was located, which they said they shot down over the weekend with an automatic Kalashnikov AK-47.

The drone, according to the Ukrainian military, was flying at a very low altitude – close enough to be shot down with a handgun. The reporters also said that a crater was created in the ground where the drone fell.

The Mugin-5s are manufactured by a Chinese manufacturer based in the port city of Xiamen on China's east coast.

CNN notes that the drones are known as "Alibaba drones" because they have been available for sale for up to \$15,000 in Chinese markets from the Alibaba and Taobao e-commerce platforms.

**Mugin Limited confirmed to CNN that it was its own drone and described the incident as "extremely unpleasant".**

**"We do not approve of the use. We are doing everything we can to stop it,"** a spokesperson for Mugin Limited told CNN.

Russian Mugin-5 UAV (Chinese made) was shot down by 111th TD brigade.  
[pic.twitter.com/H0ahfcvtxC](https://pic.twitter.com/H0ahfcvtxC)

– Paul Jawin (@PaulJawin) [March 12, 2023](#)

In Donetsk region, the Ukrainian military shot down a modernized Chinese Mugin-5 drone – CNN

On the night of March 11 in Donetsk region, soldiers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine shot down a modernized Mugin-5 drone launched by the enemy with an AK-47 assault rifle.

/1 [pic.twitter.com/9hYcz1S2iu](https://pic.twitter.com/9hYcz1S2iu)

– Lew Anno Suport #Ukraine 24/2-22 (@anno1540) [March 16, 2023](#)

**MORE -**

**From WarNew24/7:** <https://warnews247-gr.translate.goog/rosiko-ypovrychio-robot-entopise-to-amerikaniko-drone-mq-9-reaper-se-vathos-900-metron-megali-kinitopiisi-tou-rosikou-stolou/? x tr sl=auto& x tr tl=en& x tr hl=en>

# The Russians imposed a naval blockade: An underwater robot detected the American MQ-9 Reaper drone at a depth of 900 meters near Sevastopol (upd)

Big tech leak from US to Russia/China and Iran

16/03/2023 - 21:17 in Main Topics , Russia

FO  
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**Full confirmation for WarNews247: The Russian Navy spotted the US MQ-9 Reaper drone near the port of Sevastopol in Crimea, at a depth of 900 meters, as reported by the Russian media outlet Forpost, citing sources from the Russian Ministry of Defense.**

The units of the Russian Navy had started from the first moment the efforts to locate the wreckage of the drone, which was found at the bottom of the sea, 60 kilometers from Sevastopol, at a depth of 850-900 meters.

According to information, the Russians have already collected some parts of the American drone.

*"An underwater robot descended to the bottom of the sea and discovered the MQ-9 Reaper at a depth of about 850-900 meters. Not far from this zone is the deep-water branch of the South Stream gas pipeline,"* the Russian defense source told ForPost.

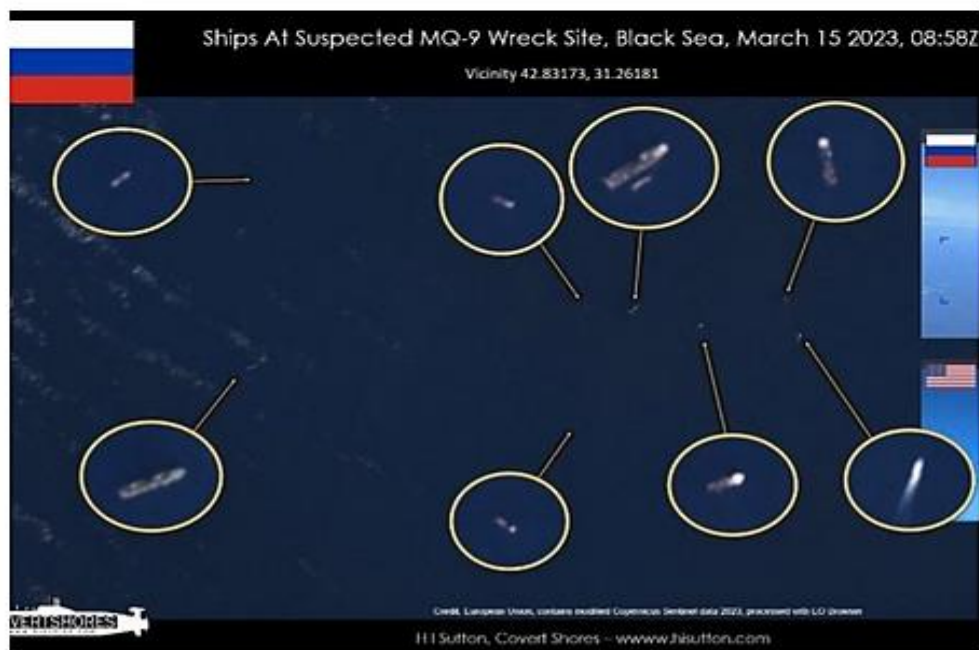
A Russian warship is currently on duty on the surface of the water in the area where the US aircraft crashed, and the perimeter of the crash site is being guarded.

