

**NOTE**

**Sorry no postings for 3 days but it has been a very busy and wonderful family celebration. Too much to eat and much joy. - rdb**

**Gaza hostage talks still stalled, official says, amid reports of incremental progress  
Hamis says it is studying new Israeli proposal, but official from group reiterates that it won't disarm and wants permanent end to war in what likely prevents breakthrough**

By [Jacob Magid](#), [Agencies](#) and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 2:43 am



Protesters, led by family members of people held hostage in Gaza, hold placards showing the face of hostage Edan Alexander, near the home of Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer in Jerusalem, on April 13, 2025. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

**A breakthrough does not appear to be on the horizon in the long-stalled Israel-Hamas hostage negotiations, an official from one of the Arab mediating countries told The Times of Israel on Monday amid several reports claiming incremental progress has been made in the talks.**

**“There’s a lot of noise, particularly from the Israeli side, about a potential breakthrough,** but the same elements that have prevented a deal until now are still in place,” the Arab official said.

**While Hamas in recent weeks has walked back its rejection of an interim ceasefire deal,** it is still insisting that strong assurances be put in place for such a temporary agreement to transition into a permanent Gaza truce — something that Israel will not accept unless Hamas relinquishes governing and security control of the Strip, the official explained.

“Hamas is not going to agree to a complete surrender, but that is still what Israel is demanding,” the Arab official added.

Hamas said in a statement late Monday that it was studying a new Israeli proposal and that it will submit its response “as soon as possible.”

**The terror group reiterated its core demand that a ceasefire deal must end the war in Gaza and achieve a full Israeli pull-out from the strip.**



Palestinians inspect their home after an Israeli airstrike targeting Muhammad al-Darbashi, the Khan Younis police chief, resulted in one death and several injuries in the Mawasi area of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip. (Abed Rahim Khatib/FLASH90)

**Earlier, senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters that the proposal did not meet the group’s demand that Israel commit to a complete halt of hostilities.**

In the proposal, Israel called for the disarmament of Hamas, which the group will not agree to, Abu Zuhri said.

“Handing over the resistance’s weapons is a million red lines and is not subject to consideration, let alone

discussion,” Abu Zuhri said.

Hamas has long rejected talk of disarmament, though, its officials have expressed willingness to forgo governing control of the Strip to a transitional body of independent technocrats, such as the one envisioned in the Egyptian plan for the post-war reconstruction of Gaza that was unveiled last month.

“ Hamas is ready to hand over the hostages in one batch in exchange for the end of the war and the withdrawal of Israeli military” from Gaza, Abu Zuhri said, confirming what a senior Hamas official [told](#) The Times of Israel earlier this month.

It was not clear whether the latest Israeli proposal to which Hamas said it would soon respond was the same one that officials [revealed](#) to The Times of Israel last week, which envisions the release of ten hostages over a 45-day period.

Meanwhile, Hebrew media reported that Hamas has shown flexibility regarding the number of living hostages it would release in a partial deal — now seven to nine, instead of five — but not about its demand that any such deal include negotiations for a permanent end to the war.

**Additionally, Arabic media outlets reported that the Hamas delegation, which had been in Cairo since Friday as part of the ongoing hostage-truce negotiations, had left Egypt. A Hamas official — speaking on the condition of anonymity — told the Associated Press that the group was sending a delegation to Qatar, however, for talks later this week or next.**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said Monday that the premier held a call with the mothers of hostages [Tamir Nimrodi](#), [Avinatan Or](#), and [Eitan Horn](#) about the negotiations.

Netanyahu has held such calls with hostage families on a near daily basis in recent weeks, as he tries to buck accusations that he is not urgently working to advance their release.

According to the PMO, Netanyahu described to the parents ongoing efforts to secure the hostages’ return and provided “updates on the existence of intensive negotiations currently underway.”



The premier reiterated his “commitment to the return of all the hostages — both the living and the fallen,” the PMO added.

*Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gives a Passover address, April 11, 2025. (PMO)*

**Also Monday, Channel 13 reported that Netanyahu, in a recent conversation with families of hostages, said “it is possible that the terror group will determine the list of those freed” in a partial-hostage-release for temporary-truce**

**agreement.**

When the hostages’ families expressed their fear that military pressure would harm their loved ones, Netanyahu responded that he doesn’t “believe that the end of the war will bring the release of all the hostages,” and emphasized, “We are continuing military pressure,” according to the report.

Had Israel agreed to previous proposals, the prime minister said, “we would have received a maximum of five hostages. Our rationale is to maximize the number of hostages it’s possible to get out.”



*Hostage soldier Edan Alexander is seen in a propaganda video released by the Hamas terror group on April 12, 2025. (Courtesy)*

**The families were said to have also objected to the staged nature of the hostage releases, whereby some are freed while others remain in captivity: “The stages are a mistake. We have to get to one deal that includes all of them,” they are said to have told the prime minister.**

**“I am optimistic that a deal is close,** in the coming weeks, that will probably return 10 living hostages,” he is said

to have responded.

Asked how Israel decides which hostages will be released in a partial deal, Netanyahu reportedly said: “At this stage, there is still no mechanism for determining the list — it could be that Hamas, even, will determine it.”

The parents of Edan Alexander, an American-Israeli soldier abducted on October 7 who is the last living hostage with US citizenship, said Monday that Netanyahu told them, too, that a deal may soon be reached.

Hamas released a [propaganda video](#) on Saturday in which Alexander, visibly gaunt, says that he heard the terror group was ready to release him three weeks ago and that the government and Netanyahu “refused and left me here.” The statement was almost certainly dictated by his captors.

Israel and Hamas signed onto a phased ceasefire deal in January that fell apart after its first stage. Hamas wanted to transition to the second phase as stipulated in the agreement, but Israel sought to rework the terms in order to free additional hostages without committing to a permanent end to the war, as envisioned in the second phase. After Hamas refused, Israel resumed its offensive in Gaza on March 18.

Netanyahu has long refused to end the war before Hamas's military and governing capabilities have been dismantled. He is backed by many of his hardline coalition partners who have threatened to collapse his government if he agrees to end the war, which was sparked by Hamas's October 7 onslaught.

However, successive polls have indicated that the government is out of step with a majority of Israelis who back ending the war started by Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack in exchange for the release of all 59 remaining hostages — 24 of whom are believed to still be alive. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/gaza-hostage-talks-still-stalled-official-says-amid-reports-of-incremental-progress/>

## **Educators, reservists, ex-diplomats are latest to urge hostage deal, even by ending war** *Petitions signed by thousands pan ongoing fighting for allegedly serving political interests, straying from war goals; warn operation endangers lives of hostages, Gaza civilians*

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 12:30 am



*Hostage families and their supporters protest for the release of captives held in Gaza, outside the home of Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, in Jerusalem, on April 13, 2025. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)*

**A wave of public petitions calling for the return of hostages from Gaza even if it means an immediate end to the war continued on Monday, representing several more sectors of Israeli society, with thousands signing on to back the call originally made by Israeli Air Force reservists last week.**

Separate letters were published Monday in the name of some 3,500 higher education academics, 3,000 education officials, 1,500 armored corps soldiers, 1,000 parents, dozens of former Foreign Ministry officials, and IDF Spokesperson's Unit reservists.

As quoted by the Haaretz daily, academics signed on to a demand for the return of hostages without delay, "even at the cost of ending the war immediately."

"The war serves mainly personal political interests," the petition charged. "Continuing the war will bring death upon hostages, IDF soldiers, and innocent civilians and will wear out reservists. As has been proved in the past, only an agreement can bring hostages back to Israel safely."

In a separate letter, education officials emphasized their belief that "only a diplomatic agreement can save lives, and that every passing moment without one" endangers the hostages.

It asserted that "this is not a call for refusal" to show up for military duties, but "a call to save lives."



