

IDF is closing in on controlling 30% of Gaza, defense sources tell 'Post'

Katz to 'Post': No military occupation, but getting closer to large operation if no hostage deal.

By [YONAH JEREMY BOB](#) APRIL 2, 2025 07:18 **Updated:** APRIL 2, 2025 22:05



IDF operating in the Rafah area of the Gaza Strip, March 27, 2025. (photo credit: IDF SPOKESMAN'S UNIT)

With the IDF's latest pushes in southern Gaza and northern Gaza, it is close to controlling 30% of the Gaza Strip, defense sources said Wednesday.

Division 36 finally started to take a full hand in the invasion, focusing on northern Rafah in southern Gaza. Its activities added to other divisions already active in Gaza since mid-March, including Division 252 in northern and central Gaza and Division 143 in southern Rafah.

The latest IDF maneuvers could eventually cut off Rafah from Khan Yunis.

Despite the expanded areas of operation, defense sources have said they are continuing to avoid operating in areas in which hostages might be held.

Furthermore, **defense sources said even as the growing invasion with three divisions has required some new rounds of reservist call-ups**, the government still will not need to order a very large reservist call-up wave unless it engages in a much larger invasion of Gaza.



IDF operates in Rafah, in Gaza, April 2, 2025. (credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT)

IDF operations in Rafah

Defense sources threatened that if Hamas did not agree to a new hostage deal soon, a much larger invasion could be ordered within a period of days or weeks.

Nevertheless, Defense Minister Israel Katz deflected any questions from The Jerusalem Post that suggested Israel was moving toward a slow military occupation of Gaza.

Instead, the focus of the operation was still achieving a hostage deal, he said, declining to speculate about whether Hamas could or would try to

outlast Israel's latest military assault for several more months.

Defense sources disputed widespread reports that if there is be a larger reservist call-up, half of the forces would refuse to serve over the government's recent actions, such as not continuing the ceasefire to bring back more hostages, undermining the legal establishment, and trying to replace Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) Director [Ronen Bar](#).

In addition, defense sources disputed the notion that the more Gazan territory the IDF tries to hold onto, which requires more stationary forces, losses in the field would start to spike. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-848505>

Israeli airstrikes in Syria meant to 'convey a message' to Turkey, source tells 'Post'

Israel strikes Syria with warning to Turkey: Do not interfere with Israeli activities.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#), [REUTERS](#), [AMICHAEL STEIN](#) APRIL 2, 2025 21:32 **Updated:** APRIL 2, 2025 22:50



Smoke rises from an Israeli airstrike in Syria in December. (photo credit: SCREENSHOT/X, SECTION 27A COPYRIGHT ACT)

The recent airstrikes in Syria are to “convey a message to Turkey,” an Israeli official told The Jerusalem Post on Wednesday.

“Do not establish a military base in the Syria and do not interfere with Israeli activity in the country's skies,” was the message according to the official.

The strikes targeted the vicinity of Hama, as well as the scientific research building in the Syrian neighborhood Barzeh in the capital Damascus, the IDF confirmed on Wednesday.

Israel spent years carrying out airstrikes on Syria during former President Bashar al-Assad's rule, targeting what they said were Iran-linked military

installations and weapons transfers from Tehran intended for the Lebanese armed group [Hezbollah](#).

The **Israeli air force reportedly targeted infrastructure and weapons remaining from Assad's army**, according to Israeli media.



People inspect a damaged area in the aftermath of what Syrian state media reported was an Israeli strike in the Mezzah suburb, west of Damascus, Syria October 9, 2024. (credit: REUTERS/FIRAS MAKDESI)

Turkish opposition to Israel's expansion of Gaza operation

Turkey recently slammed Israel over its announcement of a major expansion to its military operation in Gaza, saying the move marked a manifestation of what it called Israel's illegal approach detached from the pursuit of peace.

In a statement, Turkey's foreign ministry said statements on expanding operations in Gaza and settlement expansion in the Israeli-occupied West Bank marked "yet another demonstration of Israel's blatant disregard for international law and its complete

detachment from the pursuit of peace."

It called on the international community to take a stance to protect holy sites, prevent provocations and halt Israel's efforts to expand its territory through occupation. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-848620>

IDF says several gunmen ‘eliminated’ after firing on troops in southern Syria

Military says troops completed task of confiscating weapons, destroying terror infrastructure; Syrian local government says 9 civilians killed



By [Emanuel Fabian](#), [AFP](#) and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 10:37 am

An antenna lies amidst debris at the scene of an Israeli strike in Syria's southern Hama governorate, on April 3, 2025. (Abdulaziz KETAZ / AFP)

The military said Thursday several gunmen opened fire on Israeli troops operating in the southern Syrian town of Tasil overnight, as they were working to “confiscate weapons and destroy terror infrastructure.”

The Israel Defense Forces said the troops of the 474th Golan Regional Brigade returned fire and

“eliminated” several gunmen “on the ground and from the air.”

No soldiers were injured in the exchange, and the operation in the area was completed, the IDF added.

Tasil is located some 13 kilometers (8 miles) from Israel’s border, outside of a demilitarized buffer zone along the Israel-Syrian border which the Israeli military moved into last December following the fall of Bashar al-Assad’s regime to Islamist-led rebels.

It **marked only the second incident in which IDF troops operating in southern Syria** have come under fire since deploying to the buffer zone.

The provincial government in southern Syria’s Daraa said nine civilians were killed and several were injured in an Israeli bombardment following an “Israeli incursion.”



Defense Minister Israel Katz (left) and IDF Deputy Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Tamir Yadai (right) in the Mount Hermon area in southern Syria, March 11, 2025. (Emanuel Fabian/Times of Israel)

It said in a statement posted to Telegram that the shelling near the Syrian city of Nawa came after “an Israeli incursion” in the area. It said that this was the deepest into Syria that Israeli forces have advanced thus far since the establishment of the buffer zone.

Nawa is located some 9 kilometers (5.6 miles) from Tasil, where troops came under fire.

The discrepancy in the location of the incident was not immediately clear.

Following the collapse of Assad’s regime, Israel vowed to destroy weapons in Syria it fears could fall into the hands of “hostile forces” that may seek to attack it.

Earlier on **Wednesday, the IDF said it struck “remaining military capabilities”** at the Hama military airport and T-4 airbase in Syria. Damascus denounced the strikes as a “blatant violation of international law and Syrian sovereignty.”

Following the operations on Wednesday and Thursday, Defense Minister Israel Katz warned Syria’s new ruler Ahmed al-Sharaa he would “pay a heavy price” if he allowed forces hostile to Israel into Syria.

“Israel will not allow Syria to become a threat to its communities and security interests,” Katz said, speaking to Defense Ministry employees at a ceremony ahead of Passover, and adding that troops would continue to maintain a presence in the buffer zone and act against threats.

“The air force’s activities yesterday at the T-4 airbase, in Hama and the Damascus area, are a clear message and warning for the future — we won’t allow harm to the security of the State of Israel.”

Israeli leaders have consistently stated that they do not trust Sharaa, a former rebel fighter whose Islamist group began as al-Qaeda’s local branch, whom Katz has called an “extreme Islamic leader.”

