

Man killed in Hezbollah barrage on Kiryat Shmona after deadly Israeli strike in Lebanon
Terror group says rocket attack on northern city a response to deaths of 7 in Habbariyeh; IDF says it targeted a 'significant terrorist' in overnight strike
By [Emanuel Fabian](#) and [Agencies](#) Today, 10:46 am



Firefighters and medics at the scene of a deadly rocket strike in Kiryat Shmona on March 27, 2024. Inset: Zaher Bashara, who was killed in the strike. (Jalaa MAREY / AFP)

A 25-year-old man was killed Wednesday morning as Hezbollah launched a barrage of rockets at the northern city of Kiryat Shmona, in what the terror group said was a response to a deadly Israeli airstrike in Lebanon hours earlier.

The Israel Defense Forces said some 30 rockets were launched at Kiryat Shmona in the attack. Hezbollah claimed to have launched dozens of projectiles at the city and a nearby army base.

Some of the rockets were seen being downed by the Iron Dome air defense system, but at least three struck the city, causing damage and casualties, authorities said.

One rocket directly struck an industrial building, resulting in a fire. The Fire and Rescue Services said it worked to extinguish the fire, as it pulled out a man from under the rubble.

The Magen David Adom ambulance service said the man, aged 25, who is not a Kiryat Shmona resident, was pulled out without vital signs. The service's medics declared his death at the scene.

He was named by media reports as Zaher Bashara, a resident of the Druze village of Ein Qiniyye.

<https://t.co/4VqUSdzU46@> | [guyvaron](#)
pic.twitter.com/SkMf9WMfme

— החדשות – N12 (@N12News) [March 27, 2024](#)

Another man in his 30s, who was unharmed, was rescued from the damaged building.

A home in Kiryat Shmona was also directly hit and a third rocket strike in the city damaged a car, local authorities said.

Hezbollah claimed responsibility for the attack on Kiryat Shmona, saying it targeted the northern city and a nearby army base with “dozens of rockets.”



Israeli security forces examine the site hit by a rocket fired from Lebanon, in Kiryat Shmona, northern Israel, March 27, 2024. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

The terror group said the attack was a response to an Israeli airstrike overnight in southern Lebanon's Habbariyeh, some five kilometers (three miles) from the border with Israel, which reportedly killed seven people.

Overnight, the IDF said it had struck a “military building” in Habbariyeh, killing a “significant terrorist” of the al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya group, along with several other operatives who

were with him in the building.

The IDF said the target, who was not named, had “advanced attacks against Israeli territory.”

Two security sources told Reuters that seven people were killed in a strike on an emergency and relief center belonging to Jamaa al-Islamiya in Habbariyeh.



People inspect destruction at the site of an overnight Israeli airstrike in Habbariyeh, Lebanon, on March 27, 2024. (AP Photo/Mohammed Zaatari)

On Tuesday, Jamaa al-Islamiya head Sheikh Mohammed Takkoush told the Associated Press that the group was closely coordinating with both Hezbollah and Hamas along the border with Israel, where they have claimed responsibility for several attacks over the past months.

“Part of [the attacks against Israeli forces] were in coordination with Hamas, which coordinates with Hezbollah,” he said, adding that direct cooperation with Hezbollah “is on the rise and this is being reflected in the field.” He did not elaborate further.

The group carried out attacks against Israel mainly from the southern city of Sidon, where it once enjoyed wide influence.

The group is one of Lebanon’s main Sunni factions but has kept a low profile politically over the years. It has one member in Lebanon’s 128-seat legislature. Elections within the group in 2022 brought its leadership closer to Hamas.

Two members of the group were killed in an Israeli strike in Beirut on January 2 that also killed top Hamas terrorist Saleh al-Arouri. Three others were killed in an Israeli strike earlier this month, Takkoush said.

The cross-border exchange came a day after the IDF struck Hezbollah sites deep in Lebanon in response to the terror group targeting a sensitive air traffic control base in northern Israel and a winery in a border community.



A fire is seen at a winery in the northern community of Avivim following a Hezbollah missile attack, March 26, 2024. (Ayal Margolin/Flash90)

Tuesday’s airstrike, near the northeastern town of Zboud, which is more than 110 kilometers from the border, was Israel’s deepest in Lebanon since the war against Hamas started on October 7.

After the IDF’s strikes in the Baalbek District, Hezbollah fired a barrage of around 50 rockets at northern Israel, claiming to target an army base in the Golan Heights.

In response to that barrage, the IDF carried out another strike against Hezbollah assets in the

Baalbek region.

Since October 8, Hezbollah-led forces have attacked Israeli communities and military posts along the border on a near-daily basis with rockets, drones, anti-tank missiles, and other means, with the group saying it is doing so to support Gaza amid the war there. Hezbollah is an Iranian proxy in Lebanon and Palestinian terror groups Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad are backed by Iran.

The IDF has regularly responded with strikes in Lebanon, while warning it will no longer tolerate Hezbollah’s presence on the frontier and warning of war in the north should ongoing international efforts fail to remove the terror group’s forces from the border area.

The war in Gaza erupted with Hamas's October 7 massacre, which saw some 3,000 terrorists burst across the border into southern Israel by land, air and sea, killing some 1,200 people and seizing 253 hostages. Vowing to destroy Hamas, Israel launched a wide-scale military campaign in Gaza. Hamas's Iran-backed ally Hezbollah responded with strikes and attacks on the northern front.



Smoke billows from the area of an Israeli air strike on the southern Lebanese village of Khiam near the border with Israel on March 23, 2024. (Rabih Daher/AFP)

So far, the skirmishes on the northern border have resulted in eight civilian deaths — including Wednesday's attack — on the Israeli side, as well as the deaths of 10 IDF soldiers and reservists. There have also been several attacks from Syria, without any injuries.