*A woman walks past a poster depicting hostages held in Gaza, in Tel Aviv on April 6, 2025. (Miriam Alster/ FLASH90)*

Critics of the petitions signed by military reservists, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and members of the government, have characterized them as calls to refuse to serve, although the letters have not issued a threat to ignore calls to duty over the hostage talks impasse.

Around 1,000 parents also published a letter in which they said they refused to agree to an "eternal war" and refused to "shut our eyes at the killing of children," as quoted by Haaretz.

"We will not cooperate with this dangerous concept that there are no innocents in Gaza. We will not allow the hostages to be abandoned, and we will not accept dehumanization."

Armored Corps reservists and retirees, including former prime minister and IDF chief of staff Ehud Barak, signed on to a petition charging the fighting "no longer serves the war goals defined by the IDF," demanding the immediate return of the hostages.



**Former prime minister Ehud Barak attends a protest march against the decision of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to fire Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar, outside the PM's office in Jerusalem, March 19, 2025. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)**

Additionally, dozens of former Foreign Ministry employees, including former director generals and ambassadors, signed onto a letter backing previous petitions, calling for the immediate return of hostages.

“The recent return to hostilities has not resulted in the release of a single hostage. We therefore demand immediate action to release the hostages, in one phase, even at the cost of

ending the war,” they wrote.

IDF Spokesperson’s Unit reservists and retirees signed onto a letter similarly demanding the return of hostages at the price of ending the war, charging that the war no longer served security interests. It was not immediately clear how many signed onto that petition.

“As proved in the past, only a deal will return the hostages safely, while military pressure leads mainly to the killing of hostages and endangering their lives,” they said.

The latest petitions came after some 1,000 veterans of the Israeli Air Force [published a letter](#) last week demanding the return of the hostages in Gaza, even if it comes at the cost of ending the war against Hamas entirely. The military has moved to dismiss every active duty reservist who signed it, saying soldiers cannot use the “Israeli Air Force brand” to protest political matters.

“The continuation of the war doesn’t advance any of the declared goals of the war, and will bring about the deaths of the hostages, of IDF soldiers and innocent civilians,” read the original air force letter, which was published as an ad in several Israeli newspapers.

“As has been proven in the past, only an agreement [with the Hamas terror group] can return hostages safely, while military pressure mainly leads to the killing of hostages and the endangerment of our soldiers,” it added. “We call on all citizens of Israel to mobilize for action.”

After the IDF [moved to dismiss](#) all active Air Force reservists who signed the letter last week, Netanyahu expressed support for the decision in a statement, in which he argued that even if it wasn’t explicit, they had in practice threatened to refuse to serve.

“Refusal to serve is refusal to serve, even if it’s only hinted at in whitewashed language,” he said. “Statements that weaken the IDF and strengthen our enemies in a time of war are unforgivable.”

Retired Air Force members have published a letter calling for the return of all hostages, even at the cost of ending the war.

The letter expresses distrust in the considerations of the Chief of Staff and the Air Force Commander because it states that the war is pointless. The... [pic.twitter.com/Y3O9gelVVK](https://pic.twitter.com/Y3O9gelVVK)  
— Amit Segal (@AmitSegal) [April 10, 2025](#)

The military said that only 60 of those who signed that letter were active reservists. Among those, only a handful were competent pilots, while the rest have been serving in headquarters roles, according to an IDF examination of the signatories.

The military recently dismissed at least two reservist officers for refusing to serve, including Air Force combat navigator Alon Gur, who said he told his superiors that “a line was crossed” and the government was “again abandoning its citizens in broad daylight.”

According to reports, those incidents were seen by the IDF as isolated cases, but a number of senior IDF officials were reportedly concerned that refusal to serve could become a larger phenomenon among reservists.

At the height of the 2023 protests against the judicial overhaul, hundreds of IDF reservists signed declarations saying they would no longer show up for reserve duty to protest the government advancing its plans to curtail the judiciary.

However, when war erupted in Gaza with the October 7, 2023, Hamas-led attacks and massacres, nearly 300,000 reservists showed up for duty, marking the largest-ever call-up of reservists in Israel’s history. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/educators-reservists-ex-diplomats-are-latest-to-urge-hostage-deal-even-by-ending-war/>

# Top EU diplomat: Israel has right to self-defense but current actions disproportionate

## European Union announces \$1.8 billion to 'help stabilize the West Bank and Gaza'; Macron calls Abbas, urges 'reform' of Palestinian Authority as part of path to two-state solution

By [Agencies](#) and [Tol Staff](#) 14 April 2025, 9:54 pm



PA Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa (L) shakes hands with EU High Representative and Vice-President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas (R) ahead of a European Union Foreign Affairs Council meeting at the European Convention Center Luxembourg (ECCL) in Luxembourg City, on April 14, 2025. (JOHN THYS / AFP)

**Israel has the right to defend itself, but its current actions go beyond proportionate self-defense, Kaja Kallas, the European Union's top diplomat, told reporters Monday.**

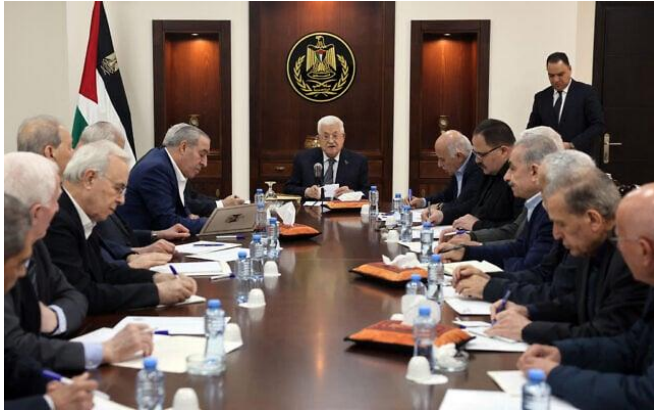
Earlier, **Kallas said Europe was stepping up its support for the Palestinians, with a plan to provide €1.6 billion (\$1.8 billion) until 2027 to "help stabilize the West Bank and Gaza."**

The fresh aid pledge came just ahead of a meeting between Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa and EU foreign ministers in Luxembourg.

"The EU will invest in essential infrastructure while delivering humanitarian aid and support for refugees," she said on X.

The EU is looking to boost the PA, as Israel has resumed its war against Hamas in Gaza after a ceasefire-hostage release deal largely put a halt to the fighting for two months.

"This will reinforce the PA's ability to meet the needs of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and prepare it to return to govern Gaza once conditions allow," Kallas said.



A handout picture provided by the Palestinian Authority's press office (PPO) shows PA President Mahmoud Abbas chairing a meeting of the Fatah Central Committee, in Ramallah, on February 19, 2025. (Thaer GHANEM / PPO / AFP)

**Brussels — the biggest international donor to the Palestinians — said the package would include 620 million euros in grants for the PA.**

The funds will be linked to reforms on "fiscal sustainability, democratic governance, private sector development, and public infrastructure and services," the EU said.

The rest will be made up of 576 million euros in grants for projects aimed at helping economic recovery in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

A further 400 million euros in loans would come from the bloc's lending arm, the European Investment Bank.



The EU's new package follows on from the previous three-year support plan worth 1.36 billion euros from 2021 to 2024.

### Macron urges PA reform

Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron urged "reform" of the PA as part of a plan for the West Bank-based body to govern a postwar Gaza without the Hamas terror group, which Israel has sworn to eliminate after its October 7, 2023, onslaught.

France is among European nations to have backed a plan for Gaza to return to the control of the Ramallah-based authority after nearly two decades of Hamas rule if a ceasefire deal is reached to end the war with Israel.