The IDF has described its presence in the buffer zone as a temporary and defensive measure, though Katz has said that troops will remain deployed to nine army posts in the area “indefinitely.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-several-gunmen-eliminated-after-firing-on-troops-in-southern-syria/>

Troops kill Palestinian, injure 2 others who threw explosives at force in West Bank



Amid crackdown on military indiscipline, IDF said to call off raid near Bethlehem after soldiers in the area found to have vandalized Palestinian property

By [Stav Levaton](#) Today, 4:31 pm

IDF soldiers operate in the West Bank, in a photo cleared for publication on April 3, 2025. (Israel Defense Forces)

Israeli forces killed one Palestinian and injured two others who had hurled explosives at Israeli soldiers during an overnight raid in the northern West Bank, the IDF said Thursday.

The incident occurred during a combined counterterrorism raid conducted by the IDF, Shin Bet and police forces.

Soldiers from the Nahal Brigade responded to the attacks in Silat al-Harithiya, near Jenin, and successfully neutralized the threat, the IDF said, adding that there were no Israeli casualties.

According to the statement, security forces also arrested eight wanted individuals and seized two homemade “Carlo” submachine guns. The detainees and weapons were handed over to the Shin Bet and Israeli police for further investigation.

The raids were part of an ongoing Israeli effort in the West Bank, dubbed Operation Iron Wall, which was launched on January 21 and has since seen hundreds of arrests.

Also overnight, the IDF reportedly called off a raid in the Deheisha refugee camp near

Bethlehem after troops were caught vandalizing Palestinian property and spray painting graffiti in homes.



Inflammatory graffiti by IDF soldiers in the West Bank, depicting an Israeli flag over two rifles and an Arabic phrase, unknown date. (screen capture: Twitter, used in accordance with Clause 27a of the Copyright Law)

Kan news reported Thursday that the soldiers, reservists tasked with erasing anti-Israel graffiti, defaced property with their own markings, despite being explicitly instructed to remove incendiary messages, not to create new ones that could further inflame tensions.

However, photos taken by Palestinian residents reportedly showed the defacement of walls by Israeli soldiers with their own graffiti, including Stars of David over the Arabic slogans, and drawings of rifles.



Upon receiving the images, Brigade Commander Col. “Gimmel” — identified only by his rank and first Hebrew initial — and Judea and Samaria Division Commander Brig. Gen. Yaki Dolf immediately ordered the mission to be halted, withdrawing the soldiers from the area, Kan reported.

Grffiti by IDF soldiers in the West Bank, depicting a Star of David, unknown date. (screen capture: Twitter, used in accordance with Clause 27a of the Copyright Law)

According to the report, the IDF has since opened an investigation to determine which soldiers violated orders.

The action appears to be part of a wider effort by new IDF chief of Staff Eyal Zamir to crack down on such acts of vandalism and restore military discipline that has become visibly lax over the last year and a half of war.

Last weekend, the IDF handed down punishments to several officers and troops for defacing Palestinian property during an unwarranted search of the southern West Bank village of Jinba.

Media reports said that Zamir himself went to Jinba to investigate the incident.



IDF soldiers operate in the West Bank, in a photo cleared for publication on April 3, 2025. (Israel Defense Forces)

As the IDF intensifies its counterterrorism operations, the region remains in a fragile state, with a rise in settler violence.

On Tuesday, a mob of [some 50 Israeli settlers attacked](#) homes in the northern West Bank village of Duma, setting property ablaze and assaulting residents. Three Palestinians were reportedly injured in the attack.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/troops-kill-palestinian-injure-2-others-who-threw-explosives-at-force-in-west-bank/>

New IDF spokesman: Military killed 250 Hamas terrorists in new Gaza invasion

Describing the new actions taken on Wednesday, Defrin said, “We stepped up [the invasion] to a new level to serve the goals of the war.”

By [YONAH JEREMY BOB](#) APRIL 3, 2025 19:24 Updated: APRIL 3, 2025 19:59



IDF spokesperson Brig.-Gen. Effie Defrin is seen in a switch-over ceremony in Tel Aviv, Israel, March 27, 2025 (photo credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT)

The IDF has killed 250 Hamas terrorists since it renewed hostilities in Gaza on March 18, IDF Chief Spokesperson Brig.-Gen. Effie Defrin said on Thursday in his first press conference since taking office on March 27.

Defrin also said that, more broadly, the military has struck over 600 targets in Gaza since March 18, including 60 since a stronger invasion push on Wednesday.

He said these attacks, mostly from the air force, would pave the way for even more ground troops to enter

deeper into Gaza.

Further, the [new IDF spokesperson](#) said that the **military, often with the help of the air force, had assassinated 12 senior Hamas officials.**

Describing the new actions taken on Wednesday, Defrin said, “We stepped up [the invasion] to a new level to serve the goals of the war: returning the hostages and dismantling Hamas’s military and political rule.”



IDF soldiers operate in the northern Gaza Strip, March 31, 2025. (credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT)

Pressure on Hamas in hostage negotiations

Despite Defrin's and claims by other top Israeli political and defense officials of putting such enormous pressure on Hamas, that soon it will likely agree to more concessions in the Israel-Hamas hostage negotiations, there were no signs on Thursday that Hamas would make more moves toward Israel's position in the negotiations than it made earlier in the week.

Earlier in the week, Hamas agreed to provide Israel with five live hostages and some deceased ones as part of an additional 50-day ceasefire, leading to an end to the war.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-848778>

IDF expands invasion into once impregnable Shejaia, killed 250 Hamas terrorists

In his first speech, IDF chief spokesman Brig.-Gen. Effie Defrin added that the military had struck 600 terror targets since the start of the renewed invasion of Gaza.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) APRIL 3, 2025 10:47 Updated: APRIL 3, 2025 20:53

The IDF on Thursday expanded its renewed invasion of Gaza into a number of new areas, including the once impregnable Shejaia in northern Gaza.

As part of these new moves, the military is shifting a substantial number of Gazans who had returned to northern Gaza back south and west to the al-Masawi humanitarian zone.



Israel Air Force strikes Hamas weapons facility in Syria, February 9, 2025 (photo credit: IDF SPOKESMAN'S UNIT)

In 2014, the battles between Israel and Hamas over Shejaia were the harshest of the conflict, leading to relatively heavy casualties on both sides and the need for heavier Israeli bombing and artillery.

During earlier rounds of the current war, while the IDF did defeat Hamas's Shejaia battalions, it took much longer than predicted, and the military left fighting those battalions as its last move in northern Gaza.

Also, during this renewal of hostilities and invasion, which started on March 18-19, the IDF entered several other areas of northern Gaza before trying to once again take

over Shejaia.



Scenes of destruction in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. (credit: MOHAMMED SALEM/REUTERS)

IDF strikes terror targets

Discussing the latest progress in the war on Thursday night, IDF Chief Spokesperson Brig.-Gen. Effie Defrin said the IDF has killed 250 Hamas terrorists since it renewed hostilities in his first press conference since taking office on March 27.