Hezbollah has named 251 members who have been killed by Israel during the ongoing skirmishes, mostly in Lebanon, but some also in Syria. In

Lebanon, another 42 operatives from other terror groups, a Lebanese soldier, and at least 50 civilians, three of whom were journalists, have been killed.

Amid the constant attacks from Lebanon, Israeli officials maintain the country will no longer accept Hezbollah's presence along the border, which is in contravention of the UN resolution that ended the 2006 Second Lebanon War. They say from those positions, the terrorists could launch an attack similar to Hamas's October 7 attacks in southern Israel.

Jerusalem also says the situation whereby tens of thousands of northern residents have been driven from their homes for months by Hezbollah's attacks is intolerable and unsustainable.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant warned in February that a possible truce in Gaza would not affect Israel's "objective" of pushing Hezbollah back from its northern border, by force or diplomacy.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/man-killed-in-hezbollah-barrage-on-kiryat-shmona-after-deadly-israeli-strike-in-lebanon/>

IDF pessimistic about settlement with Hezbollah on northern border

Army officials say significant military operation against Hezbollah clearly needed to allow northern residents to return to home, and decisions regarding northern front, as well as Rafah, nearing resolution

[Yoav Zitun](#)|10:47

The Washington Post reported Wednesday that Israel has indicated it might initiate an operation in Rafah immediately after Ramadan ends in mid-April if efforts to secure a hostage deal fail.

In the northern sector, military officials explain that the conflict is likely to end with some form of agreement rather than the complete dismantlement of Hezbollah, as has been the case with Hamas, but with stronger and more significant enforcement of keeping the terror group's elite Radwan forces away from the border.

Footage from rocket barrage toward Kiryat Shmona

Additionally, the IDF expresses pessimism regarding the likelihood of a near-term settlement through U.S.-French mediation.

IDF officials say that a significant military operation against Hezbollah is clearly needed to allow residents of the north to return to their homes, and decisions regarding the northern front, as well as the issue of Rafah, are nearing resolution.

Rocket strike on Kiryat Shmona (Photo: AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

Hezbollah fired approximately 40 rockets



Wednesday morning toward settlements in the Upper Galilee. Zaher Bashara, 32, was killed by a rocket strike at a factory in Kiryat Shmona, and another individual was lightly injured and rescued from a commercial building that suffered a direct hit in the city's industrial park.

Additional rockets caused damage to buildings and vehicles in the city. Sirens were also sounded in other settlements in the Galilee Panhandle, including Tel Hai, Ma'ayan Baruch, Kfar Yuval and Kfar Giladi.



Zaher Bashara

In response to the deadly attack, the IDF struck a series of Hezbollah targets along the border area and two "significant targets" deep inside Lebanon.

Overall, IDF strikes in the past two days have killed 12 terrorists in Lebanon, seven of whom were from the Sunni organization Jama'ah Islamiyah, with the remainder being Hezbollah operatives.

Military analysts suggest that the cell eliminated overnight may have been planning to carry out an attack in Israel, likely involving a ground infiltration into the country, possibly targeting the Mount Dov area, acting as a Hezbollah proxy, or executing a shooting attack near the border fence.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sk0v3h111a#autoplay>

After canceling top aides' trip to Washington, Netanyahu now seeking to reschedule
White House reveals PM's reversal hours after he tells visiting Republican senator that he canceled
delegation following US's 'very, very bad' decision not to veto UN resolution

By [Lazar Berman](#) and [Jacob Magid](#) Today, 9:18 pm



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denounces the US failure to veto a UN Security Council ceasefire and hostage resolution, while hosting Republican Senator Rick Scott of Florida at his Jerusalem office, March 27, 2024 (Youtube screenshot)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office reached out to the White House, asking to reschedule a meeting regarding a potential Israeli operation in Rafah, which the premier canceled earlier this week, a US official told The Times of Israel on Wednesday.

Netanyahu's office denied granting final authorization for any such trip, but an Israeli official told The Times of Israel that the reports were "not wrong" and that Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer and National Security Council chairman Tzachi Hanegbi would likely travel to Washington when the meeting was finalized.

The US official said the sides were working on a new date for the inter-agency meeting that was supposed to be held on Wednesday with Dermer and Hanegbi.

They also noted that top Biden officials National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, and CIA chief Bill Burns held "constructive" meetings with visiting Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and that Rafah was a key topic of discussion.

Earlier on Wednesday, Netanyahu defended canceling the trip to Washington as a protest of the Biden administration's decision to allow the adoption of a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate Gaza ceasefire and hostage release.

Hosting Republican Senator Rick Scott of Florida at his Jerusalem office on Wednesday, Netanyahu said he thought the US decision not to veto the resolution was "very, very bad."

"The bad thing about the US decision... was it encouraged Hamas to take a hard line and to believe that international pressure will prevent Israel from freeing the hostages and destroying Hamas," he said.

He insisted his move was "a message to Hamas: 'Don't bet on this pressure, it's not going to work.' I hope they got the message."



This handout photo shows Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shaking hands with US Senator Rick Scott, a Florida Republican, at his office in Jerusalem on March 27, 2024. (Haim Zach/GPO)

A senior US official told The Times of Israel on Tuesday that Hamas's rejection of the latest hostage deal was issued before the resolution that Washington allowed to pass, blaming Netanyahu for playing politics with his claims.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters in Jerusalem on Wednesday, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina downplayed the growing tensions between the Biden White House and the Israeli prime minister, saying

that the situation "is not as bad as it seems."