***Palestinian Authority's Heritage and Tourism Minister Hani al-Hayek (L), French President Emmanuel Macron (C) and IMA President Jack Lang visit the exhibition Treasures rescued from Gaza at the Arab World Institute (IMA) in Paris, France on April 14, 2025. (Michel Euler / POOL / AFP)***

Macron called his PA counterpart Mahmoud Abbas on Monday, after last week announcing France could take the unprecedented step of recognizing a Palestinian state in the coming months, sparking ire from Israel.

“France is fully mobilized to obtain the return of all hostages, the return of a lasting ceasefire, and immediate access for humanitarian aid into Gaza,” Macron said on X after the phone call.

“It is essential to set a framework for the day after: disarm and sideline Hamas, define credible governance and reform the Palestinian Authority,” he said.

“This should allow progress towards a two-state political solution, with a view to the peace conference in June, in the service of peace and security for all.”

Macron said France could recognize a Palestinian state during a United Nations conference in New York in June.

The Palestinian news agency Wafa reported that Abbas and Macron had “emphasized the urgent need for a ceasefire, the acceleration of humanitarian aid delivery, the rejection of the displacement of the Palestinian people from their land.”

France has thrown its support behind a plan put forward by Arab nations, including Jordan, to rebuild Gaza without evicting its 2.4 million Palestinian residents.

The Arab League-endorsed plan was put forward to counter a US proposal to send the war-ravaged territory's inhabitants elsewhere.

Hamas has governed the Gaza Strip since 2007 when it violently seized control from the PA.

Both France and the United States under Joe Biden have pressed for the PA, which has limited autonomy in parts of the West Bank, to root out corruption and bring in new faces in the hope it could take charge of Gaza.



***Palestinians gather around a large crater following an Israeli strike in the Zaytoun neighborhood in Gaza City on April 13, 2025. (Omar AL-QATTAA / AFP)***

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government have ruled out the PA's return to Gaza, accusing it of supporting terrorism.

Paris has long championed a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which would see both a Palestinian and Israeli state live peacefully side by side.

But the formal recognition of a Palestinian state would mark a major policy switch and risk antagonizing

Israel, which insists such moves by foreign states are premature.

Macron's remarks last week sparked a wave of criticism from right-wing groups in France and from Netanyahu and his son Yair Netanyahu.

“Screw you!” [Yair Netanyahu wrote](#) in English on X late on Saturday, while the premier himself dismissed Macron's remarks.

War was sparked on October 7, 2023, when thousands of Hamas-led terrorists stormed southern Israel to kill some 1,200 people and take 251 hostages.

The Hamas-run Gaza health ministry says more than 50,000 people in the Strip have been killed or are presumed dead in the fighting so far, though the toll cannot be verified and does not differentiate between civilians and fighters. Israel says it has killed some 20,000 combatants in battle as of January and another 1,600 terrorists inside Israel on October 7.

Israel has said it seeks to minimize civilian fatalities and stresses that Hamas uses Gaza's civilians as human shields, fighting from civilian areas including homes, hospitals, schools, and mosques.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/top-eu-diplomat-israel-has-right-to-self-defense-but-current-actions-disproportionate/>

**Hamas claims it lost contact with group holding Edan Alexander hostage**

**Hamas kidnapped American-Israeli Edan Alexander on October 7, 2023 and has been held in Gaza since.**

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) APRIL 15, 2025 18:03 Updated: APRIL 15, 2025 19:14

**Hamas's Al-Qassam Brigades claimed they have lost contact with the group that is holding American-Israeli hostage Edan Alexander after a direct strike at their location, their spokesman, Abu Obeida, said on Tuesday.**

"We announce that we have lost contact with the team guarding soldier Edan Alexander following a direct Israeli bombardment targeting their location. We are still trying to reach them," Abu Obeida said.

"Be prepared, soon your children will return in black coffins," Hamas said in a propaganda video published on Tuesday.

**JPost Videos**

**Hamas reportedly rejects ceasefire proposal**

**Earlier on Tuesday, Hamas reportedly [rejected the Israeli proposal](#) for a six-week ceasefire in Gaza, the BBC reported.**

**A Palestinian official told the British news agency that the proposal did not mention any end to the war in Gaza nor Israeli troops leaving Gaza, which were Hamas's key demands for a ceasefire in exchange for half of the remaining living hostages who are currently still in Gaza.**



*A photograph of hostage Edan Alexander, outside a Jewish community center in Alexander's home town of Tenafly, New Jersey, US. December 14, 2024. (credit: REUTERS/Stephani Spindel)*

**Israel has said it will not end the war until Hamas is stamped out.** The terrorist group has ruled out any proposal that it lay down its arms.

Hamas had reportedly initially agreed to release nine hostages held in Gaza captivity, while pressure is being exerted on the terror group to release additional hostages, according to Arab media reports on Monday.

Egypt received an Israeli proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza and a start for negotiations for a permanent ceasefire, state-affiliated Al Qahera News TV cited sources as saying on Monday.

**Palestinian and Egyptian sources told Reuters that the latest round of ceasefire and hostage deal talks in Cairo ended with no apparent breakthrough.**

**Edan Alexander Hamas video**

[Hamas released a video of Alexander](#), right before the Passover holiday began in Israel on Saturday.

The terror group published the video as part of its ongoing efforts to carry out psychological terror.

Earlier, a teaser of the video was released by the group with the captions "Soon" and "Time is running out."

In the video, Alexander blames the Israeli government and the American administration for "deserting" him in Gaza, saying, "I am collapsing physically and mentally."

"Tell me why. Why am I not at home? Why am I filming my second video? Why?" Alexander asked.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-850211>

## **Witkoff indicates US seeks to cap Iran uranium enrichment, not dismantle nuclear program**

**Trump's envoy focuses on importance of enrichment levels during media interview on negotiations; confusion over where second round of talks to be held, Oman or Rome**

By [Jacob Magid](#) and [Agencies](#) Today, 11:23 am



*US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff speaks to reporters outside the West Wing of the White House in Washington, DC on March 6, 2025 (Mandel NGAN / AFP)*

**US special envoy to the Mideast Steve Witkoff appeared to use a key component of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal signed during the Obama administration as a reference point for the**

## **ongoing talks with Tehran, in comments that seemed to indicate the US is looking to limit rather than dismantle Tehran's nuclear program.**

**The deal, which US President Donald Trump abandoned in 2018 and has long criticized, barred Iran from enriching its uranium beyond 3.67 percent as part of a framework intended to prevent the Islamic Republic from obtaining a weapon. [Witkoff is a bozo and needs to be removed from all negotiations. He has no idea of what he is doing and the mindset of islam. This will end up being the same idiotic failure as the Obamanation deal. So who is supposed to be the master deal maker. They lost their negotiations when they agreed to allow them be in separate rooms and not face to face. Stupidity is terminal. – rdb]**

"The president means what he says, which is: Iran cannot have a bomb," Witkoff told Fox News in a Monday interview, elaborating that the ongoing "conversation" with Iran would be about enrichment and weaponization, with the imperative to verify any agreed commitments.

"Iran "do[es] not need to enrich past 3.67%. In some circumstances, they're at 60%, in other circumstances 20%. That cannot be," he said. "You do not need to run — as they claim — a civil nuclear program where you're enriching past 3.67%."

**Enriching uranium from 60% to the 90% needed for a weapon is a relatively short technical step.**

**The comments indicated that the US is looking to limit Iran's uranium enrichment rather than dismantle its nuclear program altogether, as demanded by Israel, which sees a nuclear-armed Iran as an existential threat.**

A first round of talks over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program took place over the past weekend in Oman. They were the highest-level Iran-US negotiations since the collapse of the 2015 nuclear accord and included a conversation between Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. **[ how do you have a conversation when one party is in one room and the other is in another room. Dumb. - rdb**

????????? ?????????? WITKOFF: TRUMP'S PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH MESSAGE IS CLEAR—IRAN CANNOT HAVE A BOMB

"The President means what he says: they cannot have a bomb. Talks with Iran will focus on two points—enrichment and weaponization. they don't need to enrich beyond 3.67%.