The final decision is now awaited on the next actions regarding the operations to retrieve the drone from the bottom of the sea.

As the same source claims, the Russian Ministry of Defense is interested in recovering the "brain" and engine of the MQ-9 to study them.

If the lift operation is finally completed, it will be a major technology leak from the US to Russia/China and Iran.

See a satellite image of the Russian Navy's naval blockade in the Black Sea region



The Pentagon confirmed

MORE -

**From WarNew24/7:** <https://warnews247-gr.translate.goog/cheirourgos-o-rosos-pilotos-me-eligmo-psekase-to-amerikaniko-mq-9-reaper-kai-to-esteile-ston-pato-tis-mavris-thalassas-vid/? x tr sl=auto& x tr tl=en& x tr hl=en>

## The Russian pilot is a "surgeon": With a maneuver he sprayed the American MQ-9 Reaper and sent it to the bottom of the Black Sea (vid)

What does the Lieutenant General say K. Iatridis

16/03/2023 - 15:56 in Main Topics , Russia

**In an amazing maneuver, the Russian Su-27 pilot "sprayed" the American MQ-9 Reaper drone with fuel, driving it to the bottom of the Black Sea. In fact, according to the Lieutenant General e.a. K. Iatridis, the Russian pilot probably used an afterburner.**

**In more detail, the US military's European Command released footage of Tuesday's "four by four" between a US surveillance drone and a Russian fighter jet, which took place over the Black Sea.**

The newly declassified video depicts critical moments of the aerial encounter, which the Pentagon said lasted 30-40 minutes.

The video shows the MQ-9 Reaper drone's camera pointing back towards its tail and the aircraft's rear-mounted propeller spinning. A Russian Su-27 fighter jet is then seen approaching.

As it approaches, the Russian fighter drops fuel as it intercepts the American drone.

In another piece of footage, the Russian aircraft makes another pass. As it approaches, it drops fuel again. The drone footage then cuts out. A little later, the propeller of the American drone appears to have been damaged by the release of fuel and afterburn.

There is no conflict in any case.

With the propeller damaged, the drone crashed in the waters southwest of Crimea.

At the time of its crash, two US officials told CNN that the operators had remotely shut down the drone's sensitive software, reducing the risk of classified material falling into Russian hands.

[Watch the video](#)

**MORE –**

## Cuba accepts Russian payment system

**ATMs in Havana allow cash withdrawals in pesos using MIR cards issued in Russia**

16 Mar, 2023 10:27

**Cuban banks have started accepting MIR cards, Russia's alternative to Visa and Mastercard, the payment system announced on Tuesday.**

**Several banks in Havana have installed ATMs displaying the logo of the MIR system, and offering the option to withdraw cash using Russian bank cards in Cuban pesos.**

**"The MIR payment system continues to work on expanding the acceptance of the cards in friendly countries including Cuba,"** the network's press service noted, adding that it is now focused on enabling transactions using MIR cars in Cuban shops, restaurants and other retail outlets.

**Russia launched direct flights to Cuba in December,** as the Caribbean country is a popular destination for Russian tourists. Moscow and Havana are seeking to boost their economic ties, with a Russian trading house opening in the Cuban capital.

**Russia started developing its own national payment system when the US targeted the country with sanctions** in 2014. Last year, as Moscow was hit by further sanctions in response to its military operation in Ukraine, including the blocking of many Russian banks from SWIFT, the government started promoting the domestic system as a reliable alternative. Russia's SPFS ensures the transfer of financial messages between banks both inside and outside the country. <https://www.rt.com/business/572969-cuba-accepts-russian-mir-payment-cards/>

## **African nation wants to join BRICS**

*Zimbabwe considers the group a new force in international relations, a senior politician says*

16 Mar, 2023 08:11

**The Zimbabwean government would like to become a member of the BRICS economic bloc, the speaker of the ruling party ZANU-PF said on Wednesday.**

**"We made it clear that we would like to become a member of the BRICS," Christopher Mutsvangwa told Russia's RIA Novosti news agency.**

**The official added that his country is interested in developing alternatives to the Western-dominated SWIFT payment network.** In his view, BRICS could contribute to that.