"I know it seems bad, but I'm there on the ground. There's a lot of common view in the Senate that Israel has to destroy Hamas militarily," he explained, adding that the fight over the UN Security Council resolution "will be behind us soon."

"Israel cannot afford to let Hamas or anyone else know that there will be a pause in fighting for 30 seconds without the hostages being released," he said, backing Israeli frustration over the US not using its veto.

Asked by The **Times of Israel** about the potential for the White House to slow down arms deliveries to Israel to pressure it to change its policies in Gaza, Graham said that "there would be a violent reaction in the Congress if there was a whiff of any suggestion that we're slowing down arms to Israel when it's in a fight for its very existence."

He said he **had not heard about any plans to delay or halt weapons shipments.**



Senator Lindsey Graham, R-SC, speaks in Jerusalem, March 27, 2024. (Lazar Berman/The Times of Israel)

Graham also told reporters that accusations that Israel is using starvation as a tool of war in Gaza are "bullshit."

"You're talking about an accusation that is just a blood libel," continued Graham.

"Never in the history of warfare have I seen such an effort by one of the protagonists in a war to lessen the effect on the population of the other side," argued Graham, who met with

Netanyahu and war cabinet Minister Benny Gantz, and spoke with IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi by phone earlier in the day.

"The Israeli military and government, in my view, are making incredible efforts in a time of war to make sure that innocent Palestinians can have the basics of life," he said. "I know it is miserable in Gaza. I'm sure it is. But the food is flowing. Healthcare is flowing the best it can."

"The Israeli people through their military and elected officials have chosen to help the Palestinian people," he said, responding directly to US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who told his Israeli counterpart Yoav Gallant that protecting Palestinians was a "moral imperative."

"Was there a moral imperative in World War II by the United States to lessen casualties in Germany and Japan?" Graham asked. "If you had told the American people after Pearl Harbor, you need to come up with a plan to feed civilian populations and lessen casualties at the expense of military victory, you would have been run out of town."

The senator, in Israel on his fourth trip since October 7, said he was briefed on the Israeli plan to evacuate civilians sheltering around Rafah, and that it is "very impressive."



Palestinians check the rubble of buildings that were destroyed following overnight Israeli strikes in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, on March 27, 2024. (MOHAMMED ABED / AFP)

Graham also said that UNRWA, the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, is “dead to the Congress” and “dead to the United States.”

“For decades now, Palestinian children have been taught through UNRWA and other agencies to kill all the Jews,” Graham said of the agency, which is facing intense scrutiny for the involvement of some of its employees in the October 7 attacks.

“Somebody needs to pull the Palestinian school system up by its roots and destroy it,” Graham added. He also said that the Palestinian Authority, “as it exists today, in my view, is not a legitimate partner for the State of Israel.”

Graham said that he is hopeful that through a normalization deal between Saudi Arabia and Israel, Arab countries “will begin to change the Palestinian trajectory, that they will replace old and corrupt with newer leaders, that they will come up with a new governing formula for the West Bank and Gaza that Israel would have somebody to talk to about the future of the Palestinian people.”

On the desire by some Israelis to establish settlements in Gaza, Graham said that it would “not be a practical solution that would have much support anywhere.”

He argued that the best plan for the day after Hamas is to let Arab states “take ownership of the Palestinian file in a fashion to demilitarize the West Bank and Gaza, and to come up with a plan to deradicalize the populations.”

The war in Gaza broke out on October 7 after Hamas launched an unprecedented attack on Israel, murdering some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and kidnapping 253.

The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza claims that more than 32,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israel in the war, but the number cannot be independently verified, as it is believed to include both Hamas terrorists and civilians, some of whom were killed as a consequence of the terror group’s own rocket misfires.

The IDF says it has killed over 13,000 terrorists in Gaza, in addition to some 1,000 who were killed inside Israel on and immediately following October 7. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-canceling-top-aides-trip-to-washington-netanyahu-now-seeking-to-reschedule/>

Surprise! Hamas has thousands more fighters than Israel initially thought - analysis

At least around 26,000 Hamas members have been put out of action by Israel to date when adding together killed, wounded, and arrested totals.

By [YONAH JEREMY BOB](#) MARCH 27, 2024 18:45 Updated: MARCH 27, 2024 21:54



Palestinian fighters from the armed wing of Hamas take part in a military parade to mark the anniversary of the 2014 war with Israel, near the border in the central Gaza Strip, July 19, 2023. (photo credit: REUTERS/IBRAHEEM ABU MUSTAFA)

30,000 was always an estimate for how many fighters Hamas had. We now know that the number was too low. Following numbers provided by Israeli defense sources, Israel has killed around 13,000 members of Hamas.

Already back in early February, the IDF had wounded another 10,000 to such a degree that it was assessed that they would not be able to return to battle and had arrested another 2,300.

The IDF has not provided updated wounded and arrest numbers since then, but simply adding together a series of public announcements regarding arrests, such as the more than 500 Hamas terrorists arrested at Shifa Hospital, at least around 3,500 would have been arrested to date.

This means that at least around 26,000 Hamas members have been put out of action by Israel to date when adding together killed, wounded, and arrested totals.

Until Tuesday, Israeli defense sources had said that there were four Hamas battalions in Rafah and two left in central Gaza, leaving around 6,000 Hamas forces.

Adding 26,000 and 6,000 would have broken the 30,000 total but could be considered close enough to be generally accurate. However, on Tuesday, Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer said

that Hamas has 8,000 of its forces in Rafah. Adding an additional 4,000 to 32,000 brings us up to 36,000.