This is about... <https://t.co/2EDMldwvrX> [pic.twitter.com/qsrlLQIVUg](https://pic.twitter.com/qsrlLQIVUg)  
— Mario Nawfal (@MarioNawfal) April 15, 2025

**The stakes of the negotiations couldn't be higher for the two nations closing in on half a century of enmity. Trump repeatedly has threatened to unleash airstrikes targeting Iran's nuclear program if a deal isn't reached. Iranian officials increasingly warn that they could pursue a nuclear weapon with their stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels. Israel needs to launch an attack immediately unless Trump dumps Witkoff. - rdb**

**In his Fox interview, Witkoff went on to say that the next round of talks with Iran would focus on "verification on the enrichment program and then ultimately verification on weaponization."**

"That includes missiles — the type of missiles that they have stockpiled there. And it includes the trigger for a bomb," he added.

"We're here to see if we can solve this situation diplomatically and with dialogue. The first meeting was

positive, constructive, compelling," Witkoff said. **When you don't have a grasp on the thinking of the person you are dealing with you can't possibly negotiate with them. - rdb**

Pressed on whether **US inspectors — rather than UN inspectors — would be the ones to verify that Iran is adhering to any deal that is reached, Witkoff declined to answer directly.**



*This handout picture provided by the office of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei shows him addressing a meeting with a group of armed forces commanders and clerics in Tehran on April 13, 2025. (KHAMENEI.IR / AFP)*



In remarks carried by state TV, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei said the negotiations were "well carried out in the first steps. Of course, we are very pessimistic about the other side, but we are optimistic about our own capabilities."

He said neither "exaggerated optimism" nor "extreme pessimism" were appropriate. "The red lines are clear — to us and to the other side," he said. "If we stick to them, the talks may bear fruit, or they may not."  
**Toward the second round**

**Though a second round of talks was confirmed, there was confusion over which country would host the negotiations.**



*Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi attends a meeting with his Armenian counterpart in Yerevan on March 25, 2025. (Karen Minasyan / AFP)*

**Following indirect negotiations in Muscat last weekend, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said overnight Monday that the next talks would take place in Oman's capital on April 19, IRNA reported. The Dutch and Italian foreign ministers had earlier said that the talks would be held in Rome.**

**Baqaei said the next set of talks would continue to be indirect with Omani mediation, adding that direct talks with the US**

were "not effective" and "not useful." Oman's foreign minister shuttled between the two delegations at the last talks. **Once again it is Iran that is controlling the narrative. That is a losing proposition with radical Islamic mindset. - rdb**

American officials have not said where the talks would be held.

**The next meeting had been expected to take place on Saturday in Rome, according to a source in the Italian government who spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press because they weren't authorized to speak publicly. Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani also signaled the talks would take place there.**

"We **received the request from the interested parties, from Oman, which plays the role of mediator and we gave a positive response,**" Tajani told reporters during a trip to Osaka, Japan. "We are ready to welcome, as always, meetings that can bring positive results, in this case on the nuclear issue."

**Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp, speaking at a meeting in Luxembourg, also said the coming talks would be in Rome. Iran's foreign minister Araghchi reportedly said Monday the talks would happen in Rome while speaking to his Iraqi counterpart on Monday, according to the state-run Iraqi News Agency.**

**Then early Tuesday, IRNA news agency quoted Iranian spokesperson Baghaei as saying the talks would be back in Oman, without elaborating on the reason. Easter Sunday will be this coming weekend, a major holiday in Rome, which surrounds Vatican City, the home of the Roman Catholic church.**

**Baqaei had previously said the only focus of the next talks would be "the nuclear issue and the lifting of sanctions," and that Iran "will not have any talks with the American side on any other issue."**

**Late Sunday, IRNA reported that Tehran's regional influence and its missile capabilities were among its "red lines" in the talks.**

Iran and the US separately described [Saturday's discussions](#) as "constructive."

#### **UN nuclear chief to visit Iran**

**Baqaei reiterated that Iran would host United Nations nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi in the coming days but noted that the details of his trip were still "to be decided on."**

In a **post on X, Grossi confirmed that he would be heading to Tehran "later this week."**

"Continued engagement and cooperation with the Agency is essential at a time when diplomatic solutions are urgently needed," he said.

**IRNA later reported that Grossi would arrive on Wednesday to meet Araghchi and Mohammad Eslami, the head of Iran's nuclear energy agency.**

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency last visited Iran in November when he held talks with top officials, including President Masoud Pezeshkian.

The IAEA played a key role in verifying Iran's compliance with its nuclear deal with world powers and has continued to work in the **Islamic Republic, even as the country's theocracy slowly peeled away its access after Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord.** The US then reinstated stiff sanctions while Iran dropped many of its commitments under the deal, including limits on uranium enrichment.

Last week, [Iran threatened](#) to halt cooperation with IAEA inspectors if the US continued to threaten the use of force if talks collapsed,

### Diplomacy flurry

**Iran's foreign minister Araghchi is set to visit Moscow this week to discuss recent nuclear negotiations with the United States held in Oman, the foreign ministry spokesman additionally** said.

**"Dr Araghchi will travel to Moscow at the end of the week," Baqaei said**, adding that the trip was "pre-planned" and would be "an opportunity to discuss the latest developments related to the Muscat talks."

**Russia, a close ally of Iran and party to the 2015 deal, and** China have engaged with Tehran in recent weeks over its nuclear program.

Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Araghchi would meet his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov and other officials.

Moscow welcomed the Iran-US talks as it pushed for a diplomatic solution and warned that military confrontation would be a "[global catastrophe](#)."

**Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke to Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan earlier Monday about the dangers posed to regional security by Iran and its proxies**, State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said.

"They agreed on the importance of counterterrorism cooperation and strengthening NATO," the statement said. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/witkoff-indicates-us-seeks-to-cap-iran-uranium-enrichment-not-dismantle-nuclear-program/> This is a losing deal from the onset. Concessions are weakness in Islam. - rdb

**Analysis** From dismantlement to arms control

### Iran wants to drag out talks, Trump wants a deal now. Neither is good for Israel

**Both sides say a good start was made in Oman, where it is unlikely that Steve Witkoff was pushing for full dismantlement of Tehran's nuclear program. Netanyahu could find himself in a corner**

By [Lazar Berman](#) Today, 2:15 pm

**MUCH More--** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-wants-to-drag-out-talks-trump-wants-a-deal-now-neither-is-good-for-israel/>

### US approves major weapons shipment to Israel as IDF prepares for Gaza offensive, eyes Iran

**Israel set to receive over 3,000 US munitions to boost Air Force readiness for a major Gaza operation, with attention also on Iran; additional 10,000 munitions, frozen under Biden, released after Trump returned to White House**

[Yoav Zitun](#)|15:10

**The IDF is set to receive a major arms shipment from the United States in the coming weeks, including more than 3,000 munitions for the Israeli Air Force, as part of its preparations for continued operations in the Gaza Strip and a potential strike on Iran, Israeli officials said Monday.**

**The shipment, recently approved by the U.S. administration, is intended to boost the Air Force's readiness for a large-scale campaign planned by the IDF Southern Command in the Gaza Strip.**

**The delivery comes in addition to more than 10,000 aerial munitions expected to replenish Israeli stockpiles after 18 months of prolonged, multi-front fighting.**



JDAM bombs at an Israeli Air Force base (Photo: Yoav Zitun)

The shipment complements a previous [deal for heavy munitions](#) that Israel purchased from the U.S. last year. The [Biden administration](#) had initially frozen the transfer, but [U.S. President Donald Trump reversed the freeze](#) in recent weeks.