Mutsvangwa described **BRICS as a new force in international relations**, and said he hopes its growth and expansion will continue.

**The five BRICS nations – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – account for more than 40% of the world's population and nearly a quarter of global GDP.**

Earlier this year, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that *"more than a dozen"* nations have expressed an interest in entering the BRICS alliance.

They include Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Egypt, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. <https://www.rt.com/africa/573030-zimbabwe-russia-brics-membership/> **More and more nations are shifting from the west financial/political group (aka the globalist group) to the eastern dominated group. The US is rapidly sliding down the slippery slope of oblivion. Such was the fate of most great empires who fell from their founding principles.- rdb**

## **US estimates 'upwards' of 100,000 Ukrainian soldiers killed – Politico**

*Washington is concerned by Kiev's dwindling supply of ammunition, air defenses and experienced troops, according to the outlet*

16 Mar, 2023 09:05

**US officials estimate that more than 100,000 Ukrainian troops have been killed since the outbreak of the conflict with Russia last February, Politico has reported, without disclosing its sources.**

**Washington is concerned by Kiev's lack of ammunition, air defenses and experienced soldiers in the run-up to a major Ukrainian offensive expected later in spring, the US news website said** in a report on Wednesday.

**"Upwards of 100,000 Ukrainian forces have died in the year-long war, US officials estimate, including the most experienced soldiers," Politico wrote.**

*"Many of these losses are taking place in Bakhmut,"* it added. The city, which Russia calls Artyomovsk, is a key Ukrainian stronghold and logistics hub in the People's Republic of Donetsk. Russian forces have been advancing on Artyomovsk since August last year, and, according to Wagner Private Military Company chief Evgeny Prigozhin, have now almost fully encircled the city and taken control of its eastern part.

**Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky has repeatedly insisted that he will not surrender Artyomovsk, despite reports of tensions with US officials, who have allegedly urged Kiev to withdraw and cut its losses.** Earlier this week, Zelensky again said that the defense of the key city would be reinforced.

**On Monday, the Washington Post reported: "US and European officials have estimated that as many as 120,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed or wounded since the start of Russia's invasion early last year."**

**Politico pointed out that Washington and Brussels can only guess the extent of Ukraine's losses, as Kiev keeps this information secret even from its Western backers, who have provided it with billions of dollars' worth of weapons.**

Speaking after Wednesday's virtual meeting of the multinational Ukraine Defense Contact Group, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said, **"Ukraine doesn't have any time to waste."**

*"We have to deliver swiftly and fully on our promised commitments"* to Kiev, including supplies of *"armored capabilities,"* training for Ukrainian troops, spare parts and other things, he urged.

**Last week, Russia's Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu announced that Ukraine has lost at least 11,000 troops during the fighting in February. The number of killed and wounded on the Ukrainian side had risen by more than 40% since January when it stood at 6,500, he added.**

*"The support of the Kiev regime by NATO countries doesn't lead to the success of the Ukrainian troops on the battlefield. On the contrary, there is a significant increase in losses among the personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine,"* the minister said.

Shoigu last provided an estimate of Ukraine's casualties in the conflict back in September. At the time, he said that they amounted to more than 100,000, with at least 61,000 troops killed and almost 50,000 wounded.

<https://www.rt.com/news/573062-ukraine-troops-killed-politico/>

## **'Serious military developments' are coming in Ukraine conflict – envoy**

***Kiev is suffering heavy losses, with its prospects looking bleak, a senior Russian diplomat said***

16 Mar, 2023 10:24

**Ukraine is being plagued by mounting military problems which do not bode well for its fortunes on the battlefield, Russia's deputy permanent representative to the UN said on Wednesday.**

**Speaking to American journalist Kim Iversen, Dmitry Polyanskiy was asked where he thought the Ukraine conflict was heading, with one possible scenario being NATO's direct involvement.**

The diplomat said **Moscow would prefer to avoid such an outcome, as a stand-off between the US-led military bloc and Russia "would be dangerous for the whole world."**

However, he claimed that the **"Ukrainian troops are now in a very poor situation,"** pointing to evidence that they *"are really suffering heavy losses"*.

**"The new conscripts are being used as cannon fodder after two-three days of training,"** the senior diplomat claimed. In his view, the *"regime"* of Ukrainian President Vladimir **Zelensky "has become hostage of its own policy and of its promises to Western countries that it is capable of winning militarily over Russia" if it is being supplied with weapons.**

The Ukrainians are willing to show they are capable of a counter-offensive and do not want *"any damage to their image,"* which is why the **situation around the key Donbass city of Artyomovsk, known as Bakhmut in Ukraine, "is really very bad" for the country,** Polyanskiy said.