Defrin also said that, more broadly, the military has struck over 600 targets in Gaza since March 18, including 60 since a stronger invasion push on Wednesday. He said that those attacks, mostly from the air force, would pave the way for even more ground troops to enter

deeper into Gaza.

Further, the new IDF spokesperson said that the army, often with the help of the air force, had assassinated 12 senior Hamas officials.

Describing the new actions taken on Wednesday, Defrin said, **"We stepped up [the invasion] to a new level to serve the goals of the war: returning the hostages and dismantling Hamas's military and political rule."**

Defrin and other top Israeli political and defense officials claimed that putting such enormous pressure on Hamas would likely have the terror organization soon agreeing to more concessions in the hostage negotiations with Israel. However, there were no signs on Thursday that Hamas would make more moves toward Israel's position in the negotiations than it had earlier in the week. Then, Hamas had agreed to provide Israel with five live hostages and some deceased ones as part of an additional 50-day ceasefire agreement, leading to an end to the war.

With the IDF's latest pushes on Wednesday in deep southern Gaza, in Rafah, and in northern Gaza, it will be close to controlling 30% of Gazan territory, defense sources said later Wednesday.

On Wednesday, IDF Division 36 finally started to take a full hand in the invasion, focusing on northern Rafah. Its operations add to those of other divisions already active in Gaza since mid-March, including Division 252 in northern and central Gaza, and 143 in deep southern Rafah.

The latest **IDF maneuvers could eventually cut off Rafah from Khan Yunis, on the higher part of southern Gaza.**

While *The Jerusalem Post* and other media were told about the IDF building a new defense line, **the Morag Corridor, to accomplish this cut-off strategy, the Israeli censor had barred publication of the specifics,** until suddenly Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided to publicize the new moves.

Questioned about how the censor could claim revealing the Morag defense line too soon could endanger Israeli soldiers' lives in the field, while Netanyahu then revealed exactly that, Defrin said that he only represented the IDF, in implicit criticism of the prime minister.

Despite the expanded areas of operation, defense sources have said they are continuing to avoid operating in areas in which hostages might be held.

Further, defense sources said that even though increasing the Gaza invasion forces to three divisions, so far, has required some new rounds of reservists call-ups, the government still will not need to order a very large wave of reserve call-ups, unless it engages in a much larger invasion of Gaza. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-848686>

Observers say IDF abandoned Gaza border outpost in 12-hour security lapse

60 observers at the post were left without any protection, and the base gate was open and unsupervised.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) APRIL 3, 2025 13:56 **Updated:** APRIL 3, 2025 20:14



IDF observers say military abandoned Gaza border outpost for 12 hours, April 3, 2025 (illustration). (photo credit: Canva via Getty Images/andrey shalari, TiTi Lee, Shutterstock/Melnikov Dmitriy, New Africa)

For 12 hours last Thursday, the lookout post at the Urim base in the Gaza periphery was left with no guard and no security. As a result, 60 lookouts at the outpost were left unprotected, and the base's gate was open and unsupervised, *The Jerusalem Post* confirmed Thursday.

In footage obtained by the N12 news site, the outpost can be seen abandoned, meaning anyone could theoretically enter without hindrance.

“Our base was completely abandoned – without a guard and without a security force other than us, who were not all armed,” one of the female lookouts told N12.

“We contacted the battalion headquarters, but for 12 hours, we received no response, during which time anyone could enter and exit freely. Finally, two reserve volunteers were sent to us – fighters who do important work but cannot sufficiently secure dozens of female lookouts and guard the entire outpost.”



Part of the mental damage - not from the fighting itself but from the massacre at the IDF bases. Soldiers in Nahal Oz (credit: IDF SPOKESMAN'S UNIT)

During the October 7 massacre, the Nahal Oz outpost was left without security. That allowed dozens of terrorists to break in and murder or take hostage the female lookouts stationed there, N12 reported.

Lessons after October 7

“After the events of October 7, we expected lessons to be learned, especially in the Gaza border area,” the female lookout said. “How are we supposed to feel protected when security is so minimal? The feeling is that nothing has been learned; no one in the army cares about us.”

The IDF said it was carrying out a comprehensive investigation.

The Urim outpost is “located about 10 km. from the border” with Gaza and near where the massacre at the Supernova music festival took place, it said. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-848714>

Anti-Israel protesters block McGill classes in pro-Palestinian strike

Jewish organizations reported that the protests were intimidating students at the Quebec university.

By [MICHAEL STARR](#) APRIL 3, 2025 19:46



Student protest at McGill University in Quebec. (photo credit: screenshot, SECTION 27A COPYRIGHT ACT)

Anti-Israel activists blocked access to classes at McGill University on Wednesday as part of a student union-backed strike to pressure the Montreal institution to cut ties with companies with ties to Israel.

Masked and keffiyeh-clad activists raised banners in front of classrooms, in what Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights called on Instagram picket lines. The group claims that "over 16 auditorium classrooms were confronted with student-led pickets, effectively enforcing the strike mandate."

According to SPHR, activists demanded that other students not attend class, and encouraged them

to join their own lectures on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Bnai Brith Canada claimed on X that protesters disrupted classes during the call for a student strike.

"Protest is a protected right — intimidation is not. No student should have to choose between their safety and their education. Disrupting classes, harassing students and faculty, and hijacking campus spaces is not activism, it's dangerous behavior that has no place on a Canadian campus," Bnai Brith Canada said Wednesday on social media. "McGill is failing its students. The University has a responsibility to ensure the well-being and academic success of every student — this must end now."

View this post on Instagram

[A post shared by SPHR McGill \(@sphrmcgill\)](#)

Classes during student strike

On Tuesday a petition was circulated online asking students to report professors who held classes during the strike, according to the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU). SSMU condemned the petition and any other actions contrary to a peaceful strike, and emphasized that students and staff had no obligation to participate in the action.

"While we support and encourage participation, we strongly denounce any acts or communications that are meant to intimidate others, including those who choose not to participate," SSMU said in a Wednesday statement. "Any actor who attempts to threaten or pressure students or faculty into participating, either through physical intimidation, online harassment campaigns, or otherwise, does not speak for the SSMU, and we firmly condemn such actions."

The strike is set to last from Wednesday until Friday, according to a motion passed in a Special Strike General Assembly last Thursday.

The purpose of the "strike in support of Palestinian liberation" to demand that McGill divest from "corporations supporting military activity in Gaza, an end to institutional relationships with complicit entities, and a cessation of suppression of student activism on campus."

McGill has repeatedly taken a [stance of neutrality](#) on the ongoing conflict, as noted by the McGill Board of Governors when discussing a Committee on Sustainability and Social Responsibility report on divestment from defense firms in February. After a February 5 incident in which five campus buildings' windows were smashed by anti-Israel activists, McGill University President and Vice-Chancellor Deep Saini emphasized that the university was clear in its position against Boycott, Divest, and Sanction policies.

SPHR said on social media that the protests would continue Thursday.