**In February, the U.S. government confirmed the approval of a major arms deal with Israel valued at \$7.41 billion, which includes guided munitions, bombs**

and related equipment. The [Pentagon](#)'s Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) notified [Congress](#) that the deal is intended to preserve Israel's ability to defend itself.

The authorization followed a January notification from the Biden administration regarding an [\\$8 billion arms package](#) just before Trump reentered office. Under the agreement, Israel will use American military aid funds to purchase 3,000 Hellfire missiles valued at approximately \$660 million and 2,166 AGM-114 Hellfire bombs, also valued at \$660 million.



*AGM-114 Hellfire missiles (Photo: Shutterstock)*

**Israel will also acquire 2,166 GBU-39 bombs, roughly 13,000 JDAM guidance kits for various bomb weights and 17,475 FMU-152A/B fuses as part of a separate \$6.75 billion deal.** The delivery of the Hellfire missiles is scheduled to begin in 2028, while the additional munitions are expected to start arriving in 2025.

According to the Pentagon, the equipment will come from existing U.S. military stockpiles and American defense contractors including [Lockheed Martin](#), [Boeing](#) and L3Harris. In a formal statement, the Pentagon said the

deal would not alter the regional balance of power and would support Israel's defense of its borders, critical infrastructure and civilian population.

The [U.S. State Department](#) said the transactions are consistent with American policy to maintain Israel's security and defense capabilities. The agreements will allow Israel to integrate the new systems seamlessly into its military and will not affect U.S. military readiness, according to the official notice.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/rj00ztjiakx>

## **PA President Abbas, French President Macron discuss Israel-Hamas ceasefire, reject Gaza plan**



*The two discussed the possibility of the Palestinian Authority assuming "full responsibility" in Gaza, including security duties.*

*By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) APRIL 14, 2025 16:33 Updated: APRIL 14, 2025 23:45*

*French President Emmanuel Macron welcomes Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas before a meeting at the Elysee Presidential Palace in Paris, France July 20, 2022 (photo credit: LUDOVIC MARIN/POOL VIA REUTERS)*

Palestinian Authority President [Mahmoud Abbas](#) and French President [Emmanuel Macron](#) discussed the Israel-Hamas ceasefire, along with plans for Gaza, during a Monday phone call, Palestinian state-run Wafa News Agency

reported Monday.

Abbas emphasized the "urgent need for a ceasefire and the swift delivery of humanitarian aid" into the Gaza Strip.

Abbas also stated his "firm rejection" of the plan to relocate Gazans from the Strip.

The two discussed the possibility of the Palestinian Authority assuming "full responsibility" in Gaza, including security duties, with the goal of "international legitimacy, one system, one law, and one legitimate source of arms."

### **France's recognition of a Palestinian state**

**Macron said on Wednesday France could recognize a Palestinian state in June, adding that in turn some countries in the Middle East could recognize the state of Israel.**

"We need to move towards recognition (of a Palestinian state). And so over the next few months, we will. I'm not doing it to please anyone. I'll do it because at some point it will be right," he said during an interview on France 5 television.

"And because I also want to take part in a collective dynamic that should also enable those who defend Palestine to recognize Israel in their turn, something that many of them are not doing."

In response, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's son, Yair, wrote on X/Twitter, "[Screw you!](#) Yes to the independence of New Caledonia! Yes to the independence of French Polynesia! Yes to the independence of Corsica! Yes to the independence of the Basque Country! Yes to the independence of French Guinea! Stop the

neoimperialism of France in West Africa!” <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-850091> **[Macron the definition of a peter principle in government. - rdb**

## Iran resumes smuggling arms to Hezbollah via Beirut’s port

*A recent report claimed that Iran has been relying on direct maritime smuggling routes to Lebanon or through an intermediary country.*

By [AMICHAJ STEIN](#) APRIL 14, 2025 21:47 Updated: APRIL 14, 2025 21:51



*Beirut Port, one of the largest and busiest ports in the Eastern Mediterranean, shows traces of Beirut 2020 port explosion on October 10, 2024 in Beirut, Lebanon. The city, which located on the eastern Mediterranean coast, has a population of over 1.5 million. (photo credit: Eren Bozkurt/Anadolu via Getty Images)*

A Western intelligence source told *The Jerusalem Post* that Tehran had made several attempts to smuggle weapons from [Iran to Hezbollah by sea via the Port of Beirut](#).

Following former Syrian president Bashar al-Assad’s downfall, [Iran has found it difficult to smuggle arms](#) to Hezbollah via its usual land routes. Its ability to do so has been significantly reduced.

Beirut’s Rafic Hariri International Airport no longer receives frequent cargo flights from Iran either, making the oceanic

route increasingly relevant for smuggling attempts.



### The Beirut port explosion

The use of [Beirut’s](#) seaport to this end was surprising, given that it had been out of commission since a massive explosion occurred there in August 2020.

Over 200 people died as a result of that blast, and over 7,000 people were wounded.

*General view of the port of Beirut, Lebanon January 6, 2024. (credit: REUTERS/MOHAMED AZAKIR)*

The blast emanated from a warehouse storing 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate – the equivalent in power to 1,000 tons of TNT. Since then, the port has only been partially restored.

According to the source, Hezbollah was now using it again for its own purposes.

A recent report on the Saudi Arabian Al-Hadath channel said that Iran has been relying on direct maritime smuggling routes to Lebanon or through an intermediary country.

The operations are reportedly handled by Unit 190 and Unit 700 of the Quds Force, who are responsible for naval arms smuggling to Hezbollah.

The source’s statement to the Post highlighted the extent to which Hezbollah continues to seek creative ways to arm itself, even after a year and a half of warfare with the Jewish state.

Israel, in turn, in an effort to prevent the organization from rearming and growing stronger, continues to try and foil [Hezbollah’s](#) attempts to transfer shipments of weapons by sea, including via conducting attacks along land border areas. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-850122>

## Jordan uncovers missile smuggling plot by operatives linked to Hamas

**Jordanian authorities announce arrests of Hamas-affiliated suspects accused of manufacturing missiles and drones and recruiting operatives; Israeli security officials previously warned of increased Iranian weapons smuggling and attempts to destabilize Jordan, which has intensified since the Gaza conflict**

[Lior Ben Ari](#), [Reuters](#)|09:36

**Jordan announced on Tuesday afternoon that it had thwarted plots aimed at "undermining national security and creating chaos within the country." According to a Jordanian statement,**

**authorities arrested 16 people**, reportedly linked to Hamas, suspected of manufacturing missiles using locally sourced equipment and materials smuggled from abroad, as well as possessing explosives.



*King Abdullah of Jordan with US President Donald Trump (Photo: Alex Brandon/AP)*

Jordanian television reported that **the suspects were apprehended following a lengthy intelligence surveillance operation ongoing since 2021**. The report noted that the plots intended to destabilize the country included not only missile production but also a project for manufacturing drones, as well as recruiting and training operatives both within Jordan and abroad.

**Amid these developments, reports from Jordan indicate that security forces arrested Khaled al-Johani, director of the office of the Islamic Action Front, during the night.** Security forces reportedly broke down the door to his home, confiscated mobile phones and detained his sons, though the children were later released.

**A security source said the suspects were connected to the Palestinian terror organization Hamas.** The group, which has been at war with Israel since October 2023, has been accused of instigating anti-government street protests in Jordan, which has a large Palestinian population.