*"There are a lot of [Ukrainian] troops that are on the brink of being encircled. Casualties are immense,"* the diplomat continued, suggesting that Kiev is throwing in troops *"just to support the prestige"* of Zelensky and his promises to the West.

*"The weather conditions are also not in favor of the Ukrainian army, because they can't use heavy machines for their tasks. So I think we are on the eve of quite serious military developments there, not in favor of Ukraine,"* Polyanskiy concluded.

The fight for Artyomovsk, a major foothold and logistics hub for Kiev's forces, has been raging for months now, with Moscow's troops recently capturing several villages around the strategic city. Earlier this month, Wagner Private Military Company chief Evgeny Prigozhin claimed that Russian forces were in full control of the eastern part of Artyomovsk.

Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky has described this battle as *"one of the hardest."* On Wednesday, he promised to reinforce the city.

Both sides recognize the strategic importance of the city in the Donetsk People's Republic. Last week, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu said control over Artyomovsk would allow Moscow's forces *"further offensive actions deep"* into Ukrainian defenses, a statement which was largely echoed by Zelensky himself.

<https://www.rt.com/russia/573066-military-developments-ukraine-russia/>

## **Kiev's plan for counteroffensive revealed in media report**

**Western weapons and training aimed at countering Ukraine's manpower losses, Politico said, citing US officials**

16 Mar, 2023 10:00

**Washington expects Kiev to launch a counterattack against Russian troops in May, using the weapons that NATO countries have been sending to Ukraine,** Politico reported on Wednesday, citing unnamed US officials.

**US military aid packages “going back four or five months have been geared toward what Ukraine needs for this counteroffensive,” one source cited** by the outlet said on condition of anonymity.

**Kiev is preparing the operation even as its manpower and resources are being drained,** Politico reports, by its continued clinging to the Donbass city of Artyomovsk, which it calls Bakhmut. The city, which senior US officials assessed has only symbolic significance, became the scene of some of the most intensive fighting between Russia and Ukraine this year.

**While both sides reportedly suffered significant casualties fighting for Artyomovsk, Kiev lost some of its most experienced troops,** Politico said. US officials have suggested that Ukraine should pull out of the city, which President Vladimir Zelensky declared a fortress. With the advice unheeded, America is now urging Ukrainian troops to conserve artillery munitions, the report explained.

**According to the outlet, Kiev is yet to settle on a strategy for its counteroffensive.** One scenario involving a push across the Dnieper River near the city of Kherson is “not realistic,” US officials believe, since Ukraine does not have the manpower for an amphibious operation of that kind. The second one would require advancing from the north in an attempt to cut off Russian troops from Crimea.

**The US has been stressing that it was up to Zelensky and the Ukrainian leadership to decide how exactly they would conduct a military operation. But senior American generals hosted Ukrainian officials in Wiesbaden, Germany this month to help them with wargaming the upcoming operation,** Politico's report notes. There has also been an effort to train Ukrainian troops in NATO tactics to replenish battlefield losses.

**Russia believes that the Ukrainian conflict is a US proxy war against it, with Ukrainian soldiers serving as cannon fodder.** Moscow said Washington prevented Kiev from signing a peace agreement with Russia in the first months of the conflict, telling Zelensky to continue fighting instead. <https://www.rt.com/news/573063-ukraine-counteroffensive-may-politico/> **[The last statement in red is actually the most accurate one. – rdb]**

## **Switzerland tells Ukrainians to sell their cars – media**

**The measure is about “equal treatment” of all refugee groups living on benefits, social services agency says**

16 Mar, 2023 12:23

**Ukrainian refugees receiving financial assistance in Switzerland might be forced to sell their cars in order to keep getting their assistance payments, news outlet 20 Minuten has reported, citing social services.**

**The new Swiss regulations oblige any person that is living off benefits a year after arriving in the country to pass a revaluation of their assets, the outlet said on Tuesday.**

**Ukrainian refugees with so-called ‘S status,’ – which allows them to leave and enter Switzerland freely – also fall into this category, it pointed out.**

**According to the Swiss Conference for Social Assistance (SKOS), which issues guidelines for social welfare in the Alpine country, cars are to be disposed-of “if their value exceeds the asset allowance for the relevant household size.”**

**In the central canton of Lucerne, the authorities have set a deadline of one month for those getting social assistance to sort out issues** with their personal vehicles.

**The local Asylum and Refugee Service (DAF) branch explained to 20 Minuten that it counts cars as assets for people with ‘S status,’ meaning that the sum earned from the sale of the vehicle will be excluded from the benefits.** Even if a car isn't sold, its value will still be estimated, affecting the calculation of the amount of the financial aid, it added.