"Resistance until divestment," said SPHR. "Join us tomorrow for the second day of this historic strike. Long live Gaza, the graveyard of the occupation, and long live the Student Intifada. <https://www.jpost.com/bds-threat/article-848789v>

Anti-Israel activists chain themselves to Columbia gate demanding to know who reported Khalil

The chains and bindings were removed by security personnel, and the students were removed from the campus area.

By [MICHAEL STARR](#) APRIL 3, 2025 16:55 **Updated:** APRIL 3, 2025 19:54



Columbia student demonstrators chain themselves to the gates of St. Paul's Chapel at Columbia University to denounce the arrest of Mahmoud Khalil in New York City, US, April 2, 2025. (photo credit: REUTERS/DANA EDWARDS)

Anti-Israel activists chained themselves to a Columbia University entrance gate on Wednesday afternoon in a protest based on the belief that a member of the board of trustees reported Columbia University Apartheid Divest leading member Mahmoud Khalil to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

At least four activists affiliated with Columbia Jewish Voice for Peace chained themselves to the St. Paul's Chapel gate, according to the protest group and Columbia Office of Public Affairs. Columbia Palestine Solidarity Coalition claimed that seven students were involved, six Jewish and one Palestinian.

The chains and bindings were removed by security personnel, and the students were removed from the campus area. Columbia PSC charged that the security guards were most aggressive with the Palestinian student.

View this post on Instagram

[A post shared by Columbia Palestine Solidarity Coalition \(CPSC\) \(@columbia.psc\)](#)

"We will follow the process established in the Rules of University Conduct for enforcing violations," said Columbia. **"Our focus is on preserving our core mission to teach, create, and advance knowledge** while ensuring a safe campus for our community."

JVP explained the incident in an Instagram statement, demanding more information in relation to a March 10 The Forward article in which pro-Israel activist Ross Glick claimed that members of the Columbia board had reported Khalil to officials. Khalil was arrested on March 8, and his green card was revoked over his support for Hamas and leading belligerent protests on campuses.

Student demonstrators watch as others chain themselves to the gates of St. Paul's Chapel at Columbia University to denounce the arrest of Mahmoud Khalil in New York City, US, April 2, 2025. (credit: REUTERS/DANA EDWARDS)

"We demand to know the names of the Columbia trustees who gave Mahmoud's name to ICE," said JVP.

Columbia denied that any member of its leadership had ever requested the presence of ICE agents near its campus.

Columbia should have responded that they have no right to know anything about the ICE communications or activities. It is law enforcements business. Now you are all expelled. - rdb



Other activist groups join JVP in protest

Another activist group joined the effort, with Within Our Lifetime calling on X/Twitter for activists to join the protests against Columbia, which it claimed was complicit in a supposed genocide in Gaza.

"Stand with them – we must escalate now!" WOL urged on social media. "The time for neutrality is over. Join Columbia students in the fight for liberation now!"

JVP said on Instagram that the board of trustees didn't have the students at heart and only

served their alleged business interests invested in defense firms. The group asserted that acting president Claire Shipman's replacement of former [interim president Katrina Armstrong](#) last Friday was a "de facto coup by the trustees" in response to the federal government's March 7 cancellation of \$400 million in grants and contracts with the university.

View this post on Instagram

[A post shared by Columbia Palestine Solidarity Coalition \(CPSC\) \(@columbia.psc\)](#)

"Our trustees have forsaken all forms of shared governance and transparency to endanger our peers," JVP said in reference to Khalil, whose deportation is still being litigated. Why should there be Shared governance? They are there to learn not to determine university rules and policies. - rdb

Reuters reported on Tuesday that US District Judge Michael Farbiarz ruled that the activist's case could be heard in New Jersey rather than in the more conservative Louisiana, where he is currently being held.

As part of its agreement with the federal government, [Columbia](#) has resolved to expand its security system with specially trained patrol officers.

StandWithUs Center of Legal Justice and Columbia College alumna Yael Lerman said that the gate incident was yet another act of unchecked intimidation that had created a hostile campus environment, with the exception that Columbia took action on Wednesday to restore order.

"That action didn't come voluntarily — it was the result of mounting pressure including a federal crackdown and legal challenges like ours," said Lerman, referencing a lawsuit filed last February over the university's alleged indifference to the hostile climate for Jews and Israelis. "It should never have required this much to compel the university to uphold basic standards of safety and accountability."

<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-848754>

Ex-Israeli intel officer: Egypt is building emergency wartime warehouses

Elaborating on the weaponry within the stockpiles, Dekel explained, "These stockpiles include weapons like tanks, artillery, and tractors."

By [PELED ARBELI](#) APRIL 3, 2025 20:23



A visitor holds an Egyptian weapon at the Egypt Defence Expo (EDEX), showcasing military systems and hardware, in Cairo, Egypt, December 7, 2023. (photo credit: REUTERS/MOHAMED ABD EL GHANY)

Lt. Col. Eli Dekel, a former intelligence officer who specializes in Egypt studies, elaborated on his knowledge about Cairo's building of mass emergency weapons warehouses to reduce global dependency. During Dekel's Thursday *Marriv* interview, he began by explaining that Egypt has been working on the building of warehouses for an extended period of time, dating back to 2003.

"Egypt, fundamentally—and not just because of [US President Donald] Trump—has been working since 2003, and especially over the past five years, to build national emergency stockpiles for wartime," Dekel explained.

Elaborating on the weaponry within the stockpiles, he explained, "These **stockpiles include weapons like tanks, artillery, and tractors, and likely also medicine and food. The total area covered by these facilities exceeds 2.5 million square meters.**"

"It's an enormous scale," Dekel emphasized regarding the stockpiles.

According to Dekel, the goal of building these reserves is to avoid reliance on foreign powers.

"This construction is deliberate, meant to ensure that [Egypt](#) won't be dependent on any superpower dictating its actions," Dekel said.

"Egypt is preparing itself to withstand pressure from countries like the US, Russia, or France," he added.

US leverage over Cairo

Still, Dekel emphasized his belief that the US holds significant leverage over Cairo, despite Egypt's preparations.

"Practically speaking, the US—despite all the warehouses Egypt has—still holds the ability for influence. Maybe not in terms of direct military aid, which Egypt could easily forgo, but the US has other levers," Dekel said.

"A large part of the global economy revolves around it. If the US seriously decides to harm Egypt economically, Egypt will have to think eight times over whether it can handle it," he added.

Dekel used the Yom Kippur War as a historical example to illustrate the tension between foreign dependence and military autonomy.

"If today Egypt is only partially dependent on the US, then during the Yom Kippur War, it was deeply dependent on the Soviet Union. At the time, the Soviets didn't want Egypt to go to war, but Egypt didn't listen. In May 1973, Egypt began preparing for war, and when the Soviets realized this—they were the ones who eventually gave in," he explained.

What questions are to be asked now regarding Egypt?

A key question that remains is whether Egypt could withstand US economic pressure if it came in response to Trump's plan.

"I can't predict what kind of pressure the US will apply, or whether Egypt will withstand it. But Egypt is undoubtedly preparing very seriously for a scenario in which it faces an economic siege. That's why it's building these massive warehouses," Dekel concluded.