*Hamas in Gaza*

**In recent years, particularly since the Gaza war, Israeli security officials have warned that Iran has increased the pace of weapons smuggling into the region**

**through Jordan, attempting to establish a foothold in the neighboring kingdom** and undermine its monarchy. Israeli authorities acknowledge that the smuggling activities via Jordan involve not only weapons but also materials classified as "terror enablers," such as cash transfers directly to terrorist organizations operating in the West Bank. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/h1nznjn0kl>

## **Clash with anti-Israel marchers at Jewish-owned Strasbourg bakery draws outrage**

*French politicians decried the incident, calling it antisemitic, and said that it must stop.*

By [MICHAEL STARR](#) APRIL 14, 2025 19:19



*Crowd gathers at Place Kleber with the call of Strasbourg Palestine Collective and marches to the Place du Chateau with slogans in support of Gaza, in Strasbourg, France on March 22, 2025. (photo credit: Muhammed Gun/Anadolu via Getty Images)*

A clash by [anti-Israel residents](#) and pedestrians outside a Jewish-owned Strasbourg bakery on Saturday drew outrage from French politicians, with some suggesting that the incident was indicative of a broader issue in French society.

The Dreher bakery itself wasn't attacked or targeted, according to officials, but video of an encounter between anti-Israel activists and other residents outside the shop circulated on social media showed a mass of Palestinian flag-waving protesters surrounding the site.

Police could be seen standing between the protesters and the shop. The original poster of the video also confirmed in a Sunday X post that the target was a [pro-Israel opponent](#) of the march, not the bakery.

### **JPost Videos**

Strasbourg : Actuellement la boulangerie Dreher est prise pour cible par une foule d'islamiste palestinien en colère car elle est considéré comme israélienne. [pic.twitter.com/hhloqFVos1](https://pic.twitter.com/hhloqFVos1)  
— Wolf (@PsyGuy007) [April 13, 2025](#)

A march had been planned on Saturday by Collectif Strasbourg Palestine, according to the group's Instagram account. The protest route detailed in a Thursday Rue89 Strasbourg report would have brought the march past the bakery.

### French politicians respond

Equality Minister Aurore Berge condemned the incident on X, calling for all of society to act, noting that anti-Zionism had become the new face of the antisemitic prejudice that had killed so many in France in recent years.



*French Junior Minister for Gender Equality and the Fight against Discriminations Aurore Berge leaves following the weekly cabinet meeting at the Elysee Palace in Paris, France, January 15, 2025. (credit: REUTERS/SARAH MEYSSONNIER)*

Republicains Bouches-du-Rhône senator Valérie Boyer despaired on X Sunday that France had "fallen so low" that Jewish businesses were being targeted in Strasbourg.

"The list of anti-Semitic atrocities displaying the Palestinian flag is far too long," said Boyer. "It is urgent and vital that this stops and quickly!"

National Rally MEP Virginie Joron said on X that every Saturday the city center of Strasbourg was "taken hostage" and the municipality was doing nothing to protect shopkeepers and passers-by.

<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-850110>

### 'Dirty Jew': French Jew beaten on street in latest antisemitic attack in Villeurbanne

*A man wearing a Star of David pendant necklace was allegedly attacked by two men on Friday, with one man filming and another striking the victim on the head while calling him a "dirty Jew."*



By [MICHAEL STARR](#) APRIL 14, 2025 18:27 Updated: APRIL 14, 2025 20:29

*French police in Villeurbanne, near Lyon, central France, August 31, 2019. (illustrative) (photo credit: EMMANUEL FOU DROT/ REUTERS)*

**A French Jew was assailed in an antisemitic street attack in Villeurbanne on Friday, according to the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes district's prefecture and local politicians. This is the third antisemitic attack in the Lyon area commune in just over a month.**

**A man wearing a Star of David pendant necklace was allegedly assaulted by two men on Friday,** Le Progrès reported, with one person filming and another striking the victim on the head while calling him a "dirty Jew" and "dirty fascist."

[Antisemitism is at a record high. We're keeping our eyes on it >>](#)

### Condemning the attack

The prefecture assured on social media that France's National Police were investigating the attack, and Prefect Fabienne Buccio said that she was determined to fight antisemitic incidents and would not let the perpetrators go unpunished.



### JPost Videos

**Villeurbanne's Mayor, Cédric Van Styvendael, decried the antisemitic assault in a Saturday Facebook post,** promising to do everything to fight against "all forms of violence."

*A member of the Jewish community prays at a synagogue in Orleans, central France, on March 23, 2025, the day after an attack to the rabbi of Orleans, for which a minor has been arrested (credit: JEAN-FRANCOIS MONIER / AFP)*

**"I hope that full light will be shed on this and that the perpetrators will be identified,** arrested, and brought to justice without delay," said Van Styvendael. "Impunity is not an option."

La [France](#) Insoumise National Assembly member Gabriel Amard condemned the Tonkin Street attack on

X/Twitter and called for the swift identification and prosecution of the attackers.

“Hate has no place in our city,” Amard wrote. “Let’s not let hate speech divide us.”

Former Villeurbanne mayor and former Socialist Party MP Jean-Paul Bret said that repeated incidents in the city required more than just outrage. On Instagram on Sunday, Bret called for a special city council meeting on the issue and for the dissemination of information against antisemitism on public transportation.

Le Progrès reported that on March 17, a 46-year-old woman on her way to a Hebrew class was called a “dirty Jew” by a woman in a black veil before being pushed up against a wall, stuck, spat on, and threatened that her throat would be slit if the attacker ever spotted her again. The outlet also reported the violent March 8 attack on a Jewish man that left him with multiple fractures.

Equality Minister Aurore Bergé noted the Friday Villeurbanne incident as part of a larger trend that included the Saturday clash between anti-Israel activists and pedestrians outside a Jewish-owned Strasbourg bakery.

According to officials, the Dreher bakery was not attacked or targeted. Still, a video of an encounter between anti-Israel activists and other residents outside the shop circulated on social media. It showed a mass of Palestinian flag-waving protesters surrounding the site. Police could be seen standing between the protesters and the shop. The video’s original poster said in a Sunday X post that the target was a pro-Israeli opponent, not the bakery.

A march was planned for Saturday by Collectif Strasbourg Palestine, according to the group’s Instagram account. The protest route detailed in a Thursday Rue89 Strasbourg report would have brought the march past the bakery.

Bergé condemned the incident on X, calling for all of society to act, noting that anti-Zionism had become the new face of the antisemitic prejudice that had killed so many in France in recent years.

Republicans party Bouches-du-Rhône Sen. Valérie Boyer said on X on Sunday that France had “fallen so low” that Jewish businesses were being targeted in Strasbourg.

“The list of antisemitic atrocities displaying the Palestinian flag is far too long,” said Boyer. “It is urgent and vital that this stops – and quickly!”

National Rally MEP Virginie Joron wrote on X that every Saturday, the city center of Strasbourg was “taken hostage,” and the municipality was doing nothing to protect shopkeepers and passersby.

<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-850104>

## **Poillievre: Deport foreign antisemitic lawbreakers, Conservative gov't would protect Jews** ***“We will bring in tougher laws to target vandalism, hate marches that break laws, violent attacks based on ethnicity and religion,” Poillievre said.***

By [MICHAEL STARR](#) APRIL 14, 2025 14:46 **Updated:** APRIL 14, 2025 17:25



*Conservative Party of Canada leader Pierre Poillievre speaks during his election campaign tour, in British Columbia, Canada, April 6, 2025 (photo credit: REUTERS/JENNIFER GAUTHIER)*

**Visitors to Canada engaging in antisemitic crime would be deported, and anti-Jewish vandalism and arson would be met with tougher laws under a Conservative-led federal government, Conservative Party leader Pierre Poillievre said during a Saturday** Canadian general election campaign event in Ottawa, promising Canadian Jews alleviation from increased antisemitic incidents in the country that he attributed to Liberal Party policies and rhetoric.

After his presentation about the Conservative plan to increase benefits and support for military veterans, Poillievre laid out his position on antisemitism and anti-Israel activity in response to a Toronto Sun query about rising antisemitism since the October 7 massacre and Liberal Party leader Mark Carney’s Tuesday gaffe suggesting that a [genocide was being carried out in Gaza](#).