**More than 130 Ukrainian refugees with cars are currently receiving social support** in Lucerne, with “the majority of the registered vehicles exceeding the asset allowance,” which is 4,000 Swiss francs (around \$4,380) per person or 10,000 Swiss francs (around \$10,900) per family, DAF said.

**“It's about equal treatment [of Ukrainians] with all other groups of people in Switzerland, who**

**receive social assistance. Vehicles** are also counted towards their respective assets," a representative of the agency said.

Other Swiss cantons are also working to implement the new regulations, but it remains unclear how many cars will actually need to be sold, the outlet said. Social services in Bern told 20 Minuten that *"there have been no sales yet."*

More than 79,342 Ukrainian refugees fleeing the conflict with Russia have arrived in Switzerland over the past year, according to the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM). 20 Minuten estimated that at least several thousand of them are in possession of vehicles. <https://www.rt.com/news/573072-ukraine-refugees-switzerland-cars/>

**[HUmMMM perhaps a similar program should be implemented in the US for those on government assistance. That might decrease the shortage of workers we currently have. There are still help wanted signs everywhere. – rdb]**

## With Russia visit, Xi pursues effort to upend U.S.-led global order

Story by Lily Kuo, Meaghan Tobin • 4h ago

Fresh off a legislative congress where he cemented his vision for governing China, Xi Jinping turned to how he would **create a better world order**. It would be based on mutual respect, tolerance and equality — and China would be its natural leader, he told heads of political parties for an array of countries, including Russia and South Africa, Nicaragua and East Timor.

**"Chinese-style modernization does not follow the old path of colonial plunder** or the hegemony of strong countries," Xi told them in a video call Wednesday, sitting at a desk surrounded by Chinese and Communist Party flags.

**"The world does not need another Cold War,"** he said, announcing his new concept — the **"global civilization initiative,"** a set of lofty guiding principles for a **"new type of international relations" that China is building.**

**Xi's comments were a clear rebuke of the United States — and a reflection of the harder tack he is taking as he ramps up China's diplomatic efforts** with an expected visit to Russia.

President Vladimir Putin [said in December](#) that he had invited Xi for a state visit in the spring. That trip could happen [as soon as next week](#), Reuters reported Monday. **MORE -** <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/with-russia-visit-xi-pursues-effort-to-upend-us-led-global-order/ar-AA18H4M6>

## After suspected Hezbollah bombing, Gallant warns those responsible 'will regret it'

*Defense minister briefed on Monday morning blast carried out by man who infiltrated Israel from Lebanon; says Israel will retaliate*

By [Emanuel Fabian](#) Today, 12:55 pm



*Defense Minister Yoav Gallant (center) speaks with IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi (left), chief of the Northern Command Ori Gordin (right), and commander of the 91st territorial division Shai Klapper (back to camera), at the Har Adir lookout point on the Lebanon border, March 16, 2023. (Elad Malka/Defense Ministry)*

**Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Thursday issued a warning to "whoever is responsible" for a bombing carried out by a man who infiltrated Israel from Lebanon earlier this week, without explicitly mentioning the prime suspect, the Hezbollah terror group.**

**"Whoever is responsible for the attack will regret it. We'll find the right place and time and we'll hit them,"**

Gallant said following a briefing with army officials at the 91st territorial division, based at the Biranit camp on the northern frontier.

**It was only on Wednesday that the Israel Defense Forces and Shin Bet security agency published details of the Monday morning attack, which left a man seriously wounded and had been kept under wraps due to security concerns.**

Gallant was briefed Thursday by IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi, Northern Command chief Ori Gordin, and commander of the 91st territorial division Shai Klapper.

"The defense minister received the initial findings from the investigation into the attack, as well as the

intelligence findings to complete the picture of the situation,” Gallant’s office said in a statement. W [MORE - https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-suspected-hezbollah-bombing-gallant-warns-those-responsible-will-regret-it/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-suspected-hezbollah-bombing-gallant-warns-those-responsible-will-regret-it/)

## Man shot dead in northern Bedouin town in suspected gangland slaying

*Resident of Tuba-Zangariyye killed in car; police say incident related to ongoing feud between rival groups; 34 members of Arab community killed since beginning of year*

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 11:57 am



*Screen capture from video of the scene where a man was shot dead in the northern Bedouin town of Tuba-Zangariyye, March 16, 2023. (Twitter. Used in accordance with Clause 27a of the Copyright Law)*

**A man was shot dead Thursday in the northern Bedouin town of Tuba-Zangariyye in what the Israel Police said was an incident tied to feuding organized crime groups.**

**The man, 48, a resident of the town, was killed in a car as it was apparently being driven. An image shared on social media showed the bullet-ridden vehicle in a ditch at the side of the highway.**

**It was the 34th killing in the Arab community since the beginning of the year,** according to the Abraham Initiatives nonprofit, which campaigns against violence in the community.