But that is not the end of it. Recently, IDF sources gave a briefing indicating that around 70% of Hamas forces in Khan Yunis, out of an original 4,500, had been removed from the battlefield. That would leave at least 1,300 additional forces in Khan Yunis.



A march of Hamas in Gaza. (credit: REUTERS/Ahmed Jadallah AJ/TC)

Similarly, there have been reports that Hamas still had at least a few thousand forces left in northern Gaza. Adding all these numbers up, one comes closer to a pre-war Hamas force of 40,000 or more and the idea that it still has around 15,000 or more remaining forces.

None of this takes credit away from Israel for having succeeded at taking apart 18 out of Hamas's 24 battalions and from having succeeded at removing - even with these new numbers - more than 60% of Hamas forces from the battlefield, an impressive feat.

Why did the IDF continue to repeat the 30,000 number?

The truth is that even as almost all official channels from the IDF repeated the 30,000 number, a couple of high officials always let slip, in less regulated briefings, that the actual number was closer to 40,000.

For this reason, when the Jerusalem Post assessed the overall numbers, it always gave two statistics: how much of Hamas was removed and remained based on a 30,000 number and a 40,000 number.

Have new terrorists joined Hamas during the course of the war in a way that the IDF has been unable to measure? Was the decision to go with 30,000 to inflate the military's progress? If it was due to uncertainty, why did the IDF not repeat both numbers in official channels and briefings, in line with its usually conservative estimate policy?

There has been at least one example where the IDF seemed to cave to political pressure on the numbers. Up until February 1, defense officials had said Israel had killed around 10,000 Hamas forces. By February 12, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was saying the IDF had killed 12,000 Hamas forces.

Although multiple defense sources said the number was still closer to 10,000/10,500 in real-time, within days, the IDF had shifted its total to be consistent with what Netanyahu had said publicly. However, these numbers are not just part of the public relations war.

Israel and the IDF need to make assessments about the future of the war and how long it will take to truly defeat Hamas (and what will be lost by the continuation of the war for that amount of time) based on cold-hard factual numbers and not based on wishful thinking.

There is no question that, given an unlimited amount of time, the IDF could eventually eliminate Hamas as a fighting force. But time is not unlimited. Anyone who did not know that was reminded when the US decided not to veto the recent UN Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire.

The US has made it clear that despite that vote, it still supports Israel's goal of defeating Hamas, but only within certain limits in its actions and probably only within a quickly closing time frame.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-794045>

IDF sources reveal: This is what Israel needs to end Gaza, Lebanon wars



Absent a plan for managing Gaza, the IDF believes Hamas can still return to areas where the IDF previously achieved operations control.

By [YONAH JEREMY BOB](#) MARCH 27, 2024 16:28 **Updated:** MARCH 27, 2024 17:14

IDF soldiers operate in the Gaza Strip, March 27, 2024 (photo credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT)

There will be no resolution of the war in Gaza and Lebanon without one or more diplomatic agreements, IDF sources said on Wednesday.

The IDF believes it has significant military achievements on both fronts but that diplomatic moves by the political echelon will be necessary to translate those military wins into long-term progress and stability.

Absent a stable plan for managing Gaza post-war, the IDF believes that Hamas can easily still return to areas where the IDF previously achieved operations control, as occurred with Shifa Hospital in northern Gaza.

Israel faces another escalation in North

All of this comes as the IDF and Hezbollah have seen another round of escalations in the last 72 hours, with 12 Lebanese terrorists killed and multiple Lebanese drone bases destroyed deep in Lebanon, an Israeli killed, multiple Israelis wounded, and Hezbollah attacks which have come closer to harming IDF bases.

In these recent rounds, Hezbollah has fired over 110 rockets at Israel, signaling that despite its losses of over 300 of its forces to date, it is not close to bending to Israel's desired outcome regarding security for the northern border.



Smoke rises following an Israeli strike in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, March 27, 2024 (credit: REUTERS/AHMED ZAKOT)
IDF's Shifa Hospital operation takes longer than expected

Regarding the operation against terrorists in Shifa Hospital, it is expected to continue for at least a few more days, given that some dozens of terrorists are still holed up in two buildings at the sprawling complex.

This will mean that the operation will take at least two weeks when it was initially estimated to take one week.

Despite claiming that it has obtained significant new intelligence regarding Israeli

hostages and Hamas's leadership, there are no current signs that the IDF will imminently be able to save more hostages or kill more of the leadership.

Honing in on Rafah, the IDF is not close to an operation in the coming weeks, though after Ramadan, such an operation could be more possible.

Even in that scenario, it is expected that it would take many weeks if not longer, to evacuate the 1.4 million Palestinian civilians there in a way that would get them to a place where there would be sufficient tents, field hospitals, and food to maintain their health.

According to the IDF, it is not enough to evacuate the civilian population rather the setting up of infrastructure to receive them in new spots, whether at al-Muasi near the coast, back to part of Khan Yunis, or back to part of central Gaza, is equally critical. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-794025>

With truce talks seemingly stuck, Israel said planning Rafah incursion in April or May

Pro-Hezbollah newspaper says offensive will come after Ramadan and will last 4-8 weeks; Israel reportedly vows to notify Cairo in advance of an IDF operation into Philadelphi Route

By [Gianluca Pacchiani](#), [Tol Staff](#) and [Emanuel Fabian](#) Today, 5:30 pm

Following the apparent failure of the latest round of negotiations in Qatar, Israel is not willing to make any further concessions to Hamas and is gearing up for a ground operation in Rafah, a Lebanese newspaper reported Wednesday.

The pro-Hezbollah Al-Akhbar daily, citing Egyptian sources who were said to have been in contact with Israel Defense Forces officials, reported that the expected offensive would come after Eid al-Fitr — the three-day holiday that follows Ramadan and ends around April 12 — or in early May at the latest.