***“We will bring in tougher laws to target vandalism, hate marches that break laws, violent attacks based on ethnicity and religion,”*** Poillievre said, according to a Cable Public Affairs Channel broadcast. “Anyone who’s here on a visitor visa who carries out law-breaking will be deported from this country and there will be very serious jail time and, on top of that, fines for anyone who carries out antisemitic vandalism or property damage.”

**JPost Videos**

## 'Rampaging chaos' targeting Canada's synagogues, Conservatives leader says

Poillievre decried the situation in Canada relating to hate-based and political violence, describing “rampaging chaos” in the country’s streets targeting synagogues and Jewish schools with vandalism and arson attacks.

“The **Jewish community feels understandably under siege as these hate-marches and antisemitic outbursts have become an unfortunate part of Canadian life,**” said Poillievre.



*Conservative Party of Canada leader Pierre Poillievre speaks at an election campaign event in Brampton, Ontario, Canada April 9, 2025 (credit: REUTERS/CARLOS OSORIO)*

“**My closing message on this to Canada’s Jewish community is: You are not alone, you have friends, Canadians stand with you.** You have the right to wear your Star of David, your kippa, and to have your mezuzah on your door. You should feel proud to be Jewish and you should never have to hide your Jewishness in order to stay safe; and as your prime minister, I will fight for your safety, your security, and your acceptance, every single day.”

**Poillievre said that there had been a 251%**

**increase in hate crimes in the country since the 2023 terrorist attacks** in southern Israel, but that the Hamas-led pogrom was not solely to blame for all the rising hatred in Canada, as there had been a 100% increase in hate crimes before the massacre. The federal opposition leader said that antisemitic and hate crimes were the “direct result of radical liberal policies and divisive rhetoric that has driven our people apart.”

“The Liberals have encouraged these divisions,” said Poillievre. “We see what they do: They say one thing to one group, and then exactly the opposite to another group – they turn Canadians against Canadians and they’ve been doing it for 10 years.”

Poillievre explained that the resulting violence and unrest in Canadian streets was a previously unknown phenomenon in the North American country, and it fell on the Conservative Party to unite Canadians again so that citizens of all backgrounds could feel safe again.

“These things were unheard of 10 years ago – we’ve always had debates and disagreements about foreign issues in Canada but those disagreements did not spill into violence on our streets,” said Poillievre. “People left the violence abroad, that’s why they came to this country, to live in peace and in freedom so that disagreements can play themselves out in debate, not in fire bombings and physical violence.”

Laborers’ International Union of North America international vice president Joseph Mancinelli praised Poillievre for his statements against antisemitism on social media.

“Seeing our country become complacent, and worse, embolden the worst surge of antisemitism, has broken my heart,” Mancinelli warned on X/Twitter on Sunday. “This is not the Canada I know.”

Poillievre’s campaign statements calling for the deportation of antisemitic criminals ahead of the April 28 federal election are not new. At a January 27 Ottawa Holocaust memorial ceremony, Poillievre said that it was not enough to condemn antisemitic crime. It was necessary to take action by deporting “any temporary resident that is here on a permit or a Visa that is carrying out violence or hate crimes on our soil.”

During the speech, the Carleton Member of Parliament blamed “obscene woke ideologies” for the rise in antisemitism. He also called it “obscene” that [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](#) (IRGC) officials have been operating in Canada for years. He affirmed his support for Israel and the Jewish state’s role as an ally of Canada.

According to B’nai Brith Canada’s Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents published last Monday, there were 6,219 recorded incidents in 2024. This would represent a 7.4% increase in antisemitic incidents from 2023, in which there were 5,791 antisemitic incidents. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-850082>

## Zelensky fires Sumy head after Russian strike



**Vladimir Artyukh has been dismissed following accusations he organized a military awards ceremony targeted in a missile attack**

15 Apr, 2025 15:20

FILE PHOTO. Collapsed building in Ukraine's border city of Sumy after Russian strike. © Getty Images / Vlada Liberova; Libkos



Vladimir Zelensky's office announced on Tuesday that it has fired the head of Ukraine's Sumy Regional Military Administration, Vladimir Artyukh. The move follows accusations that Artyukh organized a military awards ceremony that was targeted in a Russian missile strike.

On Monday, the Russian Defense Ministry confirmed that it carried out a precision strike the previous day on a gathering of Ukrainian command staff in the border city of Sumy. Two Iskander-M missiles were used in the attack on Sunday, it said, adding that over 60 senior Ukrainian servicemen were killed in the strike.

The local Ukrainian authorities have claimed that the attack targeted a military awards ceremony for the 117th Territorial Defense Brigade. Officials reported that the strike resulted in 35 civilian deaths and 129 others injured.

Several Ukrainian officials, including the mayor of Konotop, Artyom Semenikhin, have since called for the prosecution of Artyukh, accusing him of being directly responsible for the casualties by "organizing an awards ceremony" despite warnings not to do so.

Artyukh has effectively confirmed that the ceremony took place on the day of the attack but denied responsibility for the event, telling public broadcaster Suspilne that he "was invited" but did not organize it.

Nevertheless, Zelensky signed a decree on Tuesday removing Artyukh from his post. Taras Melnychuk, the cabinet's representative in parliament, confirmed the move in a post on Telegram on Tuesday and announced that the government has decided on a replacement.

Moscow has stressed that it does not attack civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated that the Russian military only strikes "military-related targets." Russian officials have accused Kiev, however, of deliberately hosting military events in civilian areas.

Following the Sumy attack, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said the facility targeted in Sunday's strike was hosting both Ukrainian and NATO officers, and claimed they were posing as mercenaries.

Lavrov went on to say that Kiev routinely flouts international law by placing military facilities and weapons in or near civilian infrastructure, and that there have been "a million" examples of this.

Sumy is a regional capital and frontline city of over 250,000 people, located 25km from the border with Russia. It has become a focal point of Ukraine's retreat from Russia's Kursk Region following its failed incursion. <https://www.rt.com/russia/615802-ukraine-sumy-head-fired/>

## Zelensky moves to delay election again

**A newly introduced bill to extend martial law would rule out a presidential vote in the near future**

15 Apr, 2025 14:37



**FILE PHOTO: Vladimir Zelensky. © Paul Morigi / Getty Images**

**Ukraine's Vladimir Zelensky has submitted a bill to extend martial law in the country by another 90 days, which would rule out any chance of a new presidential election being held within that time frame.**

Zelensky – whose presidential term expired almost one year ago – has repeatedly cited martial law as a pretext for refusing to hold a new election. Russia has declared Zelensky "illegitimate" as a leader, insisting that the Ukrainian parliament remains the only legal authority in the country.

On Tuesday, Zelensky introduced draft legislation in the Ukrainian parliament proposing a three-month extension of martial law and general mobilization starting from May 9. According to Ukrainian law, elections cannot be held while martial law is in effect, meaning the presidential vote will remain suspended.

If martial law were lifted, parliamentary elections could be held within 60 days after the end of the restrictions, and presidential elections within 90 days.

The submitted bills are expected to be approved by parliament between April 15 and 18, Ukrainian MP Yaroslav Zheleznyak has said.

Zelensky's potential run for reelection has been the subject of much media speculation, particularly after Steve Witkoff, US President Donald Trump's special envoy to the Middle East and a key figure in negotiating a settlement of the Ukraine conflict, claimed in late March that "there will be elections" in the country, although without providing a timeline. His comments also came after Trump himself called Zelensky "a dictator without elections."

A later report by The Economist claimed that Zelensky and his team were gearing up for a blitzkrieg election campaign to “catch [his] rivals off guard” and win the vote before the opposition could muster its strength.