A video of the scene showed a group of people apparently carrying someone from the side of the road to a waiting car. In the background, another car can be seen on fire.

Social media reports said the burning vehicle was used by the shooter and that it was then destroyed by an explosive device. [MORE - https://www.timesofisrael.com/man-shot-dead-in-northern-bedouin-town-in-suspected-gangland-slaying/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/man-shot-dead-in-northern-bedouin-town-in-suspected-gangland-slaying/)

## 4 Palestinians, including terror group members, killed by Israeli troops in Jenin

*IDF confirms forces operating in West Bank city; Palestinian media identify two men as senior members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, respectively*

By [Emanuel Fabian](#) Today, 4:39 pm



*Armed men, said to be undercover Israeli forces, are seen operating in the West Bank city of Jenin, March 16, 2023. (Screenshot: Twitter)*

**Four Palestinians, at least two of whom were members of terror groups, were shot dead Thursday by undercover Israeli forces during a daytime raid in the West Bank city of Jenin, according to Palestinian media reports.**

**The Israel Defense Forces confirmed troops were operating in Jenin but did not immediately provide further details.**

**The Palestinian Authority health ministry said four people were killed and at least 23 others**

**were hurt** in the raid, five of them seriously.

Palestinian media outlets identified the slain men as Yusuf Shreim, 29, a member of the military wing of the Hamas terror group, and Nidal Khazem, 28, a member of Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

**The reports claimed the pair were senior members of their terror groups.**

The other two Palestinians were named by the PA health ministry as 16-year-old Omar Awadin and 37-year-old Luay al-Zughair.

The extent of their involvement in the clashes was not immediately clear.



الشهيدان يوسف شريم من كتائب القسام ونضال خازم من سرايا القدس اللذين ارتقيا في جنين قبل قليل.

[pic.twitter.com/w8kt5UcPUs](https://pic.twitter.com/w8kt5UcPUs)

— فلسطين الآن (@paltimes2015) [March 16, 2023](#)

Graphic footage from the scene showed one of the men shot dead outside a store in the city.

Another clip appeared to show undercover forces retreating to a vehicle.

الشهيد الفتى عمر عوادين [pic.twitter.com/jm64m7vIAU](https://pic.twitter.com/jm64m7vIAU)

— فلسطين الآن (@paltimes2015) [March 16, 2023](#)

A local wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad said its members had clashed with the undercover forces who “carried out a cowardly assassination of resistance fighters.” **MORE - <https://www.timesofisrael.com/4-palestinians-including-terror-group-members-killed-by-israeli-troops-in-jenin/>**

## On Berlin visit, Netanyahu denies he’s working to curtail independence of judiciary

*German chancellor says he’s watching overhaul debate ‘with great concern,’ urges weighing Herzog plan; PM insists Israel ‘will remain a liberal democracy’*

By [Lazar Berman](#) Today, 7:38 pm



*German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (R) and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu give a joint press conference following talks at the Chancellery in Berlin on March 16, 2023. (Tobias SCHWARZ / AFP)*

**BERLIN — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that Israel is and “will remain a liberal democracy,” after he rejected a judicial reform framework proposed by President Isaac Herzog a night earlier.**

**Standing alongside German Chancellor Olaf Scholz — who urged the prime minister to consider a compromise deal on the plan to overhaul the judiciary and said Berlin was watching the debate**

**unfold “with great concern” — Netanyahu portrayed himself as a champion of democracy.**

**“I’ve helped liberalize the Israeli system. Liberalize its economy,” he said. “Liberalize its way of life. Advance the rights of LGBTs.” Does this give you an idea of current ethos in Europe. Totally debauched. The European continent has gone down the tube. – rdbj**

**“The image that is foisted as though we are trying to bring a judicial reform to curtail the independence of the judiciary is not true,” Netanyahu insisted, saying that the judicial branch has become too powerful in Israel.**

**“We will have the same balance that exists in any other democracy” after the plan is implemented, Netanyahu argued. He hit back against those depicting him as a “potentate who’s abolishing democracy and all this nonsense,” calling such charges “absurd” and “preposterous.”**

Scholz, meanwhile, said Germany has been closely monitoring the ongoing debate, and that “as Israel’s friend, we hope that the last word has not been spoken” on Herzog’s alternate proposal.