The ground incursion inside the last bastion of Hamas in the Gaza Strip would last from four to eight weeks, the sources said, and would be accompanied by an evacuation of the civilian population

sheltering in Rafah, which amounts to about 1.5 million people, toward the center of the Strip along specific routes and at specific times, announced to civilians in each area of the city in advance.

The mass evacuation would be monitored from the ground and the air to ensure that no Hamas fighters or Israeli hostages are hidden among the Gazan civilians, the Egyptian officials said.

Four Hamas battalions remain in Rafah, and it is believed that Hamas leadership and at least some of the hostages — 130 of those kidnapped on October 7 remain in Gaza, not all of them alive — are in the city bordering Egypt.

Cairo expressed its deep concerns over an IDF operation in the Rafah area, noting that it could lead to a further escalation not only in Gaza, but in the whole region, Al-Akhbar reported.



Displaced Palestinians next to tents in Al-Shaboura camp, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, on March 26, 2024 (Abed Rahim Khatib/Flash90)

Israel reportedly vowed to notify the Egyptians in advance of an IDF incursion into the Philadelphi corridor, which runs west of Rafah along the border between Gaza and Egypt.

The Lebanese paper also reported that Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi refused a request by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for a direct line to remain in contact.

Additionally, it claimed that negotiations are underway under the auspices of UAE mediation to bring medication to Israeli hostages in exchange for large amounts of medical aid to be allowed into the Strip.

Netanyahu and the Biden administration have been locked in a growing public spat over a potential ground operation in Rafah.

The US State Department said Tuesday that Secretary of State Antony Blinken underscored in a Washington meeting with Defense Minister Yoav Gallant that alternatives exist to a ground invasion of Rafah that would both better ensure Israel's security and protect Palestinian civilians.

A plan to send a senior Israeli delegation to Washington to discuss a Rafah offensive was [scrapped](#) by Netanyahu after the US abstained from a UN Security Council vote on a resolution [calling for a Gaza ceasefire](#), ensuring it would pass.

Fighting at Shifa

Meanwhile, the IDF said Wednesday that its raid on Gaza City's Shifa Hospital was ongoing, with the military saying troops killed dozens of gunmen and captured weapons over the past day.

Hundreds of members of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad have been captured so far in the Shifa operation, which began early on March 18, according to the IDF. Israel has said those arrested at Shifa include several "very significant" senior Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad commanders.

An Israeli official told The Times of Israel that it is believed that the maternity ward in Shifa Hospital was used as Hamas propaganda headquarters. The IDF is expected to release photos from the ward to back up the assessment. On Monday, the army said Hamas gunmen were [firing on troops from the maternity ward](#), among other medical facilities in the hospital.

International law stipulates that while a medical facility is a protected site in conflict, it loses that status if it is used for military activity. Israel has offered evidence Hamas uses such facilities as cover for terror purposes and says the group plunders humanitarian aid to take supplies for its fighters, depriving the civilian population.

Residents living nearby reported hearing explosions in and around Shifa and lines of smoke coming from buildings inside the medical facility.

"A war zone, this is how it looks in and around Al Shifa," said Mohammad Jamal, 25, who lives 1 kilometer, less than a mile, away from the hospital.

"Explosions never stop, we see lines of smoke coming from inside, no one moves even in streets that are hundreds of meters away because of Israeli snipers on rooftops of buildings," he said.

The Hamas-run health ministry said Israeli tanks and armored vehicles have also massed

around Nasser Hospital, adding that shots were fired but no raid had been launched.

Tunnels, Hamas buildings targeted

In the south of the Strip, the IDF said additional Hamas operatives were killed during operations over the past day in southern Gaza's al-Qarara and the al-Amal neighborhood in Khan Younis, where troops also captured caches of weapons.

The Israeli Air Force also targeted dozens of sites across the Gaza Strip, largely in support of forces maneuvering on the ground, the IDF said

The IDF said the sites included tunnels and buildings used by Hamas gunmen, and other infrastructure.



Troops operate in Gaza in an undated handout image released for publication March 27, 2024. (Israel Defense Forces)

In central Gaza, the IDF said the Nahal Brigade killed several gunmen over the past day, including by calling in airstrikes.

The IDF also published footage showing a recent airstrike on what it said was a member of a terror group surveilling troops in southern Gaza's Khan Younis.

According to the IDF, the operative was passing information on troop locations to other

gunmen over a phone. The operative was spotted by the Givati Brigade, who called in the deadly drone strike against him, the IDF said.

Meanwhile, Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry said 76 Palestinians were killed in the past day, bringing the death toll since October 7 to 32,490. The numbers cannot be verified and do not differentiate between combatants and civilians.

Amid a spiraling humanitarian crisis in Gaza, some 25 aid trucks reached the northern Strip overnight, after just seven trucks arrived the previous night, an Israeli official said. No looting was reported on either night.

The trucks entered through Crossing 96, a new gateway into the enclave set up next to Kibbutz Be'eri, after first being checked in Kerem Shalom.

The UN has repeatedly warned of famine in the Palestinian territory, particularly in the north, which has been largely cut off from aid deliveries amid the combat.

However, Israel blames the ailing humanitarian situation on aid agencies' failure to distribute supplies, and on Hamas and armed groups that have looted trucks entering the Gaza.

War erupted on October 7 when thousands of Hamas-led terrorists burst into Israel by air, land and sea, killing close to 1,200 people and kidnapping another 253 to Gaza.

The New York Times on Tuesday published an interview with Amit Soussana, the first Israeli woman to speak publicly about having been sexually abused while held hostage in Gaza.