Dekel's interview comes after a recent phone call between Trump and President of Egypt Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

The call focused on possible solutions for the situation in Gaza, and it reignited questions about Egypt's ability to withstand political and economic pressure from Washington.

Trump announced his plan in February to take US control of the Strip Gaza and evacuate it. He then explicitly named Egypt as a destination for absorbing Gazans from the Strip. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-848786>

Russia warns of "Catastrophic Consequences" if the U.S. strikes Iranian nuclear sites



Russia has just issued a stark warning to the United States, cautioning that any military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities could lead to "catastrophic" consequences for the Middle East and beyond.

The statement, delivered by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, comes amid escalating tensions following U.S. President Donald Trump's recent threat to bomb Iran unless it agrees to a nuclear deal with Washington.

This development has reignited global concerns over the fragile balance of power in the region, with multiple news outlets reporting on the potential fallout.

According to The Times of Israel, Ryabkov emphasized that strikes on Iran's nuclear infrastructure would have far-reaching and devastating effects.

"The consequences of this, especially if the nuclear infrastructure is hit, could be catastrophic for the entire region," he said in an interview with Russia's International Affairs magazine.

Moscow has positioned itself as a mediator, offering to facilitate dialogue between Washington and Tehran to de-escalate the situation. [Newsweek reported](#) Ryabkov's assertion that Trump's rhetoric "only served to complicate the situation," underscoring Russia's opposition to military action.

Russia's warning follows Trump's comments to NBC News over the weekend, where he threatened military action and secondary tariffs if Iran refused to negotiate.

Reuters noted that this marks a significant escalation in U.S.-Iran relations, with Russia stepping in to urge restraint.

The **Kremlin's offer to mediate reflects its growing ties with Iran**, particularly since the onset of the Ukraine conflict in 2022, during which Tehran has supplied Moscow with drones and ballistic missiles.

Iran, **for its part, maintains that its nuclear program is for peaceful energy purposes** and denies pursuing atomic weapons. However, Trump's threats have prompted Tehran to bolster its defenses.

The **Times of Israel** reported that footage from January 2025 showed Iran conducting air defense drills near its Natanz nuclear site, a key facility in its nuclear program.

This military posturing suggests Tehran is preparing for potential conflict, further heightening regional instability.

The broader context of Middle East tensions adds weight to Russia's warning.

Reuters previously reported on April 16, 2024, that Russian President Vladimir Putin urged all parties in the region to avoid actions that could trigger a "catastrophic" confrontation, following Iran's retaliatory drone and missile strikes on Israel.

This history of Russian diplomacy in the region underscores Moscow's current efforts to prevent a U.S.-Iran clash from spiraling out of control.

The prospect of U.S. strikes on Iran's nuclear sites has drawn varied responses. Newsweek highlighted the growing rhetorical conflict between Washington and Tehran, with both sides ramping up their public statements.

Meanwhile, Al Jazeera recently explored Europe's delicate position in the nuclear landscape, noting that any escalation could further complicate global security dynamics.

Although not directly addressing the U.S.-Iran standoff, the outlet warned that additional nuclear flashpoints would strain diplomatic efforts worldwide.

Analysts suggest that a strike on Iran's nuclear facilities could unleash a cascade of consequences, including environmental disasters from radioactive contamination, retaliatory attacks by Iran and its proxies, and a broader regional war involving Israel and other Gulf states. Russia's reference to "catastrophic" outcomes aligns with these fears, as reported across multiple sources.

As of April 2, 2025, the situation remains fluid. The Times of Israel and Newsweek both noted Russia's readiness to act as a go-between, with Ryabkov stating Moscow is "ready to offer its good services" to both the U.S. and Iran.

However, Trump's hardline stance and Iran's rejection of direct talks leave little room for optimism. The international community watches closely, aware that any misstep could ignite a conflict with repercussions felt far beyond the Middle East. <https://endtimeheadlines.org/2025/04/russia-warns-of-catastrophic-consequences-if-the-u-s-strikes-iranian-nuclear-sites/>

US won't leave NATO – Rubio

Washington is as active as ever in the military bloc, the secretary of state has said

3 Apr, 2025 16:22



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks during a press conference following the NATO Foreign Affairs Ministers' meeting on April 03, 2025 in Brussels, Belgium. © Omar Havana/Getty Images

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has reassured NATO member states that Washington remains committed to the military bloc, while insisting that members must drastically increase spending on their militaries.

Rubio made the remarks at NATO's foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels

on Thursday.

US President Donald Trump had previously threatened to leave NATO if bloc members failed to increase their military spending. He has called for a huge hike to 5% of gross domestic product (GDP) from the current 2% benchmark only reached by 23 of its 32 members in 2024.

"The United States is in NATO ... The United States is as active in NATO as it has ever been," Rubio told reporters, dismissing doubts about that commitment as "hysteria."

He went on to stress that Trump was "not against NATO" but rather against a bloc "that does not have the capabilities that it needs to fulfil the obligations" under its founding treaty.

Rubio insisted that "every single" NATO member must agree on a "realistic pathway" to eventually committing 5% of its GDP to defense, however it may take years.

Eastern European members such as Estonia and Poland have supported the US demand - with Estonia already committing to 3.7% of GDP and Poland aiming for 4.7%. Leading EU economies, however, such as Italy and Germany, have criticized the 5% goal as unrealistic, citing fiscal pressures.

[READ MORE: Von der Leyen criticized for skirting EU oversight](#)

Trump's NATO rhetoric has prompted European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to propose a 'rearmament' plan to ramp up military spending through loans. Southern European states, however, have reportedly been pushing back against the initiative, voicing "serious doubts" about taking on additional debt. <https://www.rt.com/news/615202-us-wont-leave-nato-rubio/>

EU state announces withdrawal from ICC

The move by Hungary coincides with a visit from Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, who is wanted by the Hague-based court

3 Apr, 2025 12:54



© Getty Images/Sitthipong Pengjan

Hungary will pull out of the International Criminal Court (ICC) because it has become a "political tool," Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has said.

The announcement coincides with a visit to the EU and NATO member-state by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is wanted by the Hague-based body for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity related to

Israel's ongoing military operation in Gaza.

During a joint press-conference with Netanyahu on Thursday, Orbán said that in recent years the ICC had stopped being impartial and turned into "a political court."

Hungary, which is a "democratic state governed by the rule of law, cannot participate in this," he insisted.

The Israeli leader praised Budapest for its "brave step" in quitting the UN court, which he described as "a corrupt organization" that chose to prosecute Israel instead of going after terrorists.

[READ MORE: Netanyahu defies ICC with Budapest visit \(PHOTOS\)](#)

Earlier on Thursday, Orbán's chief of staff, Gergely Gulyás, announced that Budapest would officially begin the process of withdrawal from the ICC later in the day "in accordance with [the] constitutional and international legal framework."

Budapest signed the Rome Statute, which gives the ICC its powers, in 1999 and ratified it two years later.

Orbán invited Netanyahu to visit Hungary a day after the Hague-based court issued an arrest warrant against him, saying that he would "guarantee him that if he comes, the ICC ruling will have no effect in Hungary, and we will not follow its contents."