**Netanyahu’s visit, coinciding with a day of protests in Israel, was also marked by demonstrations in Berlin against his coalition’s judicial overhaul legislation.**

On Wednesday evening, Herzog unveiled his “People’s Framework” proposal, urging both sides of the debate “not to destroy the country” in a power struggle over the judiciary, but rather seize the opportunity for “a formative constitutional moment.” <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-berlin-netanyahu-tells-scholz-israel-is-and-will-remain-a-liberal-democracy/>

## Protesters block roads in day of ‘escalating resistance’ as PM nixes Herzog proposal

*5 arrested for painting red line on street leading to Supreme Court in Jerusalem; reserivts protest in Haifa and Bnei Brak; ‘disruptions’ planned in 150 locations*

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 4:58 am Updated at 8:50 am



*Reserve soldiers and activists protest against the government's planned judicial overhaul, in the city of Bnei Brak, March 16, 2023. (Flash90)*

**Protests began early Thursday, with hundreds of thousands of Israelis expected to take part in a day of “escalating resistance to dictatorship” as the coalition headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu forged ahead with controversial legislation to radically overhaul the judiciary and restrict the powers of the High Court of Justice.**

**Acts of disruption and protest began before dawn, with demonstrators painting a bright red line in the street leading up to the Supreme Court in**

**Jerusalem**, saying it symbolized the link direct link between the independence of the courts and free speech.

Police said they arrested five people for vandalizing public property.

**Leading the early-morning protests were a group of IDF reservists known as “Brothers in Arms.” One group of navy veterans blocked the entrance to Haifa port.**

**Another group set up an “army recruitment center” outside the municipality building in the ultra-Orthodox city of Bnei Brak, saying, “We have come to pass the burden of recruiting to the ultra-Orthodox population because if there is a dictatorship here, we will have to come here and recruit. We repeat: Without democracy, there is no people’s army.”**

They also blocked the main road in the city. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/protesters-plan-day-of-escalating-resistance-as-pm-nixes-herzogs-compromise-offer/>

## **Israel signals EU foreign policy chief unwelcome in Israel**

*Josep Borrell angers Jerusalem with an article that appears to equate Israeli victims of Palestinian attacks with terrorists killed in Israeli army operations*

By [Lazar Berman](#) Today, 10:59 am



*Josep Borrell, the high representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, speaks with members of the European parliament March 14, 2023, in Strasbourg, France. (AP Photo/Jean-Francois Badias)*

**After European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell harshly criticized Israel on several occasions in recent weeks, Israel has signaled that he is not welcome to make an official visit to the country, officials said Wednesday.**

**“He is not banned from coming,” an Israeli official told The Times of Israel, “but we don’t see the purpose of such a visit right now, and we’re not helping to coordinate such a trip.”**

“We don’t think it’s a good time to come,” he said.

Foreign Minister Eli Cohen blasted Borrell on Tuesday for allegedly drawing a comparison between Palestinian terror attacks and IDF operations in an article he wrote.

The EU told The Times of Israel that it was “not aware” of any restrictions on Borrell visiting Israel. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-signals-eu-foreign-policy-chief-unwelcome-in-israel/>

## **In first, Israel said to authorize sale of defensive military equipment to Ukraine**

*Report says FM Cohen told Zelensky that Israel will supply electronic warfare system to defend against drone attacks, seeking to learn how it performs against Iran-made weapons*

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 5:43 pm

**For the first time since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Israel has authorized the sale of defensive military equipment to Kyiv, a report said Thursday.**

According to the Walla news site, which cited three Israeli and Ukrainian officials, Jerusalem approved export licenses for two Israeli companies to sell electronic warfare systems with a range of some 40 kilometers (25 miles) that could be used to defend against drone attacks.

Russia has sent thousands of Iranian-made suicide drones to attack targets across Ukraine, particularly power stations and other crucial infrastructure.

The report said that the export licenses were approved by Foreign Minister Eli Cohen and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in mid-February. Cohen then informed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky of the decision during his visit in Kyiv.

A Ukrainian official told Walla that while the country was pleased with the development, it was still pressing Israel to supply anti-missile systems, saying: "On that, we have a gap that we are not managing to solve." **MORE - <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-israel-said-to-authorize-sale-of-defensive-military-equipment-to-ukraine/> this could be a very dangerous move for Israel. Assuming Russia will let them do this without a major censure is most questionable. They are already testing Russia with their attacks on Iranian installations in Syria. – rdb]**

## UAE to donate \$3 million to rehabilitate Palestinian town ravaged by settlers

*Emirati President bin Zayed pledges cash to repair buildings and property damaged in riot in Huwara last month, after 2 Israeli brothers killed in terror attack there*

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 2:55 pm

United Arab Emirates AE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has ordered that \$3 million be given to rehabilitate the West Bank Palestinian town of Huwara, where Israeli settlers rampaged last month in revenge for a deadly terror attack.