Soussana, a 40-year-old lawyer who was abducted from a kibbutz on October 7 and released in November, said she was sexually assaulted at gunpoint by her guard inside Gaza, and was repeatedly beaten.



Amit Soussana speaks to journalists at Kibbutz Kfar Azza on January 29, 2024 (Paulina Patimer/Hostages and Missing Families Forum)

Earlier this month, the United Nations published a report stating that there are "reasonable grounds" to believe that Hamas committed rape and sexual abuse during its murderous rampage on October 7, and that there is an even higher standard of evidence to indicate that hostages kidnapped by Hamas that day were subject to rape in captivity.

Soussana spoke to the UN investigator who issued the report during her visit to Israel in late January. IDF spokesman Daniel Hagari said that Soussana's abuse "is a wake-up call to the world to act. To do everything and pressure Hamas. To free our hostages. To bring our hostages home."

Hamas has rejected Israel's latest offer in talks on a hostage deal and truce, and Jerusalem on Tuesday recalled its negotiating team from Qatar. Despite that, several news outlets reported that a small Mossad team remained in Qatar to continue talks. The Prime Minister's Office would not comment on the reports. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/with-truce-talks-seemingly-stuck-israel-said-planning-rafah-incursion-in-april-or-may/>

Three Palestinians killed by Israeli troops in Jenin drone strike, heavy clashes

IDF says 2 gunmen targeted by UAV, 3rd man killed after hurling explosives at soldiers in West Bank city; troops destroy vehicle containing primed explosive devices

By [Emanuel Fabian](#) Today, 2:50 pm



A destroyed car following an Israeli army raid on Jenin in the West Bank, on March 27, 2024 (Zain JAAFAR / AFP)

Three Palestinians were killed — two of them in a drone strike — during an arrest raid in the West Bank city Jenin on Wednesday, the Israel Defense Forces said.

The military said that the two killed in the drone strike were gunmen, and that the third Palestinian killed by Israeli fire during the raid had hurled explosive devices at troops, who responded by opening fire toward the man.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa named the two killed in the drone strike as Hamza Ararawi, 27, and Muhammad Nasser Al-Sabti, 19.

The army said that combat engineers destroyed a vehicle that contained several primed explosive devices during the raid, which began overnight and continued into the morning.

Two suspects in the car were detained by troops before it was blown up. Combat engineers also uncovered roadside explosives in the city.

One more wanted Palestinian was detained in Jenin, and weapons were seized, the IDF added.

Videos on social media showed army vehicles and bulldozers operating in the northern West Bank city, amid gunfire and at least one large explosion.

لحظة استهداف جرافة عسكرية لجيش الاحتلال بعربة ناسفة بمنطقة جبل مخيم جنين. pic.twitter.com/cfzC1Nvhfc ????

— المركز الفلسطيني للإعلام (@PalinfoAr) **March 27, 2024**

Security forces in Jerusalem and the West Bank have been on high alert since the start of Ramadan last week. Tensions were already high between Israelis and Palestinians due to the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, triggered by the October 7 massacre, which saw Hamas terrorists murder about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and kidnap 253.

Since October 7, the IDF has said troops have arrested some 3,600 wanted Palestinians across the West Bank, including more than 1,600 affiliated with Hamas.

Palestinians say over 450 people have been killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank since hostilities broke out, most while carrying out attacks or during clashes with IDF troops during nightly raids that have largely concentrated on a handful of areas in the northern West Bank. However, killings of innocent bystanders have also been alleged. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/three-palestinians-killed-by-israeli-troops-in-jenin-drone-strike-heavy-clashes/>

No 'unfriendly nations' for Russia, only 'unfriendly elites' – Putin

Unlike the West, Moscow will never "cancel" any foreign culture

27 Mar, 2024 20:00



Russian President Vladimir Putin meets artists in the Tver Region, Russia, on March 27, 2024. © Sputnik / Mikhail Mettsel

Russia has no intention of cancelling any country's culture, President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday during a working trip to Tver

Region. Moscow understands the difference between the people and the elites and respects every nation's culture, and also considers its own to be part of the world's heritage, he added.

The president was talking to regional artists when the issue of attempts to "cancel" Russian culture by some Western nations was raised. According to Putin, Moscow has no plans to respond in kind.

"We do not have any unfriendly nations, we have unfriendly elites in those nations," the president said, adding that the Russian government "has never tried to cancel" any foreign artists or cultural performances. "On the contrary, we believe the Russian culture to be a part of the global one and we take pride [in this fact]."

The Russian authorities seek to take the global cultural context into account and "exclude nothing," he continued. Those seeking to abolish the culture of a nation inhabited by some 190 million people are "not wise," the president said, referring to the Western actions during the Ukraine conflict.

Western nations have repeatedly sought to ban performances by Russian artists and musicians, as well as those deemed supportive of Moscow. Most recently, renowned Italian singer Enzo Ghinazzi, best known as Pupo, had an upcoming performance in Lithuania cancelled over a concert he gave at the Kremlin in March.

Pupo arrived in Russia to "convey the message that peace will return to the world," he told TASS at the time. He also argued against an "embargo of any people's culture," calling such a stance "wrong." The Lithuanian venue set to host his performance subsequently announced that it was being cancelled, calling it "good news" for those opposed to Russia's military campaign in Ukraine.

Earlier the same month, South Korea canceled a series of performances by Svetlana Zakharova, a renowned ballerina from Russia's Bolshoi Theatre, after Ukraine expressed anger over the planned events.

Many Western cultural institutions have sought to completely remove Russia-linked works from their galleries and theaters ever since the conflict between Russia and Ukraine broke out in February 2022.