The court does not have its own police force and relies on member-states to detain and transfer suspects. The ICC's jurisdiction is currently recognized by 123 countries.

In February, the administration of US President Donald Trump sanctioned the ICC and its top prosecutor Karim Khan for going after Netanyahu and former Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Washington is not a party to the ICC. Other non-participating states include Russia, China, and Israel.

In March 2023, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Children's Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova over alleged illegal deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia. Moscow called the order "null and void," saying the children had been evacuated for safety reasons and could be returned to their parents or guardians upon request. <https://www.rt.com/news/615189-icc-hungary-announce-withdraw/>

ICC responds to Netanyahu's Hungary visit

The Israeli PM is visiting Budapest despite an arrest warrant issued against him by The Hague-based court

3 Apr, 2025 14:54



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks during a press-conference alongside Hungarian counterpart Viktor Orbán in Budapest. © Getty Images / Janos Kummer

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has said Hungary is obligated to cooperate with an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, after the Israeli leader arrived for a visit to Budapest on

Thursday.

The ICC issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in November, over alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity related to Israel's ongoing military operation in Gaza. **Netanyahu traveled on Thursday to Hungary, which had earlier insisted it would not detain the Israeli leader.**

Budapest also announced on Thursday that it was starting the official procedure of withdrawing from the ICC. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban explained the move by claiming that The Hague-based court had turned into a "political tool" in recent years.

Speaking about Netanyahu's visit to Budapest later in the day, ICC spokesman Fadi El Abdallah said *"the court recalls that Hungary remains under a duty to cooperate with the ICC."*

Reuters earlier reported that it would likely take Hungary at least a year to fully withdraw from the ICC. Budapest signed the Rome Statute, which gives the ICC its powers, in 1999 and ratified it two years later.

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Orban invited Netanyahu to visit Hungary a day after The Hague-based court issued an arrest warrant against him, saying that he would *"guarantee him that if he comes, the ICC ruling will have no effect in Hungary, and we will not follow its contents."*

During a joint press-conference with his Hungarian counterpart on Thursday, Netanyahu praised Budapest's *"bold and principled"* decision to pull out from the court.

Netanyahu insisted that it is *"important to stand up to this corrupt organization,"* expressing confidence that Budapest will not be the last capital to abandon the ICC.

Last month, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) resumed airstrikes and ground operations in Gaza as talks with Palestinian armed group Hamas over the release of the remaining hostages and implementation of a truce collapsed.

According to the latest data from Gaza's Health Ministry, at least 50,523 Palestinians have been killed and 114,638 others wounded inside the enclave since the IDF began its attacks on Gaza in response to a deadly incursion by Hamas into Israel on October 7, 2023. <https://www.rt.com/news/615187-hungary-icc-orban-netanyahu/>

Wall Street reacts to President Trump's trade tariffs plan

Agenda calling for fairness for American products, manufacturers ... and consumers

By Bob Unruh April 3, 2025

President Donald Trump's campaign to reach fair trade deals with the international community, as expected, hit American consumers with "short-term" pain this week, as stocks measured by the S&P 500, Nasdaq and the Dow Jones Industrial Average all bumped down by a couple of points on the release of his tariff plan.

Trump's extensive tariff agenda includes tariffs for foreign goods imported into the United States that align with tariffs those nations charge for American goods delivered to their citizens.

Analysts have confirmed that the short-term pain is real, but the plan is for the end result to be a better market for American products and American consumers.

On Thursday, just hours after Trump's tariff program was revealed, doomsayers claimed the market "fell significantly." One report even said they "plunged."

The markets, in fact, were down a couple of percentage points, with those individual stocks whose managers have been relying on favorable import structures to make money hit the hardest.

Trump said, in all caps, "THE OPERATION IS OVER! THE PATIENT LIVED, AND IS HEALING. THE PROGNOSIS IS THAT THE PATIENT WILL BE FAR STRONGER, BIGGER, BETTER, AND MORE RESILIENT THAN EVERY BEFORE..."

Trump even has gone to the point of making sure those who have been gaming the system now will be playing in a fair field, by eliminating the so-called 'de minimus' exceptions that allowed overseas companies, from China and the like, to ship directly to American consumers and avoid tariffs.

Those rules had allowed shipments under \$800 in value to avoid any payment, and billions of those shipments were routinely sent and delivered.

Trump had given the Commerce Department time to develop a plan to collect those payments, and he said that now is in place.

Starting May 2, shipments under \$800 will be subject to an ad valorem duty of 30% of the value of the postal item or \$25 per postal item. On June 1, the per-postal-item tariff will increase to \$50, reports confirmed. Billions in revenue for America are predicted.

The [Washington Examiner](#) noted the S&P was down about 3%, the Dow Jones about 2.8%.

Also affected were international markets, with Japan's Nikkei 225 down 4% and South Korea's Kospi index down about 2.7%. Other markets in Europe, Germany, France and London were down between 1% and 2%.

Gold was at \$3,090. And cryptocurrencies were down in the range of 3%.

Trump said, "For decades, our country has been looted, pillaged, raped, and plundered by nations near and far, both friend and foe alike. With today's action, we are finally going to be able to make America great again – greater than ever before. Jobs in factories will come roaring back into our country."

There is a 10% base tariff for all, he said, and "reciprocals" will mean a 54% tariff for China.

<https://www.wnd.com/2025/04/wall-street-reacts-to-president-trumps-trade-tariffs-plan/>

Denibrat Insanity

Case 1:25-cv-00952 Document 1 Filed 03/31/25 Page 1 of 74

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE,
430 South Capitol Street SE
Washington, DC 20003;

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION,
1225 Eye Street NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005;

DSCC,
120 Maryland Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20002;

DCCC,
430 South Capitol Street SE
Washington, DC 20003;

U.S. SENATE MINORITY LEADER CHARLES E.
SCHUMER,
Notice of address to be filed under seal pursuant to
LCvR 5.1(c);

and

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MINORITY
LEADER HAKEEM S. JEFFRIES,
Notice of address to be filed under seal pursuant to
LCvR 5.1(c);

Plaintiffs,

v.

DONALD J. TRUMP, in his official capacity as
President of the United States,
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500;

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500;

U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION,
633 3rd Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20001;

CIV. NO. 1:25-cv-00952

JUST IN: Democrats Hakeem Jeffries, Chuck Schumer, and the DNC have filed a lawsuit against President Trump to stop his executive order banning non-citizens from voting in U.S. elections.

Now, why would they do that?

Why Did The FDA Hide Vaccine Injuries?