The money will be used to repair damaged buildings and help those whose property was ruined, UAE state media reported Thursday.

The Abu Dhabi Department of Municipalities and Transport will work with the Emirati-Palestinian Friendship Club to implement the project.

The London-based The National [reported](#) that the department held a meeting to discuss the funds with a Palestinian delegation that include the mayor of Huwara. It did not say when the meeting was held.

Hours after two Israeli brothers were gunned down by a Palestinian terrorist while driving through Huwara, south of Nablus, on February 26, hundreds of settlers went on a [destructive rampage](#) through the town, burning homes, cars, and storefronts, and assaulting Palestinians, leading to scores of injuries and the death of a Palestinian man in unclear circumstances. Palestinians say he was shot. **MORE - <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uae-to-donate-3-million-to-rehabilitate-palestinian-town-ravaged-by-settlers/>**

## Gallup poll: Democrats sympathies in Middle East shift to Palestinians

*Americans' views on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have become more polarized, Gallup reveals; 11-percentage-point jump in Democratic sympathy toward Palestinians while republicans still favor Israel*

Hadas Bar-Ad | 13:27

A Gallup poll published on Thursday shows an increasing trend of American Democrats sympathizing with Palestinians.

**According to the poll, 49% of their sympathy now lies with the Palestinians, as opposed to 38% with Israelis.**

The findings published by the American analytics and advisory company, reflect a new high in sympathy towards Palestinians.

The up-to-date data reflects an 11-percentage-point increase over the past year in Democrats' sympathy with the Palestinians. Additionally, Democrats not favoring a side in the conflict has also reached a new low, with 13%.

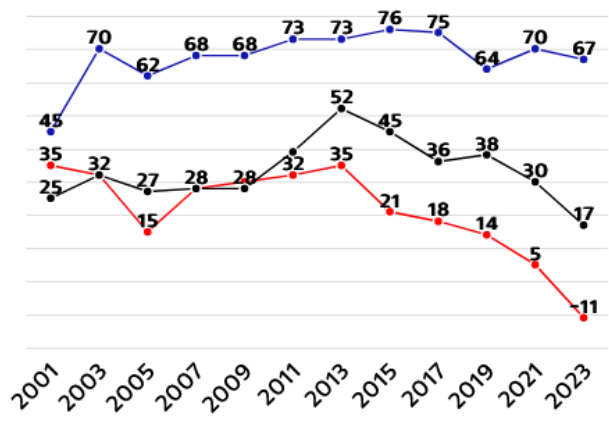
On the other hand, Republicans' views remain relatively unchanged, with 78% still sympathizing more with Israelis, and 11% with Palestinians.

Furthermore, Gallup shows that sympathy for Palestinians has grown amongst political independents as well (32%), but the majority still leans toward the Israelis - 49%.

## Net Sympathy for Israel in the Middle East Situation, by Party ID

Net sympathy for Israel is % more sympathetic toward Israel minus % more sympathetic toward the Palestinians.

● Republicans ● Democrats ● Independents



Amongst American adults in general, the percentage of Americans sympathizing more with Israel is similar to last year, standing at 54% in comparison to last year's 55%. However, this is the lowest its been since 2005.

Meanwhile, according to Gallup, sympathy towards Palestinians among U.S. adults has reached a new high of 31%, pointing to a growing gap between American public opinion on the matter.

However, when the question focuses on the countries, as opposed to the people, Americans view Israel much more favorably than they do the Palestinian Authority - 68% versus 26%.

The bottom line, Gallup claims, is that Americans' views on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have become more polarized. Democrats are growing more sympathetic to the Palestinians, while Republicans maintain their solid stance with Israelis.

The shift in public opinion could be partially explained by the escalation of Israeli-Palestinian hostilities over the past year.

However, the tendency to favor Israel as opposed to the PA suggests that while there may be an increasing call to address the problems of the Palestinian people amongst the Democrats,

the general public still wants solutions that respect Israel's needs.

Earlier this week, former New York governor Andrew Cuomo announced he was [forming a new pro-Israel group](#) targeting democrats.

"You can't denounce antisemitism, but waver on Israel's right to exist and defend itself," Cuomo said. "And it shouldn't be just our Jewish officials who speak, but it should be non-Jewish officials who speak first and loudest,"

Cuomo said. **MORE -** <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sypl7neg2>