The Cardiff Philharmonic Orchestra in Wales dropped the music of composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky from a concert, Britain's Royal Opera House canceled a tour by the Bolshoi Ballet, and New York's Carnegie Hall and Metropolitan Opera have stopped allowing most Russian musicians and organizations to perform.

The campaign has reached such a fever pitch that it has drawn criticism from some Western leaders. In April 2023, Italian President Sergio Mattarella branded it a "mistaken gesture." In August of the same year, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz argued against such moves by calling Russian culture a part of "our common European history." <https://www.rt.com/russia/595028-no-unfriendly-nations-russia/>

Death toll in Moscow terror attack grows to 143

Four more Crocus City Hall victims have succumbed to their injuries over the past day

27 Mar, 2024 19:17



A view shows the burnt-out Crocus City Hall following a deadly attack on the concert venue outside Moscow, Russia. © Sputnik / Grigory Sysoyev

Three more people injured in last Friday's terrorist attack on a Moscow concert venue have passed away, Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko announced on Wednesday evening.

The death toll of the Crocus City Hall massacre now stands at 143.

A group of terrorists stormed the venue ahead of a concert, killing people on sight as they moved towards the main hall, eventually setting it on fire. Initial estimates put the number of deaths at around 130, with 200 more injured by bullets, blaze and smoke inhalation.

As of Wednesday morning, 83 survivors were listed by the health officials as undergoing treatment, and 40 have been released. The death toll stood at 139 when Murashko noted that four victims were in "extremely serious" condition. They appear to have succumbed to their injuries since.

The **gunmen left the venue after about 15 minutes and rushed towards the Ukrainian border, where they were arrested on Saturday. They were identified as nationals of Tajikistan.** Russian President Vladimir Putin has described them as “*radical Islamists.*”

Multiple officials in Moscow have suggested that the terrorist attack at the Crocus City Hall may have been organized by Ukrainian special services, who used the Islamists as proxies. <https://www.rt.com/russia/595018-moscow-terror-attack-death-toll/>

US ‘exposed’ itself over Moscow terror attack – Foreign Ministry

Washington’s reaction to the Crocus City shooting shows its bias as it seeks to cover up for Kiev, Maria Zakharova claims

27 Mar, 2024 12:59



FILE PHOTO: Russian Foreign Ministry’s spokeswoman Maria Zakharova. © Sputnik / Russian Foreign Ministry

The US is covering up for Ukraine by denying that Kiev was involved in the deadly shooting at the Crocus City Hall outside of Moscow last week, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has said.

On Friday evening, a group of gunmen armed with automatic weapons attacked the venue ahead of a rock concert, indiscriminately shooting at civilians and setting the building on fire. The terrorist attack, the worst in Russia’s history since the early 2000s, killed at least 140 people and injured almost 200. In the aftermath of the shooting, law enforcement detained several suspects, including four accused of carrying out the attack.

According to Russian President Vladimir Putin, the latter – who he described as “radical Islamists” – were caught fleeing “towards Ukraine where, according to preliminary data, a window to cross the border was prepared.”

Meanwhile, the US, along with many of its allies, insists that Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS) terrorists are solely to blame for the shooting, saying there is no indication that Kiev had anything to do with it. Ukraine has also vehemently denied any involvement.

Commenting on the position of the West, Zakharova said in an interview with RIA Novosti on Wednesday that “they [Washington] have exposed themselves.”

“They started crying, not calling for an investigation, but covering up for Ukraine. Their bias and involvement in this issue is evident.”

She claimed that if Kiev had not actually been involved in the attack, Washington’s first reaction would have been to stress the need for an investigation.

Zakharova’s comments come after the head of Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB), Aleksandr Bortnikov, suggested that not only Ukraine, but also the US and UK – Kiev’s main backers in its conflict with Moscow – may have been behind the shooting. He described the information on the matter as being general, but added that investigators already have “concrete results.”

<https://www.rt.com/russia/595005-us-bias-crocus-shooting/>

'Full Hitler': Jill Biden likens opponents of gay porn in schools to Nazis

'One morning you wake up and you no longer live in a democracy'

By [Bob Unruh](#) Published March 27, 2024 at 2:43pm

Joe Biden's record on border security isn't that good – as he essentially ordered it wide open and invited millions of illegal aliens to invade. Now taxpayers already have paid billions and American cities still are struggling to meet the demands for financial help.

His economy has left Americans facing inflation of more than 18% since he took office, and struggling to pay their grocery bills.

His presentation of America to the world has left the door open for multiple wars to erupt.

So for his campaign this year, something else had to be used, and a report from the National Pulse explains that has been "fearmongering" concerning "threats about an alleged danger former President Trump and his supporters pose to 'democracy.'"

Actually critics have said Democrats are the ones deconstructing democracy because they want to banish Trump, and others, from the 2024 ballot, so voters would not, in fact, be able to choose their leader.

As part of that fearmongering, Jill Biden, in a campaign stop, has compared the conservative desire to rid public schools of gay porn, and have the schools focus on educational basics like reading, history, writing and math to Naziism.

She was speaking at an event for the Human Rights Campaign when she delivered her rant.

"Rights are being stripped away. Freedoms are eroding. More and more state laws are being passed...Just last night, we had to fend off more than 50 anti-gay amendments that Republicans tried to force into the government funding bill... they served only one purpose: to spread hate and fear," she claimed.

"History teaches us that democracies don't disappear overnight. They disappear slowly. Subtly. Silently. A book ban. A court decision. A 'don't say gay' law," she continued, citing Florida's new law establishing parental rights in education that does not, in fact, even say "don't say gay."