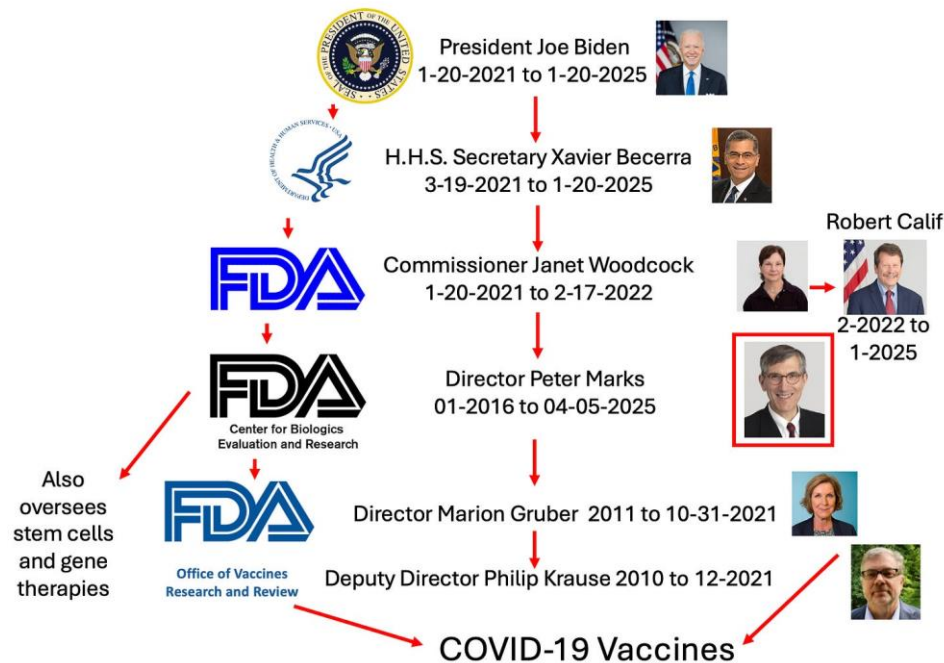
How Peter Marks' role in the COVID vaccine debacle exposed the flaws in America's toxic health bureaucracy

A frequent criticism of corporations (which I believe also applies to governmental bureaucracies) is that their organizational structure encourages sociopathic behavior. This is because members of these entities are shielded from legal or personal accountability for their actions, with any wrongdoings being attributed to the corporation as a whole. In contrast, the main form of accountability most members face is the pressure to advance the institution's mission (e.g., make more money), leading to the proliferation of increasingly unethical methods to achieve that goal.

To illustrate, consider this quote from Peter Rost, a former executive at Pfizer and one of the few pharmaceutical leaders to speak out against the industry:

It is scary how many similarities there are between this industry and the mob. **The mob makes obscene amounts of money, as does this industry. The side effects of organized crime are killings and deaths, and the side effects are the same in this industry.** The mob bribes politicians and others, and so does the drug industry ... The difference is, all these people in the drug industry look upon themselves – well, I'd say 99 percent, anyway – look upon themselves as law-abiding citizens, not as citizens who would ever rob a bank ... However, when they get together as a group and manage these corporations, something seems to happen ... to otherwise good citizens when they are part of a corporation. It's almost like when you have war atrocities; people do things they don't think they're capable of. When you're in a group, people can do things they otherwise wouldn't, because the group can validate what you're doing as okay.

In looking through what went awry with the COVID-19 response, while Fauci was commonly blamed for all that went amiss, I kept running into another less-known individual who, while hidden within the FDA bureaucracy, I believe was directly responsible for many of the mishaps that happened



This was because Peter Marks was:

- The primary person who covered up the reports of COVID vaccine injuries (and instead repeatedly told the world they were “safe and effective”).
- Kept on pushing the FDA's chief vaccine scientists (who were very pro-vaccine) to accelerate and condense the approval timelines for the COVID vaccines (as those approvals were needed to legally implement Biden's vaccine and booster mandates). Eventually, Gruber and Krause reported their were no more corners

they could cut to further accelerate the COVID vaccine approvals, at which point they were removed from the COVID vaccine approval process and Marks took it over (at which point the unjustifiable approvals and mandates quickly followed).

As such, I felt Marks should not be in the agency and four weeks ago put together a detailed summary of his gross malfeasance at the FDA throughout COVID-19 in the hopes his abhorrent conduct could become widely known.

Last week, Marks announced his resignation in a spiteful letter that concluded with:

I was willing to work to address the Secretary's concerns regarding vaccine safety and transparency...However, it has become clear that truth and transparency are not desired by the Secretary, but rather he wishes subservient confirmation of his misinformation and lies.

This, in turn, prompted Robert Redfield (Trump's 2018-2021 CDC director) to make a Twitter account to state:

Secretary Kennedy and Commissioner Marty Makary have the responsibility to build their own team at the FDA to move our nation forward. **It was extremely disappointing to see Dr Peter Marks' vindictive comments towards Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. in his resignation letter. I firmly believe RFK will be the most consequential Health Secretary in our nation's history.**

Note: Redfield, to my knowledge, is the only CDC director who went into private practice (he treats long COVID) after leaving the CDC (whereas in contrast most directors accept lucrative or prestigious positions following their tenure).

Following Mark's resignation (which many news outlets claimed was forced), many news outlets attempted to

paint him as saint and a victim of RFK's "war against science"

Peter Marks, FDA's top vaccine official, resigns >

The New York Times

Top F.D.A. Vaccine Official Resigns, Citing Kennedy's 'Misinformation and Lies'

17 hours ago • By Christina Jewett, Sheryl Gay Stolb...



NPR

The top FDA vaccine official is forced out, cites RFK Jr.'s 'misinformation and lies'

17 hours ago • By Rob Stein



USA TODAY

Dr. Peter Marks, top vaccine official at FDA, resigns and criticizes RFK Jr.

27 minutes ago • By Sudiksha Kochi



The Washington Post

RFK Jr. forces out Peter Marks, FDA's top vaccine scientist

16 hours ago • By Dan Diamond



NBC News

FDA's top vaccine scientist is out, citing Kennedy's 'misinformation and lies'

18 hours ago • By Berkeley Lovelace Jr.



CNN

Top vaccine official forced out of FDA

17 hours ago • By John Bonifield, Meg Tirrell & Nora ...



Reuters

Top vaccine official Peter Marks forced out at FDA, WSJ reports



CNBC

Top FDA vaccine official Peter Marks resigns in opposition to RFK Jr.



This gushing coverage of Marks, in turn, I would argue was due to his background. Specifically:
•Prior to joining the FDA, Marks was an academic hematologist and oncologist with an "average and unimpressive publication history" (none of which related to vaccines, but [one of which](#) extensively discussed the global

need for fully informed consent and stated "those that have only pretended to move [towards informed consent] will have the greatest difficulty").

•Prior to joining the FDA, he'd also worked for several years the pharmaceutical industry (although oddly, no information exists online as to which companies he worked for—although one [was likely Novartis](#)).

•While at the FDA, he prioritized pushing through extremely expensive gene therapies (22 in total—most of which cost over half a million dollars), including some highly questionable ones (e.g., he overruled three FDA review teams and two top officials to push through a failed muscular dystrophy treatment [which subsequently killed a patient](#)).

Note: Robert Malone recently showed that Peter Marks was not qualified to be a senior regulator and had minimal knowledge or background in molecular biology, immunology or vaccinology (and worse still, repeatedly chose to overrule the FDA scientists who did).

•Marks was seen as a global leader in commercializing this field (e.g., he helped direct [Germany's national program to develop gene therapies](#), his resignation [shook the entire sector](#), and following his resignation, [large drops occurred](#) in the stocks of key gene therapy companies).