However, Ukrainian officials have dismissed any plans to hold an election anytime soon. David Arakhamia, the head of Zelensky’s faction in the parliament, said that “all parliamentary parties and groups have agreed that elections should be held six months after the lifting of martial law.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said that European NATO members are making every effort to make sure that Zelensky retains power. Even if he fails to do so, Kiev’s backers would seek to maintain “the same Nazi and overtly Russophobic regime” in Ukraine by installing a new “half-Fuhrer” in Zelensky’s stead, Lavrov stated. <https://www.rt.com/russia/615801-zelensky-moves-delay-election/>

## Vance blasts Zelensky for ‘absurd’ claim

*The Ukrainian leader earlier suggested that Washington is under Moscow’s influence*

15 Apr, 2025 11:49



**FILE PHOTO: US Vice President J.D. Vance speaks during a summit. © Getty Images / Kayla Bartkowski**

**US Vice President J.D. Vance has accused Vladimir Zelensky of making “absurd” statements, after the Ukrainian leader suggested that Washington is on Russia’s side in the conflict between Moscow and Kiev.**

**In an interview with CBS News on Sunday, Zelensky claimed that “Russian narratives are prevailing in the US” and that Moscow has “enormous influence” on the**

**administration of US President Donald Trump and its policies.**

Responding in a conversation with the UnHerd outlet published on Tuesday, Vance described Zelensky’s remarks as “certainly not productive.”

“I think it is sort of absurd for Zelensky to tell the [US] government, which is currently keeping his entire government and war effort together, that we are somehow on the side of the Russians,” he stressed.

“If you want to end the conflict, you have to try to understand where both the Russians and the Ukrainians see their strategic objectives,” Vance added.

“That does not mean you morally support the Russian cause, or that you support the full-scale invasion, but you do have to try to understand what are their strategic red lines, in the same way that you have to try to understand what the Ukrainians are trying to get out of the conflict,” he said.

Members of the Trump administration “are not on anybody’s side. We are on America’s side,” Vance insisted.

Trump and Vance publicly clashed with Zelensky during his visit to the White House in late February, accusing the Ukrainian leader of disrespect toward the US, failing to appreciate American aid, and not being interested in achieving peace with Russia.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told the Kommersant newspaper in an interview published on Tuesday that Moscow appreciates that “the Trump administration is trying to get to the bottom of the issue and, most importantly, understand the root cause” of the Ukraine conflict.

Lavrov also noted that Trump “has repeatedly said that the colossal mistake which led to the current events in Ukraine was the Biden administration’s decision to drag Ukraine into NATO.”

Ukrainian neutrality remains one of Moscow’s key demands for a settlement of the conflict, along with the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine and recognition by Kiev that Crimea, the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics, and Kherson and Zaporozhye regions are part of Russia. <https://www.rt.com/news/615785-vance-zelensky-us-ukraine/>

### OP ED

## California Doubles Fine on White Drivers

Mon, 14 Apr 2025 9:00 PM PST by Daniel Greenfield

Two men are speeding through a construction zone on a California freeway. They have identical speeds and driving records.

They're both stopped and get tickets. One man pays \$500 and the other \$100.

How is that possible? One driver is white and the other is a member of a minority group.

This illegal experiment in disproportionate racial impact known as 'AB-645 Vehicles: Speed Safety System Pilot Program' passed the California State Assembly 62-9 and the Senate by 29-6 (the 'no' votes were nearly all from Republicans) before being signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom. And the systemically racist program is now being rolled out in LA, San Francisco, and other areas before the two-tier fine system can be implemented statewide.

Contrary to its name, AB-645 doesn't crack down on speeding, instead it actually gives speeders a pass as long as they meet an economic test which will lead to more speeding.

And, like many DEI programs trying to bypass Supreme Court rulings outlawing equity-based racial discrimination, it's using income tests to disguise its underlying systemic racism, but the racial bias is written right into the text of the bill which falsely claims that "traditional enforcement methods have had a well-documented disparate impact on communities of color, and implicit or explicit racial bias", mandates that its governing body will work with "racial equity" groups and orders a "racial and economic equity impact analysis" of the impact of fines on minorities.

Speeding enforcement is a matter of math and the least racially biased form of enforcement there is. Two men going 25 miles above the speed limit should receive identical fines.

California's Democrat majority has now created actual systemically racist enforcement.

Here's how it works.

AB-645 requires LA, San Francisco and other areas to slash fines and penalties by 80% for "indigent" individuals and by 50% for low-income individuals "up to 250 percent above the federal poverty level." According to the California Health Care Foundation, only 21% of low-income individuals are white, 60% are Latino and 7% are black.

Using California's MediCal estimates and average household numbers, members of the average black household would be eligible for a 50% reduction, many Latino households would, but few white and Asian households would qualify for this 50% 'reduction' on their tickets and fines.

Those in the 'indigent' category, meaning their income is at 125% of the federal poverty level, receive not only an 80% discount, but the opportunity to substitute community service instead.

In San Francisco, one of the locations where this experiment is being rolled out, only 2.6% of white households would qualify for this 80% discount, but 17% of black households and 9.5% of Latinos would. In Los Angeles, only 6.9% of white households, but 14.7% of black households and 13.1% of Latino households would be eligible. (Only 7.9% of Asian households would.)

This is actual systemic racism and disproportionate impact on action.

That's why the white driver pays \$500 and the minority driver pays \$100 even though they committed the same offense and have the same record. Another way of looking at it is that the white driver has his ticket and fines increased twofold to fivefold in the name of equity.

Is this experiment in systemic racial equity going to make California roads any safer?

The California Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board claimed that black people made up 15% of traffic stops, three times their 5% population, Latinos, who make up 34% of the state, made up 45% of those who were stopped, while white people, who made up 34% of the state, made up 30% of traffic stops. Asians make up 15% of the state, but only 5.3% of traffic stops.

California authorities predictably blamed this on racism without explaining why officers and patrolmen, including in minority forces in major cities, were biased against blacks and Latinos, but not Asians. Despite the history of bigoted jokes and stereotypes about Asian drivers, they were actually far less likely to be stopped than white drivers were. If California law enforcement officers were conducting traffic stops based on their biases, shouldn't they have been giving in to their prejudices about 'Asian drivers' stopping Asian drivers more? But they weren't.

What these numbers actually revealed was that traffic stop demographics tend to follow the indexes of stable behavior, such as middle-class membership, two-parent families, and lack of involvement in criminal activities, which taken together are predictive of most other behaviors.

A California Policy Lab report castigating the California Highway Patrol for racism was forced to admit that

“black-white and Hispanic-white disparities in stop rates for non-moving violations made a small contribution to overall disparities in stops rates.” It found a 17% higher stop rate for black drivers than white drivers for moving violations and a 6.8% higher stop rate for Hispanic drivers. The basis for these disparities was not race, but actual violations.

Assuming that all of this is racially driven also assumes that patrolmen are able to guess the race of a driver in a moving vehicle with incredible pinpoint accuracy before they stop him.

These numbers are not evidence of racial discrimination, but of different offense rates among different groups. By offering 50% and 80% lower ticket and fine rates for groups that are more likely to engage in driving violations, California Democrats are not only engaging in systemic discrimination, but lowering the punishment for bad behaviors by the most likely offenders.

And that will lead to more speeding, more car crashes and more deaths. And those deaths will disproportionately affect minority communities where the bad drivers they are protecting live.

Rather than doing minority groups a favor by letting minority drivers off the hook, California’s new two-tier fine system will lead to more deaths of more minority drivers and pedestrians in the same way that their police defunding programs had sent black murder rates soaring after 2020.

Democrats claim that systemic racism has lethal effects on communities. This systemic racist program actually will cost more minority lives. And leave their blood on Gov. Newsom’s hands.

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