She added, "Before World War II, I'm told, Berlin was the center of LGBTQ culture in Europe. One group of people loses their rights. And then another, and another. Until one morning you wake up — and you no longer live in a democracy."

The report said her comments "Appear to be part of the Biden camp's wider 'full Hitler' strategy. With the Biden government's mishandling of the border crisis and the failure of Bidenomics, the Biden campaign and the Democrats have little to run on beyond fearmongering"

<https://www.wnd.com/2024/03/full-hitler-jill-biden-likens-opponents-gay-porn-schools-nazis/> **The woman is a evil vile nutjob. rdb**

OP ED

Biden Lies To America, Tells The Truth To China

"When I was director of intelligence for the Indo-Pacific Command, for example, I watched as numerous requests to publicize Chinese malign activities were disapproved by Washington," Rear Admiral Mike Studeman recently warned.

The former head of the Office of Naval Intelligence had served between 2022 and 2023 and during that time one of the suppressed stories about China's attacks involved "Beijing's use of high-altitude surveillance balloons over the sovereign airspaces of the US" which came "many months before the shooting down of a Chinese balloon flying over the US."

After the spy balloon was exposed, Biden administration officials had claimed that there had been multiple spy balloon overflights under Trump and only one under Biden, which went unnoticed at the time, but the US Navy was clearly aware and had been ordered to keep quiet by D.C. about the multiple incursions by Chinese spy balloons under Biden.

When the spy balloon was first detected, the initial response by the Biden administration had been to suppress news about it and then to deny that the administration had been aware of it.

"Before it was spotted publicly, there was the intention to study it and let it pass over and not ever tell anyone about it," an administration official [admitted](#).

But when a Montana resident's footage of the spy balloon went viral, the Biden cover-up fell apart. Once it was exposed, the official complained that "It caused so many problems."

While the Biden administration was publicly criticizing China, the State Department was privately [sidelining sanctions](#) and any actions against the People's Republic of China. A month later, a top State Department official dealing with China was already looking to "move on"

By May, Biden had resumed relations with China and was dismissing the whole thing as a "silly balloon". In June, he claimed that the spying was "more embarrassing" for Beijing "than it was intentional." Over a year later an FBI report on the balloon is still being kept secret.

With Secretary of State Blinken trying to wrangle an invitation to China, the Biden administration fully committed to covering up "difficult subjects".

One of those [difficult subjects](#) was [China's spy base](#) in Cuba. After the Wall Street Journal reported that China had agreed to pay Cuba billions to build a spy base, the Biden administration denied it.

And then it had to admit it anyway.

To quote NBC News, “as for why the White House, Pentagon and others all flatly denied the Journal’s reporting despite knowing that China has been spying from Cuba for years, the official said the Journal story was inaccurate because it called the eavesdropping a new development.”

After the initial denials, the Biden administration backpedaled and admitted that China had been spying on America from Cuba since 2019. Much as with the spy balloon story, after a China espionage cover up fell apart the Biden administration tried to pass the blame on to Trump.

Cover-ups of enemy activity had become the default mode for the Biden administration.

While Russia developed a space weapon, the Biden administration [covered it up](#) because it was “worried that if the program became more widely known in Congress or in the public, that might scuttle the nascent efforts to get Russia to abort those tests.”

What began with [Biden’s abandonment](#) of the China Initiative in 2022 escalated into coverups.

The Justice Department had argued that “the ‘China Initiative’ fueled a narrative of intolerance and bias” and that the “rise in anti-Asian hate crime and hate incidents” made it urgent to shut down the effort to stop PRC spies. The assaults on Asian-Americans in San Francisco and New York City by minority street thugs had nothing to do with catching spies. It was a cover-up.

The cover-ups, in the name of anti-racism or diplomacy, allowed the Communist regime a clear field for spying on the United States while suppressing the story so Biden wouldn’t get blamed.

By the fall of last year, the Wall Street Journal [reported on](#) Chinese infiltrators trying to access American military bases “as many as 100 times in recent years”. Chinese nationals pretending to be tourists did everything from trying to force their way into a base in Alaska to scuba diving to spy on a Florida rocket launch site. The increasing brazenness of the Chinese efforts reflected the extent to which the Biden administration was covering up for the spy campaign.

Over the last year, Chinese spies have been accused of looting everything from AI secrets to tech used to detect nuclear missile launches.

And there is every reason to believe that the situation may be worse than we realize.

The Biden administration has developed a consistent track record of suppressing damaging information about Communist China. What we know about the PRC’s operations against us come from leaked material and court cases. Without viral videos, like the one out of Montana, and intelligence reports leaked to the media, we would know even less than we do now.

Governments normally conceal information about enemy activities so as not to tip off foreign spies, but the Biden administration’s consistent pattern has been to hide the information from Americans rather than from Russia and China. Instead of trying to deceive our enemies, the Biden administration instead deceives and lies to Americans.

The Biden administration has misleadingly denied reports for no purpose other than to conceal information about enemy activities from Americans. China knew it was spying on the United States from Cuba. And they certainly knew that we knew it. Russia knew it was building a space weapon and was talking about it with the Biden administration. But Biden didn’t want us to know.

After the spy balloon, the Biden administration told Americans one thing and China another.

Whom did it tell the truth to? China. The Biden administration put on a fake show of outrage for Americans while quietly telling Chinese Communist officials that all of this would soon pass.

When the United States government lies to Americans, but tells the truth to an enemy dictatorship, something is very wrong. China can trust the White House, but we can’t.

[Daniel Greenfield](#) is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center. This article previously appeared at the Center's [Front Page Magazine](#). <https://www.danielgreenfield.org/2024/03/biden-lies-to-america-tells-truth-to.html>