The Forgotten Side of Medicine is a reader-supported publication. To receive new posts and support my work, consider becoming a free or paid subscriber. To see how others have benefitted from this newsletter, click [here!](#) <https://www.midwesterndoctor.com/p/why-did-the-fda-hide-vaccine-injuries> **Way too much corruption on these advisory and approval groups and individuals. – rd b**

OP ED

Don't Cry for Elmo, He's Filthy Rich

Wed, 2 Apr 2025 9:11 PM PST by Daniel Greenfield



“Elon Musk and Marjorie Taylor Greene are trying to defund Sesame Street and dismantle PBS and NPR,” Rep. Robert Garcia claimed during hearings on the two radical leftist organizations.

“The Trump administration’s abrupt federal grant cuts have made their way to ‘Sesame Street’—and they risk pulling the rug out from under children,” Fortune Magazine claimed.

“Sesame Street’s Future Is in Jeopardy”, Newsweek moaned.

“Why Does Big Bird Look So Sad?” the New York Times asked. According to the paper, the Trump administration’s cuts to USAID “stripped Sesame Workshop of some valuable grants”.

The USAID grants in question were \$20 million to make an Iraqi version of Sesame Street. The Sesame Workshop previously got over \$4 million to make a Bangladeshi Sesame Street and \$18 million from the Pentagon and GSA to make a Sesame Street for military families.

Even assuming that there was some justifiable reason to spend \$20 million making a Sesame Street for an oil-rich country which just passed a law legalizing adult men marrying members of the Sesame Street viewing audience, it has nothing to do with funding the American series.



And \$20 million might be a big number somewhere, but it’s a drop in the Sesame bucket.

Every time members of Congress discuss cuts to PBS, Democrats hide behind Big Bird and Elmo, even sending the giant yellow creature to Congress in the nineties, but only 4% of Sesame Workshop’s revenues come from the federal government. If it all went away, even Count Von Count would hardly notice. 4% of Sesame Workshop’s budget wouldn’t even cover the salaries for its C-suite which were in excess of \$6 million in the last reported year.

Sesame CEO Stephen Youngwood makes over \$1 million a year, President Sherrie Rollins Westin earns \$864,748 a year and together with the rest of the top executives account for enough money to bring Sesame Street to at least three different Islamic terrorist states.

Sesame Workshop took in \$187 million in 2023 and \$271 million the year before that. The non-profit has assets of \$607 million. Over the last decade, those assets more than doubled.

A non-profit with over half-a-billion is not about to disappear if we stop funding Jihad Street in Iraq. The real question is why were taxpayers ever subsidizing one of the wealthiest non-profit production companies associated with PBS which can print money by selling merchandise?

20% of Sesame Workshop’s revenues come from licensing. 50% from distribution fees and royalties. Millions of dollars continue pouring in from toy and music licensing.

Sesame Street already gets sizable amounts of money from liberal foundations and billionaires like Michael Bloomberg, Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg, the MacArthur Foundation, and even CEO Stephen Youngwood chipped in under \$49,000 of his million dollar salary and Sherrie Westin under \$100,000 of her nearly seven figure salary to the Sesame Workshop.

And they can probably afford to chip in some more if Sesame Workshop is really in trouble.

The real nightmare on Sesame Street came not from the end of its nonprofit work or PBS productions, but the end of HBO MAX’s lucrative deal to screen and showcase its episodes. The HBO deal made it clear that Sesame Street was not primarily a public television property. But as Discovery, HBO’s parent company, began cutting costs, the Sesame Street deal was a casualty. It wasn’t Republican budget cuts that hurt Sesame Street, but cutbacks by the Hollywood studio most closely associated with funding BLM and other radical leftist movements.

Another crisis was caused by the Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU), one of those baffling conglomerate unions of bureaucrats that includes everything from Canadians to minor league umpires to

leatherworkers, trying to unionize Sesame Street employees.

These much more serious blows to Big Bird came from lefties, including unions, not Trump, but you won't see Democrats talking about how unions are trying to kneecap Elmo.

The USAID grant to make Sesame Street in Iraq does point to one source of the organization's financial problems, which is that it spends too much of its budget on international programming while getting little in the way of its revenues for licensing everything from toys to puppets in international markets. Sesame Workshop brags about all the work it's been doing in Ukraine, Lebanon and India. And that's work that American taxpayers and audiences subsidize.

Sesame Street needs to decide whether it wants to make puppet shows for American kids or for the children of the world. Big Bird and Elmo remain lucrative in America, but there's no reason for American taxpayers to be subsidizing Sesame Street's outreach to Syrian migrants or teaching children in India about gender equality.

Democrats used to pretend that budget cuts to PBS threaten Sesame Street, now they admit that they're no longer using Big Bird as an avian or puppet shield for PBS but for USAID. Elmo isn't just being used to defend subsidies for American public television, but for Iraqi public television, and even families with faded Grovers in the house will draw the line there.

Sesame Workshop needs to choose between Sesame Street and Iftah Ya Simsim, Sim Sim Hamara and the other Sesame Streets for the Muslim world. The Pakistani Sesame Street previously had its funds cut off in 2012 over allegations of fraud and Sharaa Simsim, the version that airs in the Muslim terrorist-occupied territories in Israel, after its leaders rejected a joint production with Israel, had its funding cut over its problematic content.

Daoud Kuttub, the executive producer of Sharaa Simsim, the 'Palestinian' Sesame Street, wrote that the " Hamas' operation against Israel on Oct. 7 was carried out on the basis of the internationally sanctioned right of people to resist" and that Hamas leaders did nothing wrong.

His 'Palestinian' Sesame Street, was funded by USAID,

Kuttub, who often pops up representing the 'Christian' point of view, also claimed that the Hamas attacks were a response to "Jewish supremacy" for offending Muslim religious sensibilities by praying at a Jewish holy site claimed by Islamic conquerors as a mosque.

But when funds for Jihad Street were previously pulled, Brookings published an op-ed claiming that, "Congress Makes Elmo Cry by Defunding Palestinian "Sesame Street". And Kuttub recently resurfaced in the New Republic with an op-ed titled, "I Worked on the "Arab Sesame Street." It Was Not a Waste of Money" in which the terror apologist claimed that American taxpayer funding for it encouraged "peace and tolerance among children of the Middle East".

If 'Palestinian Elmo' didn't want to cry, he shouldn't have joined Hamas. And if the Sesame Workshop wants to justify its \$6 million C-suite salaries, it should stop working on international shows and go back to its original mission of entertaining and teaching American children.

Merchandising and licensing makes Sesame Street financially viable and quite profitable in the United States and some western nations. The real problem is that Sesame Street became a vehicle for foreign aid and government grants in the third world.

And that is what's threatening Big Bird and making Elmo sad.

Sesame Workshop is in trouble because it puts American kids last. Sesame Street should go back to being a street in the U.S.A. and not in Pakistan, Bangladesh or Hamastan.

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://bkdvk-zgpvh.campaign-view.com/ua/viewinbrowser>